WEIGHT OF THE WIND

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FADE IN:

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

A page rips out of a composition book. At the kitchen table, disheveled and writing franticly, is JONAS MACKABEE, (29).

JONAS V.O.
The average person lives for twenty-eight-thousand-two-hundred and fifty-one days. Today’s my birthday. If I would have known what this life entailed, I never would’ve signed up for it.

A broken noose hangs loose from his neck. He finishes his scrawl, then rushes out of the cluttered house.

JONAS V.O.
Of those days, how many can we say we’ve actually lived?

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE – ROOM – DAY

Jonas, languid as he wakes, walks into his –

LIVINGROOM

He checks his e-mail. No messages. He slams the laptop shut.

PORCH

He drags a cigarette, then sips a coffee mug. His spiritless eyes are concentrated.

He tosses his coffee and goes inside.

JONAS V.O.
I’ve always felt like a spectator watching my life go by.

INT. TONY & LUIGIS RESTAURANT – DAY

It’s the lunch hour but the place lacks the bustle. As per rote, Jonas, drone-like, approaches one of the few tables.
He sets some drinks down and leans in.

    JONAS
    Ready to order?

A VOICE becomes audible. Jonas redirects his focus to TAYLOR, (20’s). He clears the dishes from his table and walks away.

    TAYLOR (PRE-LAP)
    Thank you. You’ve been a good table. It was my pleasure serving you today.
    CUSTOMERS O.S.
    ...No garlic, light sauce and lots and lots of cheese.
    (beat)
    Got all that?

Jonas re-faces his eager patrons. Musters a smile, then heads away. Jonas stands behind a computer as Taylor comes back. His customers leave.

    TAYLOR
    Ya’ll made my day. Come back and see me now.

They exchange smiles and exit. Jonas finishes his order, then writes in his book.

    TAYLOR
    Three dollars.

    JONAS
    How’d they make your day? Didn’t even leave you a decent tip...

    TAYLOR
    I made them smile. To me that’s worth it.

    JONAS
    Smiles don’t pay the bills.

    TAYLOR
    You have to remember, this job’s not my provider.
    (pointing up)
    He is. He could be for you too if you’d just open your eyes, Jonas.

Jonas gives a dubious nod, then saunters towards the back.

LATER

Jonas drops the bill at his table and scrambles away. Time passes.
Taylor gives him his check. A verse replaces the tip.

JONAS
Matt. 6:33. What’s that mean?

TAYLOR
Seek first the kingdom of God and all else will be added unto you.

Jonas stands, furious.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY
Jonas, unobservant, meanders past some homeless men nestled against a fence.
One of the men holds a sign that says, “Change.”

EXT./INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - NIGHT
Jonas sprints up the stoop with a sack of beer and enters.

LIVING ROOM
The place is trashed. He checks his email - no messages.

JONAS V.O.
Routine - it’s inevitable.

KITCHEN
He un-rings a can and opens the fridge. He throws the beer among an assortment of to-go boxes.
Pops the tab, then sips as if it were the one thing he’s been longing for.

MANAGER (PRE-LAP)
...Pretty soon you’re going to be running this place.

INT. TONY & LUIGIS RESTAURANT - DAY
Taylor chats with the manager. Jonas eavesdrops while holding back a deluge of tears.
He throws the cutlery down, progressively harder. Taylor nears and notices.
JONAS V.O.
How much longer can I keep this up?
I better get a response soon.

TAYLOR
Got a meeting for management...
Everything all right, Jonas?

JONAS
Fine.

TAYLOR
If you need to talk...

JONAS
It’s fine, Taylor.

He drops his rag and charges towards the manager.

JONAS
I’m ready for my check out.

INT./EXT. JONAS’ HOUSE - NIGHT
Jonas sits at his laptop, pensive. The cursor blinks on the wordless page.
Moments pass. Nothing. He jolts over to the fridge and snatches a beer.

PORCH

JONAS V.O.
Wish mom was still here. She always had comforting words.

He sips the beer and lights a cigarette.

JONAS V.O.
Maybe I’ll never know. Was she confused or was I?

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS’ MOM’S HOUSE - NIGHT/BEGIN FLASHBACK:
Jonas comes in wearing his work uniform. His MOM, (40’s), lies enfeebled on the couch. She does a double take.

MOM
You’re back...
JONAS
Told you I’d be over after work.

MOM
Yeah, you were just here. You had on that denim jacket I got for your birthday.

Jonas spots several pill bottles. His demeanor is surmise.

JONAS
I haven’t worn that jacket since the fall.

His mom remembers. He sits on the coffee table, annoyed.

MOM
What?

JONAS
Nothing. Feeling any better today?

She takes a pill from one of the bottles.

MOM
Thought I was - apparently not.

She throws it into her mouth, then washes it down with water.

JONAS
Maybe if you’d stop self medicating. Think those pills are playing with your mind.

MOM
Jonas, I’m not crazy. You just came in, gave me a big hug and told me you made it.

JONAS
I told you that?

MOM
Yes. Just a few minutes ago. You were acting strange. Still are.

JONAS
Mom, it pains me saying this, but you’re delusional. Yes, if ever I do sell a poem - be a published writer - you’ll be the first to know. I promise.

She stares, epiphanized.
MOM
You just did...

Jonas, now riled, breaks their concentrated stare. He storms towards the front.

JONAS
If that were the case, I wouldn’t keep working dead end jobs and praying for my big break. I wouldn’t worry when you’re gonna get better.

MOM
Speaking of your father, you’re starting to sound like him. I’ll tell you the same thing I told him - put your trust...

... In the Lord and you’ll be prosperous.

JONAS
When did I say anything about dad? Was it your scripture quoting nature that drove him away?

He edges closer to the door. Hand on the knob - about to open, but recessed by his mother’s compassion.

MOM
Jonas. I love you very much. You’re having a bad day - I get it.

JONAS
No, you don’t get it. I’m going nowhere fast - holding on to a faith I don’t have. Dad didn’t.

MOM
Your father may have left us but God hasn’t.

JONAS
All I think - if there is a God, than why won’t he listen? Probably hear from the devil before him.

MOM
Don’t say that. He is listening, honey. Even if you can’t hear him. Remember how He gave me the verse?
JONAS
Yeah, you found it in one of your pill bottles and yet, you continue taking them - I don’t get it.

MOM
It’s hard breaking the cycles we build for ourselves. But that’s where faith and prayer come in.

JONAS
You’ve got your faith - hopefully that’s enough.
(opening the front door)
I don’t have the patience for this tonight - I’ll see you later.

The DOOR slams as he exits.

BACK TO:

PORCH/END FLASHBACK:

Jonas zaps back from his memory.

JONAS V.O.
How’s my life succumbed to this?
I’ve pushed everyone away...

He tosses his cigarette and drags himself into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. JONAS’ HOUSE - NIGHT/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jonas snaps twigs from a tree. He gives a melancholic stare to the stars.

Cozy, next to a fire is, BIRDIE WILSHIRE, (20’s). He sets the kindling among the flames, then sits next to her.

JONAS
Mesmerizing, isn’t it?

She rubs the back of his head. He sips a beer.

BIRDIE
It’s times like these that all of our troubles seem to evaporate and nothing else matters.
JONAS
If only it were that simple.

BIRDIE
It is that simple.

She reaches for his hand. He’s reluctant.

JONAS
What are you doing?

BIRDIE
Just give me your hand.

She traces a circle in his palm with her finger.

BIRDIE
This is us. And this is the world.

She curls his fingers into a fist.

BIRDIE
Just clasp your fingers around it.

They linger in each other’s eyes.

BIRDIE
Realize how young we truly are and all the possibilities that await. The world is at our fingertips - if we’d just take hold of it.

Jonas pulls back, laughing.

BIRDIE
What? Why are you laughing?

JONAS
You make the world sound so poetic but it’s not. Love, dreams – faith. They’re just illusions.

BIRDIE
You don’t believe that. Don’t pretend to be stoic.

Jonas sips his beer, straight-faced.

JONAS
Who’s pretending? I wonder why your with me.

He throws his empty can into the blaze. She wraps her arm around him. He watches the sparks ascend.
JONAS
I'm a nobody going nowhere. I’m just holding you back.

She redirects his eyes to face hers.

BIRDIE
Stop. I love who you are. I have faith in us -- In you. So pinch me because I’m dreaming. Maybe not tonight, maybe not next week but one day... One day you’re going to stop looking to the future to appreciate who you are right now.

Jonas is taken aback.

BIRDIE
Just stop. Because I appreciate you for who you are today. Someone who’s determined to achieve his dream. And you will. Have faith in that.

His eyes glisten. She hugs him firmly.

END FLASH BACK:

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonas strikes some cacophonous chords on his piano. He shakes his head in despair, then turns it off.

EXT. RED POPPY LIBRARY - DAY

An ashtray overflows next to Jonas’ open composition book. Only a few words written.

He sips his coffee. SADY MCCLEARY, (25), warm with doleful eyes, approaches with a coffee pot.

JONAS
I’m fine.

She begins to refill his coffee. Synchronously, he pulls his cup away. Coffee spills everywhere.

SADY
I’m so sorry.
He leaps up, air-drying his journal. They bump into each other. Her keys fall to the ground.

SADY
I feel so bad. Let me get a towel.

He picks up her keys and hands them to her.

JONAS
I don’t know why I moved the cup.

SADY
I hope I didn’t ruin whatever you were working on.

Jonas ignores her and sits back at the table. He flips through the book and notices a page missing.

SADY
You know, I intern for Candor Mag... If you ever wanted me to submit something - I could.

She tries to make this awkward encounter less awkward.

SADY
I want to be a publicist someday.

He runs his finger along the torn edge of his book.

JONAS V.O.
I don’t remember tearing out a page.

Her dismayed smile fades. She walks back inside. Jonas turns.

JONAS
Sady...

Too late.

JONAS V.O.
She’s pretty -- but she’s not Birdie.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

The place is slammed. Birdie and Jonas are at a table towards the middle. Dinner’s pretty much wrapped up. Jonas rises.
JONAS
(before she can speak)
I know. I know. Eventually I’m gonna quit. You don’t need to keep reminding me.

Birdie’s put back.

BIRDIE
I wasn’t going to say anything.

He gives a small smile and walks away.

PATIO OF RESTAURANT

Jonas smokes and watches the passing cars. He looks to Birdie through the window. Her back’s to him and she’s very still.

RESTAURANT LOBBY

Jonas heads back to his table. A guy in a denim jacket rushes past. They bump shoulders. Jonas is unable to see his face.

TABLE

Jonas arrives back. Birdie holds a delighted smile.

JONAS
What?

BIRDIE
Sometimes you make me feel unappreciated. But then you do something like that. I’m falling for you fast.

Jonas stands, perplexed.

JONAS V.O.
How could she possibly think that about me? Look how I reacted.

BACK TO:

RED POPPY LIBRARY – CONTINUOUS/END FLASHBACK:

Jonas snaps out of his memory. Perturbed, he grabs his stuff.

JONAS
Stupid.
Sady tacitly watches him walk away from inside.

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - NIGHT

To-go boxes scatter the kitchen table. Jonas habitually refreshes his email.

JONAS V.O.
This can’t be my life.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOTS BISTRO - NIGHT/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

A large crowd watches a projection screen. Jonas and Birdie are in the middle.

He focuses on the images. Her on him.

She reaches for his hand. He puts his arm around her, dismissing the moment. She’s chagrined.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - ROOM - DAY

Jonas’ PHONE rings. His eyes flutter awake. Missed it. He listens to the voice mail.

BILL V.O.
Jonas, after careful evaluation of your writing sample, we’ve determined this wouldn’t be the best fit for Candor Magazine. We wish you the best of luck wherever your writing takes you.

Jonas slowly lowers the phone in defeat.

INT. TONY & LUIGIS RESTAURANT - DAY

Unlike before, the place is brimming. Jonas clears dishes from a large table of elderly patrons.

A nearby table’s adorned with pictures. One of them falls over.

He doesn’t notice. Hands full, he backs away, then PSSHHH! It appears like he ran into an invisible wall.
Shattered dishes scatter the floor. That’s it. Last straw. He storms away.

TAYLOR
Where are you going?

He rushes out of the building. Taylor watches him.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Jonas strides down the street noticeably more distraught than before. He approaches the homeless men once again.

HOMELESS MAN
Change?

Jonas stares straight, continuing to pass.

JONAS
I don’t have any money.

HOMELESS MAN
I was just saying, looks like you could use some change.

Jonas comes towards him.

JONAS
A bum’s got advice for me...?

HOMELESS MAN
That word - so circumstantial. Appearances are deceiving.

JONAS
Look, I gotta be somewhere.

He turns to walk away.

HOMELESS MAN
We all do. But remember, the decisions we make pave our future.

JONAS
Ugh-huh, looks like you made all the right decisions.

HOMELESS MAN
Where we are’s a circumstance of how we chose to deal with it. I just choose to trust in the Lord.

Jonas faces him once again.
JONAS
You talk to God?

HOMELESS MAN
Everyday.

JONAS
Well next time you do, tell Him I’m tired of waiting on Him.

HOMELESS MAN
Maybe he’s waiting on you. Can’t blame God for your actions.

JONAS
Here’s an action.
He pulls out his wallet and throws cash at the man.

JONAS
Buy yourself some better advice.
Jonas turns and this time, actually walks away.

HOMELESS MAN
He loves you.
From a distance, Jonas looks back. The homeless man’s handing the money to someone else and praying.
Jonas, disgusted or intrigued, slowly shuffles away.

EXT. SIX HUNDRED PIZZERIA - LATER
Jonas stops a block away. People are gathered in camaraderie.

CROSS FADE:
The people become him and his friends. They have a blast.

DISSOLVE - BACK TO:
His friends fade back into the strangers. Jonas laments for a moment, then continues on his way.

JONAS V.O.
Making a deal with the devil’s never sounded so appealing. But I gotta remember, if God doesn’t exist, how can he?
EXT./INT. JONAS’ HOUSE – NIGHT

A MATCH strikes. Jonas ambles up his stoop. A masculine silhouette watches him enter the house.

KITCHEN

Jonas sips a beer and scrolls through previous text messages from Birdie. He sits back and sulks.

PORCH – LATER

Jonas lights a cigarette and stares ahead, blankly.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY – DAY/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jonas stands near a big blue mailbox. He looks around, then walks across the street to ROOTS BISTRO.

JONAS V.O.
I still don’t know what I was doing there. It was one of those times when I thought I knew exactly what I was going to say...

INT. ROOTS BISTRO – DAY

Birdie’s behind the bar as Jonas approaches.

EMPLOYEE
Speaking of the devil...

BIRDIE
Jonas, I had the strangest dream with you last night.

Her PHONE rings. She’s about to answer, but Jonas stops her.

JONAS V.O.
...Then I opened my mouth and something different came out.

BIRDIE
I can’t keep doing this.

BIRDIE
Doing what?
JONAS
You’re good at taking care of people. I’m just not one to be taken care of.

BIRDIE
Are you breaking up with me?

JONAS
We just need to realize we would’ve never worked out.

BIRDIE
What are you talking about, Jonas?

Jonas stares back, bemoaning.

JONAS
I’m sorry.

He exits the bar. Her PHONE rings again.

BACK TO:

EXT./INT. JONAS’ HOUSE – NIGHT/END FLASHBACK:

PORCH
Jonas finishes his beer. Tears flood his eyes.

JONAS V.O.
Always believed I couldn’t get hurt if I never got close to anybody.

LIVINGROOM
He walks in and throws his empty can against a wall.

JONAS
Here I am God. Can you hear me? Can you see me now? You want change...

KITCHEN
He shoves everything off the table. Trashes his house even more, if you can believe that.

His destructive fit lands him against a wall, bawling in hysterics.
JONAS
What are you waiting for?

INT./EXT. JONAS’ HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Jonas takes a shower. Steam fills the room. The door cracks open and the water cuts off.

He opens the curtain and grabs a towel. The gaping door catches his attention.

...But there’s no one there.

JONAS V.O.
Maybe when you’re close to death someone’s trying to tell you something. Or maybe not.

He steps out of the tub and swings the door shut.

BEDROOM

Jonas puts on his denim jacket.

JONAS V.O.
I tried to think of the way that translated my mental anguish...

KITCHEN

He drags a chair from his dinette set through the back door.

BACKYARD

The chair’s positioned under a low-hanging tree branch. A noose drops from the limb. Jonas steps onto the chair.

JONAS V.O.
...This is all I could come up with.

His hands tremble as he slides the noose down his tear-streaked cheeks. He takes several deep breaths. In. Out.

JONAS V.O.
Happy birthday...

He squeezes his eyes shut - then steps off. The chair falls over. His body left writhing until no more.
INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - DAY
Jonas jolts awake. He looks around, then springs out of bed.

LIVINGROOM
He pans across the mess he made.

EXT./INT. TONY & LUIGIS RESTAURANT - DAY
Jonas rounds the corner, tucking in his shirt. The parking lot’s full. The place is busy.

RESTAURANT LOBBY
Jonas enters. Taylor, now in slacks and a tie, greets him.

TAYLOR
Good afternoon. Just one today?

JONAS
What?

TAYLOR
How many is it going to be?

Jonas walks past him, towards the computer counter.

JONAS
Taylor, what are you talking about? And why are you dressed like that?

TAYLOR
Excuse me, you can’t go back there.

JONAS
What are you doing? It’s me, Jonas.

Taylor edges closer to him, very confused.

TAYLOR
Okay, Jonas. I don’t know you.

Jonas steps out and stares at him.

JONAS
What’s going on here?

TAYLOR
I don’t know but I think I need you to leave.
JONAS
What? No. I’m not going anywhere.

TAYLOR
Okay, then I’ll call the cops.

Other employees approach and watch the scene. Clueless.

JONAS
Okay, I’m going...

He exits.

PATIO
Jonas steps out.

He realizes he’s not in uniform, but rather a denim jacket and jeans.

He darts away.

EXT./INT. THE UPTOWN SOCIAL - VERANDA - NIGHT
Gazing over the city lights, Jonas chugs a beer. He pulls out his phone and dials Birdie. RING - RING.

BEE V.O.
Jaybird coffee.

JONAS
I - I’m sorry. Who is this?

BEE V.O.
Jaybird coffee. Can I help you?

Confused, he clicks off the phone and makes sure he dialed Birdie. He then dials another number.

GARLAND V.O.
Hello?

JONAS
Hey, man. I know it’s been awhile but something’s happening to me right now. Can we meet up?

GARLAND V.O.
Who is this?

JONAS
Jonas...
GARLAND V.O.
I don’t know what kind of game you’re trying to play, but it’s not funny.

CLICK. Jonas lowers his phone. He gulps the last of his beer.

BAR
Jonas holds his empty bottle across the busy bar. He turns and looks over the crowd. A bartender sets down another beer.

BARTENDER
Here ya’ go, Jonas.

With that, the whole place freezes. Everyone’s still and stares at him. Aghast, he slowly backs up and sprints away.

BATHROOM
Jonas hunches over the faucet. He splashes his face.

SATAN O.S.
I heard you’ve been looking for me.

Jonas nearly jumps out of his skin. He turns to see SATAN, (40’s). He’s tall, dapper and sporting a white tuxedo.

There’s half of an unlit cigar pressed between his lips.

JONAS
Who are you?

Jonas looks him up and down.

SATAN
I’ve got many names – all of which are the least of importance. What is important is you called on me. I heard your cry and here I came.

JONAS
I didn’t call on you.

SATAN
I beg to differ.

JONAS
What did I do?
SATAN
Remember...

CUT TO:

EXT. JONAS’ HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY
Jonas kicks the chair aside. His body dangles.

BACK TO:

UPTOWN SOCIAL - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS
Jonas gapes.

JONAS
Oh, God.

SATAN
Not quite.

JONAS
Am I dead?

SATAN
Only on the inside. Your new life awaits you.

JONAS
What do you mean?

SATAN
Come with me.

VERANDA
The doors open. Satan and Jonas walk out. People scatter the balcony, all reading something.

They glance over to Jonas. He and Satan stand at the edge.

SATAN
You were in a bad place. No friends. No love. You said it yourself, this can’t be your life.

JONAS
How did you...?
SATAN
So many prayers. Where was He? I couldn’t watch any longer. So here I am. For you, Jonas.

JONAS
For me?

SATAN
That’s right. To answer your prayers and give you your desires.

JONAS
...And what’s that?

SATAN
Look around you.

Jonas looks around. People whisper and stare at him.

JONAS
What’s everyone looking at?

Satan walks over to a nearby table.

SATAN
Why don’t you see for yourself?

He jerks a Candor Magazine from someone and hands it to Jonas. He flips to the middle.

There’s a two page spread of a poem that he wrote. He gapes.

JONAS
But how?

Satan STRIKES a match and lights his cigar.

SATAN
I don’t have the best reputation, but I’ve got feelings too. Maybe more than Him if He can’t see the pain and hurt in this world.

He throws the match over the edge. People begin to walk over.

SATAN
I’m just trying to perform a service and clear my name. After all, He didn’t answer your prayers.

MALE STRANGER
It’s you. Will you sign this?
He holds out the magazine. A small crowd forms around Jonas.

    JONAS
    Is this a joke? This can’t be happening.

    SATAN
    No games. No gimmicks. This is real and this is really happening right now. They’re here for you, Jonas.

Jonas lives the moment. Smiling. Happy. Oblivious as Satan backs away from the crowd.

    SATAN
    There is just one matter of business, but we’ll get to that at another time.

Satan vanishes. Jonas just keeps signing magazines. The moment he’s been waiting for.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY
RING. RING. Jonas has his phone to his ear.

    BEE V.O.
    Jaybird coffee...

He lowers his phone, revealing the establishment. He enters.

INT./EXT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE/JAYBIRD - DAY
JAY MAC, (40’s), sits in the back with his laptop. He looks expectant as Jonas walks up to the counter.

His wife BEE, (40’s), rings up a patron.

    BEE
    Have a glorious day.

She smiles. The patron walks away. Jay comes around.

    JAY
    Why don’t I take over for awhile?

    BEE
    You sure?

    JAY
    Yeah.
He kisses her cheek. She walks away. Jonas looks around.

JAY
I wasn’t sure when to expect you.

JONAS
This is all gonna take some getting used to, I guess.

JAY
What’s that?

JONAS
People knowing who I am.

JAY
How about some coffee?

JONAS
Yeah, okay.

Jay turns and begins pouring the coffee.

JONAS
Place looks different than I remember.

JAY
My wife and I made some changes when we bought it years ago.

CUT TO:

INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE - DAY/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jonas and Birdie walk through the front door. They appear happy. The place looks different now.

BIRDIE
Wouldn’t it be cool, once we got married, we owned a coffee shop?

Jonas doesn’t look as interested in the idea as she does.

BIRDIE
You would’ve quit smoking by then and would sit over there and write while I ran the place.

She pulls him close.

BIRDIE
How does that sound?
JONAS
Sounds like a plan.

He steps over to the counter. Her eyes follow him.

BACK TO:

CIANFRANI’S/JAYBIRD – CONTINUOUS/END FLASHBACK:

Jay hands Jonas the cup of coffee. Jonas shakes his head.

JAY
Looks like you’ve got a lot going on behind those eyes.

JONAS
You have no idea. Probably wouldn’t even believe me if I told you.

JAY
I’m an old man, Jonas. Not too much you can say that I wouldn’t believe.

CIANFRANI’S/JAYBIRD PATIO

Jay and Jonas sip coffee at a table. There’s a crucifix around Jay’s neck. Jonas motions to Jay with his cigarettes.

JAY
Quit long ago.

Lighting his cigarette...

JONAS
I’ve quit quitting.

JAY
You will. And it will be the greatest day of your life.

Jonas notices Jay’s necklace. Jay holds it up.

JAY
Birthday present from my wife. Seems like a lifetime ago.

JONAS
You religious?
JAY
Not in the traditional since, but I can tell you, He’s real. I’m guessing you’re not?

JONAS
Not really. Guess that’s kind of how I got here.

JAY
What makes you say that?

Jonas sips his coffee and leans in.

JONAS
You ever feel like you can’t distinguish between a dream and reality?

JAY
You mean deja vu?

JONAS
I mean like us coming out here. We both remember doing it, right?

JAY
I suppose so.

JONAS
Well, who’s not to say we’ve been out here the whole time? Maybe our memories only serve to comfort us.

JAY
How do you mean?

JONAS
I keep replaying a memory in my head over and over again and I can’t seem to figure it out. I was at the end of my rope - ready to end it all. And just when I thought I did, I woke up here.

JAY
Believe it or not, I was in your shoes once. Had lost hope. No faith. Ready to call it quits just like you -- then I met someone.

JONAS
Your wife?
JAY
No. I had pushed her, along with everyone else, away. Was burdened with regret. Until someone told me something I’ll never forget.

Jonas gazes at him, intently.

JAY
It was right here. He sat across from me just like you and said, We may wear our scars but they don’t define who we are. Life is the gift of joy and once we realize that, we can live every minute and love every second.

He holds up the crucifix.

JAY
...And He makes it all possible.

JONAS
If that were the case than He would have shown up. And I wouldn’t be living this - blessing or curse.

JAY
Blessing or curse, it’s what you choose to do with it. Remember though, you bite at the devils heals and eventually he’ll bite back. Just have to have courage.

JONAS
I’ve never had a courageous heart.

JAY
It’s something that comes in time. And when that time comes, you have a choice to make. Whose side are you going to stand behind?

Jonas gazes out and sees Birdie ride her bike past. Jay notices and stands from his chair.

JAY
I better get back in there.

Jonas toggles his vision from Jay to Birdie. She’s chaining her bike to a rack across the street at Roots Bistro.
JONAS
Just realized I don’t know your name.

JAY
You can call me Jay.

He holds out his hand. Jonas rises. They shake.

JAY
Come back and see me. Anytime.

He turns and heads for the door.

JAY
Remember Jonas, even if you’ve given up on Him, doesn’t mean He’s given up on you.

Jay’s about to walk in.

JONAS
Who was it that you met?

JAY
Everybody. And believe me, finding that one person to share it with, makes it that much more worth it.

JONAS
Where is she, your wife?

Jay looks over to Birdie, then to Jonas.

JAY
Around here -- Somewhere.

He smiles again, then walks inside.

INT. ROOTS BISTRO - DAY

The place is empty. Birdie replaces a keg behind the bar. Jonas walks over.

JONAS
Tell me you know me.

She rises and inspects him.

BIRDIE
You do look familiar but I don’t believe we’ve met. Wait a minute, you’re that guy from the magazine.
Jonas’ smile fades.

BIRDIE
Don’t let the sudden rush of fame get to your head.

JONAS
I’m being serious.

BIRDIE
When are you ever serious, Jonas?

JONAS
Things are really crazy right now.

She grabs a magazine from below and throws it down in front of him.

BIRDIE
Overnight success can be overwhelming. But, what would I know about that?

JONAS
Your time will come. I just wish it didn’t happen the way it did.

She shrugs.

BIRDIE
Do you want a drink or something?

He points to the tap she just replaced. She walks over and begins to fill a glass.

JONAS
Glad to see you still working here.

BIRDIE
Just until I can open my own place.

JONAS
The coffee shop - you always loved taking care of people.

She sets the beer down in front of him. He sips the foam.

BIRDIE
What are you doing here?

JONAS
I needed to see a familiar face.
She rolls her eyes and walks to the other side of the bar. She wipes it down with a rag. Jonas follows her.

**BIRDIE**
Now that you’ve made it, you think you can waltz back in here and pick up where you left off?

**JONAS**
I know things ended badly. And I know it probably doesn’t mean anything now, but I’m sorry.

She stops wiping the counter and looks him in the eyes.

**BIRDIE**
You hurt me, Jonas. You cut me deep. And a lousy apology isn’t going to heal the pain. Besides, things are different now.

She begins unloading a rack of glasses. Jonas rushes over.

**JONAS**
I know things are different -- I’m different now.

**BIRDIE**
It’s not who you become after you’ve made it. It’s who you are while you’re trying to get there.

**JONAS**
Believe me, I’d go back and fix things if I could.

A customer walks over to the counter.

**BIRDIE**
It’s too late to fix things.

She holds up her left hand. There’s a ring on her finger. Jonas swallows hard.

**BIRDIE**
(to customer)
What can I get for you?

**CUSTOMER**
I’ll take a pint, please.

She grabs a glass and pours the beer.
It’s the small things you learn to appreciate once you know they’re gone for good. As much as it doesn’t come across sincere, truly I am happy for you.

Jonas finishes his beer and approaches the customer. He opens his wallet and takes out some money.

JONAS
Let me get this.

CUSTOMER
Hey, you’re that guy.

JONAS
Yeah... I’m that guy...

CUSTOMER
Cheers.

The customer walks off.

JONAS
Suppose I’ll be here for awhile. Maybe we can get together. I’d love to hear about your new life.

He smiles and exits. Her eyes never leave him.

EXT. RED POPPY LIBRARY - NIGHT
Jonas writes in his book alone at a table. Sady walks over and sets down a cup of coffee.

JONAS
Do you - know who I am?

She smirks.

SADY
Don’t flatter yourself.

She turns to walk back inside, then spins back around.

SADY
Don’t do what?

Jonas shrugs. Sady glares, then walks back inside. Jonas sits back, shocked.
INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - DAY

Jonas springs up in bed.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN THE SQUARE - DAY

Jonas paces through the crowd. A PIANO becomes audible that only he seems to hear. It leads to a staircase. He ascends.

INT. A PREMIUM BLEND - DAY

Jonas reaches the top of the stairs. It opens to a large empty room. The MUSIC’s behind him.

He turns to see a suave man who looks oddly familiar.

JONAS
  I’m sorry if I’m interrupting. I heard music and wanted to see where it was coming from.

PIANIST
  Not at all. Come in.

Jonas walks over. The Pianist continues to play.

JONAS
  I’m surprised nobody else heard it.

PIANIST
  Shocking what you’ll hear when you’re actually listening. You play?

JONAS
  Not really. Never had the patience for it. That and I lacked the talent.

PIANIST
  We’ve all got a talent in us somewhere. We just have to realize what it is and what to do with it.

JONAS
  Sounds beautiful.

PIANIST
  The piano’s just like everything else. Relationships - work ethic, they all require one thing if they’re going to prosper.
JONAS
What’s that?

PIANIST
Come give it a shot.

Jonas sits beside the man.

JONAS
I don’t know what to play.

PIANIST
Play this.

He demonstrates some notes. Jonas plays along with him. It sounds great.

PIANIST
You’re a natural.

They play together. Time passes. They both come to a stop.

JONAS
That was fun. Wish I would’ve taken the time to learn how to play.

PIANIST
Many things we can learn, Jonas. But until we master the art of patience; we can’t succeed in anything.

JONAS
You’ll never fail that way.

PIANIST
You’ll never fail if you never try. And if you don’t ever try, you’ll never know what could’ve been.

Jonas smirks with realization and stands.

JONAS
Well, thank you. And for the...

He mimics playing the piano.

PIANIST
Anytime. With the right heart, all things can be accomplished.

Jonas heads back down the stairs. The MUSIC stops. He turns and eases up a few steps.
There's no trace of the pianist. He turns and descends.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN THE SQUARE - DAY

Jonas steps out, stirred by what just transpired. He pulls out the magazine from his back pocket and stares at it.

INT./EXT. CANDOR MAGAZINE - DAY

Desks fill the small lobby. Jonas enters and looks around. BILL GUNThER, (40’s) walks out of an office and sees him. He also has a striking resemblance to someone else.

BILL
Mister Mackabee, how ya’ doing, baby?

JONAS
Good, I guess.

BILL
Did you see your two-page spread? Nice, isn't it?

JONAS
It's better than what I could've imagined.

Sady rounds a corner and drops a large stack of magazines. She looks flustered as she kneels down and picks them up.

BILL
(to Sady)
Try to be worth the time here.
(to jonas)
I don’t know where we keep getting these useless interns.

Jonas starts to head over but Bill grips his shoulder.

BILL
We’re starting to prep this months issue. When can we expect another awe-inspiring prolific prose piece from the hot, unattainable, Jonas Mackabee?

Jonas and Sady exchange looks. Back to Bill

JONAS
Soon.
Still gripping his shoulder, Bill directs him towards the front door.

BILL
Okay, sooner the better. Ya’ know what I mean? Sales are up by fifty percent. Oh, which reminds me.
(to Sady)
Sady, get that envelope off of my desk.
(to Jonas)
This magazine’s lucky to have you.

Sady walks over and hands the envelope to Bill.

JONAS
Hey, Sady.

No response. She walks away. Bill hands Jonas the envelope.

BILL
Saves me the effort of mailing it to you. Well, waste no time, my friend. Get back to it.

Jonas turns to exit.

BILL
Oh, Jonas, you’re contract’s going to have to be resigned in a few days. Don’t forget.

Bill winks to him, then turns and heads for his office. He picks up one of the magazines. Jonas looks at Sady once more.

BILL
I told you not to print this. This is totally useless now. You’re just wasting my time here.

Sady looks over with somber eyes, then walks into Bill’s office. Jonas exits.

CANDOR FRONT

Jonas opens the envelope and beams. There’s a check for fifty thousand dollars. He COUGHS lightly.

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

At the table, Jonas sips a beer and holds out the check.
JONAS

Is this really happening?

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jonas stops typing on his computer and leans back in thought. GARLAND CARSON, (20’s), strums a GUITAR loudly behind him.

GARLAND

You going to buy me recording time with your first big check?

JONAS

I’m not going to get any checks if I can’t write. Can you just - take a break or something?

GARLAND

Jeez. Sorry, man.

He sets the guitar aside and begins packing up his stuff.

GARLAND

I should get going anyway. You’re coming to the show tonight, right?

JONAS

I’ve got too much to do. I don’t know why you keep wasting your time playing free shows at bars.

GARLAND

Is that what you think I’m doing? Wasting my time?

JONAS

C’mon, Garland. Quit romanticizing a musicians life. Chances of you actually making it are pretty slim.

Garland grabs his guitar case and heads for the door.

GARLAND

You know the difference between you and me? I support you in your dreams. Even if you are going nowhere with it.

Garland charges out of the house.

BACK TO:
JONAS’ HOUSE - CONTINUOUS/END FLASHBACK:

Jonas sips a beer, afflicted.

JONAS
I did it mom. If only you could see me now.

He shuts his eyes.

EXT./INT. JONAS’ MOM’S HOUSE - NIGHT

PATIO

Jonas opens his eyes. He’s outside his mother’s house. He looks around, confused.

JONAS
This is too lucid to be just a memory. Can I actually be here right now?

He touches the bushes, then slowly enters the house.

LIVINGROOM

His mom lays on the couch, drifting in and out of sleep.

JONAS
Wait. I remember this night.

Tears streak his cheeks as he anxiously edges closer to her.

JONAS
Mom?

MOM
Hey, honey. What’s the matter?

She becomes alert and sits up. Jonas breaks down and lunges at her. He gives her a backbreaking hug.

JONAS
I can’t believe it.

MOM
What is it?

He lets her go and sits on the edge of the coffee table.
JONAS
I just missed you, that’s all.

MOM
I miss you too, babe.

JONAS
I always wanted you to be the first person I told when I made it - and I did it.

MOM
Honey, that’s great. I always knew you would.

He holds a smile through the tears and grabs her hand.

JONAS
It’s so good to see you.

MOM
I always love when you come visit me. You know that.

JONAS
I just want to tell you that I love you so much. And I am so proud of who you were. You were a great mom.

Jonas leans down and gives her another big hug.

JONAS
Please forgive me for what I said about dad.

She holds a curious look as they break from the hug.

MOM
Honey, what are you talking about?

He sees the pill bottles on the table. A CAR pulls up outside. He runs over to the window and looks out.

MOM O.S.
Why are you using past-tense?

Someone’s in a familiar car, finishing a cigarette. He turns back to his mom.

JONAS
Mom, do me a favor - take your own advice. Put your trust in the Lord.
MOM
My trust’s always in the Lord.
Honey, is everything all right?

He looks out the window again.

JONAS
I’m not sure, but I love you very much.

He walks out of the door.

PATIO

He’s crouched behind the bushes. His actual self, wearing his work uniform, gets out of the car and walks towards the house.

JONAS
Oh my God.

He runs over. He and his actual self walk right through each other.

Jonas is freaked. His other self doesn’t notice and enters the house.

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE – ROOM – DAY

Jonas bounces awake, practically hyperventilating. He looks around, then checks his hands and the rest of his body.

EXT. RED POPPY LIBRARY – DAY

A near-empty ashtray sits beside Jonas as he writes furiously in his journal. Sady walks out with a pot of coffee.

JONAS
Hey, what was all that about the other day?

SADY
What do you care?

She tops off his coffee cup.

JONAS
What do you mean?

SADY
Don’t pretend to like me.
JONAS
I’m not pretending.

SADY
You think I’m worthless just like everyone else.

JONAS
Sady, I don’t think that.

SADY
I know you’re riding this wave of adoration right now, but I’ve got news for you, Jonas. Your not as world-class as you think you are.

She walks away from his table.

JONAS
Sady, wait.

SATAN O.S.
How’s everything going?

Startled, Jonas swings around to see Satan sitting across from him. He’s smoking a cigar.

JONAS
Jesus!

SATAN
No, just me.

JONAS
You scared me.

SATAN
I can have that affect sometimes.

JONAS
I should go talk to her.

Jonas motions to rise. Satan snuffs out his cigar.

SATAN
Don’t worry about her. You’ve got your own problems to think about. Getting some work done, I hope.

JONAS
I haven’t had inspiration like this in a long time.
SATAN
I just wanted to check on you. Make sure everything’s satisfactory.

JONAS
Honestly, it’s all a bit overwhelming.

SATAN
That’ll pass.

JONAS
Can you at least explain to me what’s happening?

SATAN
What needs explaining? This is the life you wanted. Live it. Worry about nothing else. There is, however, one small matter of business that needs attention.

JONAS
What is it? I’m just so confused.

SATAN
Life is confusing, isn’t it? But as the old adage suggests, the devil’s in the details. I won’t take up your time with that right now – You’ve got company.

JONAS
Who?

Satan steps aside. Birdie heads towards them.

SATAN
See you in due time.

JONAS
Wait, what business?

Jonas turns to speak but COUGHS lightly. Satan’s already gone. Birdie approaches the table.

BIRDIE
Thought I’d find you here. Who were you talking to?

JONAS
Nobody.
BIRDIE
It’s a beautiful day, I was thinking of going for a walk. I thought you’d like to walk with me.

Jonas smiles to her.

JONAS
I’d like that.

He stands and gathers his stuff. He puts his lighter into his pocket, then pulls out a key.

BIRDIE
What’s that?

JONAS
A key...

BIRDIE
To what?

JONAS
I’m not sure. C’mon.

He puts the key back into his pocket. They walk away.

EXT. SAN GABRIEL PARK - DAY

Jonas and Birdie walk along the edge of the river.

JONAS
So, Birdie got married. Sounds like a title of a poem or something.

BIRDIE
You would say something like that.

JONAS
What? You were the bird I couldn’t tame.

BIRDIE
That’s not how I remember it.

She looks at him. He looks down to the ground.

JONAS
I’m still kicking myself about that, so you know.

BIRDIE
What can I say? I’m a great catch.
JONAS
Some birds aren’t meant to be caught.

BIRDIE
Don’t write us off like that. This isn’t one of your poems, Jonas.

JONAS
I know. I’m sorry.

Realizing this could be a moment, Birdie reacts.

BIRDIE
So, your writing took off...

JONAS
Surprisingly so.

They sit at a pick-nick table.

BIRDIE
When’s your next public appearance? Any speeches or a book signing in the future?

JONAS
God, I hope not. I’ve got a meager oratory at best, as you know. Completely and utterly afraid.

BIRDIE
I remember...

She notices an elderly couple on a bench in the distance. She looks back to Jonas. He’s transfixed on her.

BIRDIE
Always thought that’d be us someday.

JONAS
We’re still young.

BIRDIE
But there’s no time left.

JONAS
Where’s your guy at?

BIRDIE
He’s not here right now. You and him are a lot alike, yet different in many ways.
JONAS
We cling to what’s familiar. Perhaps that’s why I pushed you away. Fear of the unknown.

BIRDIE
One day you’ll understand; fear’s just an obstacle to overcome.

JONAS
I’m working on it.

He gives a sullen smile. She shifts her focus from the elderly couple back to him.

BIRDIE
I’ve got an idea.

INT. ROOTS BISTRO - NIGHT

The place is elbow-to-elbow. A MAN reads a poem on stage. Oddly enough, he looks familiar too - but who is he?

Jonas and Birdie stand at the back of the crowd.

GUY ON STAGE
...We count the stars, innumerable in sight. Those tiny specs of dust that illuminate the night. Though our path may not be clear, each step is aligned, fulfilling our destiny of ethereal design...

PEOPLE applaud. The man steps down. Birdie glances at Jonas.

JONAS
What?

BIRDIE
What do you mean, what? This is what you’ve been waiting for.

JONAS
No way.

BIRDIE
Get up there.

JONAS
I can’t. When I said meager, what I really meant was not at all.
BIRDIE
You’re a famous writer now. Let’s hear those words in action.

He’s apprehensive.

JONAS
You first.

With no hesitation, she walks onto the stage.

BIRDIE
Hello. My name’s Birdie and this is something I wrote back in time. It’s kind of stupid but I don’t care. It’s called service industry.

She clears her throat, takes a breath, then reads quickly.

BIRDIE
Quick paced and amiable, I approach your table. A fake smile and a murmur for speech — Hi my name is, it doesn’t matter you’re only here to eat. Moments pass and no ones speaking, so I think cleverly of suggestive selling. Would you like wine or a cocktail — something other than water or tea? Having no clear thought surface, I say I’ll grab some waters while you look it over, then I’ll be right back to take your order. Now coming back and carrying a tray of drinks, I get flagged down and stopped by another waiters patron. He holds out a pen and grumbles, do you have one with ink? I roll my eyes and keep my left hand balanced while fishing through my apron pocket, then I pull out one that writes. He takes it with a smile, thanks me, then says goodnight. At another table in my section, they’ve given a flimsy browse through our extensive menu selections, then comes the bombardment of question after question. They’re concerned about what we offer regarding their dietary needs and give me a laundry list of all their allergies. No garlic, no salt, light sauce and cheese on cheese on cheese.
Annoyed yet still smiling, I say I’ll tell the chef. Done with this one, on to the next. Who am I fooling? I’m a server, it's my job to wait on egocentric people so grueling. Year after year, it should come less astonishing. After all, this is the career you strive to find the passion through the awkward interactions. The profession I didn't choose but it chose me, the ever so favorable - service industry. Thank you.

APPLAUSE fills the room. Birdie rushes back to Jonas.

JONAS
That was amazing.

BIRDIE
Your turn.

JONAS
No. Birdie, I can’t. You were great, I can’t follow that.

BIRDIE
C’mon. It’s time to face your fears. Just do it already.

She grabs his hands, guiding him towards the stage. Jonas steps onto the stage.

Crickets - a pen drop; the place is silent. He takes out his journal and speaks into the mic.

JONAS
Hi, my name’s Jonas Mackabee. This is my first time doing this so bare with me. Oh, God. Here we go.

He folds back the cover and begins reading.

JONAS
I’ve met some people recently, one of which who offered some advice. Does it get any easier I cried, with grief in my eyes. He tilted his head and sighed as he caressed his throat and his lips began to curl. Out came a lamenting reply, mumbling a subtle no, then a nimble hand to my shoulder.
An overwhelming embrace and as the tears welled, the truth became unveiled. He explained, this is it kid. Better familiarize yourself with the elusive side of life. Elicit your interests but not just for momentary instants. It's time to make up your mind and defeat your strife. Realize your potential and forget about the adverse memories that cause affliction interminable. He took a step back and held a curious smile. We aren't much different, you and me. It comes and goes - the cheerful laughs and unwilling sorrows. The only difference is, I've found relief. Put down your tongue and open your heart for the internal war isn't finished, it's only begun and you're toe-to-line at the start. Your advice has been cut and dry and has given me something to ponder. Do I know you from before? He extended his hand for me to shake and said, my child more than you think. I am you and you are me. As I grasped his hand in wonder, he dissipated into an electric mist - holding the remnants of a memory.

The silence is deafening. He steps back and closes his book.

JONAS
Thank you.

He steps down. A progressive CLAP morphs into an Olympic CHEER. He stands next to Birdie.

BIRDIE
Wow, where'd that come from?

JONAS
I guess that was my epitaph.

BIRDIE
Whatever it was, you killed it.

JONAS
That was so exhilarating. I could never have done that without you.
BIRDIE
Tearing down those walls one fear at a time.

They’re caught in each other’s eyes. If Birdie wasn’t married this would be the start to an enduring relationship.

EXT. SIX HUNDRED PIZZERIA - NIGHT

The place is sparse with patrons. Birdie and Jonas sit alone in a corner.

BIRDIE
I wish there were more times like this.

JONAS
There should have been. I was just too focused on myself to let you in. Which is still no excuse.

BIRDIE
That’s always been your problem.

He stares back, questioning.

BIRDIE
You worry too much.

JONAS
I was too afraid I wouldn’t impress you. That I wasn’t good enough.

BIRDIE
Impress me? I just wanted to spend time with you. I would’ve been happy at the edge of a creek bed as long as it was with you.

JONAS
A creek bed? Really?

BIRDIE
I would’ve preferred that to fancy dinners.

JONAS
Guess that’s what I got from my father after all. Get out before you can get hurt.
BIRDIE
Sometimes it takes getting hurt to understand how to live.

JONAS
I’ll keep that in mind for my next life.

Garland walks out. He doesn’t recognize Jonas, be Jonas recognizes him. He approaches the table.

GARLAND
It’s not often we get local celebrities. I’d like to take care of the bill tonight.

JONAS
Oh, no. Thank you, but you don’t have to do that.

GARLAND
I’d like to. My best friend wanted to be a writer once but called it quits too early. I’d feel like I was honoring him in some way.

Jonas sits back, lifeless.

BIRDIE
Thank you very much.

GARLAND
You guys have a great night.


JONAS
Hey, wait a minute. Thank you for that. That’s incredibly generous.

GARLAND
You’re welcome.

JONAS
I want to ask you, if there’s one thing you could say to your friend again, what would it be?

Garland thinks for a moment.

GARLAND
I’d say pick up the phone. Distance is only as far as we make it and I was only a phone call away.
JONAS
You still playing music?

GARLAND
Not much anymore. How’d you know I played?

JONAS
Saw you once or twice.

GARLAND
It was fun for awhile. But then I realized making it was probably unrealistic. Life’s just too short.

JONAS
Life’s not too short, man. We just wait too long to start living. Keep playing. Go for it. You never know what the future holds.

Garland considers his advice.

GARLAND
Thanks, man.

He smiles and walks inside. Jonas watches, revitalized.

EXT. RED POPPY LIBRARY - NIGHT

Jonas scribbles in his journal. An unfamiliar face warms up his coffee. He looks quizzical as they walk away.

EXT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE/JAYBIRD - DAY

Jonas, with a new glow about him, scours over the city’s square. Jay ends a call on his phone and walks over.

JAY
My publicist -- She’s a sweet girl.

JONAS
Your publicist? You’re an author?

JAY
I’ve written a thing or two.

He sits down across from Jonas.

JONAS
I had no idea.
JAY
You will. What were you saying?

JONAS
It was like I was really there. We were talking and interacting. Do you think it’s possible?

JAY
Is what possible?

JONAS
Could time be allowing me to go back and alter the past? You’re religious, what’s the bible say about this stuff?

JAY
God exists outside of our understanding of time. Maybe He’s trying to show you something.

JONAS
When I was a kid I remember seeing a shadow walk past my bedroom door. My mom tried to convince me it was nothing, but what if...

JAY
What if what?

JONAS
What if I’m a ghost?

JAY
We are our own ghosts, Jonas. Remember that.

JONAS
Well, maybe it's finally my turn to get something I want in this state of paramnesia.

JAY
What is it that you want?

Jonas thinks for a moment, then faces Jay.

JONAS
There is something I think I should do more of... Say you’re welcome more often. But, I guess in order to do that - I should make more occasions for people to thank me.
There’s an idea. The key is perseverance.

Bee walks out and sets down two cups of coffee in front of them.

Hey, Jonas. Thought you boys could use some coffee.

Thank you. Thank you.

Jay shoots Jonas a look, then quickly touches Bee’s arm.

Thank you, sweetheart. I’ll be in in a bit.

She looks over the both of them, then walks back inside.

Was that your wife?

Yes.

She seems nice. Kind of looks familiar too.

Said the same thing years ago.

They silently sip their coffee.

What would you do if you were me?

If I was you, I’d make use of this gift and realize what’s important.

How do I know what’s important?

If you find yourself in another situation you think you can alter, that might be a good indication.
JONAS
What if it doesn't work like that?
What if I can't change it?

JAY
God reveals the things we need to change in our life. But until we're ready to be changed, nothing can change.

Jonas leans back...

JONAS
What if it's too late?

JAY
Be encouraged, it's never too late to foster the relationships of those who love you. But understand, to love somebody - you must first learn to love yourself.

EXT./INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

Jonas smokes a cigarette in self-reflection.

JONAS V.O.
Did I never love myself?

He shuts his eyes, then -

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - DAY/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

HALLWAY

Jonas finds himself in his hallway. Light seeps through the bottom of the bathroom door.

The SHOWER runs. He edges forward - twisting the doorknob... Steam pours out as the door opens wider.

His clothes are on the counter. Frightened, he runs away.

The water cuts off. HE opens the curtain. Same scene from before.

BACK TO:
EXT./INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - NIGHT/END FLASHBACK:

PORCH
Jonas’ eyes wide. His cigarette’s burned to the filter. He tosses it, then runs inside.

HALL
He rushes down the hall and bursts through the bathroom door.

BATHROOM
He flips on the light. No one. He stares at his reflection, grief in his eyes.

JONAS
What’s happening to me?
Revelation washes over him. He flips off the light and exits.

EXT. ROOTS BISTRO - NIGHT
A film’s being projected to a large crowd. Jonas and Birdie sit in the middle.
He focuses on her. She on the screen.
He slowly reaches for her hand. His index finger grazes hers. She briefly allows it, then retracts.
The moments dismissed.

ALLEY WAY
Birdie and Jonas huddle together. They appear to be a couple but they’re not. They turn down -

EXT. STREET THROUGH THE SQUARE - NIGHT
They walk closely, then stop at the corner.

BIRDIE
Why do you do this to me, jonas?
Jonas gazes into her eyes.
BIRDIE
I want to get lost with you but I can’t.

He reaches to touch her cheek but she tilts her head away.

JONAS
I just want to feel you again.

She shuts her eyes and mimics his hand touching her cheek.

BIRDIE
Just remember...

JONAS
It was the memories that killed me.

She reopens her eyes.

JONAS
If we met in the future, would you remember me in the past?

BIRDIE
If this was the future, we’d be together in the past.

JONAS
I have to tell you something.

He steps away in a concentrated pace, then looks back to her.

JONAS
After I lost you I tried to kill myself.

BIRDIE
Jonas, oh my God.

JONAS
I couldn’t even kill myself right. I’m still here but everything’s different.

He steps closer to her.

JONAS
I think I’m alternating between the future and the past. That or I’m a ghost.

BIRDIE
What are you talking about?
JONAS
I know it’s crazy but it’s real. What would you say if I told you I could change things?

BIRDIE
I’d say your crazy. This is the present and there’s no going back.

JONAS
What if I could?

She becomes agitated.

BIRDIE
You know, you’re not the only one you tried to kill. A part of me died the day you said goodbye. If you could go back, I’d say change that. Save us both the pain.

Without hesitation, Jonas grabs her hands and shuts his eyes. She’s nonplussed.

He reopens his eyes. Nothing’s changed.

JONAS
Wait a minute...

He closes his eyes again. Birdie glares at him.

JONAS
It’s not working this time.

Off her look.

JONAS
I’m telling you I went back. It’ll work. Just give me a second.

BIRDIE
Well, it’s been fun and wistfully entertaining.

She starts to walk away.

JONAS
Wait, Birdie. This is real.

She faces him.

BIRDIE
No. What’s real is you can’t take anything serious.
JONAS
I’m being serious. I just haven’t figured out how to do it yet.

BIRDIE
Whenever we start to take things further, you always run from it. But you know what? It’s my turn. This time, I’m walking away.

She turns and darts around the corner.

JONAS
Birdie, wait!

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - NIGHT
Jonas walks through his front door, straight into his -

KITCHEN
He opens the fridge and takes out a beer. He plops down at his dinette table, deplored.

Many checks cover the table top.

He picks them up, stares hard, then aggressively shreds them. He tosses the remains amidst his trashed house.

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - ROOM - DAY
Jonas abruptly wakes in his bed.

EXT. RED POPPY LIBRARY - DAY
Jonas absent-mindedly scribbles in his book. An unfamiliar waiter approaches and sets down a cup of coffee.

JONAS
Where’s Sady at?

WAITER
You didn’t hear?

JONAS
Hear what?
EXT. SADY’S HOUSE — DAY

Police tape lines her house. Jonas breathes deep.

JONAS
Oh, God no. Did I cause this?

He COUGHS heavily.

INT. CANDOR MAGAZINE — DAY

Jonas rushes through the front door. Bill’s hunched over a desk. He turns to face him.

BILL
Jonas, issues’ almost finished. I still don’t have your piece, yet.

JONAS
What happened to Sady?

BILL
Who?

JONAS
Your intern...

BILL
Oh, her. I let her go. Girl was worthless. Wasting my time here.

JONAS
She’s dead. She killed herself.

BILL
That’s tragic. Oh, while you’re here; your new contract.

He grabs the contract from his desk and eagerly hands it out.

JONAS
A girl’s dead and all you’re thinking about’s money?

BILL
That’s the business, baby. Here, there isn’t much time left.

Jonas doesn’t take the contract and glares at him in disgust

JONAS
Nobody’s worthless.
He exits the building.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN THE SQUARE - DAY

Jonas slowly walks among the crowds of people.

JONAS V.O.
Why, Sady? Why’d you do it? I should have been nicer to you.

Jonas stops and looks ahead.

JONAS
Wait a minute. When was the last time I saw her?

He shuts his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. RED POPPY LIBRARY - NIGHT/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jonas finds himself sitting at his usual table. Sady’s walking away.

He realizes this is the past and blurts out –

JONAS
Don’t do it, Sady!

She briskly turns back.

SADY
Don’t do what?

JONAS
Wait, too early.

He closes his eyes again.

BACK TO:

SIDEWALK IN THE SQUARE - CONTINUOUS/END FLASHBACK:

Jonas reopens his eyes.

JONAS
Further. What happened after this?
He shuts his eyes again.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANDOR MAGAZINE - DAY

Jonas stands at a breadth. Sady rushes out crying.

    JONAS
    Okay, this is really happening.

He runs to catch her. Too late. She’s in her car and speeds away.

He watches her disappear in the distance.

EXT./INT. SADY’S HOUSE - DAY

Jonas rushes up to her house, now devoid of the police tape. He tries the door. It’s locked.

He runs around to the back. Tries that door - locked.

He grabs a rock - about to smash the window, then reaches into his pocket.

He drops the rock and takes out the key. The door unlocks. Amazed, he walks into the -

LIVINGROOM

Jonas rushes through the darkened room.

    JONAS
    Sady! Where are you, Sady?

He rounds the corner and sees her bedroom door cracked. He pushes it open.

BEDROOM

Sady lies in her bed unconscious. Jonas rushes over.

He bumps into the night stand, knocking over some pill bottles.

The prescription is for Jonas’ mom. He doesn’t notice.

    JONAS
    Oh my God. Sady! Wake up -- C’mon.
He leans over, grabbing her head and slapping her cheeks.

**JONAS**
Wake up, Sady.

She **MOANS** lightly. He carries her into the -

**BATHROOM**

Jonas leans her head over the toilet.

**JONAS**
Spit it up, Sady. C’mon.

She retches as she becomes more conscious. She leans over the toilet and violently **VOMITS**. Jonas holds her hair back.

**JONAS**
There ya’ go. Get it out.

She has full motor functions now. Jonas sits back against the door, relieved. She finishes and leans against the toilet.

**SADY**
How did you know?

**JONAS**
I just did.

**SADY**
You must think I’m stupid.

**JONAS**
I do not think you’re stupid.

She cries.

**SADY**
Everyone thinks I’m worthless. Nobody believes in me. And I don’t want to feel like this anymore.

**JONAS**
I know how you feel. I’ve been here before, myself. Come here.

He gives her a hug as she **SOBS**.

**JONAS**
We can’t allow others to determine our worth. If they can’t see the value in you then they’re the ones who are worthless.
She wipes her tears.

**SADY**
Guess I blew my chances with the magazine.

**JONAS**
No, you didn’t. I believe in you. You can do anything. You just have to believe in yourself.

She smiles through the tears. He brushes her hair back.

**JONAS**
Hey, when I make it big, there’s going to be a job waiting for you.

**SADY**
Promise?

**JONAS**
I promise.

**SADY**
Thank you.

**JONAS**
You’re welcome.

He stares at her, revelatory, then smiles.

**JONAS**
We’re going to be all right.

He rises and starts to dart off.

**SADY**
Jonas, I was wrong about you.

Looking back to her.

**JONAS**
No. You weren’t.

**SADY**
Where are you going?

**JONAS**
I know what’s important now.

He rushes away.
INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE/JAYBIRD - DAY

Jay finishes cleaning a table, then heads towards the back. Older Birdie’s behind the counter.

Jonas runs through the door. Jay turns to face him.

JONAS
Jay!

JAY
Hey, Jonas.

JONAS
I did it. I figured out what I’m supposed to do.

JAY
I knew you would eventually.

Jonas starts COUGHING really hard.

JAY
That’s not sounding too good. Must be about that time.

JONAS
I’m fine. And everything’s going to be fine.

Jonas holds out his hand. They shake.

JONAS
This is probably the last time I’m going to see you, isn’t it?

JAY
I’m sure we’ll meet each other again in the future. It was nice seeing you, Jonas.

JONAS
You too, old man.

Jay heads towards the back, then turns to Jonas.

JAY
Remember, Jonas. Always put your trust in the Lord. Only then will you be prosperous.

Jonas chimes in to himself.
JONAS
Deja vu.

JAY
Have courage. He may not show up when you expect Him, but He shows up on time. Always.

Jonas turns to Bee.

JONAS
You got a good guy there. Make sure you take care of him.

Jonas smiles and passes a picture as he exits.

It’s of Jay holding a book entitled, “How God revealed my past by showing me my future.”

Jonas Mackabee is engraved on the picture frame.

Bee walks over to Jay.

BEE
What was that about?

JAY
He just needed a little help.

He wraps his arm around her. They turn and walk away.

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE – NIGHT

Jonas COUGHS violently as he enters. He clutches his neck. It settles.

He walks over to the kitchen table.

KITCHEN

The checks that he tore up earlier are now fully intact. He inspects them.

JONAS
No way.

He throws them down and walks into his –

LIVING ROOM

Jonas paces back and forth, concentrated.
JONAS
How to do this? Think - think. The last date with Birdie.

He shuts his eyes in reverie.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK IN THE SQUARE - NIGHT
At a distance, Jonas sees Birdie and himself talking at the street corner the night she walked away.

JONAS
It’s too late for this. I have to go back earlier.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOTS BISTRO - NIGHT
Jonas eases around the corner. He spots Birdie and himself among the crowd.

Behind them, he sees himself controlling the projector.

It’s images of him and Birdie. They don’t notice.

JONAS
What? I don’t remember doing this.

He turns the corner and slumps against the wall.

JONAS
What was our last date?

He clinches his eyes shut.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
This is Jonas and Birdie’s date from his earlier memory. He sees himself get up from the table and walk outside.

He slowly approaches Birdie alone at the table. Behind her, he carefully places his hands over her eyes.
JONAS
Don’t move. Don’t say anything.
There should never have been a day
that I didn’t tell you how
beautiful you are.

With his hands still over her eyes, she melts inside.

EXT. RESTAURANT - PATIO - SAME
Jonas smokes his cigarette. He looks inside seeing only Birdie.

He tosses his cigarette and heads for the door.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS
Jonas still has his hands over Birdie’s eyes.

JONAS
You were great. Always. And I’m a
fool for not realizing it then. Not
being able to articulate my
feelings will never be an excuse
for not telling you that. You
didn’t deserve the way I treated
you and I’m so sorry.

BIRDIE
Jonas...

He slowly lowers his hands and rushes away. His actual self
rounds the corner.

They bump shoulders.

His actual self goes to the table. His other self exits.

EXT. RESTAURANT - CORNER - NIGHT
Jonas stands behind the corner. His actual self and Birdie
walk out.

He watches as they prepare to cross the street.

JONAS
Kiss her. C’mon. Stupid. Kiss her.

She looks like she wants him to kiss her but he doesn’t. They
walk across the street, get into his car and drive away.
JONAS
No -- No! You’re so stupid.

He watches the car disappear.

Yards away, he sees himself again watching from a different angle.

As puzzling as this is, he runs in the other direction.

He sees Birdie and himself walking her bike in an another direction. He stops and stares for a moment. Then...

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

He and Birdie are at a table near a big window laughing and talking.

He edges closer, his head spinning. They don’t notice him. He turns and walks away.

COURTYARD

He and Birdie sit at a bench at the corner of the lot talking. He walks past, very confused at this point.

JONAS
What’s happening?

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

Jonas edges near a cliff that overlooks a creek bed below. With tears in his eyes, he looks up to the stars.

The moonlight reflects off of his face as he calls out -

JONAS
What am I supposed to do?
   (beat)
   If I can’t change anything, then what am I supposed to do?

He COUGHS hard and looks down. On the ground lies a crushed pack of cigarettes.

It’s the same pack he smokes. He inspects it, then tosses it aside.

He walks away.
INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - DAY

He wakes abruptly in bed and lethargically walks into his -

LIVINGROOM

He looks around his filthy house. Moments later, he has a trash bag and cleans.

KITCHEN

On the table, next to the checks, lies the contract from Candor Mag. He looks it over, then throws it into the bag.

EXT./INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE - DAY

Jonas approaches the coffee house.

The sign says Cianfrani’s. He takes notice and walks in.

FRONT

The place had a face lift. Jay’s nowhere in sight. ANN, (40’s), walks behind the counter.

JONAS
You’re not Jay’s wife.

ANN
Who?

JONAS
Jay. The owner.

ANN
Never heard of him. I’m Ann. I own this place.

JONAS
What? No, I’ve been coming here the past few days meeting with Jay.

ANN
I’ve never seen ya’. I’ve been here everyday for the last ten years.

Jonas is taken aback.
ANN
It’s for sale. Maybe he was interested in buying the place.

She walks away. Jonas’ head spins.

INT. ROOTS BISTRO - DAY
Jonas rushes up to the bar. Another unfamiliar face.

JONAS
Is Birdie here?

EMPLOYEE
Never heard of her.

Jonas slowly backs away and exits.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY
A man paints a picture on an easel at the corner of the street.

Paintings litter the ground below. He also looks very familiar.

Jonas drags his leaden body past.

PAINTER
Why the long face?

Jonas gives a small glance.

JONAS
I’m not sure what’s going on anymore. I thought I did but I’m just as clueless as before.

PAINTER
I know the feeling - everyone knowing your name but not who you are. You paint?

JONAS
I’ve never tried.

The painter holds out a paint brush.

PAINTER
You never know unless you try.
JONAS
No thanks. I’ll just mess up your picture.

PAINTER
Nonsense. Here take it. Take your mind off things.

Jonas takes the brush and steps behind the canvass.

PAINTER
The great thing about painting is you’ve got a blank canvass. And what you do with it – it’s your choice. Go on, give it a shot.

JONAS
I don’t know what to paint.

PAINTER
Here, we’ll do it together.

The painter places a second canvass on the easel.

PAINTER
Just do what I do.

He starts painting. Jonas imitates every stroke.

PAINTER
Any mistakes you think are permanent can always be corrected. It’s all about perseverance.

Time passes. Jonas is lost in the moment. He paints a final stroke, then steps back.

PAINTER
Beautiful, isn’t it?

JONAS
I can’t tell what it is.

PAINTER
Sometimes we’re too focused on the details. We think we’ve got it figured out, but there’s always a bigger picture.

The painter sets his painting down. He picks three others off the ground and places them side by side.

Together, they make one big picture of Jesus on the cross.
...And it all points to him. You just have to have faith.

JONAS
I don’t think I know how.

PAINTER
When you admit you can’t do it alone. He made the ultimate sacrifice, laying down his life to take your burdens - your regrets and give you - a blank canvass.

JONAS
I want a blank canvass. I want to start over.

PAINTER
It’s with our praise that the earth moves and the heavens shake. And we’re just waiting for you, Jonas.

JONAS
What do I do?

PAINTER
Surrender. The time here is short. He died for us. The least we can do is live for Him. He’s waiting for you. Whenever you’re ready.

JONAS
I think I’m ready.

They exchange smiles. Jonas paces away. From a distance, he turns back.

The painter has vanished.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Jonas walks through the crowds of people. He begins to notice everyone’s smiling at him as they pass by.

Encouraged, he plumps to his knees and raises his hands to the heavens.

    JONAS
I surrender!

In his complete reckless abandon, Satan approaches.
SATAN
What are you doing?

JONAS
I’m doing it right this time. I’m starting over.

SATAN
There is no starting over. We had a deal.

JONAS
There is no deal.

Jonas stands to face him.

SATAN
You wanted riches, fame, a writing career – I gave that to you.

JONAS
I may have wanted that in the past but I know what’s important now. I’m writing a new future.

SATAN
Jonas, I think there’s something you need to see.

They stare eye to eye and suddenly get taken away to –

INT./EXT. TONY & LUIGIS RESTAURANT – DAY

The place is brimming. Jonas sees himself waiting on a large table, only now, the patrons are millennials. Many pictures still adorn the nearby table.

This is the same scene from earlier.

JONAS
I remember this day.

SATAN
Do you remember?

JONAS
This is the day I quit.

SATAN
Recognize anyone?

Jonas realizes the patrons are his friends. He grabs a picture off the table.
It’s of him. They’re all of him. Fear-stricken, he drops the picture.

Meanwhile, other Jonas clears the dishes. He doesn’t notice the picture has fallen over, just as it did previously.

Hands full, he backs away. They both run into each other. PSSHH!

JONAS
This can’t be happening.

SATAN
It already did.

Jonas looks up, rattled. Satan laughs hysterically.

SATAN
You’re dead.

JONAS
No – no.

He runs away from Satan.

PATIO
Jonas bursts out of the doors. He doesn’t know where to run. Satan leans against the building.

SATAN
Where are you going, Jonas?

Jonas darts off.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET – DAY

Jonas races up to the homeless men. Satan’s handing them a liquor bottle.

There’s no trace of the man with the cardboard sign.

SATAN
You may have run away from everything in your life but you can’t run away from this.

INT./EXT. JONAS’ HOUSE – DAY

Jonas burst through his door. The house is trashed again.
JONAS
What? No...

Satan walks in, kicking beer cans.

KITCHEN
Satan grabs the checks and contract off of the table.

SATAN
This might interest you now.

Satan holds them out for Jonas, but he runs out the back door.

BACKYARD
Jonas edges towards the tree where his body becomes visible. Satan comes up behind him.

SATAN
Just how you left yourself.

JONAS
This isn’t real. I can change.

SATAN
There is no changing. You’re decisions led you here now it’s time to go.

JONAS
Go where?

SATAN
Where do you think?

JONAS
No...

SATAN
Yes. You wanted this. Now you’re coming with me.

JONAS
No!

He runs away from the site, leaving Satan in the dust.
EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Jonas runs like he’s never ran before. Fierce, frightened and determined.

Satan meets him at a street corner.

    SATAN
    There’s nowhere to run. It’s time to face your destiny.

    JONAS
    This isn’t my destiny.

He runs out of site.

EXT. DAM - DAY

Jonas approaches the edge of the dam and peers down below. He steps onto the railing. Takes a breath, then COUGHS hard.

    HOMELESS MAN O.S.
    Isn’t that what got you in this mess in the first place?

Jonas jerks his attention to the homeless man behind him. This is who the pianist, painter and poet resemble.

    JONAS
    You -- I know you.

    HOMELESS MAN
    No. You may have talked to me a few times but you don’t know me. Come down from there.

    JONAS
    This is a dream. I have to wake up.

    HOMELESS MAN
    This isn’t a dream, Jonas.

Jonas shoots him a look.

    JONAS
    Who are you?

    HOMELESS MAN
    I am Him. He you thought was never listening.

    JONAS
    God? You’re not how I imagined you.
HOMELESS MAN
You see me the way you saw everyone else. Insignificant and inferior to yourself.

Jonas descends the railing.

JONAS
What’s happening to me?

HOMELESS MAN
You asked for a change in your life. You were tired of waiting on me, as you said.

JONAS
I didn’t mean like this.

HOMELESS MAN
How else did you expect to see the areas you needed to change? You had to experienced it.

JONAS
Why me?

HOMELESS MAN
Why not you? YOU – weren’t listening.

JONAS
I couldn’t hear you.

HOMELESS MAN
Isn’t it written, the birds don’t sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them? You, Jonas, are of much more value than they. I just allowed you to see what it’s like on your own.

JONAS
I don’t want to do it on my own anymore. I can’t.

HOMELESS MAN
I know, son. At times it may seem like I’m not around. But I know the plans I have for you. To prosper you, not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future. Just as long as you’re willing to listen.
JONAS
But it’s too late, isn’t it? I’m already dead.

HOMELESS MAN
Do you want to be?

JONAS
I thought I did but not anymore. I’m ready to listen now.

HOMELESS MAN
Then let’s finish this.

JONAS
Tell me what to do?

HOMELESS MAN
Now you jump.

Jonas is stunned at this statement.

HOMELESS MAN
Just joking.

Jonas LAUGHS, relived, then COUGHS violently.

JONAS
I can’t breathe. Why can’t I breathe?

HOMELESS MAN
You will soon.

JONAS
How will I remember any of this?

HOMELESS MAN
Use the talent I’ve instilled in you. Write it down. Come here, son.

The man holds out his hand. Through the COUGHS, Jonas takes it. They hug firmly.

HOMELESS MAN
Remember my words. This life is nothing but a vapor. Cherish it. When you run into tough times, know that I am here to guide you through it. Always.

FADE OUT.
FADE IN.

EXT./INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Jonas twists and jolts, hanging from the tree.

A gust of wind snaps the rope. He falls to the ground. He clasps his throat and runs into the house.

KITCHEN

The noose is still around his neck. He rips a page out of his book. At the table, he writes vigorously.

JONAS V.O.
You won’t believe this unless you read it for yourself. One day you’re going to meet somebody who’s lost and broken. Someone who just needs to hear that they’re worth something. Remember these words. Burn them into your mind and imprint them on your heart.

INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE/JAYBIRD - OFFICE - DAY

Jay unlocks a safe on a shelf. He retrieves a folded piece of paper with a torn edge.

He begins to read...

JAY O.S.
We may wear our scars but they don’t define who we are.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY

This is the same scene from earlier. Jonas stands near a big blue mailbox. He looks around, still unsure why he’s there.

JONAS V.O.
God chooses not to reveal some things to us at the time to provide hope for our future.

INT./EXT. TONY & LUIGIS RESTAURANT - DAY

Jonas runs through the front door and sees Taylor. He’s now back in regular work attire.
TAYLOR
Jonas, I didn’t know you were working today.

JONAS
Come here.

Jonas runs over and gives him a big hug. Taylor’s surprised. He sets him back down and looks into his eyes.

JONAS
Keep shining like the star you are. You’re a great person and you have a great outlook on life.

TAYLOR
What happened to you?

JONAS
I opened my eyes.

He exits.

INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE/JAYBIRD - OFFICE - SAME
Jay continues to read the page. Bee walks up to him.

BEE
Still holding on to that thing? Did it help whomever it was intended for?

JAY
I think it did.

EXT. TONY & LUIGIS RESTAURANT - PORCH - CONTINUOUS
Jonas pulls out his phone and dials a number.

GARLAND V.O.
Jonas?

JONAS
Yeah, man. I just wanted to call and tell you how much I miss you.

EXT. SIX HUNDRED PIZZERIA - DAY
Jonas shines now. He exits onto the patio. Garland looks over. They rush into a big hug, smiling from ear to ear.
JONAS
I’m sorry. I’ve missed you so much.
I should’ve been a better friend.

GARLAND
Hey, man. Now and then we get
captured up on the small things and
forget who we are for a second.
Sometimes it takes an absence to
put things into perspective.

JONAS
Don’t let other people’s opinions
influence your dreams. Whatever it
may be, stick with it.

They break from the hug. Jonas notices more of his friends.
They’re all smiles and hugs.

Garland passes out beers from a side table. He hands one over
to Jonas.

JONAS
You go ahead, man. I’m done with
that life. From this point forward,
I’m starting fresh.

GARLAND
Good for you.

Jonas appears to have a revelation.

JONAS
In fact, there’s something I need
to do.

He beams bright as he exits.

INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE/JAYBIRD - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jay and Bee stand side by side.

BEE
You still never told me how you got
that thing? Did that boy have
something to do with it?

Jay glances over the letter, remembering.

CUT TO:
EXT. SQUARE - DAY/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jonas stands at the blue mailbox. He’s about to shove the letter in, then stops. He brings it near and closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS’ MOM’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jonas, as a little boy, sits in his room. His bedroom door is cracked.

A shadow walks past. He’s spooked.

**YOUNGER JONAS**

Mommy! There’s a ghost.

He runs out. Older Jonas walks in, reminiscing.

**MOM O.S.**

Honey, there aren't any ghosts.

**YOUNGER JONAS O.S.**

I’ll show you. Come here...

Their VOICES get closer. Jonas opens a photo album and sets the letter inside.

His mom and younger self walk in.

**MOM**

I don’t see any ghosts, do you?

She checks under his bed.

**MOM**

None under here...

Older Jonas watches from a cracked door. She walks over to the closet – Nothing.

**MOM**

None in here...

He’s outside the bedroom. She kneels down beside younger Jonas. He watches.

**MOM**

Ghosts can only exist if we allow them to. And we won’t allow that, will we?
She tickles him. He’s relaxed now. Older Jonas smiles and darts away.

KITCHEN

Jonas dumps his mom’s pills down the drain. He grabs a pen and piece of paper, then writes -

“Trust in the Lord and you’ll prosper.” He leaves the note in place of the pills.

BEDROOM

His mom is still knelt down beside his younger self. Older Jonas edges back to the cracked door and peers in.

MOM
Sometimes we create ghosts because we’re scared of something. But since we keep the Lord right here we don’t have to be afraid.

She touches over his heart.

MOM
What does the bible say?

MOM
Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heat.

JONAS
Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heat.

She hugs him tightly.

JAY O.S.
We can’t move forward in this life until we realize that we are our own ghosts who haunt the memories of our past and future - unless we come to terms with them right here, now in our present.

Older Jonas runs away.

END FLASH BACK:

INT. ROOTS BISTRO - DAY

Jonas runs in. Birdie stands behind the bar with a fellow employee. Her PHONE rings as Jonas approaches.
EMPLOYEE
Speaking of the devil...

JONAS
Don’t answer that!

BIRDIE
Jonas, I had the strangest dream with you last night.

JONAS
Wait, Birdie...

He runs around the side and grabs her hand. They run out.

BIRDIE
What’s gotten into you?

He smiles big as they exit.

JAY O.S.
Only then will we be able to live every moment and love every second.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Jonas and Birdie stand at the edge of the cliff above the dried creek bed below. They watch the sun set in the distance.

BIRDIE
Deja vu.

Jonas looks over to her, intently.

BIRDIE
The dream I had. You broke up with me, then killed yourself and were alternating between the past and future. In the dream I told you to bring me here.

Jonas grabs her hand and looks deep into her eyes.

JONAS
The past - the future - a parallel universe - whatever it was, I was in a bad place, unhappy without you. But here, now - together. I couldn't be happier.

He lifts up their folded hands and kisses hers.
BIRDIE
Interesting...

JONAS
What now?

BIRDIE
Usually you’re surrounded by a cloud of smoke.

He pulls his cigarettes out of his denim jacket. He crushes the pack and throws it on the ground.

JONAS
Not anymore. No longer will I beckon death. I’ve got plenty to live for right here.

They kiss as the sun goes down.

INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE/JAYBIRD - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jay finishes reading the letter. He folds it and puts it back into the safe. Bee’s at his side.

BEE
Seeing that boy reminded me of somebody. I just can’t think of who right now.

Jay looks deep into her eyes.

BEE
I don’t seem to recall where you were when we first got married. You went away from me. Just like in my dream.

JAY
There was something I had to learn. In order to love you, I first had to understand how to love myself. But I never left you.

A big smile creeps across her face.

BEE
I know who he reminds me of.

He stares into her eyes, then touches her cheek in the same fashion Jonas tried with Birdie in the earlier scene.
BEE
It’s you. It was always you.

CUT TO:

EXT. RED POPPY LIBRARY - DAY/BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jonas is at his usual table. Sady walks over with a pot of coffee.

She begins to pour it be he intentionally moves the cup. It spills all over his book.

He jumps up and bumps into her. She drops her keys in the ruckus. Jonas grabs them.

He turns and takes a key from the ring and sticks it into his pocket.

JONAS V.O.
What if a simple decision could change the fate of your destiny? The average person lives for twenty-eight-thousand-two-hundred-and-fifty-one-days. We’re all heading in a direction. Wherever the wind blows us. And even so, there is weight to every word spoken. We’ve got one shot at this life, better do it right the first time. Put Him above everything and be someone for someone else. Believe in them because you never know, the life you end up saving could be your own.

END FLASHBACK:

INT./EXT. ROOTS BISTRO - NIGHT

The marquee highlights, “THE GARLAND CARSON BAND.”

MAIN

It’s packed and dimly lit. GARLAND’S full band plays on the stage. Jonas and Birdie stand in the back of the crowd.

BIRDIE
Do you ever feel like this is all just a dream?
JONAS
You have no idea.

Sady walks over from among the crowd and stands next to them.

SADY
Okay, Jonas. If we’re going to work together, you’ve got to get more organized.

JONAS
Sady! It’s so good to see you.

He gives her a big hug. She seems confused.

SADY
It’s good to see you too. Not like I don’t see you everyday.

BIRDIE
I don’t know what’s gotten into him, but I like it.

JONAS
Wait. Watch this?

He runs onto the stage. Garland smiles to him while he sings. Jonas stands behind a piano and plays beautifully to the song.

Birdie and Sady stand back, awestruck.

INT. JONAS’ HOUSE - ROOM - DAY

Jonas wakes in bed, the same as he always has. He looks around quizzically, then darts up.

He runs into the -

KITCHEN

Birdie wears Jonas’ shirt while making breakfast. Relief washes over him.

He stands in the threshold and watches her, smiling.

JONAS V.O.
...And of those days, how many can we say we’ve actually lived?
You have to decide, would you rather die for yourself or would you be willing to live for someone else? And once you find that one person to share it with, it makes it that much more worth it.

Birdie looks over to him.

BIRDIE
Morning. We need to get ready.

She gives him a kiss.

JONAS
Ready for what?

She stares, blankly.

JONAS
I feel like I should know the answer to this, but help me.

BIRDIE
The coffee shop. You haven’t changed your mind, have you?

JONAS
No, no. Yeah, I remember now.

He gives her another kiss. He starts to walk away.

BIRDIE
Your phone was blowing up this morning. I think your mom called.

He flies back around in disbelief.

JONAS
What did you say?

BIRDIE
I didn’t want to wake you. I think she left a message.

He grabs his phone from the counter and puts it to his ear.

MOM V.O.
Happy birthday, honey. Twenty nine. My baby’s growing up. Call me later. I love you.

A giant smile creeps across his face. Before he can lower his phone, the next message begins to play.
BILL V.O.
Mister Mackabee, this is Bill from Candor Magazine. We’ve reviewed your writing sample and would love to talk. Call me.

Jonas’ face says it all.

EXT./INT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE – DAY

Jonas and Birdie walk up to the entrance of Cianfranie’s. There’s a for sale sign in the window.

Jonas looks at the sign and smiles. It all starts to make sense.

    BIRDIE
    Ready to do this?

    JONAS
    Let’s do it.

    BIRDIE
    Oh, I almost forgot.

She reaches into her purse and pulls out a small wrapped box. He opens it.

    JONAS
    What’s this?

    BIRDIE
    I meant to give this to you last night. Happy birthday, yesterday.

It’s Jay’s crucifix necklace. Jonas pulls it out, joyously. Birdie helps him put it on.

    BIRDIE
    I saw it and immediately knew I had to get it for you.

    JONAS
    It’s great. Thank you.

They kiss and walk inside.

INT./EXT. CIANFRANI’S COFFEE – DAY

Birdie and Jonas fill out a form at a table.
BIRDIE
Sign your initials here.

He takes the pen and signs the blank.

BIRDIE
Think we’ll get it?

JONAS
I’d say there’s a really good chance.

BIRDIE
What are we going to call it?

She smiles to him, hopeful. He looks over the form where they just signed their initials, then up at her.

JONAS
You and me – Jay Bird.

BIRDIE
I love it.

Jonas kisses her forehead, then rises from the table. He starts to walk away but stops.

He looks back to her.

JONAS
I love you.

She looks up at him.

BIRDIE
I love you, too.

He exits.

CIANFRANI’S PATIO

A rejuvenated Jonas looks out among the square. His attention is drawn to a bench across the courtyard.

There, Satan sits next to a troubled man. He’s whispering inaudibly into his ear.

Satan glances over to Jonas and winks.

Jonas’ heart almost drops, but he sees in the other direction the homeless man holding the cardboard sign with a comforting smile.
You wouldn’t be able to smack the smile off Jonas’ face. Birdie walks out with the form they just signed.

    BIRDIE
    I just need your signature here.

Jonas doesn’t acknowledge her. He keeps smiling, looking out ahead.

    BIRDIE
    What are you looking at?

He takes a moment.

    JONAS
    The joy of life.

Birdie looks over but doesn’t see anyone. Jonas faces her.

    JONAS
    C’mon, let’s go.

He puts his arm around her. They walk back inside.

The homeless man smiles, turns and begins walking away.

He drops the cardboard sign as he passes a tree. He comes out the other side, now well-groomed and wearing a white robe.

He’s Jesus.

He walks past another tree and that’s the last we see of Him. The sign on the ground becomes visible. It reads, Matthew – 6:33.

    FADE OUT.

    THE END