



'SHARK BYTES'

written by
Hans Huffman

"On a supernatural New Year's Eve, Jack, a struggling alcoholic and drug addict watches a paranormal TV that takes him on a trip through his past, present, and future, guiding him on a journey towards spiritual redemption."

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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING - 1978

JACK MARLEY, (8 yoa), sits cross-legged on the shag carpet, eyes glued to the TV. The living room is filled with the warm glow of morning sunlight streaming through the windows. On the TV, the iconic "This is your brain on drugs" commercial plays.

TV ANNOUNCER
(holding an egg)
This is your brain.

The cracked egg falls into the sizzling oil on a pan.

TV ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
(seriously)
This is your brain on drugs. Any
questions?

CLOSE UP: Jack'S face, his wide eyes reflect a mix of wonder and apprehension as the egg cracks and sizzles on the screen.

Jack clutches a 6" plastic, army doll in his hand tightly, then slowly releases it, letting it fall onto the carpet.

JACK (8 YOA)
Wow!

SUDDENLY:

The sunlight dims. Shadows creep across the room as if an invisible hand is pulling a dark curtain over the scene.

GABRIEL (V.O.)
This is a crucial moment for Jack.
What you saw wasn't just an egg;
it's a representation of choices.

ANGLE ON:

The window again. Thick, dark clouds roll in, blocking the sun. The room plunges into an eerie twilight.

CUT TO:

The family photo. The once bright and cheerful image now looks somber in the dim light.

From the kitchen, his mother, Molly, calls out.

MOLLY (O.S.)
 (yelling)
 Jack, what do you want for
 breakfast?

Jack turns his head away from the TV, his mind still on the sizzling egg. He yells back to his mom.

JACK
 (excitedly)
 Eggs! Can you make them fried in
 the skillet so they sizzle, Mom?

Molly chuckles from the kitchen, amused by her son's enthusiasm.

MOLLY (O.S.)
 (laughing)
 Coming right up... fried eggs? You
 never ask for that honey!

Jack turns back to the TV, a satisfied grin on his face. The commercial ends, and he eagerly anticipates his breakfast, imagining the fried eggs sizzling in the skillet like on TV.

JACK'S POV: The TV blurs, transforming into a FLASH FORWARD image of a dark, gloomy room filled with empty bottles and a dead shadowy figure.

GABRIEL (V.O.)
 Down here.

CLOSE UP: On the coffee table stands 6" GABRIEL, with halo wearing a disco outfit with gold chain and accessories. Jack is oblivious to his presence.

GABRIEL
 (smiling warmly)
 Please allow me to introduce
 myself. I'm Gabriel and it's time
 to get to work because young Jack
 here is now at the crossroads in
 life.

Gabriel sprouts tiny wings and flies in front of Jack, who remains oblivious to his presence. He lands on the armrest of the couch, watching Jack with a protective gaze.

Gabriel waves his tiny hand, and the TV volume lowers slightly. Jack looks around, confused for a moment, then shrugs and continues watching his show.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
 (to the audience)
 Just a little reminder that
 someone's always looking out for
 him... I'll see you later.

Gabriel, now a full size man, sits on the couch waving bye,
 keeping a watchful eye on Jack as the scene fades out.

EXT. SEASIDE CEMETERY - RAINY DAY

Rain pours down on a dreary day, creating a somber
 atmosphere. The waves crash against the shore in the
 distance. TAMMY TYLER, 13, in bright yellow raincoat, sits in
 a rickety wheelchair, holding a flimsy umbrella. Her mother,
 TAMIKA, 40s, stands beside her, also holding an umbrella.

They are the only ones to brave the weather at the cemetery.
 They're at the headstone of "DAVEY JONES".

TAMMY TYLER
 (looking around, confused)
 Where's Uncle Jack?

TAMIKA
 (irritated, snapping)
 Are you kidding me? You haven't
 learned by now Jack's drunk ass is
 worthless. He's not your damn uncle
 either.

Tammy's flimsy umbrella shudders in the gusts, threatening to
 flip inside out.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
 It's his sorry ass's fault your
 dad's dead... Now we are really
 screwed.

Tamika kneels beside the headstone and lays down a small, sad
 bouquet of fresh flowers.

TAMMY TYLER
 I know (beat) I love to pretend
 Jack is my Uncle though. We don't
 have any family.

Tammy reaches for her mother's hand, squeezing it tightly.

TAMMY
 We're all we have now—let's not
 waste it.

Tammy looks down, tears mixing with the rain on her face. Tamika's expression softens slightly, but the pain and anger remain... They stand in silence, the rain continuing to fall, as the waves crash in the background.

The rain-soaked ground beneath the wheelchair and Tamika's feet squelches softly as they try to move. Tammy's wheelchair gets stuck in the mud. Tamika hands her umbrella to Tammy and gets soaked as she pushes Tammy out of the mud.

EXT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - MORNING

The sun beams over the horizon, casting a golden glow on the seaside cafe and empty swimming pool. The waves gently lap against the shore, and seagulls call out with happy beach music in the background.

A SEAGULL rests on top of a intersection wooden sign that reads "TOKYO 3252 miles" on top of "NEW YORK 31250 miles"

The sign for "SHARK BYTES CAFE" sways slightly in the morning breeze. The cafe is quiet, with only a few early risers enjoying their coffee and the serene view of the ocean.

SUPER: "7 YEARS LATER"

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - NEW YEAR'S EVE MORNING

The quaint "SHARK BYTES CAFE" is quiet, the sounds of sea gulls and waves crashing outside is heard. The decor is nautical-themed, with fishing nets and seashells adorning the walls, lively Reggae music plays in the background. A few tables are scattered in front of the empty computer booths lining a wall.

TAMMY TYLER, now 20, in a rusty wheelchair, is the only customer. She sits with her laptop, 2 scones and a cup of tea on a table. EMILY VANCE, 30s, a server, is wiping down a booth with a 24" monitor attached to the wall.

EMILY VANCE

You doing good Tammy?

TAMMY TYLER

Yeah just checking my Go Fund Me Page... I'm still a hundred grand short.

JACK MARLEY, 50s, disheveled with a 7 day beard, staggers from a back door into the cafe half dazed, shirt unbuttoned with a Bloody Mary. He sits behind a cash register unnoticed.

EMILY VANCE

You'll get there, you gotta have
faith-

SAGE BLUNT (O.S.)

And perseverance.

SAGE BLUNT, 20s, slacker with long hair, is at the open front door, wearing a backpack and holding a skateboard.

JACK MARLEY

You're late.

SAGE BLUNT

You're drunk.

JACK MARLEY

Go fuck yourself.

EMILY VANCE

(cheerfully)

Morning, Jack. Another rough night?

JACK MARLEY

Always, it's my destiny but it's
nothing a little hair of the dog
can't cure.

Sage goes over to Emily and whispers something to her. She shakes her head No. Gabriel, in a 3 piece business suit, skips happily up to the counter. Jack ignores the customer.

EMILY VANCE

Do you know what you want? I'll be
right with you.

GABRIEL

(confidently)

Yes Siree Bob, I'll take half-
decaf, triple shot espresso with
two pumps of unicorn syrup, a
splash of cucumber juice, topped
with a sprinkle of lavender petals,
and served in a hollowed-out
coconut shell.

Jack looks up in disbelief as Sage goes behind the counter.

JACK MARLEY

Unicorn syrup? Get the hell out of
my café you fuckin fruitcake.

SAGE BLUNT

Hold on Jack I got this... Sorry about my boss... We're out of unicorn syrup but we have dragon sweat. Is that okay?

GABRIEL

Oh that's even better.

SAGE BLUNT

(looks at customer)

Is that for here or to go? You want one boss?

Gabriel shakes his head; looking at Jack's slovenly reflection in a mirror in the bar.

GABRIEL

I'll take it here.

Sage starts to prepare the coffee looking at Jack holding his head in his palms. He takes the coffee over to the Gabriel.

SAGE BLUNT

Happy New Years.

Gabriel slides a debit card through the machine and hands Sage a "20" bill.

GABRIEL

Happy New Year's to you too Sage... Tomorrow starts a new year and a new chance for transformation.

Gabriel goes and takes a seat in the corner of the café.

SAGE BLUNT

How late are we working today boss?... two? Two fifteen sounds good.

Jack tilts his glass and downs his drink. He gets a bottle of vodka out from under the counter and fills his cup up.

EMILY VANCE

(softly)

Jack, I'm having a small New Year's Eve party at my place tonight. You should come. It'll be fun.

JACK MARLEY

(grinning)

Whatever, I'd rather burn in hell.

TAMMY TYLER

You sure Uncle Jack? I'm going to spend the night ringing in the New Year.

JACK MARLEY

(shaking his head)

Whatever Tammy, I'm staying right here. I drink alone.

SAGE BLUNT

(excitedly)

Yo, Jack! I'm heading to this rager at the Cobra Club tonight. You should like totally come!

JACK MARLEY

Not my scene Sage.

SAGE BLUNT

It'd be fun. I'll come back and get you so you don't get another DUI?

JACK MARLEY

Uh, that's a big hell no.

Jack tilts his glass back and finishes his drink.

TAMMY TYLER

That sounds cool Sage. Maybe if I get my surgery I can dance and do stuff like that. I'm still not old enough to drink.

SAGE BLUNT

Bet, after your surgery I'm going to show you the world Tammy.

EMILY VANCE

(trying one last time)

Well Jack if you change your mind about my party tonight, you ought to slow down a little. It's only eight in the morning.

JACK MARLEY

And in Vegas it always five o'clock somewhere, twenty four, seven. My kind of party.

SAGE BLUNT

You ever thought about the marijuana maintenance program Jack?

(MORE)

SAGE BLUNT (CONT'D)

(beat)
No hangovers!

JACK MARLEY

Whatever, Sage I was smoking that
shit plus doing a lot of other
things before you were shittin,
yellow in your diapers.

MIKE and ANGIE (30s), a vibrant young married couple enter
the café. They walk up to the counter. Mike and Angie both
nod at Tammy. Tammy sheepishly waves back.

MIKE

(looks at Angie)
You know what you want?

ANGIE

Green tea and a bran muffin.

MIKE

No meat?

ANGIE

No I'm fasting.

MIKE

That's right. I'll have the same.

Tammy starts to get the order ready.

ANGIE

Happy New Year's to you all.

The room except Jack responds back Happy New Years.

MIKE

We run the Haven of Hope, homeless
shelter... If you have any
donations for our New Year's Eve
dinner tonight it would be
appreciated.

ANGIE

We take anything, food, clothes,
you name it.

JACK MARLEY

We don't have anything.

EMILY VANCE

Oh, c'mon Jack. We have days old
pastries we could give them.

(MORE)

EMILY VANCE (CONT'D)

I'm just going to throw them out
this afternoon anyway.

JACK MARLEY

Whatever, they're bums so they're
probably used to eating out of
dumpsters anyway.

ANGIE

We'll take em.

SAGE BLUNT

Jack we could give them the case of
chickory root coffee in your
office... No one drinks that stuff.

TAMMY TYLER

Because it's nasty.

JACK MARLEY

Whatever... I don't care.

Sage gathers up a care package in a box, he gives it to Mike.
Angie holds the door open for Mike and her to leave.

Jack stands up sets the glass down, he staggers and loses his
balance. The glass falls to the floor, shattering glass. Jack
collapses on the floor, beside the mess unable to get up.

EMILY VANCE

Jack!

TAMMY TYLER

Oh my God!

Jack POV: Emily and Sage's faces are staring at Jack.

SAGE BLUNT

Jack are you okay?

JACK MARLEY

Now that's a fucking stupid
question. Do I look okay?

Jack tries to get up but is too drunk to stand by himself.

EMILY VANCE

I'm calling nine one one.

JACK MARLEY

You'll be fired if you do. Just
help me get to my feet.

EMILY VANCE

That's like the fifth time you have fallen this month.

JACK MARLEY

Whatever, I told you I have vertigo among many other things. Got it in the Navy.

Emily and Sage start to help Jack up. They each take an arm and lift Jack up he is unsteady on his feet.

SAGE BLUNT

(laughing)

My doctor says Vodka causes vertigo.

EMILY VANCE

Why don't you sit in that booth for a few minutes?

SAGE BLUNT

That's a good idea and I'll bring you some strong black coffee and something to eat as soon as we get you in a booth.

Emily and Sage escort Jack to a booth by Tammy's table. He sits down and sighs, looking at Tammy.

Sage pours a cup of coffee in a tall paper cup.

JACK MARLEY

Put a triple shot of Bailey's in my coffee.

Sage adds a little cream and sugar to the coffee. He takes it over to Jack.

SAGE BLUNT

I'll have your egg and cheese muffin ready in a minute.

JACK MARLEY

I'm not hungry.

Jack tastes his coffee and furls his forehead. Slowly He gets up and walks behind the counter. He pours some coffee out then pours some vodka into his coffee cup and sits down.

Gabriel fades out ghost like, he moves to a stool at the counter.

GABRIEL

Another fine day of pretending this is all just a phase... 'Excuse me, bartender, can I order a side of 'not my fault' with that?

Emily brings over an egg muffin sandwich.

EMILY VANCE

Jack you should try to eat a little something... When was the last time you ate?

Jack wobbly tries to stand with his drink, in his wet pee stained pants. He sits back down.

JACK MARLEY

You know, I've read somewhere that vodka is basically a vegetable like ketchup. So, I'm not just drinking; I'm getting healthy!

SAGE BLUNT

Maybe you should consider broccoli instead?

JACK MARLEY

Yeah, but broccoli doesn't help me forget my third divorce and the fact that my life looks like a dumpster fire...so I'm drinking a bottle of potatoes instead.

Fading Colors: Gradually desaturate the colors in Jack's surroundings to reflect his mental disconnect—while the café remains bright and lively, everything around Jack appears dull and muted.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

I'll be fine. I just need a little nap. I didn't sleep very good last night.

Jack tries to stand up but is wobbly again.

GABRIEL

Jack's about to get a little intervention of sorts to learn our destiny is not written for us but rather by us.

JACK MARLEY

Tell you what, Sage bring my breakfast...

(MORE)

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
 and the bottle to my bedroom... I'm going to lay down again. If I'm not up by one o'clock you both can lock up and go. Happy Mother Fucking New Years.

Tammy rolls her SQUEAKY wheel chair over by Jack.

TAMMY TYLER
 What's you New Year's resolution Uncle Jack?

JACK MARLEY
 To keep my title as the world's funniest drunk. I have a reputation to uphold, you know.

Sage with bottle helps Jack out of the Cafe into the back.

A close up on Tammy's flimsy wheelchair shows it's missing screws and ready to fall apart.

The landline in the café RINGS.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
 That's probably my life coach... Oh wait, I forgot- he quit.

INT. SHARK BYTES - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - DAY

WIDE SHOT: The bedroom is spacious and elegantly decorated, with large windows offering a stunning view of the ocean. The sunlight streams in, casting a warm glow over the room. A king-sized bed with plush bedding dominates the space.

Jack is being helped across the room by Sage. Jack is still clearly drunk and unsteady on his feet. A lone helium balloon hangs in a corner.

SAGE BLUNT
 (carefully guiding Jack)
 Easy does it, Jack. Let's get you to bed.

They reach the bed, and Sage helps Jack plop down. Jack's eyes are heavy, and he mumbles incoherently.

JACK MARLEY
 (speech slurred)
 I'm living the dream.. but I'm still waking up in my nightmare.

SAGE BLUNT

(hesitant)

Are you sure you don't need
anything else? I can stay for a
little if you want.

Jack doesn't respond. He's already fallen asleep, his head drooling on the pillow. Sage sighs and shakes his head with a hint of concern he places Jack's phone on a nightstand beside the bed amongst scattered prescription pill bottles.

SAGE BLUNT (CONT'D)

Sleep well, old man... Please don't
end up like my dad.

Sage turns on the flat screen TV mounted on the wall. The screen flickers to life, showing an old Zombie movie. Sage quietly leaves the room picking up the bottle of Vodka on the way out the door, closing the door behind him.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - NEW YEAR'S EVE MORNING

Sage walks into the café from the back with the almost empty bottle of Vodka. Tammy looks up at Sage while Emily pretends to check her phone.

EMILY VANCE (V.O.)

(inner thought)

This can't keep going on.

SAGE BLUNT

He's out cold. We could go now-

EMILY VANCE

We'll close at one.

SAGE BLUNT

A bottle of vodka before noon?
Jack's really dedicated to his
'hair of the dog' philosophy.

TAMMY TYLER

You should pour that poison out.

EMILY VANCE

It won't stop Jack from drinking.
He'll just get more.

SAGE BLUNT

If I fill the rest of this vodka up
with tomato juice is it a fruit or
a vegetable?

CLOSE UP: Tammy's face is highly stressed with worry.

EMILY VANCE

Smirnoff called and said they had to hire an extra shift for Jack this holiday.

Sage shifts uncomfortably, aware of their shared frustration before he responds.

SAGE BLUNT

Well at one o'clock I'm out of here. I promised my mom I'd dig some more holes in her herb garden.

Emily nods, but her expression is strained. The clock on the wall ticks ominously, counting down the moments.

EMILY VANCE

Tell Cassia to come over tonight if she doesn't have any plans.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - DAY

Jack snores as seagulls KEOW outside. He wakes up groggy, checking his phone reading "3:43," and he instinctively rubs his sore head and unshaven face.

JACK MARLEY (V.O.)

(inner thought)

I blacked out. What in the hell did I do this morning?

He opens the drawer and pulls out the pint bottle of vodka, a familiar sight, yet it feels like a weight on his hand.

JACK MARLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(inner thought)

Just one drink to take the edge off. I can handle this... who am I kidding?

Jack snorts multiple lines of cocaine off the mirror, shaking slightly as he reaches for the pill bottles. Jack swallows several pills with half the bottle of vodka in one swoop.

JACK MARLEY

(talking to himself)

Whew, doggy.

Jack lies back down on his bed with the TV remote in his hand.

JACK MARLEY (V.O.)
 (inner thought)
 Just one more time... It's New
 Year's Eve.

He points the remote, clicks it, then passes out breathing very heavily.

A close up on 2 pill bottles says "DO NOT MIX WITH ALCOHOL".

The eerie atmosphere begins to shift. The room grows colder, shadows stretching ominously as whispers echo through Jack's mind—faces of hurt people flash before him, memories of laughter turned to disappointment.

JACK MARLEY
 (talking in sleep)
 No, no... this is just a bad dream.
 Can't let it in—

EXT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - FULL MOON RISING OVER THE OCEAN

The full moon rises majestically over the ocean, casting a silvery light across the waves. No one is outside.

An ominous black shadow moves through the sky and passes into the café.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack stirs in his sleep, his face contorted with fear. He suddenly wakes up, eyes wide with terror. On the TV screen, the serene documentary has been replaced by the ghostly image of DAVEY JONES, Jack's long-dead slacker friend.

DAVEY JONES
 (on the TV, eerily)
 Hi a Jack... Jack Marley...
 Remember me?... It's your old buddy
 Davey Jones?

Jack's heart races as he rubs his eyes. He stares at the screen in sheer panic, unable to believe his eyes.

JACK MARLEY
 (whispering, terrified)
 Davey? Is that really you?

DAVEY JONES
 (on the TV, laughing)
 Hell yeah it's me dumb ass. I'm
 here to haunt ya. Boo!
 (MORE)

DAVEY JONES (CONT'D)

You were my one true friend but I'm
telling you now you must change
your ways, Jack... Before it's too
late...

Jack's breathing quickens, and he clutches the sheets,
paralyzed with fear.

JACK MARLEY

Great, just what I need— a dead guy
making house calls. I hope you
brought pizza.

Jack face grows more panicked, breathing faster and sweating.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

Am I sick with a fever? This can't
be real. I'm having a nightmare.

DAVEY JONES

No nightmare Jack. It's time for
you to put the plug in the jug.
You're getting a chance I didn't.

JACK MARLEY

You died seven years ago. I was
with you.

Jack's eyes widen in terror as the ghostly image of Davey on
the TV screen begins to shimmer and distort. The room grows
colder, and a faint, eerie glow emanates from the television.

Slowly, Davey steps out of the screen, his form translucent
and bound by heavy, rusted chains that CLINK and RATTLE with
every movement. His eyes are hollow, and his face is etched
with sorrow and regret.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(almost hysterical)

No... no, this can't be
happening...

Jack reaches out with a trembling hand, passing it through
Davey's ghostly figure. His hand feels nothing but cold air,
and he recoils in shock.

DAVEY JONES

(otherworldly voice)

Oh but it is Jack... I'm here to
show you the errors of your selfish
sick ways... You've hurt a lot of
people Jack with your vices.

JACK MARLEY

Vices? What vices? I prefer the term 'enthusiastic hobbyist.'

Jack's breathing quickens more, he puts his hands over his eyes, trying to block out the terrifying sight. The chains rattle louder, echoing through the room.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(whimpering)

I'm trippin balls. This isn't real... this can't be real... ghosts don't exist.

Jack covers his ears, but the sound of the chains continues to haunt him, growing louder and more insistent.

DAVEY JONES

Oh I'm real alright, and you're about to go through some things... See these chains bounding me?

Jack nods peeking through his fingers covering his eyes.

JACK MARLEY

I knew you and Tamika were into some kinky stuff, but bondage?

DAVEY JONES

I forged this chain link by link, yard by yard; a lot of it when I was with you. I was powerless and by my own free will I made these invisible chains binding me... Do you understand?

JACK MARLEY

I'm not you. You've been dead over seven years now.

Davey's ghostly eyes turn red; a breeze howls through the room.

DAVEY JONES

Exactly, and you can't see your own invisible chains of your addiction now but I can. You think my chains are bad? Yours are worse. Yours are far heavier and longer than mine.

JACK MARLEY

So, you're telling me I'm basically in ghost rehab?

(MORE)

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
Is there a 12-step program for the
living? Why? Why me?

DAVEY JONES
(voice fading)
Just accept it. You've been
drinking and druggin for seven
years after my death. Hopefully
you'll break the chains of
addiction by first looking at the
wreckage of your past.

JACK MARLEY
So let me get this straight- my
best friend is haunting me? I knew
we were buddies, but this is a bit
much.

Jack relaxes, only to see Davey's ghost fading back into the
TV screen, leaving the room in an eerie silence.

DAVEY JONES (V.O.)
An old friend is coming to see you
at midnight.

JACK MARLEY
Okay, ghost or not, I can handle my
problems without you, buddy! Adios
amigo!

Jack looks around the room. He checks his pill bottles.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
Whoa that was some kind of fucking
trip. Glad that shit's over... and
I gave everyone the day off
tomorrow. Time to party!

Jack does another line of cocaine, and takes another pill
with a slug of vodka. He turns the TV off and passes out
again.

EXT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - NIGHT

Fireworks EXPLODE with many colors over the ocean. The
display illuminates the dark café.

TAMIKA (V.O.)
Oh Jack, Jack Marley I'm coming for
you.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit, with shadows dancing on the walls. Jack paces nervously, glancing at the clock. It's almost midnight. His face is etched with fear and anxiety.

JACK MARLEY
(muttering to himself)
Not again... please, not again...

A dark shadow flies across the room into the TV.

The clock strikes midnight. Suddenly, the TV flickers on by itself, casting an eerie glow across the room. TAMIKA, the ghost of New Year's Past, appears on the screen as a glamorous African Queen. Her presence is ghostly yet human, with a translucent form.

Jack is paralyzed, unable to move, frozen in fear.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
(panic, wide eyed)
No! No! No! Not you!

Fireworks EXPLODE outside. The brilliant colors reflecting over the ocean through the sliding glass door.

TAMIKA
Happy New Years, you sorry ass
mother fucker... Did you expect an
angel?

Jack frantically tries to turn off the TV, pressing buttons and even unplugging it. But the TV stays on, and Tamika's laughing image taunts him.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
Expectations lead to resentments
Jack. You ought to know that.

Jack stumbles backward and falls to the floor.

JACK MARLEY
Are you here to take me to hell?

TAMIKA
(grinning)
I wish I could but that's the
reaper's job... You better be
treating my daughter good. Now get
up.

JACK MARLEY

I'm dead aren't I? I'm already in hell.

Jack on his feet moves towards the TV in his room.

TAMIKA

(on the TV, sternly)

Get a grip on reality, dude. You did this to yourself. Your choices don't just affect you; they ripple out, hurting everyone who loves you -including my daughter.

Jack steps back, his eyes wide with terror. A translucent Tamika steps out of the TV. She stands before Jack, her expression a mix of pity and determination.

JACK MARLEY

(hands shielding his face)

Why aren't you in chains?
(voice trembling) Am I that far gone?

TAMIKA

Why would I be in chains fool? -
Because I'm black?

Jack trembles, unable to look away from her ghostly form.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

(firmly)

That's racist. I'm taking you on a trip to your pathetic past. Do you remember July fourth when you almost died from alcohol poisoning?

Tamika walks over to the nightstand and examines the drugs and alcohol shaking her head. Jack now crosses his arms.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

There's only two ways to quit this Jack. It's either death or on your own. It's your choice, free will you know.

JACK MARLEY

So now you're telling me what to do?

TAMIKA

It's a duty of dead spirits to help those still suffering.

(MORE)

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Remember I was killed by a drunk driving friend of yours, and I'm here to make sure you don't do the same.

Jack sighs, uncrosses his arms, and stares at her intently, his posture relaxing slightly.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

(reaching out her hand)

Take my hand, Jack. This is your chance to own your past and finally break free. Don't waste it like Davey did.

Jack's breathing quickens, and he clutches his chest, overwhelmed by fear and guilt. Reluctantly, Jack reaches out and takes her hand.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Oh believe me Jack, I didn't want to hold your hand either... but it's the only way for you to face your past and me to move on.

The room begins to fill with thick, swirling fog, obscuring everything from view. The fog envelops them completely, and the scene fades to black slowly to end of scene.

TAMIKA (V.O.)

When was the last time you took a shower Jack? You stink even in the other realms.

JACK MARLEY (V.O.)

Whatever, can we get on with this and make it quick.

TAMIKA (V.O.)

Did you really think an angel would come for you? After all the pain your sorry ass has caused?

EXT. SANTA LOCO - FAKE ST- NEW YEAR'S EVE 1999 - NIGHT

The street is alive with excitement as people gather for the "2000 Tulip Parade". The air is filled with laughter, music, and the anticipation of the new millennium. Tamika, the ghost of New Year's Past, and an ethereal Jack, 50s, stand unnoticed by the passing crowd, celebrating the festivities.

TAMIKA

(smiling)

Look at them, Jack. So full of hope
and excitement.

ETHEREAL JACK

Yeah because they're all getting
high and drinking. Hope doesn't get
you anywhere.

On the sidewalk, a younger JACK, 20, and DAVEY, 20, have set up a vendor's tent. They are selling "Y2K" Survival Kits, complete with canned food, bottled water, cough syrup, hand sanitizer and flashlights. They are caught up in the festivities, drinking beer and laughing.

CASSIA BLUNT, 20, pushes a baby stroller with SAGE, a small infant, and her parents CARMINE and SOFIA.

SOFIA

Look Cassia there's Jack and Davey.

Jack turns around and smiles. He tries to hide his beer but gives up holding it in his hand. Davey continues to accost people trying to sell them Y2K kits.

JACK (20 YOA)

Hey what's up?

CASSIA

We just went out for a New Year
Eve's early dinner.

CARMINE

What are you guy's hustlin now?

Davey comes over to the group.

CASSIA

(to Jack)
I heard you dropped out of
college.

DAVEY (20 YOA)

(to Carmine)
This will save your life
tomorrow.

JACK (20 YOA)

(looks away)
I'm joining the Navy.

CARMINE

(examines box)
I can buy all this stuff at
Ralph's right now... for
less.

CASSIA

(sheepishly)
You looked like shit last
Friday in Botany.

DAVEY (20 YOA)

(to Carmine)
True, but I did all the work
for you sir. Think of it as
I'm your personal butler.

JACK (20 YOA)

(embarrassed)
I was hungover. How's baby
Sage?

CARMINE

(grins)
Okay, I'll take one but Davey
You'll need more than a
survival kit if you're
planning to drown yourself in
drinks tonight!

CASSIA

(looking in Jack's eyes)
He's fine. Are you sure this
is a good idea, joining the
Navy? I'm going to miss you.

JACK (20 YOA)

Whatever.

Davey slides the money in his pocket while Jack is
distracted.

SOFIA

Alright Cassia we better go if
we're going to get home in time to
watch the ball drop.

JACK (20 YOA)

Can you believe people are actually
buying this bullshit?

DAVEY (20 YOA)

(sarcastic)
Sure, it's the end of the world,
man. Gotta be prepared!

JACK (20 YOA)

Whatever, I'm going to drown my
problems in beer. What could go
wrong? It's New Year's Eve! What
good is money if the world is
ending at midnight?

DAVEY (20 YOA)

Maybe we didn't think this through..
(opens cooler) and we're out of
beer... Shit!

JACK (20 YOA)
 We have more alcohol right here.
 (looking at Cough Syrup) Oh yeah
 baby.

Jack pours the cough syrup in a cup with some soda pop. He takes a sip and passes it to Davey.

DAVEY (20 YOA)
 (grimaces)
 Not good but not bad.

JACK (20 YOA)
 Drink enough of this and it's
 hammer time!

An hour later all the Y2K kits are open. Empty cough syrup bottles are scattered around the tent.

DAVEY (20 YOA)
 If the world really was ending in a
 day what would you be doing?

JACK (20 YOA)
 I'd be getting fucked up.

DAVEY (20 YOA)
 No man, I'd be boning Tamika.

Ghostly Tamika puts her hand on her heart. Ghostly Jack pretends he's gagging.

TAMIKA
 At least he thought about me
 instead of another drink and
 getting wasted.

ETHEREAL JACK
 He was thinking about sex Tamika.

Jack, 20, looks at a bottle of hand sanitizer from the kits. The crowd around them is lively, with people dancing and celebrating.

JACK (20 YOA)
 This has alcohol too. I heard you
 can strain it like bong water and
 get drunk.

DAVEY (20 YOA)
 I'm good.

As the night goes on, Jack, 20, and Davey, 20, pass out in their sleeping bags on the sidewalk, their tent filled with unsold open kits.

A group of shadowy figures lurks nearby in a dark alley.

TAMIKA

This is the good part for you two clowns.

ETHEREAL JACK

That's when drinking was fun.

As the clock strikes midnight the crowd on the street CELEBRATES. A group of shady characters approaches the tent. They quietly rummage through the belongings, taking everything of value including the clothes off passed out Jack and Davey.

TAMIKA

It's a shame, really but some people just insist on going to the school of hard knocks.

Tamika holds out her hand and Jack grabs it.

ETHEREAL JACK

Whatever, we didn't hurt anyone or beat anyone up.

PRELAPSE: TAMIKA (V.O.)

(singing)

I wish they all could all beat

The scene fades out as the shady characters disappear into the night, leaving the young Jack and Davey lying on top of their sleeping bags in only their underwear.

EXT. CARNIVAL AT THE PIER - DAY

The sun blazes down on a bustling carnival. Jack, 16, Davey, 16, and two other boys, SAM, 16, and MIKE, 16, are lounging near the pier trying to act cool in sunglasses. They pass around a bottle of whiskey and a joint.

Shaking her head, ghostly Tamika, and the ethereal Jack, 50s, observe from a distance as giant waves are crashing down in the background.

TAMIKA

California girls.

ETHEREAL JACK
The Beach Boys? Really?

TAMIKA
Surfing USA.

ETHEREAL JACK
Butthole Surfers

TAMIKA
Yeah your an asshole. A dumb one
too. They're from San Antonio.

Sam stands up and puts his hand to his forehead to look out.

SAM
Look at those waves! Man I wish had
my board with me! I say surfing,
girls, weed in that order.

DAVEY (16 YOA)
No bro, it's girls, weed and
surfing in that order.

JACK (16 YOA)
(raising the bottle)
You all are retarded. It's getting
fucked up and cutting school first,
and then it's girls or surfing,
which ever comes up next second!

Jack and Davey sing "BORN TO BE WILD" while they shoot fake
finger guns at each other and blow on their index fingers
like they're hot.

The boys cheer and take swigs and long inhales on the joint.
Suddenly, a group of six boys, the VATO LOCO BOYS, approach
with menacing looks wearing gang paraphernalia.

VATO LOCO BOY 1
What do we have here? You fags know
this is a V-L-B beach.

MIKE
(making peace sign)
Peace man, we're just chillin. We
don't want no trouble.

JACK (16 YOA)
(nervous, he spits)
Fuck that. It's on like donkey kong
mother-.

VLB 2 pulls out a switchblade and flicks it open grinning. Jack steps back nervous.

DAVEY JONES (16 YOA)
 (blows smoke at VLB Boys)
 Ten bucks say my boy Jack can whip
 all your punk asses if you put your
 blade away.

Tamika and the ethereal Jack exchange curious glances.

TAMIKA
 Once a bone head always a bone
 head? Tell me I'm wrong bone uh I
 mean Jack.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (hushed voice)
 Whatever, we were young and dumb.
 Write that down for your boss.

VLB 3 raises his shirt to display a gun; VLB 4 is now flipping around num-chuks.

TAMIKA
 What are you whispering for? Still
 scared? They can't hear us.

The tension escalates. Jack, 16, steps forward and flexes, trying to look tough, he shadow boxes the air.

ETHEREAL JACK
 I know it... I'm dead.

VATO LOCO BOY 1
 Take your glasses off four eyes. I
 never hit a guy with glasses on.

Jack raises both hands to remove his glasses. The instant he has both hands on his glasses. VLB 1 jabs Jack hard in the eye sending him reeling backwards and falling on his butt.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (O.S.)
 Freeze! You kids, stop right there!
 You're all under arrest.

Multiple police cars and POLICE are now on the scene ready to haul some hooligans to jail.

The group splits and scrambles in 2 opposite directions as the police sirens WAIL in the distance with Tamika and ethereal Jack watching the scene.

TAMIKA

So, Mr. Tough Guy, how many more black eyes before you realize you're not invincible?

ETHEREAL JACK

Whatever, at least I'm consistent. What's the point of being tough if no one remembers my name?

TAMIKA

You were always the dumbest and the bravest in school, but now it just looks like you're trying to outrun your own shadow.

ETHEREAL JACK

I'm just surfing my own wave in life.

The boys run down the beach. Jack, 16, holding his swollen black eye, leads the way. They slow down as they reach the quieter part of the beach under the pier at the edge of the ocean.

TAMIKA

One of these days you're going to wipe out, and no one will be there to drag you back to shore... You about got your parents killed with that Chinese gang in China Town, remember that?

EXT. BEACH - DAY

DARLENE, 16, pulls up in her mom's car, with Cassia, 16, and Tamika, 16, in the backseat. She stops in front of the boys window rolled down.

CASSIA

What happened to you Jack?

JACK (16 YOA)

Just a little surfing accident.

DARLENE

You want a ride?

JACK (16 YOA)
 (throws hands down)
 Only if I can drive... Darlene you
 know I'm a professional driver for
 bank robbers and hitmen around
 here.

The group except for Tamika, 16, all laugh. A distant roar of
 a wave crashes loudly, echoing Jack's recklessness.

DARLENE
 (rolls eyes)
 Fine, but be careful. You wrecked
 your dad's car.

JACK (16 YOA)
 It wasn't my fault.

CASSIA
 You ran into a fire hydrant.

Darlene gets out of the car and Jack starts to get in.

TAMIKA (16 YOA)
 (nervous)
 I don't know Davey. You all have
 been drinking... Let me out.

Tamika and the ethereal Jack watch with great intensity as
 Tamika gets out of the car.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
 Custer's last stand.

ETHEREAL JACK
 She should have told my dumb ass
 no.

TAMIKA
 I agree with the dumb ass part...
 You can't even tell yourself no
 now, after you take that first
 drink or get high.

ETHEREAL JACK
 I don't have a problem. I can quit
 anytime. It's not like I'm one of
 those scumbags on TV... right?

Tamika and Ethereal Jack burst out laughing.

Ethereal Jack looks serious, pleading with Tamika.

ETHEREAL JACK (CONT'D)

Really this isn't funny, I am a
scumbag- or I'm insane, right?

The sun glints off the asphalt, creating a shimmering effect, while the sound of crashing waves fades as the car speeds away from the beach.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jack, 16, sits at the wheel, Cassia sits in the middle front seat beside Darlene. The car SCREECHES off with Davey, Mike and Sam in the back seat.

CASSIA

(anxiously)

Are you sure you should be driving,
Jack?

A warning sign reads 'Curvy Road Ahead,' but Jack's focus is on the music blaring from the speakers, drowning out caution.

Darlene clutches the 'oh shit' handle above her head, her knuckles white, as she glances nervously at Jack.

Quick cuts between:

- Cassia biting her lip,
- Darlene's furrowed brow,
- Jack's confident but unfocused gaze on the road.

Jack's unsteady hand swerves the steering wheel.

Time slows.

Cassia's eyes widen-

CASSIA (V.O.)

(inner thought)

This isn't right. Jack is too drunk
to drive.

Annoying blare of an approaching train raises anxiety levels.

A telephone pole looms ahead.

Moments later, Jack swerves violently and CRASHES into the telephone pole as the passengers rock whiplash like in their seats.

Cassia hits her head on the front dashboard blood runs from above her eye, Darlene SCREAMS and the boys are stunned stupid.

The front of the car crumples like a soda can; shards of glass explode from the windshield, shimmering like stars in the daylight.

CASSIA

Fuck! My head!

Steam billows from the hood, rising like smoke from a battle, while the sound of the crackling engine is accompanied by distant sirens wailing like banshees.

DARLENE

It's going to blow up!

MIKE

(screams)

We're all going to die!

The stuck car lurches backward, tires squeal burning rubber on the pavement going nowhere. The wind roars past, drowning out the hesitant voices of bystanders outside.

EXT. CANYON ROAD - DAY

The kids panic and open the car doors to escape except Jack. Slow Motion: As Cassia is getting out she stops and kisses Jack on his cheek.

The car rocks violently, and a half-empty beer can rolls across the back seat, tipping over as it spills its contents.

The kids covered in glass shards, all run in different directions except Jack frozen at the steering wheel, dazed and confused, remains until police arrive to arrest him.

The smell of stale beer lingers in the air, mixing with the salty scent from the nearby ocean, while the pounding bass from the radio vibrates in the air.

POLICE OFFICER

Kid, this isn't just a momentary mistake—this is your life we're talking about. You're coming with us, and it's time to face the consequences.

JACK (16 YOA)

I—I didn't mean for any of this to happen! I'm sorry. I really screwed up!

POLICE OFFICER

(firmly)

It's way past the time for apologies. You're going to face this head-on. It's time to wake up to reality.

Jack, 16, is handcuffed sitting on the curb, as Tamika, 16, is now on the other side of the street.

TAMIKA (16)

(angry, yelling)

Maybe if you had listened to me earlier Jack, You wouldn't be here.

ETHEREAL JACK

(shaking head)

Wow, seeing this live again... from this perspective. I'm just shaking my head... That was all Darlene's fault for letting me drive.

Ethereal Jack holds his hand out and Tamika takes it. They walk down the road a little fading out.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MOLLY MARLEY, 50, by the bedside of unconscious ZACH MARLEY, 50. The room is quiet, filled with a soft light and the hum of medical equipment. Ethereal Tamika and Jack, stand in the corner as translucent observers.

CLOSE UP: The heart monitor shows slow, steady green waves, and BEEPING beside Zach's lingering life and impending loss.

A soothing Dr. Welby holding a clip board enters the room.

DR. WELBY

(serious)

Molly, I wish had better news. It's never easy but Zach has less than eight hours to live... You should notify the family to come and pay their last respects.

CLOSE UP: Molly's tear-streaked face grimaces with anguish; it's reflected in her eyes as she processes the news.

Hands trembling she takes out her phone and looks at Zach.

MOLLY
 (into phone)
 Jack, it's Mom. Your dad... he
 doesn't have much time left. You
 need to come to the hospital.

Ethereal Jack and Tamika's bodies shimmer with a gold aura.

TAMIKA
 Look at her, Jack. The pain in her
 eyes... she feels so very alone,
 very, very alone.

JACK
 I should have been there with her
 to say goodbye, she's left with a
 heavy heart.

Tamika gently reaches out toward Molly; she rests her ghostly hand on Molly's shoulder.

Jack turns to Tamika, their expressions mirror Molly's pain.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom light flickers. Jack (20) is intoxicated, slumped over the toilet dry heaving intensely. Ethereal Tamika and Jack observe.

MOLLY (O.S.)
 (answering machine)
 He doesn't have much time left. You
 need to come to the hospital.

Jack listens to his mother's voice, but his eyes are glazed over. He tries to stand but stumbles; he passes out by the toilet.

ETHEREAL JACK
 My dad used to always say 'Don't
 let the bottle win Jack'.

CUT TO:

A clock on a wall TICKS; an 80s style answering machine beeps off.

TAMIKA (V.O.)
 The toilet seems to be your best
 friend.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Molly is now joined by her sister and brother. They stand around Zach's bed, holding hands and weeping. The ethereal Tamika and the ethereal Jack watch with sorrowful expressions.

ZACH
(weakly, awake)
I love you all. Don't be sad.

The family weeps as Zach takes his last breath and dies. Molly collapses into her sister's arms, sobbing uncontrollably. The Ghost of TAMIKA and the ethereal Jack look on, their faces etched with grief.

TAMIKA
(softly)
Your father was a good man.

ETHEREAL JACK
(nodding)
Yes, he was. I wish I could have told him I loved him.

ZACK MARLEY (V.O.)
(ghostly voice)
I love you too son.

Tamika and Jack look at each other bewildered.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A large crowd has gathered for Zach's funeral at the "OCEAN PALMS CEMETERY". The sky is overcast, adding to the somber mood. Molly stands with her family. Cassia, 20, Darlene, 20, Davey, 20, and Tamika, 20, whisper and huddle together. Friends and extended family are also present, all dressed in black. The Ghost of Tamika, 50, and the ethereal Jack observe from a distance.

MINISTER
We are gathered here today to honor the life of Zach Marley, a beloved husband, father, and friend. His spirit will live on in our hearts.

Molly stands at the front, holding back tears. She looks around, noticing the absence of Jack.

MOLLY
(whispering to her sister)
Where is Jack? He should be here.

Her sister shakes her head, unable to provide an answer. The crowd murmurs, sharing the same concern.

CASSIA
(softly)
He promised he'd come.

DARLENE
(sighing)
Typical Jack. Always letting everyone down.

The ghost TAMIKA and the ethereal Jack exchange a look.

TAMIKA
(whispering)
Another key moment in life you missed.

ETHEREAL JACK
Whatever, fuck that. Darlene was still pissed I crashed her mom's car.

The MINISTER continues the service, and the crowd bows their heads in prayer. Molly wipes away a tear, her heart heavy with grief and worry for her son.

MINISTER
Let us remember Zach for the love and joy he brought into our lives. May he rest in peace.

The service concludes, and the crowd begins to disperse. Molly lingers by the grave, her sister and brother by her side. Tamika and the ethereal Jack watch over them, their expressions filled with sorrow and hope.

TAMIKA
Jack this is just one of many wake up calls that were in front of you. Just what does it take?

ETHEREAL JACK
(anxious)
I don't know but I'm getting sick and tired of being sick and tired. Can we get out of here?

Tamika stares at ethereal Jack in disbelief.

ETHEREAL JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I never liked boring ass funerals.

Molly observes family and friends consoling each other.

MOLLY (V.O.)
 (inner thought)
 Look at them, gathered and united.
 Why can't Jack still be a part of
 this family? What did I do to make
 him feel like he had to run?

The wind blows RUSTLING leaves on the ground.

MOLLY
 (to herself)
 How could he do this? Jack knew
 today would be hard for all of us.
 Why can't he just show up and be
 there for me?

TAMIKA
 Jack, you let your demons blind you
 to what really mattered. Your mom
 needed you.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (defensive)
 I wasn't the only one who didn't
 show up... Everyone's got regrets.

Tamika, shaking her head, grasps ethereal Jack's hand and they fade out.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Molly stands in the doorway of Jack's bedroom, shaking her head in disappointment and tears streaming down her face. Jack (20) is passed out on his bed, still in his soiled clothes from the day, an empty bottle of whiskey on the floor beside him. The Ghost of Tamika and the ethereal Jack observe from the corner of the room.

MOLLY
 (crying)
 Jack I needed you today... what are
 you doing to yourself?

Tamika and the ethereal Jack exchange a look.

TAMIKA
 (irritated)
 You're breaking your mom's heart,
 you know.

ETHEREAL JACK

Spare me the pity party. I've
always relied on myself.

TAMIKA

Pity party? This is not a pity
party for you.

Molly walks over to Jack, gently brushing his hair back from his forehead. She sits on the edge of the bed, tears welling up in her eyes.

MOLLY

(softly)

I remember when you used to sneak
into my bed for comfort... now I'm
the one who needs it. What can I do
for you, Jack? I wish I knew how to
reach you.

Jack (20) stirs slightly but remains unconscious. Molly stands up, wiping her tears, and leaves the room, closing the door quietly behind her. Tamika and the ethereal Jack holding hands fade out.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom is a solemn space with wooden benches and a high ceiling. Sunlight filters through tall windows, casting long shadows. The air is thick with tension.

Jack, 20, stands hungover, swaying slightly, in front of a sympathetic JUDGE CHOPRA, 60. The Ghost of Tamika and the ethereal Jack sit in an empty jury box, observing the proceedings.

JUDGE CHOPRA

Mr. Marley, you stand convicted of
disorderly conduct and fighting
once again. Actually this is your
twenty-sixth arrest, all for petty
charges where drugs and alcohol
were also involved.

Jack (20) looks down, ashamed. The Ghost of Tamika and the ethereal Jack exchange glances.

TAMIKA

Twenty-six times! What the fuck
Jack? You were only twenty! You
were arrested more times than you
were years old.

JUDGE CHOPRA

Do you know the definition of
insanity?

Jack looks around sheepishly; he nods his head.

JUDGE CHOPRA (CONT'D)

It's doing that same thing over and
over but expecting a different
result. For you the result is
always going to be that same when
you drink or get high Jack. You'll
get sick and most likely arrested.

ETHEREAL JACK

(sighing)

It was all dumb stuff. I never got
arrested again after the Navy.

TAMIKA

But you didn't stop drinking.

ETHEREAL JACK

The Navy taught me how to drink
like a man.

JUDGE CHOPRA

You're at a crossroads, Mr. Marley.
I've seen many young men like you
lost in this cycle, thinking they
can rewrite their story without
making a change.

Tamika and ethereal Jack both nod at each other.

JUDGE CHOPRA (CONT'D)

Mr. Marley, it's clear that rehab
isn't working for you. You need a
change, a real kick in the butt.
So, I'm giving you a choice: join
the military or go to prison for
five years.

Jack, 20, looks up, shocked. Tamika and the ethereal Jack
lean forward, intrigued.

JACK (20 YOA)

(stammering)

The military?

JUDGE CHOPRA

This isn't just about the law,
Jack.

(MORE)

JUDGE CHOPRA (CONT'D)

It's about your life, your future—
or what's left of it if you keep
heading down this path.

Judge Chopra bangs the gavel, sealing Jack's fate. The scene fades out as Jack is led away, contemplating his future.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Jack, 20, dressed in a crisp Navy uniform, stands at the bus station, waiting to board a bus for boot camp. He looks around nervously, adjusting his cap. The sound of buses and chatter fills the air.

JACK (20 YOA)

(to himself)

Ready or not, here's to a new
chapter.

Suddenly, Davey, 20, also dressed in a Navy uniform, sneaks up behind Jack and smacks him on the side of his head.

DAVEY (20 YOA)

(surprising Jack)

Hey, sailor! Thought you could
leave without me?

Jack jumps, half peeing his pants, spins around, eyes wide with surprise and relief.

JACK (20 YOA)

Davey! What the hell? What are you
doing here?

Davey raises his hand and Jack slaps it for a high five.

DAVEY (20 YOA)

(grinning)

I can't let my best buddy join the
Navy alone, so I enlisted myself.
We're in this together.

Jack's face lights up with a mix of gratitude and excitement. Jack and David fire fake fingers like guns, then blow on their fingers like their hot, singing "BORN TO WILD".

JACK (20 YOA)

You did that for me?

DAVEY (20 YOA)

(nodding)

Yep.

(MORE)

DAVEY (20 YOA) (CONT'D)
 Boot camp is going to be holy hell,
 but we'll get through it together.

Jack, 20, pulls out a flask from his pocket, takes a swig,
 and passes it to Davey, 20.

JACK (20 YOA)
 To kick ass friends and bold
 adventures.

Davey, 20, takes the flask, raises it in a toast, and takes a
 drink.

DAVEY (20 YOA)
 To friendship and new adventures.

JACK (20 YOA)
 I don't know about you but wearing
 this uniform I just know I'm going
 to finally fit it somewhere.

They share a moment of camaraderie, then hear the bus horn
 HONKING. Jack and Davey exchange determined looks and head
 towards the bus, ready to face whatever challenges lie ahead.

MONTAGE - JACK AND DAVEY IN THE NAVY

1. EXT. BOOT CAMP - DAY

Jack, 20, and Davey, 20, struggle during brutal physical
 conditioning drills, jogging long distances, doing push-ups,
 running the obstacle courses, their physical limits and
 determination begin to improve. Tamika and ethereal Jack nod
 approval.

2. EXT. NAVY BASE - NIGHT

Jack and Davey horseplay, clearly intoxicated, as they
 stumble out of a bar near the base. The ethereal Tamika and
 the ethereal Jack (50s) observe from a distance, their
 ghostly forms shimmering. They fire their fake finger guns at
 each other laughing.

3. INT. NAVY BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jack and Davey are causing a ruckus, playing loud music and
 disturbing their fellow sailors. A superior officer bursts
 in, yelling at them to quiet down. The ethereal Tamika and
 smiling Jack watch with amusement.

4. INT. ARMORY - DAY/NIGHT

Jack and Davey fight

extreme fatigue, perhaps dozing off during a briefing, struggling to stay awake during late-night shifts, SERGEANTS barking orders at them.

5. EXT. NAVY SHIP - DAY

Jack and Davey are on deck, goofing off and not taking their duties seriously. They are reprimanded by their commanding officer. The ethereal somber Tamika and a bored ghostly Jack watch.

6. INT. NAVY BASE - DAY

Jack and Davey are seen in the brig, having been arrested for disorderly conduct. They read letters from home. They exchange sheepish grins as they sit behind bars. The ethereal serious Tamika and a giddy Jack look on with a mix of emotions.

5. EXT. NAVY BASE - DAY

Jack and Davey are seen participating in a training exercise, but they are clearly hungover and struggling to keep up. Jack stops to vomit. Their fellow sailors shake their heads in disapproval. The ethereal Tamika and Jack observe, their expressions filled with concern.

6. INT. NAVY OFFICE - DAY

Jack stands in front of a stern RECRUITMENT OFFICER, trying to re-enlist for another four years. The officer looks at his file and shakes his head. The ethereal serious Tamika and a laughing Jack, watch from the corner of the room.

RECRUITMENT OFFICER

Hell no, get out you bum. We need a few good men, and that's not you. You never promoted and were intoxicated your last four years.

Jack's face falls as he realizes the gravity of his actions. He turns and walks out of the office, dejected. The ethereal Tamika and Jack follow him, their ghostly forms a silent reminder of his past mistakes as they fade out.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

A small deep sea fishing boat bobs on the waves. JACK, 40s, and DAVEY, 40s, are on board, drinking alcohol, listening to MUSIC and laughing. The sun glistens on the water, creating a serene backdrop.

Jack and Davey fire fake fingers like guns then blow on their fingers like their hot singing "BORN TO WILD"

The ethereal Tamika, 40, and the ethereal Jack observe from a distance, their ghostly forms shimmering in the sunlight.

SUPER: "10 Years later"

JACK 40
(toasting)
To the good life, Davey!

DAVEY 40
(grinning)
To the good life!

JACK 40
Nothing bad ever happens when
you're having a good time, right?

They clink their bottles and take swigs. Unbeknownst to them, a gas leak has been slowly filling the boat's cabin.

CLOSE UP: A gas gauge connected to a bulging gas line flickers.

JACK 40 (CONT'D)
I'm going to the galley to get
something stronger than beer.

DAVEY 40
You know, every party has its
price. Here's hoping we don't pay
for this one later.

As Jack starts below deck, he wrinkles his nose as if sensing something is off.

JACK 40 (V.O.)
(inner thought)
This old boat smell's like an old
sea hag's fart... It needs a heavy
duty, power washing.

INT. BOAT CABIN - DAY

Jack opens the cabin door and is hit by the strong smell of gas. He coughs and rubs his eyes looking around for the source.

CLOSE UP: Jack spots a loose gas line and reaches for it, but it's too late. BOOM

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

On the deck, Davey leans against the railing, blissfully unaware of the impending doom below. The sun glints off the water, a radiant day that belies the danger. Suddenly, an earsplitting CRACK fills the air as the boat erupts in a monstrous fireball, flames licking the sky and debris exploding in all directions.

Jack, 40, is hurled into the icy embrace of the ocean, gasping in shock. The fiery chaos engulfs Davey, who lets out a blood-curdling SCREAM, silhouetted against the inferno. Ethereal figures of Tamika and Jack watch, horror etched on their faces.

JACK 40
(screaming)
Davey!

Chaos consumes Jack as he thrashes in the water, panic flooding his mind. Heart racing, he looks back at the wreckage, the brutal realization crashing on him: Davey is gone.

ETHEREAL JACK
We never saw it coming— life can change in an instant, based on the choices we make.

TAMIKA
You're catching on Jack. Losing him was a wound that never healed for us.

ETHEREAL JACK
I thought it was just another day partying.

TAMIKA
(emotional, firm)
Every choice has consequences. You celebrated, but what did it cost you?

Jack panics struggling to stay afloat, the shock of the explosion leaving him disoriented. He watches in horror as the boat burns, realizing that Davey is gone.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)
(softly)
You can't bring him back, but you can honor him.

JACK 40

Dear Jesus, if you keep me alive. I promise. I'll never take another drink of alcohol or get high ever again. I promise, please help me.

TAMIKA

Well we know how that foxhole prayer turned out.

ETHEREAL JACK

(sadly)

That's not my fault.

JACK 40

Jesus please forgive me of all my sins and selfish ways.

TAMIKA

(with piercing intensity)

By facing what you've done, personal growth can and will begin.

A long haired bearded Gabriel in a toga walks on the ocean up to the hysterical Jack.

GABRIEL

(looking at Jack)

I'm not Jesus, and you're not done drinking yet... Relax Jack the Coast Guard is on the way.

Jack calms down as he sees a helicopter in the sky. The sound of its engines getting louder as it flies closer. A frogman jumps from the helicopter into the water.

TAMIKA

You got two million dollars from that accident. Tammy and I got nothing. You could have at the very least bought Tammy a new wheelchair.

EXT. OPEN SEA - LATER

Jack clings to a piece of debris, drifting in the open water. The sound of a Coast Guard cutter approaches, and Jack looks up to see more help arriving. A rescue swimmer dives into the water and swims towards Jack.

RESCUE SWIMMER

(grabbing Jack)

I've got you! You're going to be okay.

TAMIKA

You've been dodging bullets, living on borrowed time with one foot in the grave your whole life. When are you going to get right?

Jack, 40, hangs onto the swimmer pulling him.

JACK 40

Do you have any alcohol on your boat? I need something for my shot out nerves.

Disgusted Tamika and an embarrassed ethereal Jack fade out.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - NIGHT

The café is closed, dimly lit by a single flickering light. Jack Marley, with straggly hair, unshaven, and wearing wrinkled clothes, sits at the bar drinking alcohol. Bubba, farmer in his 40s, sits next to him, equally inebriated. Ethereal Jack and Tamika stand in the corner, observing the scene.

ETHEREAL TAMIKA

(sighing)

Here's an oldie but a goodie, Jack. Remember New Year's Eve five years ago... Remember Bubba?

BUBBA

(speech slurred)

I can't drink no more Jack. I gotta drive.

Bubba tries to stand but stumbles, clearly drunk. Jack grabs a bottle and pours more alcohol into Bubba's glass.

JACK MARLEY

(grinning)

Sit down, Bubba. Have another drink. It's not midnight yet.

Bubba slumps back into his seat, struggling to keep his eyes open. Jack keeps pouring, insisting Bubba drink more.

BUBBA

Oh Jack, I'm seeing double I'm so wasted.

JACK MARLEY

I have a trick for that. Just keep one eye closed and you can't see double.

Jack puts a hand over his eye and pours more alcohol in their cups then takes a big swig off the bottle.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(cheerfully)

Easy peasy, now come on, it's New Year's Eve! Drink up! You're Okay.

Bubba takes a tiny sip spilling booze, his hand shaking. Jack raises his glass, slurring his words.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(happily)

Happy New Year, Bubba! I'm not going to kiss you, so cheers!

Jack clinks his glass with Bubba's and they both down their drinks. Jack's head droops and droops, then Jack passes out head down on the counter. Bubba, barely conscious, manages to stand and stagger out the door, leaving Jack alone in the empty café.

ETHEREAL JACK

(sadly)

That wasn't my fault... I'm so sorry, Tamika.

Tamika watches Bubba leave, her expression a mix of sadness and disappointment.

TAMIKA

(softly)

Nothings ever your fault Jack.

JACK MARLEY

I lost my liquor license that night because of Bubba.

TAMIKA

I died that night.

JACK MARLEY

I didn't want that.

TAMIKA

You don't mean to hurt people Jack
but you do... all the time.

Ethereal Jack looks at his past self, a sense of regret and determination in his eyes.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

An erratic Truck barrels down the street, its engine ROARING like a wounded beast. The headlights cut through the darkness, illuminating the chaos ahead.

The Truck swerves onto the sidewalk, CRASHING into a trashcan, sending it flying and scattering its contents across the pavement.

BUBBA (O.S.)

(slurring)

Get out of the way.

The Truck flies through a RED LIGHT, tires SCREECHING as other CARS BLARE their horns in panic.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Bubba, a mess of drunken bravado, is behind the wheel of his truck, swerving dangerously across the lanes. Bubba drives his truck with one hand on the steering wheel the other covering his left eye trying to fight the blur of reality.

Behind him, the ethereal Tamika and Jack float in the passenger seat, their expressions a mix of concern and desperation.

ETHEREAL TAMIKA

(whispering, sorrowful)

Each choice leads us further down a
specific road, don't you see it?

Like shadows chasing the setting sun, ethereal Jack watches the chaos unfold with a detached serenity, as if the world around him was merely a fleeting dream.

ETHEREAL JACK

(haunted)

I wish I could turn back time but
every mile I walk leaves scars...
It's my destiny.

TAMIKA

You only have one life. It's up to you to enjoy it.

ETHEREAL JACK

Define enjoy. It's different for me.

Suddenly, Bubba sways into oncoming traffic, narrowly missing a HEADLIGHT that APPROACHES like a comet. A nearby DRIVER swerves, his face a mask of panic.

DRIVER 1

(shouting)

Watch where you're going, you fool!

Bubba's eyes dart, bloodshot and wild, a fleeting memory trickling in: a younger Bubba smiling, Jack handing him a drink, carefree laughter echoing in the café.

BUBBA

(muttering)

I've got this...

But as the moment fades, his expression flickers with confusion, regret pooling in his gut.

Bubba jerks the wheel, but it's too late. The truck LOSES control and CRASHES violently into a parked car, metal CRUNCHING, glass SHATTERING.

ETHEREAL TAMIKA

(anguished)

You could've stopped this, Jack!
You let bottle win risking other people's lives!

The crash reverberates sending shockwaves through the surrounding air. A GATHERING CROWD gapes in horror, gasps mixing with the TRUCK'S sputtering. The night is a cacophony of confusion, lights twinkling like stars dimming out.

Ethereal Jack turns to Tamika, confusion and sorrow mingling within him.

ETHEREAL JACK

(voice breaking)

I couldn't see. The weight of the bottle isn't worth the life we lose!

As the smoke billows from the wreck, Bubba's head slumps against the wheel, realization dawning too late. The scene fades to black.

EXT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT

Distant streetlights glimmer reflecting the wet pavement and the shadows cast by the nearby trees.

The night is thick with the scent of rain-soaked asphalt and burnt rubber. The metallic crunch of metal shatters the still air as the truck collides brutally with the parked car, the sound echoing like a gunshot under the stillness of the night.

Ethereal Tamika stands on the sidewalk, her figure glowing faintly in the darkness, tears glistening like dew on her face beside a solemn ethereal Jack.

TAMIKA
(teary-eyed, voice shaky)
No... not again.

Flashing police lights paint the scene with blues and reds, casting stark shadows as officers rush to the mangled car, their heavy boots striking the wet pavement with urgency.

The metallic tang of blood fills the air as they pull Tamika's lifeless body from the wreck, and Bubba, dazed, sways like a poorly hung painting, blood trickling down his forehead, a stark contrast against his pale skin.

OFFICER 1
(voice heavy with dread)
We've got a fatality here.

Another officer approaches Bubba, who is dazed and bleeding from a cut on his forehead.

OFFICER 2
(sternly)
Sir, you're under arrest for
vehicular homicide.

Bubba, barely coherent, slurs his words, the taste of bitterness from alcohol clinging to his breath.

BUBBA
(slurring, eyes wide)
I didn't mean to... I'm sorry...

The officer handcuffs Bubba and leads him to the police car. Bubba stumbles, barely able to stand.

Ethereal Jack watches, an iron weight settling in his chest, a hollow ache growing, his body stops shimmering.

ETHEREAL JACK

(soft voice)

That wasn't my fault... I'm so
sorry, Tamika.

Ethereal Tamika places a hand on Jack's shoulder, her eyes filled with sadness.

ETHEREAL TAMIKA

(sternly)

Jack it's never your fault
according to you. Save your
apologies for me and make amends to
Tammy. She's an orphan who loves
you unconditionally.

As the police car drives away, the silence hangs thick and oppressive like a fog, a stark reminder of the consequences of reckless actions. Ethereal Tamika and Jack fade from view, leaving behind the somber scene.

INT. TAMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The modest living room is filled with laughter and chatter as Tammy, 16, in a wheelchair, and three other high school girls enjoy a lively New Year's Eve slumber party. They are all in their pajamas, surrounded by snacks and decorations listening to MUSIC. Ethereal Jack and Tamika stand in the corner, observing the scene.

GIRL 1

(giggling)

So, who do you think is the cutest
boy in school?

GIRL 2

(smiling)

Definitely Jason. He's got that
dreamy smile.

TAMMY

(laughing)

Oh, come on! What about Ryan? He's
so sweet.

The girls continue to talk about cute boys, their faces glowing with excitement. Tammy's smartphone buzzes on the table. She picks it up and sees what looks like her mom calling.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Hold on, guys. It's my mom.

Tammy answers the phone, her voice filled with warmth.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
 (happily)
 Happy New Year, Mom! I love you-

The smile on Tammy's face fades as she listens to the voice on the other end. A policeman gently speaks through her mom's phone.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
 (softly)
 Is this Tammy Tyler?

TAMMY
 Yes

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
 Tammy, I have some very difficult news to share. I'm so sorry, but your mother was in an accident and she didn't make it. Is your father with you?

TAMMY
 No sir, my father is dead. I'm an only child.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
 Well don't go anywhere. A patrol car will be by to take you to the Children's Home. I'm so sorry and wish there was another way but it's the law of you're an orphan.

Tammy's face shows extreme sorrow as she fights back tears. Ethereal Jack and Tamika watch, their expressions filled with empathy and sadness.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (whispering)
 Oh, Tammy...

Tammy takes a deep breath, trying to compose herself. She looks at her friends, forcing a smile.

TAMMY
 (fighting back tears)
 Everything is okay, guys. Let's keep the party going.

GIRL 1
 You never know what can happen on New Year's Eve.

Her friends look at her with concern, but Tammy's determination to stay strong keeps them from pressing further. The room's atmosphere shifts, a mix of joy and underlying sorrow.

TAMIKA
(proudly)
Look at how brave she is.

Ethereal Jack nods, his heart heavy with the weight of the moment.

ETHEREAL JACK
(sadly)
It tears me apart that all I can do is watch. She has so much inner strength and joy despite a deck stacked against her.

TAMIKA
She still believes in you, even when she feels lost. It's time to honor that love and find a way to help her—no matter how hard it is.

The girls continue their conversation, trying to bring back the festive spirit, but the shadow of Tammy's loss lingers in the air then. KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK at the door.

Red lights from police cars flash through the windows.

EXT. STREET - POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Tammy, forlorn, scared, cries uncontrollably as she looks out the side window of the police car.

ETHEREAL JACK
I can't take this anymore.

Ethereal Jack reaches for Tamika's hand. She pulls her hand away, pauses, then highly irritated takes Jack's hand and they fade out.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit, with shadows dancing on the walls. A screensaver on a desk monitor shows 12:15 AM. Jack Marley wakes up abruptly, drenched in sweat. He sits up in bed, rubbing his eyes.

JACK MARLEY

(to himself)

What a fuckin strange nightmare...
Tamika always nagging me, damn
she's bitch even in my dreams.

He shakes his head, trying to shake off the lingering fear. Suddenly, the TV in the corner of the room flickers to life. The screen shows static for a moment before the image of ZACH MARLEY (50), Jack's jovial but stern father, appears. Zach's ghostly form is both comforting and unsettling.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(shaking his head)

Great, just what I need— Dad's Home Shopping Network, and I'm the featured item.

ZACH

(on TV, sternly)

Suck it up, Buttercup. We're going shopping around town.

Jack's eyes widen in curiosity as he stares at the screen.

JACK MARLEY

(smirking)

Are you supposed to be the "ghost of expectations" or just my usual nightmare about you?

ZACH

(on TV, nodding)

It's me Jack. And it's time you faced some truths. We're about to put in some work.

Jack hesitates, then slowly gets out of bed, his heart pounding.

JACK MARLEY

(to himself)

Me therapy? Nah, I just need a shrink to analyze my dad's latest spectacular entrance.

Suddenly picks up the remote control and clicks it at the TV. The TV turns off. Jack breathes a sigh of relief.

JACK MARLEY (V.O.)

(inner smug thought)

Every time dad dragged me to something, I fucked it up royally.

(MORE)

JACK MARLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Now his ghost wants me to go for
 round two? I don't think so...

The air thickens with tension, as if the room itself is holding its breath, waiting for the inevitable.

JACK MARLEY
 (to himself)
 Sure, Dad. Let's go shopping for
 more disappointment— my favorite!

The TV comes back on. Zach on the TV screen points a remote control at the camera and clicks it. Jack SCREAMS, the bedroom HUMS as it becomes visibly charged with an eerie energy.

ZACH
 (grinning)
 You're not getting rid of me that easily. We need to spend some quality time together... Did you like my funeral you missed?

Jack, hair standing up on his head, takes a deep breath, steeling himself for whatever comes next. Jack's body shimmers as he is sucked inside the TV SCREAMING.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HAVEN OF HOPE - DUSK

Tammy grits her teeth as her dilapidated wheelchair lurches over the uneven pavement, the wheels sinking into the gaping pothole like quicksand. She grips the armrests, her knuckles white, sweat trickling down her brow as the bus engines roar closer, each second feeling like an eternity. HONK, HONK.

TAMMY
 (panicking)
 Help! Somebody, please help!

The sound of a CITY BUS barreling down the street grows louder. The headlights of the bus illuminate Tammy's terrified face.

TAMMY (V.O.)
 (inner thought)
 This can't be how it ends. Not like this. I've got so much left to do, so many fights to win.

The deep rumble of the bus engines shakes the air around her, the acrid scent of diesel burning her nostrils as the headlights cast an unforgiving glare.

The rhythmic thump of her heart pounds in her ears, drowning out everything else as she frantically pushes against the stuck wheels.

The bus driver BLARES the horn, but the bus is moving too fast to stop in time.

Without a second thought, a HOMELESS WOMAN bursts from the shadows of the sidewalk, her eyes ablaze with determination. She sprints, her feet pounding against the pavement, muscles straining as she darts toward Tammy like a bullet, desperate to bridge the deadly gap before it's too late.

The ethereal forms of Zach, 50s, and Jack watch from the sidewalk, their ghostly presence shimmering softly.

ETHEREAL JACK

Look at her... What's she doing here? Struggling all alone?

HOMELESS WOMAN

(shouting)

Hang on, I'm coming!

The Homeless Woman reaches Tammy, grabbing the handles of her wheelchair the Homeless Woman gets her foot stuck... With a mighty shove she frees the wheelchair from the pothole sending Tammy, herself and the wheel chair to the sidewalk.

The bus SCREECHES to a halt, narrowly missing them.

ETHEREAL ZACH

If the shadows of the future remain unaltered, Tammy will be deader than a door nail by next New Year's Eve.

BUS DRIVER

(yelling)

Watch out!

Tammy and the homeless woman minus a shoe rest on the sidewalk, breathing heavily. The bus driver gets out, looking shaken but relieved.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

(approaching)

Are you both okay?

TAMMY

(teary-eyed)

Yes, thanks to her. She saved my life.

BUS DRIVER
 (looking at woman)
 You're either the craziest or the
 bravest woman ever!

The Homeless Woman smiles, brushing herself off. The PEOPLE from the HAVEN OF HOPE homeless shelter rush out to help, surrounding Tammy and the Homeless Woman with concern and gratitude. Mike hands the missing shoe to the Homeless Woman.

MIKE
 (ecstatic)
 Wanda... You're a hero!

HOMELESS WOMAN
 (modestly)
 Just doing what anyone would do.

The crowd helps Tammy back into her wheelchair and checks on the Homeless Woman putting the crumpled shoe on.

MIKE
 We need to get you a new wheelchair
 Tammy... Like yesterday.

The ethereal forms of Zach and Jack watch near them, their ghostly presence shimmering softly.

ETHEREAL ZACH
 (proudly)
 It's moments like these that show
 the true strength of the human
 spirit.

ETHEREAL JACK MARLEY
 (nodding, unsure)
 I don't know dad? What's Tammy
 doing in the ghetto?

The camera pans out, showing the bustling scene of people coming together in a moment of crisis, united by compassion and bravery.

Tammy clasps the homeless woman's hand tightly, her grip trembling with relief and gratitude.

TAMMY
 (crying)
 I don't know how to thank you. You
 saved my life.

MIKE
 Wanda's a hero.

ETHEREAL ZACH

Are you a hero or a zero, Jack?

Ethereal Zach and Jack fade from the scene.

INT. HAPPY TRAILS NURSING HOME - MOLLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is modestly furnished with two beds. MOLLY MARLEY (70s) sits on one bed, looking out the window. HAZEL PETERSON (90s), a pry, witch-like woman, sits on the other bed, knitting. The ethereal Jack and Zach observe from a corner of the room, their ghostly forms shimmering.

NURSE (O.S.)

(entering the room)

Hazel, your family is in the lobby to take you to a New Year's Eve shindig.

Hazel's eyes light up, and she sets her knitting aside.

HAZEL

(excitedly)

Oh, wonderful! I'll be right there.

The NURSE turns to Molly, her expression softening.

NURSE

Molly, is Jack coming to see you tonight?

MOLLY

(talking to herself)

That summer we spent at the beach, building sandcastles and watching the sunset? We promised each other we'd always be there... I just wish you'd remember that promise.

Hazel twirls her finger at the side of her head to indicate Molly is crazy.

HAZEL

(to nurse)

She does this all the time.

Molly's face falls, and she shakes her head sadly.

MOLLY

No, I haven't seen Jack in over a year... I've learned to fill my days with silence... it's hard feeling like you've been forgotten.

ETHEREAL ZACH

Molly, my dear, we're woven
together in ways time can't
unravel. Just a little longer...
and I'll be with you. Jack just
needs to find his way back.

A reflection of Molly's face in a wall mirror projects deep
sadness and loneliness.

HAZEL

(leaning forward)
That boy could be a better son.
What happened to the Jack I knew?
(pauses)
My son would never act like that...
I thought family meant more-

NURSE

Hazel, be nice.

HAZEL

I am. I haven't put a spell on that
good for nothing son... yet.

The ethereal Jack and Zach exchange sorrowful glances.

ETHEREAL JACK

I'm just too busy running the café.

ZACH

(smiling)
Jack you can lie to yourself but
you can't lie to me. I'm a ghost. I
know what you, the owner of the
café do all day.

Hazel stands up, giving Molly a sympathetic look. Ethereal
Zach, crying, gives Molly a ghostly hug.

ZACH (CONT'D)

I love you Molly.

HAZEL

I'll see you later, Molly. Try to
have a good night.

Molly forces a smile and nods. Hazel leaves with the Nurse,
and Molly is left alone in the room. She sighs and looks out
the window, tears welling up in her eyes. The ethereal Jack
and Zach watch over her, their expressions filled with regret
and longing.

MOLLY
 (softly)
 Happy New Year, Jack. Wherever you
 are. Mama loves you biggest gobs.

Ethereal Jack clicks a remote control now in his hand and
 Jack and Zach fade out.

INT. HAVEN OF HOPE HOMELESS SHELTER - DINNER

The shelter is warmly lit and decorated with festive New
 Year's Eve decorations. A banner reads: "HAPPY NEW YEAR". The
 atmosphere is filled with laughter and chatter as homeless
 families and individuals gather for a special dinner. Mike
 and Angie are serving food with smiles on their faces. The
 ethereal forms of Zach, 50s, and Jack, 50s, observe from a
 corner, their ghostly presence shimmering softly.

MIKE
 (handing a plate of food)
 Here you go. Enjoy your meal!

ANGIE
 (smiling)
 Happy New Year! We're so glad
 you're here.

The homeless families and individuals express their gratitude
 as they receive their meals. The room is filled with a sense
 of warmth and community. SARAH, 30, and her daughter TOBI, 6,
 wait for their trays.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 Sarah, Tobi, it's so great to see
 you. Happy New Year's.

SARAH
 I guess. Thank heavens you're here
 Angie.

TOBI
 (grinning)
 I got a revolution.

MIKE
 (laughing)
 What's your revolution for this
 year Miss Tobi?

TOBI
 I'm going to be happy all year
 long, even if mom can't buy me a
 Barbie.

SARAH

That's a great New Year's
resolution.

MIKE

And a great attitude to have.

Jack and Zack's ethereal bodies shimmer brightly.

ETHEREAL ZACH

There's gratitude where you least
expect it.

SLOW MOTION: A HOMELESS GUY (40s) takes a sip of his coffee
and he violently spits it out all over the floor, gagging
profusely, causing many heads to turn.

ETHEREAL ZACH (CONT'D)

Hmmm, looks like the coffee here is
terrible.

ETHEREAL JACK

It's free so who cares?

HOMELESS GUY

(grinning)
Well, at least the food is good!

ETHEREAL ZACH

See the gratitude?- That's church.

The room erupts in laughter, and the Homeless Guy,
embarrassed chuckles along with everyone else. The ethereal
Zach and Jack exchange amused glances.

ETHEREAL ZACH MARLEY

(smiling)
It's moments like these that make
life worth living.

ETHEREAL JACK MARLEY

(sarcastic)
Yeah, Dad. It's all about the
little things.

Mike and Angie continue to serve food, their faces glowing
with happiness. The homeless families and individuals enjoy
their meals, sharing stories and laughter. The ethereal Zach
and Jack watch with pride and contentment.

MIKE

(to Angie)
This is what it's all about, isn't
it?

ANGIE
 (teary-eyed)
 Absolutely. Helping others and
 spreading joy.

The camera pans out, showing the entire room filled with warmth, laughter, and a sense of togetherness. The ethereal Zach and Jack stroll around the dining room, observing the cheerful people eating, a silent reminder of the importance of compassion and community.

Tammy, happily eats a tray of food surrounded by her homeless friends in the shelter. Tobi curiously stares at Tammy.

TOBI
 My mom says your biracial.

CUT TO: Close ups on the various happy faces including Tobi and Tammy's as she talks.

TAMMY TYLER
 (grinning)
 Tell your mom I'm a thoroughbred
 cross between two mongrel mutts!

The people at Tammy's table laugh. Zach puts his arm around Jack and they fade out.

EXT. COBRA CLUB - NIGHT

The night is thick with fog, distant sirens WAIL, and neon lights flicker ominously. Sage rides his moped up to the entrance of the "COBRA CLUB". The sound of rowdy laughter and REVING engines fills the air mixed with heavy metal music.

A group of BIKERS, the "REAPERS RIDERS", wearing black vests, roughhouse on a sidewalk surrounded by graffiti, and their parked Harley Davidson motorcycles. BIKER GIRLS join in, laughing and teasing.

The ethereal Zack and the ethereal Jack watch from a distance, their ghostly forms shimmering with trepidation.

BIKER 1
 (laughing)
 Hey, look who it is! Sage fucking
 Blunt on his baby brother's big
 wheel!

Biker #2 pats the gas tank of his tricked out Harley Davidson chopper.

BIKER 2

(grinning)

Sage, Sage, Sage you know what to do if you need the dough you need to get yourself a beast like this.

BIKER 1

Money don't grow on trees. Your old man knew that.

The BIKERS laugh and roughhouse, their voices echoing in the night. SAGE dismounts his scooter, trying to maintain his composure.

SAGE

(smirking)

Maybe I like my big wheel. It's got character.

The BIKERS laugh louder, slapping each other on the back. The ethereal Zach and Jack exchange worried glances.

ETHEREAL ZACK MARLEY

(tension in voice)

Sage is walking into the lion's den. His dad's shadow looms large. These bikers aren't just roughhousing— they're a gateway to a life Sage may not come back from.

ETHEREAL JACK MARLEY

(nodding)

He wants to belong somewhere, but this isn't it. Sage is too good for this mess. Maniac died senselessly in battle for the Reapers.

Sage takes a deep breath and walks over broken glass and bottles towards the entrance of the COBRA CLUB, the neon lights casting eerie shadows on his face.

SAGE

(to himself)

I should just leave. I didn't know these bums would be here.

ETHEREAL JACK MARLEY

Cassia hated the Reapers and Maniac's choice to be their club's president.

ETHEREAL ZACH

Look at him, Jack. The Reapers will chew him up and spit him out.

(MORE)

ETHEREAL ZACH (CONT'D)

Sage needs guidance, not the lure
of this seductive chaos.

As the laughter and romping of the bikers fills the air, Sage steps closer to the entrance, the vivid colors of the neon lights reflecting off his scooter. The raucous camaraderie around him contrasts sharply with the heaviness settling in his chest.

At the entrance of the Club BIKER #3 looks around then secretly hands Sage a small baggie of white powder. Sage looks at the baggie in his palm.

BIKER 3

(sadistic grin)

This is in memory of G Maniac. It's
purer than a Nun's virgin's pussy.

ETHEREAL ZACH

(clenching fists)

Zach needs to see what true
strength looks like. That it comes
from lifting each other up, not
destructive mayhem. If he feels he
needs these guys to be whole, he'll
never find peace.

Sage pauses and takes a deep breath, the aroma of sweat and cheap cologne mixing with a hint of nostalgia, drawing him back to the fun times he shared with his father and the life Sage is trying to reconcile.

Zach clicks the TV remote and Jack and Zack fade out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is warmly lit, decorated with festive New Year's Eve decorations. A small family gathering is in progress with popular music playing in the background. Emily, 30s, and Cassia, 50s, sit on the couch, chatting. Tammy, 20, is in a flimsy wheelchair nearby.

The ethereal Zach and Jack observe from a corner of the room, their ghostly forms shimmering.

EMILY

I'm thankful for having a house and
a job. It's been a tough year, but
we made it through.

CASSIA

(nodding)

I'm thankful for my health and my herb garden. It's been my sanctuary.

Tammy shifts in her wheelchair, which suddenly breaks, causing her to fall to the floor gasping for air. Emily and Cassia rush to help her, but Tammy waves them off with a smile.

TAMMY

(determined)

That ghetto wheelchair is just one more obstacle that won't stop me.

Tammy scrambles off the floor, her determination evident as she hauls herself onto the couch, flashing a triumphant smile at her friends.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

I'm okay, really. And I'm thankful for being in school and... for my Uncle Jack Marley.

Emily and Cassia exchange stunned looks.

EMILY

That's sweet Tammy but Jack? He's barely maintaining, being alive.

CASSIA

(skeptical)

You know that, right?

TAMMY

(sighing)

I know. But I love my Uncle Jack. I've known that rascal my whole life.

CASSIA

Jack's trouble. I used to have the biggest crush on that turd in high school.

EMILY VANCE

(shocked)

Jack! Ooh, You never told me that.

The room hovers with anticipation as Cassia continues, her blush deepening.

TAMMY

(excited)

You did? What happened?

CASSIA

He had this way about him— like he could light up a room, but he was a mess back then too. Always cracking jokes, trying to hide how troubled he really was.

Glimmers of nostalgia wash over her Cassia before she shakes it off. Ethereal Zach nudges ethereal Jack with a chuckle.

ETHEREAL ZACH

She was into you Jack. What a waste you were to shy and didn't try to get more serious with her.

Jack and Zach fade out of the party while Cassia dances by herself.

CASSIA

Jack got kicked out of the school dance once for sneaking in pot and booze. All I could think about was how he danced with such passion when he thought no one was watching. It was like he was just waiting to be seen for who he really was.

INT. CLUB COBRA - NIGHT

The "CLUB COBRA" is a surreal techno rave environment, with pulsating lights, thumping bass, and a haze of smoke. Sage navigates through the chaotic crowd, his eyes wide with a mix of excitement and apprehension. UNSAVORY MEN and WOMEN surround him, tempting him to make poor choices.

UNSAVORY MAN 1

(holding crack pipe)

C'mon, Sage, you know you wanna hit this! You think you're invincible, right? Just one puff off this glass dick and you'll knock your pecker smooth into the dirt!

UNSAVORY WOMAN 1

(shimmies on Sage)

Oh, honey, let's forget everything and just dance till dawn!

(MORE)

UNSAVORY WOMAN 1 (CONT'D)
 Just you and me, in the glow of
 forever neon!

Sage backs away bumping into a effeminate man dancing.

GAY MAN 1
 (licking his lips)
 Ooh la la honey, let's get naked
 and boom, boom, boom in the New
 Year at midnight.

Sage struggles to say no, his resolve wavering. The ghostly forms of Zach and Jack watch from a distance, their expressions filled with concern and amusement.

ETHEREAL ZACH
 (whispering)
 He's at a crossroads, Jack. This
 could define his future.

Jack's ethereal aura fades.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (sadly)
 I know, Dad. But you don't learn in
 life by making the right choices.
 We learn by the lessons we learned
 from the wrong ones?

ETHEREAL ZACH
 So that's why you keep getting
 drunk everyday instead of being a
 role model?

Sage takes a deep breath, trying to muster the strength to resist the temptations around him. The unsavory crowd presses closer, their voices growing louder and more insistent. Unsavory Man 2 in Jack's personal space pops bubble gum.

UNSAVORY MAN 2
 You want to score some blow?

Unsavory Woman 2, confident, in slinky dress sways her hips deliberately as she speaks.

UNSAVORY WOMAN 2
 (teasing)
 Give me a hundred and I'll come
 back with an eight ball?

She playfully twirls a strand of hair, then leans over to Jack.

UNSAVORY WOMAN 2 (CONT'D)

A hundred bucks, and I'll make you
holler tonight

ETHEREAL ZACH

If you're not someone to somebody,
you're life is meaningless... You
can be someone Jack.

UNSAVORY MAN 1

Life's short, man! Embrace it! You
can live forever... or die trying.
Say yes!

Sage clenches his fists, his face a mask of determination.
The ethereal Zach and Jack continue their debate, their
ghostly forms shimmering in the club's neon lights.

UNSAVORY WOMAN 2

Let go, Sage and ride the wave of
the night!

ETHEREAL ZACH

A rewarding life is about finding
balance, making choices that align
with positive values.

ETHEREAL JACK MARLEY

(skeptical)

Whatever, I have no interest in
that kum-by-yah garbage. What has
anyone done for me?

ETHEREAL ZACH

Jack my son, listen to me. No
amount of regret or remorse can
compare to the lost opportunities
you've missed in life. Once an
opportunity is missed, it's usually
gone. Feeling sorry about it later
won't change the fact that you
wasted it. The best advice I can
give you is seize the opportunities
you have now and make the most of
them before it's too late.

Sage finally shakes his head, stepping back from the unsavory
crowd. He turns and walks away, his heart pounding with a mix
of fear and relief. The ethereal Zach and Jack watch with
hope and fear as Sage walks up to a PUNK ROCK GIRL and stops
to talk.

ETHEREAL ZACH (CONT'D)
 (smiling)
 He's stronger than you know.

A fight breaks out in the club as bouncers rush to the scene. Punk Rock Girl shows Sage a black pistol. Sage holds it and smiles. They leave the club together.

UNSAVORY MAN 1
 What's life without a little risk?
 You know the Grim Reaper throws the
 wildest parties!

ETHEREAL JACK
 (concerned)
 This is bad.

Ethereal Zach holds the remote control in his hand and clicks it. Jack and Zack disappear.

ETHEREAL JACK (V.O.)
 Wait, wait.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - MIDNIGHT

The small party is watching the clock. As the second hands reaches 12:00. Emily, Cassia, Tammy and the rest of the room celebrate "HAPPY NEW YEAR'S". They blow horns and pat each other on the back.

The ethereal ZACK MARLEY and JACK MARLEY watch with a mix of curiosity.

TAMMY
 Damn Jack, I was hoping you'd make
 it here tonight.

ETHEREAL ZACK
 (soft voice)
 Damn Jack, that young girl still
 believes in you, and you let her
 down... once again.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (melancholy)
 She's my only fan, dad.

ETHEREAL ZACH
 Do you believe in yourself..
 (Pause) Because Tammy believes in
 you.

ETHEREAL JACK

Tammy can take care of herself. I'm just being true to self.

ETHEREAL ZACH

Maybe... but you can change. You have to first take care of yourself though if you ever want help someone else.

The family continues their conversation, the warmth of their bond evident despite the challenges they face. The ethereal Zack and Jack remain as silent guardians, their presence a reminder of the past and a hope for the future.

ETHEREAL JACK

Can you feel that? They're rooting for us.

ETHEREAL ZACH

But will you deliver for them?

In the midst of the celebration, Tammy stretches her arm out resting her elbow on the armrest. Ethereal Jack grasps Tammy's hand tightly, the camera pulls back, capturing the family's joyful embrace while the ethereal figures, smile approvingly, fading out.

INT. SHARK BYTES - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - DAY

The morning light filters through heavy curtains, casting a soft glow. Jack Marley lies sprawled on the king-sized bed, groaning as he wakes up hungover. His face is pale, and his body spasms with dry heaves. Ethereal Jack and Zach stand at the foot of the bed, their ghostly forms dimly shimmering.

JACK MARLEY

(groaning)

Oh my god... I feel like shit?

Jack Marley struggles to sit up, clutching his head. He stumbles out of bed, trying to make his way to the master bathroom. His steps are unsteady, and he suddenly vomits along the way. Some of the vomit splatters onto the ethereal forms of Jack and Zach covering them in slime.

Jack's ethereal form flickers every time Jack Marley gets sick.

ETHEREAL JACK

(disgusted)

Seriously? I can't even escape this in the afterlife?

Ethereal Jack and Zach wipe the slime from their faces.

ETHEREAL ZACH MARLEY

(sighing)

It's a testament to your choices.

Jack clutches his stomach doubled over. He leans against the wall, his face contorted with pain and regret. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, his eyes filled with desperation.

JACK MARLEY

(grimacing, severe pain)

Fuck, fuck, fuck, I need to end this insanity now.

The ethereal Jack and Zach watch with a mix of pity and determination. The room seems to warp and twist, the boundaries between the physical and spiritual realms blurring.

ETHEREAL ZACH

(softly)

You still have a choice, Jack. But change requires a true desire and spiritual awakening.

ETHEREAL JACK

(skeptical)

Whatever dad, no church stuff for me.

ETHEREAL ZACH

(shaking his head)

It's not church stuff. It's a psychic change. You can sober up a horse thief but unless he's had a mental change he's still a horse thief and will be probably relapse.

Jack Marley takes a deep breath, his resolve strengthening. He pushes himself off the wall and heads towards the bathroom, leaving a trail of feces, urine and vomit.

From outside, the sound of ominous church bells begins to ring, echoing through the bedroom. The sound grows louder, more foreboding, as it reverberates off the walls.

ETHEREAL ZACH (CONT'D)

Jack if you don't change soon you'll lose Shark Bytes and your life.

The ethereal Jack and Zach fade into the background, their presence a silent reminder of the consequences of his actions.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - DAY

Zach (50s) and Jack (50s) fade into sitting in a redwood hot tub in the middle of a majestic Redwood Forest. The steam rises around them, creating an ethereal atmosphere. They look relaxed, but their conversation is anything but.

JACK
(smiling)
I can handle this... Now where's the Southern Comfort?

ZACH
(sighing)
Jack, you need to get some goals and missions in life other than getting drunk.

JACK
(grinning)
Hey, I have goals. Like finding the perfect whiskey. Speaking of-

ZACK
Jack this is purgatory. There's no food or drink here.

JACK
Yeah right!

ZACH
Purgatory is to clean the spiritual stink off your soul.

JACK
Well I like it here.

ZACH
This place gets boring fast. Trust me you don't want to get stuck here. It's a kind of hell sort of.

As they talk, RANDOM PEOPLE walk by, interrupting their conversation.

RANDOM PERSON 1
(excitedly)
Hey, do you know where the Limbo Loop hiking trail is?

ZACH
(pointing)
Yeah, just follow the path to the
left. Make a left and a left and
left. You can't miss it.

The RANDOM PERSON 1 nods and walks off. Zach turns back to Jack, shaking his head.

ZACH (CONT'D)
See what I mean? You need more
purpose.

JACK
(smirking)
My purpose is to enjoy this hot
tub.

Another RANDOM PERSON walks by, checking their watch.

RANDOM PERSON 2
(curiously)
Do you know what time it is?

JACK
(looking at the sky)
Time to relax, my friend.

RANDOM PERSON 2 chuckles and continues on his way. Zach rolls his eyes and continues his lecture.*

ZACH
Seriously, Jack. You need to think
about the time you have left on
Earth.

JACK
(teasing)
My future involves more hot tubs
and less nagging.

ZACH
Every time you slip up, I feel pain
from your slipping. Do you think I
want to watch another loved one
fade to the shadows?

A third RANDOM PERSON walks by, sniffing the air.

RANDOM PERSON 3
(hungrily)
What's for dinner?

ZACH
 (laughing)
 Whatever you can catch in the
 forest! It's Jack-A-Lope season.

RANDOM PERSON 3 laughs and walks away. Zach turns back to Jack, a serious look on his face.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 I'm serious, Jack. You need to find
 something meaningful.

JACK
 (sighing)
 Alright, alright. I'll think about
 it. But for now, let's just enjoy
 this hot tub.

ZACH
 Do you think it's easy for me to
 watch you throw your life away? I'm
 doing this out of love... I failed
 you once; I won't do it again.

Random Person #1 is back at the hot tub.

RANDOM PERSON 1
 I seem to be walking in circles.
 Can you tell me where the Limbo
 Loop trail is?

ZACH
 Why yes my good man. Make a right
 at the end of this trail, then
 another right and another right and
 a right.

RANDOM PERSON 1
 God bless you, I feel like I have
 been walking in circles for years.

Suddenly, an ALIEN SOUL joins them in the hot tub. The alien soul has a shimmering, translucent blue skin, large, expressive eyes, and tentacle-like appendages that float gracefully in the water.

The ALIEN SOUL looks at them curiously, its tentacles waving gently.

ALIEN SOUL
 (excitedly)
 Greetings, Earth spirits! You going
 forwards or backwards?

ZACH
 (surprised)
 I hope to go forward.
 (points at Jack)
 He's going back.

ALIEN SOUL
 (happily)
 Got to repeat a grade huh?... This
 is quite a fascinating place.

Zach shakes his head, but a smile creeps onto his face. They both lean back, enjoying the warmth of the hot tub and the beauty of the Redwood forest.

The Alien Soul looks at them with curiosity.

ALIEN SOUL (CONT'D)
 (intrigued)
 What is this "purpose" you speak
 of?

ZACH
 (explaining)
 It's about having goals and
 missions in life. Something to
 strive for.

ALIEN SOUL
 (giggling)
 But isn't enjoying the hot tub a
 form of purpose too? Isn't there a
 time and season for everything?

Jack claps his hands with approval.

ZACH
 (looking at alien)
 You're not helping.

Another RANDOM PERSON walks by, checking their watch.

RANDOM PERSON 4
 (curiously)
 Do you know where we are going
 next?

JACK
 (looking at the sky)
 I don't care. It's time to relax,
 my friend.

ZACH

You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. We're in the water, Jack. With every slip you choose, it's like I'm failing you all over again.

RANDOM PERSON 4 chuckles and continues on their way. ZACH rolls his eyes and continues his lecture.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Seriously, Jack. You need to think about your future.

JACK

(teasing)

My future involves more hot tubs and less nagging.

The ALIEN SOUL laughs, its tentacles waving in amusement.

ALIEN SOUL

(laughing)

I travel galaxies for enlightenment! What's your excuse?

Ethereal Zach and Jack float out of the hot tub. The Alien Soul waves a tentacle goodbye.

ALIEN SOUL (CONT'D)

(mysteriously)

Every choice, like every star, shines differently. Choose wisely which constellations you wish to follow.

They float through the forest, observing the various souls below them. Suddenly, a bright light appears in the distance, drawing their attention.

ZACH

I had dreams, Jack— real dreams, not just bottles and bad jokes. I don't want you to live in the shadows; but to thrive in the light.

They float towards the light, their forms becoming more solid as they approach. The mist begins to clear, revealing the path back to earth. Jack stops and just floats... Then Jack begins to float again into the light and disappear.

INT. SHARK BYTES - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark and silent, with only the sound of waves crashing and the faint glow of moonlight filtering through the curtains. Jack lies in bed, tossing and turning in his sleep. Suddenly, the temperature drops, and a chilling presence fills the room. The mysterious GRIM REAPER appears at the foot of the bed, cloaked in tattered cloths, dark shadows and holding a gleaming scythe.

JACK

(stirring, groggy)

What... what's happening? Alexa
what time is it?

ALEXA (V.O.)

The time is one thirteen in the
morning. January first. Happy
Mother Fucking New Year's asshole.

The light flickers, casting eerie shadows that move as the Grim Reaper shifts.

JACK

I'm either still dreaming or still
really, really fucked up like on a
bad acid trip. Nobody knows or
cares.

Jack sits up, his eyes widening in fear, as he sees the Grim Reaper standing before him. The figure's hollow eyes seem to pierce through his soul.

JACK (CONT'D)

(terrified)

Am I dead? Is this it? Am I going
to see my future?

The Grim Reaper remains silent, its skeletal hand pointing towards Jack. The room grows colder, and the shadows seem to close in around them.

GRIM REAPER

(in a deep, echoing voice)

Jack Marley, your time has not yet
come. But you must face the
consequences of your actions.

Jack shivers, his breath visible in the icy air. He clutches the blankets, his heart pounding in his chest.*

JACK
 (panicking)
 What do you mean? What
 consequences?

The Grim Reaper steps closer, its presence overwhelming. The room seems to warp and twist, as if reality itself is bending under the weight of the encounter.

GRIM REAPER
 (ominously)
 You'll see the path you're walking
 now and the shadows waiting for you
 if you don't change.

Jack's mind races, memories of his past mistakes flashing before his eyes. He feels a deep sense of dread and regret.

JACK
 (desperately)
 Please, give me a chance to make
 things right!

The Reaper's movements are purposeful and slow, each step echoing in the silence, amplifying the tension.

GRIM REAPER
 Face it, Jack. Change or you'll
 meet the dark shadows.

The Grim Reaper's gaze softens, just for a moment, before he turns and approaches Jack.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)
 (sternly)
 Every choice shapes the shadows of
 your path and the people around
 you.

The Grim Reaper points his scythe at Jack. The room starts to slowly spin then the Grim Reaper and Jack float towards a spinning vortex.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)
 Your actions ripple through time,
 affecting your fate and others.
 Humans all bleed the same. A
 meaningful life lies in taking
 responsibility for your choices.

They spin into the vortex then a misty tunnel appears, their forms becoming more ethereal as they approach. In the tunnel the mist begins to clear, revealing the path back to...

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - CROSSWALK - NIGHT

Tammy, 20, smiles and takes a deep breath in her rickety wheelchair. The sound of distant waves lapping against the shore is mixed with the soft hum of nighttime crickets.

Smiling she rolls the wheels of wheelchair then panic consumes her face. She struggles to cross train tracks at a crosswalk. Frantically trying to free herself the sound of a TRAIN barreling down the tracks grows louder and louder.

The trains headlights blared like twin suns, casting long shadows that twisted around Tammy's wheelchair, illuminating the stark fear etched across her face.

The Grim Reaper and Ethereal Jack (50s) observe from the sidewalk, their ghostly forms shimmering brightly.

TAMMY
(panicking)
Help! Somebody, please help!

The train driver HONKS the horn, but the train is moving too fast to stop in time. Tammy's face is filled with fear and desperation as the train approaches at full speed.

GRIM REAPER
(solemnly)
Her time has come, Jack, and the weight of that truth hangs heavy in the air.

CLOSE UP: Tammy's sweaty palms slip on the cold wheels, her heart racing faster than the approaching train, every moment slipping through her fingers like sand.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)
You must confront the consequences of your choices, for they ripple through the future lives of those you care about.

ETHEREAL JACK
(sadly)
There's nothing we can do... My dad said it's never to late.

The train barrels towards a hysterical Tammy, and the scene fades to black... Then cuts to a large funeral.

INT. CHURCH - FUNERAL - DAY

The church is filled with mourners, their faces a canvas of sorrow. Light streams through stained glass, casting a colorful yet somber glow. Sage, dressed sharply in a coat and tie paired with blue jeans, sobs uncontrollably. Emily and Cassia, emotionally spent, sit beside him, red-eyed and trembling.

The atmosphere is thick with grief, punctuated by muffled cries and the scent of white lilies.

Angie, representative of the "HAVEN OF HOPE," stands at the podium with a flickering lit candle, her voice shaky but steady. Angie clinches her fist.

EMILY

(whispering to Cassia)

We lost both Jack and Tammy in one year... It's just too much.

ANGIE

(teary-eyed)

Tammy lived at the Haven of Hope homeless shelter because she couldn't afford the college dorms. It was there I witnessed her spirit shine.

Angie glances out at the crowd, locking eyes with various mourners.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I'll never forget the time she organized a holiday dinner, inviting everyone at the shelter, even the grumpiest of residents. She made each of them feel, seem, like family.

The Ghost Of Tamika appears, silently scowling at Ethereal Jack, who watches her with a mix of guilt and defiance, his eyes heavy with regret.

GHOST OF TAMIKA

(scowling, at Jack)

You could have done more, asshole.

Why didn't you help her?

ETHEREAL JACK

(pained, sighing)

I loved Tammy but she's not my kid. I thought...

(MORE)

ETHEREAL JACK (CONT'D)

I thought I had time to make things right. But I was selfish. I should have been there.

Tamika's expression softens slightly, her discontent lingering.

GHOST OF TAMIKA

It's not about wealth, Jack. She needed a hand, not just words. Davey is shaking his head.

The camera pans out, capturing the mourners - their teary, anguished expressions echoing the emotional weight. We see the ethereal forms of Jack, Tamika, and the Grim Reaper looming silently, casting long shadows on the pews.

In a moment of hushed introspection, the camera focuses on Sage, who struggles to breathe between sobs.

SAGE

(choking back tears)
She wanted to be free... to dream big and soar... Fuck it, I'm pissed.

CLOSE UP: The flickering candle on the podium stops burning. Ethereal Jack oblivious looks at the Grim Reaper.

ETHEREAL JACK

My funeral must have been huge!

The Grim Reaper slaps his knee in ghoulish laughter. Tamika smiles and fades out.

INT. PIRATES COVE - REAPERS' BIKER CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

Sage steps into the rowdy "PIRATES COVE" clubhouse, his heart pounding in rhythm with the raucous laughter and the thundering pulse of rock music. The air is thick with the scents of leather, sweat, and spilled beer. Dimly lit by flickering neon signs, the room buzzes with intoxicated bikers throwing knives at dartboards, swigging from frosty mugs, and grappling in intense arm-wrestling matches, each display of tough camaraderie adding to the chaotic energy.

Sage, dressed in his father's coat and tie paired with blue jeans, hesitates at the threshold, his awe mingling with apprehension. He can feel the weight of their scrutiny grazing his skin, a mixture of acceptance and skepticism lurking in the atmosphere.

From the throng emerges LOBO LOCO (40s), a brawny biker with a grizzled beard and leather vest adorned with jagged patches, he swaggers towards Sage with a welcoming grin.

LOBO LOCO
 (grinning welcome)
 Hey, kid. You must be Sage. Your dad, Jody, started this chapter here.

Sage scans the chaotic revelry, uncertain yet yearning for a connection. Lobo Loco reaches into a scarred locker and pulls out a black biker vest, worn and weathered, a relic of Sage's father.

LOBO LOCO (CONT'D)
 (holding out the vest)
 This was your old man's. Worn proud. He wanted you to have it.

A flicker of emotion crosses Sage's face as he takes the vest, feeling its weight— each scuff and fray tells tales of brotherhood and rebellion. The moment hangs in the air like the lingering echoes of his father's laughter.

LOBO LOCO (CONT'D)
 (voice softening)
 You know, when Jody got this, we were halfway through the Devil's Pass. He saved my ass more than once out there. He believed in you, and now, we do too.

With gentle reverence, Sage removes his coat and slips on the vest. The leather feels like an embrace, snugly wrapping around his shoulders. The rowdy atmosphere quiets momentarily as bikers turn their attention toward the revered moment.

SAGE
 (softly)
 Thanks, Lobo. It means a lot.

Lobo Loco slaps Sage hard on the back, his grin morphing into a fierce pride.

LOBO LOCO
 (rallying the room)
 Welcome to the fuckin' family, Prospect!

But then, tension tugs at the edges of the moment— BRAZEN BIKER, a raucous figure with bloodshot eyes, steps forward, his smirk oozing malice.

BRAZEN BIKER

You think this rug rat's worthy of family love just because Maniac was his old man? Look at him— he's just a scared, snot nosed kid playing dress-up.

The laughter of others lingers like a dark cloud over Sage, who now stands in the spotlight, an internal storm brewing within him. He grips the vest, grounding himself in its history. Lobo squeezes Sage's shoulder.

LOBO LOCO

(hushed voice)

You know what to do to earn your stripes.

Sage draws a nickel-plated 50-caliber Desert Eagle, the metal cold against his palm, aiming it shakily at Brazen Biker's head.

BRAZEN BIKER

(bewildered)

Whoa! Easy there. I don't want no trouble.

SAGE

(recalling old words)

Like my pop used to say, don't start no shit, there won't be no shit.

A raucous cheer erupts from the other bikers, glasses clinking and voices raised, marking the return of chaos. Yet Sage feels a surge of pride, standing taller, realizing he's left fear behind.

SAGE (CONT'D)

(to Lobo)

What's wrong with you? You look like you've seen a ghost.

LOBO LOCO

(intensely)

I'm looking at you. You're the spitting image of your old man.

SAGE

(determined)

No more runnin'. I'm home.

With a sudden surge of confidence, Sage throws a solid punch at Brazen Biker on his nose, knocking him off his feet.

SAGE (V.O.)
 (inner thought)
 What if I start to enjoy this too
 much? I don't want to hurt anyone
 or lose myself in this madness.

From the shadows, ethereal Jack observes the unfolding drama, shaking his head in dismay.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (whispered to the Grim
 Reaper)
 This is terrible! Sage is going to
 end up dead like Jody.

The scene swirls into uproar, laughter and cheers echoing, but haunting questions linger in the air for ethereal Jack and the Grim Reaper fading out.

EXT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - NIGHT

The neon sign of the "SHARK BYTES" café flickers in the dim light. The sound of roaring engines fills the air as the Biker Gang, "REAPERS' RIDERS," swarm the area. Jack Marley stands in the shadows, observing the chaos. The Grim Reaper, cloaked in darkness, stands beside him under a street light.

GRIM REAPER
 You're at a fork in the road Jack.
 This is one possible stop depending
 on which path you choose.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (agitated)
 This is insane. We need to do
 something.

Outside the café, bikers harass innocent bystanders. A young couple tries to escape, but a biker blocks their path, laughing menacingly.

BIKER 1
 (mocking)
 Where do you think you're going?

The couple cowers in fear as the biker revs his engine.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - NIGHT

The dimly lit café hums with tension. The air is thick with the smell of spilled beer and sweat.

Laughter bursts from a nearby table, clinking glasses punctuating the raucous atmosphere.

Sage, clad in a battered biker vest, broods at the bar. His gaze scans the chaotic room, a mix of bravado and doubt flickering across his face.

He hesitates, contemplating the PEDESTRIAN sitting alone at a table, the light glinting sharply off the man's beer like a warning sign.

SAGE
(masking uncertainty)
Hey, you! You're punk ass looking
at me?

The man quickly looks away, but that only fuels Sage's fire. He strides over, confidence morphing into aggression as he grabs the man by the collar, lifting him slightly off his seat.

PEDESTRIAN
(stammering)
N-no, I-

Sage leans in, the grin replaced by a snarl, his voice low but clear.

SAGE
(snapping)
So you're telling me I'm not worth
a look?

Chuckles rise from a nearby table of bikers, igniting the tension. Ethereal Jack watches from the shadows, concern etched on his face, while the Grim Reaper's gaze holds a weight of inevitability.

GRIM REAPER
(calmly, to Jack)
Every choice shapes their destiny
in ways they can't yet see.

Jack nods, a flicker of regret crossing his ethereal features. He watches Sage with somber foresight.

ETHEREAL JACK
(musing)
Every one of my years haunt me. I'm
a pathetic reflection of bad
decisions... And this reckless path
of Sage... could spiral quickly.

Sage eyes the diners, in search of validation. He snatches a French fry off a timid customer's plate without breaking his menacing demeanor. The bar's energy pulsates as scantily clad girls dance, further upping the primal stakes.

LOBO LOCO, ever the opportunist, stands by the cash register, the wad of bills shining in his fist.

LOCO LOBO

(smirking, eyes narrow)

Sage, this is chump change. Imagine what we could rake in with my girls stripping, pushing China Fire, and you sitting on the throne of chaos. Pure bank I'm tellin ya.

Sage chuckles, feigning amusement, but his face tightens— a glimpse of his conscience peeking through.

SAGE

(half-hearted laugh)

Yeah, because that's what buddies do, right?

He walks over to Lobo, a fleeting tension in his movements, and swipes the money from Lobo's hand.

SAGE (CONT'D)

(nervous laugh)

Looks like the lion still eats the lamb, huh?

The lighting shifts— the Grim Reaper's eyes flare a warning shade of crimson, drawing Jack's attention.

ETHEREAL JACK

(somber)

Trust me Sage, every misstep leaves an indelible mark.

GRIM REAPER

(steaming)

Look at these shadowy figures. Their choices echo through eternity.

Jack glides above the chaos, both fascinated and disturbed.

ETHEREAL JACK

(voice heavy)

Or leads to my worthless destiny if this keeps up...

A clock ticks loudly, each tick cutting through the tension. The Grim Reaper and Ethereal Jack fade subtly—watching, vigilant.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - NEW YEAR'S EVE

The living room is dimly lit, with a few scattered decorations hinting at the festive occasion. Emily and Cassia sit on the couch, their faces etched with sorrow. Ethereal Jack Marley and the Grim Reaper stand in the corner, observing the scene.

CASSIA

(sighing)

It's so unfair, Tammy and Jack both gone.

EMILY

(nodding)

Tammy was a solid punch to the gut but Jack was no surprise.

Cassia takes a deep breath, her eyes glistening with unshed tears.

CASSIA

(hesitant)

I had a crush on Jack in high school, but his wild ways were too much. My heart said yes but my brain said a big hell no.

EMILY

(sarcastically)

So you married Jody? (a beat) The maniac biker... Great choice!

Cassia winces at Emily's words, the sting of truth hitting hard. Ethereal Jack watches, his expression a mix of regret and sadness.

ETHEREAL JACK

(to Grim Reaper)

I never knew she felt that way.

GRIM REAPER

(calmly)

You've been too lost to see clearly. In hindsight you might understand the impact of your actions if you're blessed.

CASSIA

Alexa shuffle songs from the eighties.

Emily and Cassia sit in silence for a moment, the weight of their grief hanging heavy in the air before MUSIC starts.

CASSIA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Do you ever wonder where Sage got the money to buy "Shark Bytes"?

EMILY

(frowning)

All the time. He came out of nowhere with that pile of cash.

Ethereal Jack's eyes widen in realization, a sense of guilt washing over him.

ETHEREAL JACK

(to Grim Reaper)

I think I know where he got it. I... I did some things I'm not proud of. He knew the combination to the safe in the office.

GRIM REAPER

(nodding)

Our choices have consequences, Jack. It's time to face them.

The room grows colder as the clock ticks closer to midnight. Emily and Cassia's conversation continues, their words a painful reminder of the lives lost and the secrets left behind.

EMILY

(sighing)

I wish we could have saved them.

CASSIA

(teary-eyed)

Me too...

Ethereal Jack's shoulders slump, the weight of his past mistakes pressing down on him. The Grim Reaper places a hand on his shoulder, offering a moment of silent understanding.

GRIM REAPER

(softly)

It's never too late for redemption, Jack. You can still make amends.

The sound of a TICKING CLOCK beats urgently.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

Can you hear your life ticking away Jack? Every fleeting moment counts, and yet you squander them on empty indulgence. Your choices echo in eternity.

ETHEREAL JACK

I won't waste a second chance.

GRIM REAPER

(nodding)

Redemption isn't given, Jack; it's fought for through the ashes of your mistakes. You stand at the precipice now— will you leap or linger in shadows?

The Grim Reaper and Jack fade from the scene.

EXT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - NIGHT

The once vibrant "SHARK BYTES" café now stands dilapidated, its neon sign barely flickering. Ethereal Jack floats beside the Grim Reaper, his excitement palpable.

ETHEREAL JACK

(grinning, but unsure)

I can't wait to see my funeral...
Right? I mean, it's going to be...

The Grim Reaper remains silent, then leads Ethereal Jack to a concrete pedestal outside the café. On it sits a large metal cremation urn, engraved with "Jack Marley" and the word "WHATEVER."

ETHEREAL JACK (CONT'D)

(confused)

What's this? This is my grave?

GRIM REAPER

(nodding slowly)

This is your final resting place. A symbol of your grave misunderstanding your choices.

Ethereal Jack's staggers back clutching his head, realization dawning on him. The Grim Reaper puts his hand to his ear.

ETHEREAL JACK
 (dejected)
 Whatever!

A FEMALE BIKER, smoking a cigarette, open the urn's lid and extinguishes her cigarette in the urn's ashes.

GRIM REAPER
 You think this urn is an insult,
 Jack? It mirrors the life you
 wasted. How do you want to be
 remembered?

Lobo Loco walks up to the urn, drops his pants, and pees on the urn. A BIKER PET BULLDOG in black vest stops at the urn and defalcates beside the urn.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)
 (nodding head, smiling)
 There's not going to be any funeral
 for you on your current path.

Ethereal Jack's shoulders slump, his excitement replaced by deep sadness. The Grim Reaper watches him, a silent observer of Jack's despair.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)
 You've danced around the idea of
 changing, but it seems the music
 has stopped.

ETHEREAL JACK
 I thought I still had time.

GRIM REAPER
 You could live much longer and cast
 a different shadow. The choice is
 yours.

Grim Reaper gives Jack a coin with the tree of life on one side and the skull and crossbones on the other.

The wind howls through the empty streets, a haunting reminder of Jack's lonely fate. The Grim Reaper places a hand on Jack's shoulder, offering a moment of silent solace.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack Marley mumbles in his sleep, tossing and turning in his luxurious bedroom.

The ethereal Gabriel with halo, clean cut and dressed business casual, passes through the door, ghost like, his presence in the room is ethereal and serene.

ETHEREAL GABRIEL

(softly)

Benedic hanc novam viam in vita tua

Gabriel crosses the room and stands at Jack's bedside. He raises his hands and begins to chant a Latin blessing. Jack's body starts to glow with a soft, blueish-white light.

ETHEREAL GABRIEL (CONT'D)

(chanting)

Lux lucere in via tua ad novas
umbras.

The glow intensifies, enveloping Jack in a warm, radiant light. Gabriel finishes the blessing and lowers his hands.

Gabriel stands by the nightstand. A bottle materializes in his hands; he looks at the bottle and smiles.

Gabriel leaves the bottle on the nightstand; gives Jack one last, compassionate look before he turns and leaves the room, walking through sliding glass door to the beach outside.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - MORNING

Jack wakes up, feeling refreshed but confused. He sits up in bed, rubbing his eyes, patting his belly, he looks around the room. The memory of the glowing light lingers in his mind.

JACK MARLEY

(mumbling)

What... what happened? I feel
really good... no hangover? Huh?

Jack gets out of bed and walks to the sliding glass door. He opens it and looks outside, spotting Sage standing near the entrance of the empty swimming pool.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Sage! What day is it?

CUT TO:

Sage looks up, a smirk on his face by a large empty swimming pool. He has a skateboard in hand.

SAGE BLUNT

Why it's January first, Jack. Happy New Year. I was coming to check on you-

JACK MARLEY

It can't be January first. I'm not hungover.

SAGE BLUNT

It's because you already started drinking again.

Jack smiles and pats himself on his chest.

JACK MARLEY

I haven't had a drop. Not one drop.

SAGE BLUNT

Well if you're okay, I'm going to take off.

JACK MARLEY

Sage wait.

Jack stands at the sliding glass door, the events of the night before still swirling in his mind. He feels a strange sense of renewal, but also a lingering confusion about the blessing he received.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

Sage, go to Broadway Medical Supply and tell them to call me. Can you go there and take the latest most expensive electric wheelchair over to Emily's house? There's a big bonus in it for you.

Sage stands there dumbfounded.

SAGE BLUNT

Are you still drunk Jack?

A garden bed of wild flowers starts to open in the light.

JACK

Never been more clear headed in my life. Take that wheelchair to Tammy over at Emily's but don't tell her where it came from.

SAGE BLUNT

(smiling)

Anything else Jack?

Several colorful butterflies flutter near Jack.

JACK MARLEY

Yes, find a Barbie doll and get
some flowers. Somewhere, anywhere,
I don't care if it costs hundred
dollars, just get them and meet me
at Emily's.

Sage skates off and does an ollie.

INT. SHARK BYTES - JACK'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Jack stands in the bathroom, his eyes scanning a mess of empty bottles of alcohol and pill bottles overflowing a small trash can. He stands over the toilet, flushing the empty pill bottles down one by one.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(whispering to himself)

I can do this.

The sound of the toilet flushing echoes in the bathroom. Jack's hands tremble as he discards the last of the bottles. Jack, looking at his reflection in the mirror, his eyes are bloodshot, but there's a glimmer of determination. Jack reaches for the shower handle and turns on the water.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

(to his reflection)

No more. This is a new beginning.

Jack takes a deep breath, the weight of his past mistakes pressing down on him. He knows the road to redemption won't be easy, but he's ready to face it head-on as he steps into the shower.

JACK MARLEY (V.O.)

(inner thought)

No more hiding. No more lies.
Today, I take back my life.

Jack leans back against the cool tiles, the warmth of the water contrasting with the chill of his thoughts. He wraps his arms around himself momentarily, trying to hold together the pieces of his shattered past.

As the steam envelopes him, Jack chuckles to himself, a soft, incredulous sound. Jack scrubs his body as if trying to peel away the memories etched into his skin. He washes his hair, the shampoo on his face mixing with his tears of release.

Jack, clean shaven and hair combed, wipes at the fogged mirror with a firm hand, his determined eyes igniting a renewed determination. "No more," he whispers fiercely, his voice gaining strength with every word.

Jack looks at his reflection in the mirror. His reflection transforms to 8 year old Jack in the living room watching TV.

JACK MARLEY

That was all a dream last night...
Did someone rooify me?

Jack pounds his fist on the sink counter.

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - MORNING

Jack walks across his bedroom in his finest business casual clothes. He walks over to the nightstand beside his bed and picks up his phone by a coin and the bottle Gabriel left.

Jack shoves the phone in his front pocket then curious Jack examines the bottle. The label reads: "UNICORN SYRUP". Jack smiles and sets the bottle down. He picks up the coin and has an aha moment.

A close up on the coin in Jack's fingers shows a "Tree of Life". The hand turns and a "Skull and Crossbones" is on the other side.

JACK MARLEY

(to himself)

Fork in the road huh? All those
wasted nights... but not anymore.
If I can survive that, I can fight
this.

Jack flips the coin in the air and catches it in his palm. It lands Tree of Life. Jack shoves the coin in his pocket.

INT. HAPPY TRAILS NURSING HOME - DAY

The nursing home is bustling with activity as residents and staff prepare for the New Year's celebrations. Molly sits in her room, looking out the window with a wistful expression. The door opens, and a new, cleaned-up, clean-shaven Jack Marley steps in, carrying a bouquet of flowers.

JACK MARLEY

(smiling)

Happy New Year, Mom.

Molly turns around, her eyes widening in disbelief. Tears well up as she sees Jack looking healthier and happier than she can remember. Hazel scowls her disapproval of Jack.

MOLLY
 (teary-eyed)
 Jack? Is that really you? You
 look... you look great!

Jack walks over and hands Molly the flowers, his smile warm and genuine.

JACK MARLEY
 (nodding)
 It's me, Mom. I've had a revelation
 about life. Things are going to be
 different from now on.

Molly breaks down in tears, overwhelmed with joy. She reaches out and hugs Jack tightly.

MOLLY
 (sobbing)
 I can't believe it. I'm so happy to
 see you like this.

Jack gently pulls back, looking into his mother's eyes with determination.

JACK MARLEY
 (softly)
 Mom, I want you to gather your
 things. I'm moving you out of here
 and into the Shark Bytes café with
 me.

MOLLY
 Live with you Jack? Oh no I'm
 afraid not.

JACK MARLEY
 It's the start of a New Year mom. A
 time of new resolutions and
 transformation for me... I'm going to
 change my office into a bedroom for
 you.

Jack looks around at the room in the Nursing Home. Molly's tears of joy continue to flow as she nods, her heart filled with hope and happiness.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

If it doesn't work out mom. You can always come back here but I want to try.

MOLLY

(smiling through tears)

Oh, Jack, you don't know how much this means to me.

JACK MARLEY

I'm so sorry for everything mom.

Jack hugs her again, feeling a sense of purpose and fulfillment. The room is filled with the warmth of their reunion, a new beginning for both of them.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Emily, Tammy, and Cassia sit around the kitchen table in their pajamas, enjoying a cozy breakfast. The atmosphere is warm and filled with laughter. The door opens, and a cleaned-up Jack Marley steps in, carrying a bouquet of flowers. Sage follows behind, giving Jack a secret nod.

JACK MARLEY

(smiling)

Good morning, everyone! Happy New Year!

Emily, Tammy, and Cassia look up in utter surprise, their faces lighting up with joy.

EMILY

(excitedly)

Jack! What a wonderful surprise! And look at you!

TAMMY

(grinning)

You look amazing, Jack!

CASSIA

(teary-eyed)

It's so good to see you. You always could clean up nicely.

Jack walks over and places the flowers on the table, his smile warm and genuine.

JACK MARLEY

(nodding)

It's good to see you all too.

(MORE)

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
 I feel like a new man. A new Jack
 for the new year with some news...
 Tammy I'm going to pay off the
 hundred grand needed for your
 surgery.

Tammy's eyes widen in shock, her hands covering her mouth as
 tears of gratitude stream down her face.

TAMMY
 (crying)
 Jack, I... I don't know what to
 say. Thank you so much.

The doorbell rings, interrupting the moment. Emily gets up to
 answer it and returns with a deliveryman bringing into the
 dining room a brand-new electric wheelchair with all the
 bells and whistles.

DELIVERYMAN
 (smiling)
 Delivery for Tammy Tyler.

Jack turns to Tammy, his eyes filled with warmth.

JACK MARLEY
 Tammy, you're going to need this
 new wheelchair for when you move
 into the University Housing next
 week.

Tammy's tears flow freely as she hugs Jack tightly,
 overwhelmed with gratitude and happiness.

TAMMY
 But Jack I have a place to live.

JACK MARLEY
 (catches himself)
 What... what on Earth are you talking
 about. I know you live at the
 homeless shelter.

The room gasps.

TAMMY
 (sobbing)
 Are you sure? How did you find out?

JACK MARLEY

If I'd of known sooner where you were living... well there's no room at Shark Bytes now that I'm moving my mom into my office and our new expansion plans.

SAGE BLUNT/EMILY

(together)

Expansion plans?

JACK MARLEY

Yes, Sage I'm going to expand out the empty pool into a skate park with an arcade. I want you to run it, teach lesson what... anything you can dream up... Emily I'm making you manager of the café. Any new ideas just do them. I trust you.

Emily and Cassia join the hug, the room filled with love and hope for the future.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

Sage we're not done yet. We've got more work to do.

SAGE BLUNT

Like what? It's a holiday.

JACK MARLEY

It will only take a couple of hours and we don't have to clean up... We're going to feed the homeless.

EMILY

Jack are you okay? Whatever you're high on? I like it, whatever it is take more of it!

JACK MARLEY

(grinning)

Sounds corny but I'm high on life right now, and I don't say the what word anymore! So none of you smart asses better put whatever on my tombstone or else or else I'll come back to haunt you for all eternity.

The living room laughs and is amused by the new Jack. Tammy tries out her new wheelchair.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
 I'm putting a swear jar on the
 counter at Shark Bytes too. Saying
 'whatever' counts as swearing too!

In the back of the room an ethereal Tamika and Davey are
 smiling holding hands.

EXT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - DAY

Jack Marley and Sage Blunt are outside the "SHARK BYTES"
 café, loading cases of coffee and hamburger into the back of
 an SUV. An intersection wooden sign reads "TOKYO 3252 miles"
 on top of "NEW YORK 31250 miles". The sun is shining, casting
 a warm glow on the scene.

JACK MARLEY
 (grinning)
 Thanks for helping me on a holiday
 Sage. We're almost done here, Sage.
 Just a few more cases to go.

SAGE BLUNT
 (nodding)
 Got it, Jack. This is going to make
 a lot of people happy.

Jack hands Sage a hundred dollar bill.

JACK MARLEY
 Take this... It's a New Year's bonus.

Sage takes the bill and shoves it in his pocket. The sound of
 a roaring engine fills the air as Lobo Loco rides up on a
 chopper Harley Davidson. He parks his bike and approaches
 Sage, a mischievous grin on his face.

LOBO LOCO
 (smiling)
 Hey, Sage! The gang's heading out
 tonight. Be at the club by eight
 o'clock tonight.

Sage hesitates, glancing at Jack before responding.

SAGE BLUNT
 (uncertain)
 Maybe, Lobo. I don't know yet.

LOBO LOCO
 Prospect-

Jack steps forward, his expression firm and protective he flexes on Lobo Loco..

JACK MARLEY

(sternly)

Prospect my ass. You heard Sage. He said maybe. Now get your punk ass to steppin.

Lobo Loco's grin fades as he realizes Jack means business. He nods reluctantly and backs away.

LOBO LOCO

(sighing)

Alright, alright. Catch you later, Sage.

Lobo Loco gets back on his bike and rides off, leaving Jack and Sage to finish loading the SUV. Sage looks at Jack, gratitude in his eyes.

SAGE BLUNT

(thankfully)

Thanks, Jack. I wasn't sure how to handle that.

JACK MARLEY

(smiling)

One thing I did learn in the Navy is Confucius says, when something smells bad get new friends.

Sage puts the last of the supplies in the back of the SUV and Jack closes the hatch.

SAGE BLUNT

Kind of like birds of feather flock together.

JACK MARLEY

Yep, and half of that flock is in the state pen and the other half is flying blindly to meet them there.

SAGE BLUNT

Are you saying I'm blind.

JACK MARLEY

We all are. I'm only beginning to see clearly now. But what am I supposed to with that bottle of Unicorn Syrup you left in my bedroom?

SAGE BLUNT

What are you talking about.

JACK MARLEY

Unicorn syrup, I found a bottle labeled Unicorn Syrup in my bedroom.

Jack and Sage, shaking his head, get in the SUV, ready to make their delivery and bring some joy to those in need.

INT. SUV - MORNING

Jack Marley is driving an SUV through the quiet streets, the city lights casting a soft glow on his face. Sage Blunt sits in the passenger seat, his expression a mix of confusion and curiosity.

SAGE BLUNT

(aha moment)

I know where that Unicorn syrup came from it's from that weird guy Gabe that comes in all the time?

JACK MARLEY

Gabe? Weird guy?

SAGE BLUNT

Yeah it's a kooky game he plays, he orders some super ridiculous coffee as a joke. I just give regular black coffee and he tips me twenty dollars cash!

JACK MARLEY

I remember him now. No wonder you rushed over to complete his order.

SAGE BLUNT

(dumbfounded)

Jack, I gotta say, this sudden transformation... it's like night and day. What happened to you?

Jack glances at Sage, a serene smile on his face.

JACK MARLEY

(calmly)

You've heard of an epiphany or a burning bush moment?

SAGE BLUNT

Yeah, I think so.

JACK MARLEY

Sage, it hit me like a ton of bricks. Last night I was shown the importance of my choices in life and the shadows they cast on the future. This morning I'm payin it forward and making a difference.

Sage raises an eyebrow, still trying to wrap his head around Jack's words.

SAGE BLUNT

(intrigued)

A burning bush moment, huh? Sounds intense.

JACK MARLEY

(nodding)

It was. I saw the impact of my actions, the ripples they create. And I knew I had to change. From now on it's good karma kid.

Sage leans back in his seat, absorbing Jack's revelation. The weight of Jack's words hangs in the air, a profound shift in their dynamic.

SAGE BLUNT

(thoughtfully)

Pay it forward... I like that. It's about time we made a difference.

Jack nods, his grip on the steering wheel firm and determined.

JACK MARLEY

(smiling)

Exactly. It's never too late to start making better choices. We're going to create our own good karma. Can you dig it?

The SUV continues down the road, the cityscape a backdrop to their newfound resolve. The journey ahead is uncertain, but Jack and Sage are ready to face it together, driven by a shared purpose.

INT. HAVEN'S HOPE HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

The shelter is bustling with activity as residents go about their day. Mike and Angie, the shelter coordinators, are busy organizing supplies.

The door swings open, and Jack Marley and Sage walk in, carrying large bags. Mike and Angie look up, bewildered.

MIKE
(surprised)
Jack? Sage? Happy New Year!

ANGIE
(smiling)
What a surprise! You come here to help?

JACK MARLEY
As a matter of fact we did.

A homeless man takes a sip of coffee and violently spits it out, clearly unimpressed with the quality.

HOMELESS MAN
(grimacing)
This coffee tastes like dirt.

Jack steps forward, a grin on his face.

JACK MARLEY
(laughing)
Well, we're here to change that.
Mike why are you serving these fine people this crap?

SAGE BLUNT
We've brought hundred pounds of hamburger and a case of real Colombian coffee.

Angie's eyes widen in surprise and gratitude.

JACK MARLEY
That's right. Hand picked by the lovely senorita Jaunita Cortez.

ANGIE
(teary-eyed)
Thank you so much, Jack. This means a lot to us.

Jack raises a hand, stopping her mid-sentence.

JACK MARLEY
(smiling)
We're not kidding about working. Sage and I are going to grill hamburgers for everyone today.

The room buzzes with excitement as the residents hear the news. Mike steps forward, a concerned look on his face.

MIKE

(cautiously)

Just so you know, we don't allow alcohol at the shelter.

Jack nods, his expression serious.

JACK MARLEY

(nodding)

That's great. I'm done drinking. I brought some soda pop for the people who don't drink coffee.

MIKE

You know it's easy to quit drinking and getting high. The hard part is staying sober. You know we have meetings here.

JACK MARLEY

I'm not sure about that?

SAGE BLUNT

You should try it. My mom goes to meetings.

JACK MARLEY

Cassia? What for?

SAGE BLUNT

Because she's crazier than a alcoholic... She married my dad.

ANGIE

How long have you been drinking and getting high Jack.

JACK MARLEY

Thirty five years at least.

ANGIE

Then your going to find it hard to change that habit in just one night.

JACK MARLEY

I'll try a meeting if it will make you feel better but I think a miracle happened to me last night.

The residents cheer, their spirits lifted by the unexpected generosity. Jack and Sage start setting up the grill, the aroma of cooking hamburgers filling the air when Tobi, 6, walks up.

Jack sees Tobi and gets the Barbie doll. The shelter is filled with laughter and joy as everyone gathers to enjoy the meal.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)

Tobi, young lady. Word is you're the glue that keeps this place running.

TOBI

Glue?

Jack hands a wide eyed Tobi the new Barbie Doll.

JACK MARLEY

Tobi, you know, Barbie isn't just a doll. She's a symbol of imagination and possibility. When I was your age, I remember playing with my toys and dreaming up all sorts of adventures. Barbie can be anything you want her to be—a doctor, an astronaut, a chef, or even a superhero. She teaches us that we can dream big and be anything we want to be. So, let your imagination run wild and remember, you have the power to create your own story, just like Barbie.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - CROSSWALK - NIGHT

The night is quiet except for the distant rumble of a TRAIN passing through, its lights flashing ominously. In the cool air, the faint scent of rain-soaked earth fills the atmosphere. Tammy, 20, her excitement palpable, struggles slightly to maneuver her new electric wheelchair over the train tracks at the crosswalk.

The wheels snag in the grooves, the electric hum of the motor buzzing louder as she pushes the throttle. Suddenly, the wheelchair pops a wheelie, forebodingly SCREECHING as it inches out of the crosswalk. Jack, standing on the sidewalk, chuckles softly, his demeanor warm and encouraging.

TAMMY

(breathlessly)

I've always hated this crosswalk.

JACK MARLEY
 (grinning)
 Then change the path you're
 traveling,

Tammy. The hospital is right over there.

A flickering streetlight casts a soft glow on the nearby
 MERCY GENERAL hospital, its façade a beacon of hope.

TAMMY
 (eyes sparkling)
 I can't believe in a year, I might
 be able to walk again.
 (beat)
 But... what if I'm not ready?

JACK MARLEY
 (pausing)
 It's normal to feel scared. I still
 have my own battles to face.

But we just take it one step at a time, right?

Tammy looks at him, reassured. Jack holds a door open for
 Tammy as she rolls into the hospital.

JACK MARLEY (CONT'D)
 And when you meet the new people at
 the dorms,

make sure they're good, decent folks. We deserve that.

Tammy nods, a smile tugging at her lips, no longer just
 excited but empowered as she moves forward.

EPILOGUE:

INT. SHARK BYTES CAFE - DAY

The café buzzes with activity—hints of fresh coffee float in
 the air, mingling with the sound of laughter and clinking
 dishes. Customers savor their meals while the staff moves
 gracefully between the tables. Jack, now reformed and
 radiating joy, stands behind the counter, his energy
 infectious. His mother, Molly, sits at a nearby table with
 travel brochures spread out, eyes sparkling with
 anticipation.

JACK
 (cheerfully)
 So, Mom, where do you want to go
 for our vacation? Hawaii? Europe?

MOLLY
 (smiling)
 Oh, Jack, anywhere with you is
 fine. But I've always dreamed of
 seeing the Eiffel Tower.

Emily rolls her eyes with a smile. Jack hands an order to a CUSTOMER, nodding enthusiastically, a hint of nostalgia in his eyes.

JACK
 (reflectively)
 You know, it feels surreal to think
 about how far I've come. Just two
 years sober... I can truly enjoy
 moments like this.

MOLLY
 (warmly)
 It's your strength that inspires
 me, Jack. Remember when we thought
 a trip to the café was a big deal?

A soft pause envelops them, the weight of memories lingering, before Sage walks in out of breath, waving and breaking the moment.

SAGE
 Hey, Jack! The skate park and
 arcade? It's packed today. We need
 more staff!

JACK
 (grinning)
 That's a good problem to have,
 Sage!

I'll see what I can do.

Just then, Tammy bursts through the door like a ray of sunshine. She waves at everyone and heads straight for Jack and Molly.

TAMMY
 (excitedly)
 Hey, everyone! How's it going?

JACK

(smiling)

Tammy! Great to see you. We're just planning a vacation. Want to join us?

TAMMY

(laughing)

I'd love to after I graduate this year! But first, I need some coffee...

Cassia enters next, clad in a vibrant yellow dress; her smile lights up the room.

JACK

(playfully)

Good morning, Cassia! Alexa shuffle songs from the eighties.

(80s song)

Want to dance Cassia? like we did at last year's summer bash?

Cassia rears her head back with a grin.

CASSIA

(teasingly)

One dance, Jack... and not like last year's summer bash. That's naughty and we have a meeting to get to.

They share a laugh, then turn their attention to the busy atmosphere surrounding them. Gabriel with walks in unnoticed by anyone, a calm presence amidst the hustle and bustle. Jack senses him, and their eyes meet.

GABRIEL

(observantly)

Well, well, well, look at Jack! Sober, smiling, and remembering where he parked his car last night. But let's not forget, every day is a new challenge.

Jack absorbs Gabriel's words, the truth resonating deeper. He turns to his friends, determination in his eyes.

JACK

I'm ready for all challenges.

I've learned—this journey isn't just about sobriety; it's about embracing every moment, even the hard ones.

A brief silence follows, the weight of his declaration lingering in the air.

MOLLY
(tearing up)
We're so proud of you, Jack.

The warmth of the café envelops them, the vibrant life around contrasting with the quiet strength in Jack's heart.

JACK
(with a grin)
Alright! Who wants some coffee?

Gabriel minus the halo in solid form stands in front of Jack.

GABRIEL
I'll have a white chocolate mocha,
with a double shot of espresso,
three pumps of holy water, a splash
of lime juice, topped with a
sprinkle of rose petals, and served
in a hollowed-out gourd.

Jack gets the bottle of "UNICORN SYRUP" from under the counter. He holds it grinning.

JACK MARLEY
You want a Dingleberry boost Gabe?
It's free of charge.

Gabriel looks at Jack with a smile as he twirls the bottle of "UNICORN SYRUP" around and Jack starts laughing.

Laughter erupts as the characters return to their joyful chatter, the scene harmonizing with the spirit of camaraderie and hope.

FADE OUT.