

# Title: Israel Rain

**Genre:** Drama, Fantasy

**Logline:** In the afterlife, a man named Israel navigates a journey of redemption and love, reuniting with lost loved ones and finding ways to connect with his daughter on Earth, as he learns profound lessons about forgiveness, gratitude, and the enduring power of family.

## **Synopsis:**

### **Act 1: Introduction to the Afterlife**

*Israel* finds himself in a heavenly realm, guided by a glowing elderly woman named *Ms. Grace*. He is surrounded by vibrant gardens and peaceful settings, offering him a chance to reflect on his life. *Ms. Grace* provides *Israel* with insights into the nature of God, emphasizing that God is in everything and everyone. *Israel* is reunited with loved ones from his past, including his brother *Sammy*, *Sarge*, and his grandparents. These reunions offer healing and forgiveness for past mistakes and traumas.

### **Act 2: Unfinished Business**

*Israel* is eager to find ways to connect with his daughter *Mia*, who is still alive on Earth. He witnesses *Mia's* life progressing, from her teenage years to adulthood, and sees her moments of joy and sorrow. Through the help of *Nasim Amari*, a man *Israel* once knew during a war, he learns to channel his prayers and love to *Mia*. *Israel* sees *Mia* releasing green balloons as prayers for her father, which deeply touches him.

### **Act 3: Mia's Wedding**

*Israel* watches as *Mia* prepares to marry her long-time boyfriend *Payne*. He struggles with feelings of helplessness, wanting to give *Mia* a meaningful gift on her wedding day. With the help of *Ms. Grace* and a young girl named *Abby*, *Israel* manages to send a touching and symbolic gift – hundreds of green balloons, reminiscent of the ones *Mia* released in prayer. This gesture reaffirms the eternal bond between father and daughter.

#### **Act 4: The Thanking Place**

As the wedding festivities conclude, Abby leads Israel to a radiant place she calls the “thanking place.” Here, Israel kneels and gives thanks for his life, his loved ones, and the countless blessings he has received. This moment of gratitude and humility brings Israel to a profound understanding of his journey and his place in the afterlife.

#### **Act 5: The Final Reunion**

Surrounded by his loved ones, including Sarge, Sammy, and Nasim, Israel is approached by the holiest of holy lights, a representation of God. As God places His hands on Israel's shoulders, Israel experiences a flood of memories, both good and bad, which are then washed away by pure love and peace. This final acceptance and welcoming solidify Israel's place in the afterlife.

#### **Epilogue: A New Beginning**

Israel's journey culminates in a beautiful revelation: Mia gives birth to a baby girl named *Miss Grace Abigail*, a name that carries the legacy of love and guidance from Israel's heavenly journey. As Israel watches over his family from above, he understands that his love and presence will always be with them, transcending the boundaries of life and death.

#### **Themes:**

- The enduring power of love and family
- Forgiveness and redemption
- The interconnectedness of life and the afterlife
- The significance of gratitude and humility

#### **Setting:**

The afterlife is depicted as a serene, radiant place with vibrant gardens, peaceful resting spots, and a celestial glow. Key locations include the garden paths, a dilapidated church, a vibrant reception hall, and the ultimate "thanking place."

## Characters:

- *Israel*: The protagonist, a man reflecting on his life and seeking ways to connect with his daughter from the afterlife.
- *Ms. Grace*: A glowing elderly guide who helps Israel navigate the afterlife.
- *Sammy*: Israel's brother, who he reunites with and finds forgiveness.
- *Sarge*: A military friend who provides comfort and support.
- *Mia*: Israel's daughter, whose life and milestones he observes from the afterlife.
- *Payne*: Mia's boyfriend and eventual husband.
- *Nasim Amari*: A man from Israel's past who helps him channel prayers to Mia.
- *Abby*: A young girl in the afterlife who assists Israel in his journey and symbolizes new beginnings.
- *God*: Represented as the holiest of holy lights, providing ultimate acceptance and love to Israel.

## Conclusion:

"Israel Rain" is a heartfelt exploration of a man's journey through the afterlife, filled with love, redemption, and eternal connections. Through his experiences, Israel learns the true meaning of forgiveness, the power of gratitude, and the enduring presence of family, ultimately finding peace and fulfillment in his heavenly existence.

## **Chapter 1: Finding Happiness**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY**

The camera pans over a modest suburban neighborhood, eventually focusing on a single-story home. The sun is shining, and children can be heard playing in the background.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** John Lennon once told a reporter about how when he was a young boy, his mother taught him that finding happiness was the true key to success. Later in school, when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, he answered simply, "Happy." His classmates and teacher didn't understand, but John knew they were the ones who didn't understand life's real purpose.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY**

ISRAEL (mid-30s, introspective) sits at the kitchen table, flipping through an old photo album. The room is warm and inviting, filled with the aroma of home-cooked food.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** My younger brother Samuel—Sammy, as we called him—understood what Lennon meant. Sammy was the middle of us three brothers. There was me, Israel, then Sammy, and lastly Jacob. Unlike Jacob or me, Sammy was born with quite a few more challenges early on.

**FLASHBACK:**

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

A young SAMMY (7), pale but smiling, sits on a hospital bed surrounded by machines. ISRAEL (9) and JACOB (6) stand nearby, holding their mother's hands.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** During the first ten or eleven years of his life, Sammy's world consisted of one hospital trip after another, mostly for a heart abnormality. He called these trips visiting the White House because every hospital was either painted white or mostly decorated in white.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

A cozy living room with family photos on the walls. Sammy sits on the couch, flexing his miniature biceps and laughing. Israel and Jacob sit on either side of him, smiling.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Regardless of his health issues, Sammy was the glue that held our family together, the light that always led our way. His genuine, caring personality seemed to brighten everyone's day.

**EXT. JAMES RIVER - DAY**

The river sparkles under the sunlight. Israel and Sammy sit on the bank, fishing rods in hand. They laugh and chat animatedly.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy's absolute favorite thing to do was to go fishing, a passion we both shared. Living near the James River in Richmond, we often spent hours on its banks, casting our lines and talking about everything and nothing.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BASEMENT - DAY**

A makeshift art studio with canvases and paint supplies. Israel and Sammy are engrossed in painting, their faces streaked with colors. Sammy flexes his biceps, making Israel laugh.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The second great commonality we had was painting. We would lose ourselves in our art for days, always including a ton of laughter and profound conversations.

**INT. FAMILY BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The brothers' shared bedroom. Israel's bed is in the middle. Sammy sleeps peacefully with a content smile. Jacob, however, lies with his middle finger subtly extended toward Israel.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As close as Sammy and I were, Jacob and I were polar opposites. We fought constantly growing up, our squabbles escalating to the point of serious concern for our parents.

#### **INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

The family sits down for dinner. Their mother (late 30s, warm but firm) ensures the TV is off, focusing on the boys.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Our mother's one rule was that we all had to sit down to dinner together every night. It was her way of catching up on our lives and interjecting some much-needed parental guidance.

#### **EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

A young Israel peers out from behind a tree, a mischievous smile on his face. Jacob leans over a trash can, shoveling the trash down. Israel takes aim with a BB gun.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** One of our long-lasting skirmishes started when Jacob would wait until our mother came home to start hitting himself and locking himself in the closet, blaming me for it. I got a hundred whippings because of Jacob's theatrics, but I always found a way to get him back.

**Israel fires the BB gun, hitting Jacob's butt. Jacob yelps and jumps, holding his backside. Sammy laughs hysterically.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jacob and I had so many of these back-and-forth interactions. One winter day, I decided to hunt me some retaliatory Jacob butt. I fired off six rounds, each one hitting its target. Jacob screamed and jumped around like he was stung by a million bees.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The brothers lie on the floor, looking up at the ceiling, pretending the shadows are animals or people.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Lying on our backs, looking up at the sky, pretending the clouds were animals or people, was the only time Jacob and I had any sort of common ground. Sammy's peaceful nature was a buffer to our constant fighting.

## **EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY**

Israel stands with an oar in his hand, contemplating his next move. Jacob is in the backyard, taking out the trash. Israel throws the oar over the house.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** One day, I thought it would be a good idea to throw an oar over the house to scare Jacob. Instead, it hit him directly on the forehead, knocking him out cold.

**Jacob lies unconscious on the ground. Israel and Sammy shake him, trying to wake him up. Jacob eventually sits up, glaring at Israel.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** That incident scared us both. It was the first time Jacob didn't tell on me, but he didn't have to. Sammy told our mother everything. This time, instead of a beating, our parents were deeply disappointed, a far worse punishment.

## **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The boys sit quietly, their parents' disappointment evident. Israel and Jacob exchange looks of guilt and resolve.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Seeing our parents so disappointed broke our hearts. We agreed not to hurt each other anymore, though we never truly got along.

**FADE OUT.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This is the story of how we grew up, the lessons we learned, and how Sammy, with his pure heart and simple happiness, taught us more than we ever imagined.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

## **Chapter 2: Holiday Joy and Heartfelt Farewells**

**FADE IN:**

## **INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The living room is decked out in holiday decorations. A Christmas tree twinkles in the corner, and the fireplace crackles warmly. The family is gathered, with MOM (late 30s, festive) bustling around, hanging stockings.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Christmas wasn't too far off, and after our mother's disappointment eventually subsided, she fully engaged herself in the holiday season as she did every year. She loved Christmastime.

#### **INT. FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY**

MOM stands at the counter, baking cookies. The aroma fills the room. ISRAEL (teenage) and SAMMY (young teen, always cheerful) sneak in and steal cookies from the tray. Mom swats them away playfully.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We never really wanted for anything, but Christmas was the one time Mom treated us like kings. Sometimes I thought that was the real reason she and Dad worked so hard throughout the year.

#### **INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING**

The family gathers around the tree. Sammy, the first to wake up, runs around the house, waking everyone with enthusiasm.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy always woke up first on Christmas morning and his job was to wake everyone else up. Watching Sammy animate the Christmas songs while opening his gifts would have been enough for any of us, but not for Mom.

**CUT TO:**

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

The family sits around the tree, opening gifts one by one. Mom ensures each present is unwrapped slowly, savoring the moment. SAMMY eagerly opens a gift, finds underwear, and says, "Oops, next up," making everyone laugh.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She had a certain way of doing things, and everyone knew not to mess with her holiday rhythm. Sammy always went first on the smaller gifts. If something like underwear was inside, he'd say, "Oops, next up."

**MONTAGE:**

- **Jacob opening gifts, and Israel unwrapping his presents.**
- **Sammy directing the pace with “next up” whenever someone takes too long.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mom always felt she needed to be completely fair. She had to spend the exact same amount of money on each of us.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

The floor is covered in wrapping paper. MOM pretends all the presents are opened and starts cleaning up.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mom would always pretend like all the presents were opened and then say, “Boys, I believe I forgot something.”

**Sammy's anticipation builds.**

**SAMMY** Next up!

**MOM** Check the bathroom, Sammy.

**SAMMY** The bathroom?

**Sammy runs down the hall. Moments later, he yells, “You got me poo?”**  
**Everyone laughs.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy came back out confused, but then Mom directed him to the toilet tank.

**Sammy returns with a plastic bag containing two tickets. He opens it and sees Mickey Mouse on the front.**

**SAMMY** We’re going to Disney World!

**The family cheers as Sammy jumps with joy.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mom decided to spend a little time with just him. The happiest kid in the world and his mother were going to the happiest place in the world.

#### **EXT. DISNEY WORLD - DAY**

Sammy and MOM enjoy their time at Animal Kingdom, Sammy's favorite part. They go on a safari, watch exotic birds, and see giant fish. Sammy's face is filled with joy.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Ever since Sammy was small, he loved all kinds of animals. Even with that BB gun, he never let me shoot anything but targets.

#### **INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Jacob and Israel are home, keeping their distance but helping their father around the house. The atmosphere is calm but tinged with longing.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jacob and I stayed away from each other, not wanting to hurt our mother again. The house wasn't the same without Sammy and Mom.

#### **INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

MOM and SAMMY return. Sammy excitedly shares stories of their Disney World adventures.

**SAMMY** We saw so many animals! And the safari was amazing!

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy's excitement was infectious. We missed them, but their return brought the house back to life.

#### **EXT. JAMES RIVER - DAY**

Israel and Sammy prepare the Jon boat for its maiden voyage. Sammy wears his life jacket proudly.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Fishing season was here, and we had our life jackets, worms, fishing poles, and the boat ready to go.

**\*\*Sammy and Israel laugh and chat as they launch the boat. Sammy directs Israel, greeting everyone with "Good day, Good day."**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy was our little Socrates, spouting wisdom about fishing and life.

#### **EXT. JAMES RIVER - LATER**

The drizzle turns into a downpour. Sammy insists on staying, catching fish after fish. The boat starts filling with water.

**SAMMY** I got it! I have the perfect name for your boat.

**ISRAEL** What is it, Sammy?

**SAMMY** Puddles, Puddles the Boat!

**\*\*Israel laughs and agrees. They head back to the dock, Sammy pointing out "sky boobies" in the clouds.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy named the boat Puddles. It was fitting. We laughed and made our way back, enjoying every moment.

#### **INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY**

Graduation day. Israel sits among the graduates, Sammy beside him wearing a bow tie that says "Graduate." Sammy greets everyone with "Good day, Good day."

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When they called my name to receive my diploma, Sammy cheered louder than anyone.

**\*\*Sammy runs to meet Israel at the foot of the steps. The entire auditorium stands and cheers with him.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy's joy was contagious. I was honored to have him by my side.

#### **INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The family returns home. Sammy's mood darkens as he realizes Israel will be leaving soon.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy struggled with the concept of time. I reassured him we still had two months to fish, paint, and cloud gaze.

#### **EXT. FIELD - DAY**

Israel, Jacob, Sammy, and Puddles lie on their backs, looking at the clouds. Sammy sees dog bones and toys instead of "sky boobies."

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We shared one last moment together, cloud gazing and laughing. Jacob and I found common ground under the sky.

**INT. FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT**

Israel packs his truck. Sammy waves from the window, flexing his biceps. Puddles jumps up and licks Sammy's cheek.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy was going to miss me, and I was going to miss him too.

**EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - EARLY MORNING**

Israel leaves early, the truck loaded. He drives off, thinking about his family.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I left before anyone woke up, not wanting to make it harder than it already was.

**EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY**

Israel arrives at college, looking around the bustling campus.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** On the drive to college, I realized how much I took for granted back home.

**INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT**

Israel sits at a desk, studying. A calendar on the wall marks Sundays as family call days.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I worked hard to make it work, just like my parents did. I made sure to call home every Sunday. Everyone, including Sammy, seemed fine with me being gone. Puddles was doing his job.

**FADE OUT.**

**Chapter 3: Spring Break and The Unexpected Journey**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. DORM ROOM - DAY**

Israel (late teens) packs his suitcase with clothes, school supplies, and a few personal items. He pauses, looking at a photo of his family.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** My first semester roared by and before I knew it, it was time for spring break. While the rich kids headed to exotic destinations, us working-class students went back home. I wanted to go home anyway. I missed my parents, Sammy, and maybe even Jacob a little bit. I even missed both of the Puddles—the dog and my boat.

#### **EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY**

Israel's truck pulls into the driveway. The family rushes out to greet him, hugs and laughter all around. Dad (late 40s, weary but loving) surprises everyone by being home.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I got home, it was like I had returned from a war. Everyone was so happy to see me, even Dad took a day off from work.

#### **INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The family sits together, reminiscing. Jacob (teen, usually distant) approaches Israel with an unexpected request.

**JACOB** I want to go fishing with you and Sammy this week.

**ISRAEL** Are you serious? You don't even like fishing.

**JACOB** Yeah, well, maybe I just want to spend some time with you guys.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jacob insisting on going fishing was shocking. I thought, maybe I need to go away more often if this is what happens when I come back.

#### **EXT. JAMES RIVER - DAY**

Israel, Sammy, Jacob, and Puddles the dog prepare for their fishing trip. Israel checks the boat, making sure they have everything.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Saturday, our planned fishing day, arrived. For the first time, Jacob and Puddles joined us.

**Sammy greets everyone at the dock with his usual "Good day, Good day."**  
**Jacob helps unload the boat.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I remembered to bring the oars this time and even bought an electric trolling motor from our nosey neighbor.

**EXT. RIVER - LATER**

The trio enjoys their fishing trip, catching fish after fish. The rain starts to drizzle, just like their previous successful trip.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The rain brought the fish in again. With Jacob's help, we caught even more than last time.

**As they head back, Israel notices a large, fast boat named "The Armageddon" speeding across the river.**

**ISRAEL** Guys, watch out for that big boat!

**JACOB** What the hell is it doing?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The Armageddon wasn't necessarily following us, but it was so big and fast that it seemed to be everywhere at once.

**The Armageddon heads straight for them. Israel, Jacob, and Sammy try to brace for impact.**

**ISRAEL** Hold on, Sammy!

**The collision throws Israel underwater. When he resurfaces, he sees Jacob and Puddles swimming towards shore, but no sign of Sammy.**

**ISRAEL** Sammy! Sammy, where are you?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Absolute terror set in. I knew Sammy had his life jacket on, but I didn't know where he was or if that huge boat's propeller tore him to pieces.

**The captain of The Armageddon, an older shirtless man (50s, tanned), pulls Israel onto his boat.**

**CAPTAIN** Is that your brother?

**The captain points to a figure bobbing in the water. Israel's heart sinks.**

**ISRAEL** Oh God, Sammy!

**Israel jumps back into the water, retrieves Sammy's bloody, limp body, and hands him to the captain. The captain performs CPR.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I thought I was retrieving my lifeless brother, but then, he sputtered up water. Relief washed over me, but he was still pretty torn up.

**The rescue squad arrives at the dock. Sammy is taken to the ambulance. Israel, Jacob, and Puddles rush to Israel's truck.**

**INT. TRUCK - DAY**

Jacob screams at Israel, who silently drives.

**JACOB** Why did you have to come back? Why?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I didn't respond because I felt I deserved it. Guilt consumed me like never before.

**EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

Israel parks. Jacob runs inside. Israel sits in the truck, praying loudly, with Puddles howling along.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** For the first time, I just sat in my truck and prayed. I prayed so hard that Puddles started howling.

**INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY**

Israel finally enters. Mom (late 40s, worried) and Dad hug him. They don't blame him, but Israel still feels immense guilt.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** They didn't blame me, but I blamed myself enough for everyone.

**A DOCTOR (40s, composed) approaches the family.**

**DOCTOR** Sammy has a broken arm and some serious lacerations, but he'll be okay.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Thank God, he would be more or less okay this time.

**INT. FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT**

Israel overhears his parents talking through the thin walls. Mom's voice is filled with fear and sadness.

**MOM (V.O.)** We need to protect Sammy more than ever, even if it's from Israel.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Their words stained my soul. I failed Sammy, and they felt that way too.

#### **EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT**

Israel packs his truck quietly and drives away, leaving in the middle of the night.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** You can call it shame or cowardice, but I couldn't face them. I headed back to school in the middle of the night.

#### **EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT**

Israel arrives back at campus, parking in the dimly lit lot.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I was thankful Sammy would be okay, but I didn't know how long it would take for me to get there.

#### **INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT**

Israel lies awake, staring at the ceiling. His phone rings repeatedly, showing calls from MOM. He doesn't answer.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mom called multiple times, but I couldn't bring myself to answer. The guilt was overwhelming.

#### **MONTAGE:**

- **Israel skipping classes, grades plummeting.**
- **Israel meeting with an academic advisor (40s, professional) who suggests a study abroad program.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** My grades dropped, and I didn't care. The advisor suggested a study abroad program to boost my GPA and avoid going home for the summer.

#### **INT. AIRPORT - DAY**

Israel and two other art students, THEODORE (20s, intellectual) and WILLIAM (20s, easy-going), arrive at Ben Gurion Airport. Security approaches them.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As irony would have it, that other country was Israel. My parents obviously liked it there because they named me after the place.

**SECURITY** Where are you coming from? Why are you here?

**ISRAEL** We're college students from the U.S., here to study art for the summer. We're staying at the Waldorf Astoria in Jerusalem.

**Security verifies their story and lets them go, but the atmosphere remains tense.**

**EXT. JERUSALEM - DAY**

A double-decker bus takes the group to the hotel. Israel gazes at the impressive, sand-colored structure with large, hourglass-shaped windows.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The Waldorf Astoria was majestic, with its pronounced Middle Eastern flair and elegant rooms.

**INT. WALDORF ASTORIA - LOBBY - DAY**

The students check in. A BELLHOP (30s, helpful) explains the significance of the wrought iron clocks.

**BELLHOP** These clocks represent all the different languages of the world and the great diversity of our country.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It was impressive and really big, but the inside was even more majestic.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Israel shares a room with Theodore and William. They laugh, trying to settle in.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** If there was anything negative, it was sharing a room with two other guys. But I laughed, having shared a room with two brothers my whole life.

**FADE OUT.**

## **Chapter 4: The Unexpected Adventure**

**FADE IN:**

### **INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Israel (early 20s) wakes up, stretches, and looks at his two roommates, THEODORE (early 20s, intellectual) and WILLIAM (early 20s, easy-going).

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sarcastically, once I got to know my two new roommates a little better, I started calling them Bill and Ted after the movie "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventures." Their nicknames seemed to stick too, because we all hoped this trip would be our own version of an excellent adventure.

### **INT. ART CLASSROOM - DAY**

Israel stands in front of an easel, staring at a blank canvas. He reflects on a recent art competition where his painting won third place nationally.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Before I left, my professor submitted one of my paintings that came in third place in a national art competition. The art from the top five students would be used as collegiate promotional material around the world. My professor insisted my time in Israel should be spent figuring out why my painting didn't do any better than third place.

### **INT. CLASSROOM - DAY**

Bill and Ted quickly finish their art assignments, while Israel remains, struggling to find inspiration.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Bill and Ted jumped right into their work, often finishing before I even started. They left me alone, staring at an easel, with no clue what to do next.

### **INT. JERUSALEM UNIVERSITY - EVENING**

Israel feels a strange presence, like he's being watched. He looks around, checking nearby classrooms and hallways, finding nothing.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I kept feeling like I was being watched. I looked around but never found anyone. I wrote it off as my imagination and returned to wasting time in front of the easel.

**EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT**

Israel waits for a bus. After 30 minutes with no bus in sight, an old taxi pulls up. The driver offers him a ride.

**DRIVER** Need a ride?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I had all my art supplies, so I accepted the driver's offer without a second thought.

**INT. TAXI - NIGHT**

Israel struggles with his supplies, trying to make small talk with the driver.

**ISRAEL** What kind of car is this?

**DRIVER** A 1970 Sussita. Last car ever manufactured in Israel.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As he told me about the car, I noticed we were heading in the opposite direction of the hotel. I didn't say anything at first, thinking he knew the roads better than I did.

**EXT. STONE BRIDGE - NIGHT**

The taxi crosses a long stone bridge. Israel's suspicion grows.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When we crossed a long stone bridge, I knew something wasn't right.

**INT. TAXI - NIGHT**

The driver pulls out a small handgun, pointing it at Israel's ribs. Another man in the back seat presses a gun to the back of Israel's head.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The driver pulled out a gun, and so did the man in the back seat. I was doomed if I didn't follow their directions.

**EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY - NIGHT**

The taxi stops at an old, abandoned factory. The driver and the man in the back seat force Israel inside.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We stopped at what looked like an old abandoned factory. They led me inside and threw me into a pitch-black meat locker, chaining the door shut.

#### **INT. MEAT LOCKER - NIGHT**

Israel sits in the dark, feeling slime dripping from the ceiling. He tries to find the driest area to sit.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It was as dark as death. Slime dripped from the ceiling. I felt my way around until I found a dry spot to sit.

#### **INT. MEAT LOCKER - LATER**

Israel tries to ram the door open with his shoulder, but it doesn't budge.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I slammed my shoulder against the door repeatedly, but it didn't budge. I was trapped until someone decided to let me out.

#### **INT. ABANDONED FACTORY - LATER**

Israel hears voices outside, a heated argument. The door opens, and the men grab him, leading him down a long, carpeted hall.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I heard a heated argument outside. The door opened, and the men led me down a long, carpeted hall. The building looked less abandoned the further we went.

#### **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT**

Israel is taken to a modern-looking conference room. A well-dressed man (50s, Middle Eastern descent, sullen) enters and sits across from him.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The room looked like a modern office. The well-dressed man seemed genuinely concerned about how I was brought there.

**WELL-DRESSED MAN** I saw your painting. I want you to paint something similar for my son.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I almost laughed. I was far from a professional artist. I tried to explain, but he didn't let me speak. He was serious.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER**

The two men bring in Israel's original painting and set it up on an easel. They also bring in his art supplies and a fresh canvas.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** They brought in my painting and a fresh canvas. I thought of giving them the original, but that's not what they wanted.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT**

Israel prepares to paint. He recalls his inspiration for the original painting—his brother Sammy.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I poured my heart into the first painting because of Sammy. It was an apology for what happened on the river.

**Israel dips his brush into cerulean blue paint, starting at the top of the canvas.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I started with cerulean blue, my favorite color. As I spread the color, I couldn't get the phone out of my head.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER**

Israel decides to call home, despite the well-dressed man's warning. He dials the number and waits.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I dialed home. After four rings, Sammy answered, excited to hear from me.

**SAMMY (V.O.)** Good day, Good day!

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I tried to ask for Mom or Dad, but Sammy kept talking over me.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER**

The two men burst into the room, ripping the phone cord out of the wall.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The men burst in, ripping the phone cord out of the wall. It looked like I had to paint something for real.

## **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT**

Israel, inspired by Sammy's voice, paints with renewed energy. The painting begins to take shape, a beautiful landscape.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Thinking about Sammy's voice, a smile came over me. His voice gave me all the inspiration I'd ever need.

## **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING**

Israel finishes the painting, proud of his work. The well-dressed man returns, looking at the painting with tears in his eyes.

**WELL-DRESSED MAN** I'm sorry for making you paint like this, but thank you. My men will take you back soon.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** He assured me his men would take me back soon. The men who threw me into the meat locker were now sitting with me, eating snacks like old friends.

## **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER**

The well-dressed man brings in a young man in a wheelchair (late teens, frail, similar to Sammy). The young man looks at the painting, grateful.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** A young man in a wheelchair, similar to Sammy, looked at the painting with absolute gratitude. His eyes had a similar sparkle to Sammy's, but dimmer.

## **EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY - DAY**

Israel is driven back to the university by the two men. They chat casually.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The men talked casually, inadvertently filling in pieces of the puzzle. The well-dressed man or his son related to my painting's inspiration.

## **INT. JERUSALEM UNIVERSITY - DAY**

Israel is dropped off near the university. He stands, dumbfounded, watching the men drive away.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I stood there, knowing no one would believe such a tale. I was just a vessel for a gift that would continue to give.

**FADE OUT.**

## **Chapter 5: The Blessing and the Curse**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Israel (early 20s) is sitting on his bed, examining a large manila envelope. He opens it, revealing crisp, new \$100 bills.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I think at that point, for the first time in a long time, I was finally like Mr. Lennon said I should be. I was happy. Happier than I'd been in a long time. Another reason I was quite happy was when I opened that big manila envelope. There was \$10,000 in cash inside.

Israel counts the money, astonished.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** That thankful father, out of his gratitude, gave me an amount that I'd never seen before. I never had money like that, and I doubted very seriously that my parents or anyone I knew ever had that much either. I immediately came to the realization that with such a blessing, I had to use it for something that would help my family in some way.

**INT. SCHOOL ART CLASSROOM - DAY**

Israel enters the classroom, seeing Bill and Ted already working.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Bill and Ted were already inside working. They must not have missed me very much because they didn't say a word about me not going back to the room for the past two days.

Bill and Ted glance up, nodding at Israel, then return to their work.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I decided never to tell anyone about my kidnapping, mainly because if for no other reason, more good came from it than bad.

## **EXT. WAILING WALL - DAY**

Israel stands at the Wailing Wall, watching people pray and reflect. An old gypsy woman approaches, grabbing his hand.

**ISRAEL** I don't have anything to give you.

The gypsy woman shakes her head, squeezing Israel's hand tighter. She examines his palm.

**GYPSY WOMAN** You have a secret, young man. I know what happened to you in that old building.

Israel's eyes widen as she recounts the details of his kidnapping.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She told me about the secret I was trying to keep, and almost every detail about what happened in that old building.

The gypsy woman continues, speaking of Israel's turbulent future.

**GYPSY WOMAN** You and one of your siblings are at great odds. This battle has lasted for a long while. And you will suffer great losses in your life. Death will be the perennial theme of your life.

Israel tries to pull his hand away, but the woman's grip is firm.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I don't know why I didn't just walk away. It was like she had me in some sort of hellish trance.

The woman's tone softens as she speaks of Israel's future daughter.

**GYPSY WOMAN** You will have a daughter with beautiful hazel brown eyes and wavy hair. She will be your life's greatest blessing.

## **INT. AIRPLANE - DAY**

Israel, Bill, and Ted are on a flight back home. Israel stares out the window, haunted by the gypsy woman's words.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Her words gave me nightmares for the next few days and many times thereafter.

## **INT. FAMILY HOME - NIGHT**

Israel enters his family home. His parents, Jacob, and Sammy greet him warmly.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I finally made it back home for the next break, it didn't take long for me to realize that Sammy had been going back and forth to the doctor and had been doing so for quite a while.

Israel's mother (50s, caring) looks concerned as she speaks with Israel.

**MOTHER** We didn't want you to worry, but Sammy has a heart problem. It's called an atrioventricular septal defect.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy's doctors felt confident that with a small procedure they could mend much of his most pressing issues and he'd be fine again.

#### **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Sammy is in a hospital bed, surrounded by his family. He smiles, holding Puddles, his dog.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sammy's heart operation was on a Monday. The operation seemed to go well, but on the Friday after his operation, after Sammy got back home, Jacob and I got up to start our day.

#### **INT. SAMMY'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Israel enters Sammy's room, finding him cold and unresponsive. Puddles lies next to him, head on Sammy's shoulder.

**ISRAEL** Sammy... no...

Israel screams for Jacob (early 20s), who rushes in, equally horrified.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Every fear or terror that I'd ever had culminated to the point where I thought my own heart would explode.

#### **INT. FAMILY HOME - LATER**

Israel makes the heartbreaking call to his parents.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There wasn't a part of me that wanted to tell my parents what happened, but I knew I had to. My already broken heart crushed once more as I dialed my mother's work number and told her what happened.

## **EXT. FAMILY HOME - NIGHT**

The coroner arrives, and Israel and Jacob carry Sammy's body to the hearse. They both look up at the sky.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As we carried our beloved brother out, we both looked up at the sky. This time, however, all I saw were scars in the sky.

## **INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY**

Israel and his parents walk through the funeral home, choosing a casket.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Choosing a casket for Sammy felt impossible. There has never been a casket made that could come close to being good enough for him.

The funeral director calculates the cost, revealing it to be exactly ten thousand dollars. Israel's parents weep.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The price came out to exactly ten thousand dollars. My parents wept once more. I already knew where the money was going to come from.

## **INT. FUNERAL HOME - LATER**

Israel discreetly pays the funeral director, ensuring his parents won't know where the money came from.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I made it clear that I never wanted anyone to know where the money came from. I just wanted the funeral director to call my parents after I left.

## **EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY**

Israel returns home, haunted by the gypsy woman's words. He yells at her in his mind.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Thoughts of that old gypsy woman re-entered my mind. I yelled at her as if she was sitting in the seat right next to me.

## **INT. MILITARY RECRUITMENT OFFICE - DAY**

Israel signs up for the military, seeking a way to escape his pain.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I realized I couldn't sit around wallowing in my anguish any longer. The only thing I felt left for me to do was to join the military.

**EXT. MILITARY BASE - DAY**

Israel trains rigorously, volunteering for the most dangerous assignments.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The limited regard I had for anything or anyone actually helped me thrive in the military.

**EXT. MIDDLE EAST - DAY**

Israel and his unit are in a foxhole, a SCUD missile heading their way.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** For me, death in one form or another had already been the unfortunate and unexpected perennial theme of my life, just like that crazy old fortune teller said it would be.

The missile explodes nearby, throwing Israel through the air.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Everything flew up in the air, including me, but somehow I knew it wasn't my time.

Israel hits the ground, disoriented but alive. He helps his comrades, checking each bunker.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** All of the adrenaline set in at once and I used it to help ensure that all of the others near me survived that day as well.

**INT. MILITARY BASE - NIGHT**

Israel reflects on his near-death experience, thinking of the gypsy woman's words.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** In times like those, your mind travels everywhere. Mine stopped at the months before that attack, and back to when I joined the Air Force.

**EXT. SPAIN - DAY**

Israel arrives in Spain, his new military base. He meets his new boss, ANDY (late 20s, country boy).

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I was stationed at Torrejon Air Base, near Madrid. Andy was my new boss and soon to be best buddy.

**INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT**

Israel and Andy are in a nightclub. Andy spots a beautiful Spanish woman (Luz).

**ANDY** Look at that woman. She's hot.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** With my own Sol y Sombra-fueled courage, I told him I would go over to her for him.

**INT. NIGHTCLUB - LATER**

Israel talks to Luz, eventually waving Andy over. Luz and Andy hit it off.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Cupid himself must have been in that club that night. Andy and Luz hit it off, and she would later become his wife just three short months later.

**INT. NIGHTCLUB - LATER**

Israel recognizes a somewhat inebriated Spanish guy at the end of the bar. It's ALVARO (mid-20s), a former high school exchange student.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Alvaro's family started inviting us to go out on their yacht, and to their mansion for dinner. This was like my time at the Waldorf Astoria, it was a life that I couldn't believe I was living.

**EXT. LUXURY YACHT - DAY**

Israel and his friends enjoy a day on Alvaro's family yacht.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We were very grateful for their hospitality, but we never asked them for anything. They just kept inviting us places.

**INT. ALVARO'S MANSION - NIGHT**

Israel meets Luz (19, model) at a family dinner. They begin to spend time together, much to her parents' disapproval.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Luz was not only extremely beautiful, but she was also very smart. Her parents did not approve of her spending time with me at all.

**FADE OUT.**

## **Chapter 6: The Highs and Lows of Youth**

### **EXT. DORM ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

The party is in full swing on the roof of a three-story dorm building. Music blares, and laughter fills the air. Empty bottles of Sol y Sombra litter the ground.

**ANDY** (Laughing) Come on, man, another round!

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We worked hard, but when we were off, we played even harder. Six out of seven nights a week, we were out drinking somewhere. Thanks to Andy's trick with the F-16 oxygen, we always showed up to work sober.

### **EXT. DORM ROOFTOP - LATER**

The party has thinned out. The few remaining are visibly drunk. The edge of the rooftop seems dangerously close.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Andy always had my back, but this time, I pushed even his limits.

**The camera focuses on the LEDGE.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The more I drank, the less attention I paid to the ledge...

### **EXT. GROUND BELOW THE ROOF - NIGHT**

Suddenly, the sound of a BODY HITTING THE GROUND.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** ...and before I knew it, I fell off that damn building like an idiot.

### **EXT. SIDE OF THE BUILDING - NIGHT**

The camera follows the protagonist climbing back up the side of the building.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** After I fell off the first time, instead of going back in the front door and up the steps, my dumb ass started climbing back up the outside of that damn building.

## **EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

The protagonist reaches halfway up and falls again.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** After making it about halfway up, I fell again. Each time, I kept yelling out, "I AM THE SKY! I AM THE SKY!"

## **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING**

The protagonist lies in a hospital bed, eyes closed, looking pained.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I woke up the next morning, I wouldn't open my eyes for two reasons. One, I had no idea where I was, but the second and more important issue was there was something extremely wrong with my manhood.

**Andy's voice is heard.**

**ANDY** (Laughing) Hey, you awake yet?

**The protagonist slowly opens his eyes and peeks under the covers.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I peeked under the covers to see what the source of my pain was. I saw something I had never seen before. A catheter.

## **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Andy is laughing hysterically.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Andy was laughing so hard, I thought they'd have to admit him right next to me. Just when I thought all of the comedy subsided, a nurse came in and made a few more jokes at my expense before thankfully removing the catheter.

**The nurse pulls out the catheter.**

**PROTAGONIST** (Moans) Ahhh...

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The whole situation was embarrassing. What do you say when someone is pulling a garden hose out of your parts? Thank you? Gracias? Feliz Navidad?

## **INT. MASTER SERGEANT HUFF'S OFFICE - DAY**

Andy and the protagonist stand in front of MASTER SERGEANT HUFF.

**ANDY** (Voice formal) We're here, Sir, as ordered.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I felt somewhat betrayed by Andy at first, but I knew I was the idiot who fell off the building, not once, but twice.

**Master Sergeant Huff looks the protagonist in the eye.**

**MASTER SERGEANT HUFF** (Without blinking) You're going through an alcohol education program and anger management class.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** At first, I thought, I wasn't angry, I was drunk, maybe stupid but what the hell?

**Andy gives the protagonist a look, silently telling him to keep quiet.**

**MASTER SERGEANT HUFF** (Getting louder) Get the hell out!

**EXT. MILITARY TENT CITY - NIGHT**

The protagonist and his unit are setting up tents.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** After the rat-infested building and the five-star hotel, we finally settled into our tent city. Twenty snoring and farting men in one tent was a far cry from the dorms in Spain.

**INT. MILITARY TENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist and his unit sleep in sleeping bags. Rain starts pouring down heavily.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** At about two in the morning, the skies opened, and an ocean's worth of water started pouring down on us.

**They scramble to climb onto the roof of the bombed-out building.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As many of us that would fit climbed on the roof. This flood was eerily biblical.

**EXT. ROOF OF BOMB-BUILDING - NIGHT**

Rats are everywhere, trying to scratch their way up the roof.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The only animals we saw were those damn rats again. No one was thinking about how everything was being washed away because we were all just trying to keep those nasty, despicable things off of us.

**EXT. MILITARY TENT CITY - DAY**

The water recedes, and the unit rebuilds their tent city.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We soon discovered that just about everything we built over the past month floated away as well. The only thing to do then was build the tent city for the second time.

**INT. TENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist, Andy, and Sarge are in the same tent.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Andy and Sarge were in my tent—or should I say, I was in theirs. Twenty men in one tent was a far cry from any luxury I had known.

**EXT. AMBASSADOR'S COMPLEX - NIGHT**

The protagonist and his friends are drinking at the ambassador's complex.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The one time alcohol was openly available to us was at the ambassador's complex. By that time, I had done so many ignorant, stupid, and thoughtless things while drinking.

**ERIC starts talking trash to the ambassador.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Eric started talking trash to the ambassador for some unknown reason.

**ERIC tackles the ambassador's bodyguard into the pool.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Eric tackled the most muscular man I've ever seen into the deep end of the ambassador's pool. The bodyguard couldn't swim.

**The protagonist jumps into the pool to save the bodyguard.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I ended up jumping in and pushing that gargantuan to a place where he could reach the bottom.

**INT. TENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist and his friends return to their tent, where the SCUD missile alarm blares.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We barely took three steps inside when the most blood-curdling noise started blaring. It was that SCUD, and it was on its way to us.

**The camera shows the protagonist's thoughtful face as he recalls his experiences.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** If maturity and responsibility had been lacking in my life, things were about to change drastically.

#### **EXT. NIGHTCLUB IN MADRID - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**

The protagonist walks towards a nightclub, noticing a rusted-out BMW with people walking by and looking inside.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I noticed a rusted-out BMW parked directly in front of the nightclub. People were walking by, looking inside.

**The protagonist looks inside the car and sees a young couple who overdosed on heroin.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** What I saw was a young couple who had both overdosed on heroin. The worst part of all were their eyes.

**The protagonist calls the Spanish police.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I called the Spanish police to get help. When they arrived, they were very professional, but it seemed like this was a common occurrence for them.

**The police take away the bodies.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** After they left, something came over me. My friends went into the club, but I couldn't. I felt like I had lost another family member. So instead of going with my friends, I went home and sobbed myself to sleep.

**FADE OUT.**

## **Chapter 7: The Scars of War**

### **INT. NIGHTCLUB IN MADRID - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**

The camera pans over a rusted-out BMW parked in front of a nightclub. People walk by, glancing inside and muttering to each other.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I don't know why seeing that poor couple outside that club hit me so hard but it did. They were so young and just gone like they never existed.

**The protagonist peers into the car and sees the young couple who overdosed.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Life didn't seem like it was very fair to them but I guess, like with everyone, life never promised it would be.

### **EXT. MILITARY CAMP - DAY**

The protagonist, ERIC, and other soldiers navigate their daily routines amidst the harsh desert environment. SCUD missile alarms and bomb blasts echo in the background.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As far as my own mortality, I obviously made it through many more SCUD attacks and many other evils that war brings.

### **EXT. BATHROOM AREA - DAY**

The protagonist and Eric head towards a makeshift bathroom area among the sand drifts.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We jokingly called our uncomfortable relief pairings "Bathroom Buddies," and for lack of anyone else choosing him, I was paired with Eric's crazy ass.

**ERIC (Half-joking)** You watch my back, I'll watch yours.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Truthfully, Eric and I were friends, but I damn sure didn't trust him at all after the incident with the Ambassador's bodyguard and the eyebrows.

### **EXT. SAND DRIFT BATHROOM - DAY**

Eric is finishing up while the protagonist keeps watch. Suddenly, a dust storm begins to form over a nearby dune.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I saw a dust storm kicking up over one of the dunes. It wasn't rare, but this one looked man-made.

**The protagonist peeks over the ridge and sees twenty or more armed soldiers approaching.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There were twenty or more armed soldiers less than twenty yards away. I couldn't yell for Eric, but I had to do something.

**The protagonist whispers loudly to Eric.**

**PROTAGONIST** (Whispering urgently) Eric, pull up your damn pants and get over here!

**ERIC fumbles and trips, drawing the attention of the soldiers.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We all raised our rifles at the same time and I held my breath knowing that was the end.

**The protagonist, out of fear and desperation, starts pointing in different directions and shouting names.**

**PROTAGONIST** (Yelling) Johnson! Smith! Thompson! Cover the flanks!

**To his surprise, the enemy soldiers throw down their rifles and fall to the ground.**

**ERIC** (Sarcastically) Hey bud, way to go.

**PROTAGONIST** (Shaking his head) Something had to be very wrong with that guy's medulla oblongata.

**The protagonist and Eric march the surrendering soldiers back to their camp.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We quickly learned that those men were starving. They surrendered in hopes of being fed.

**INT. MILITARY CAMP - DAY**

The protagonist and Eric are treated like folk heroes as the soldiers they captured are processed and fed.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** For a few months, Eric and I were treated like folk heroes. I guess you never know what's going to happen when you go to the bathroom in the desert with your bathroom buddy.

#### **INT. MILITARY TENT - NIGHT**

Sarge holds a debriefing meeting with the soldiers in their tent. He checks on their well-being and offers fatherly advice.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sarge always made it a priority to make our problems his business. Andy was still a newlywed, worried about his pretty new Spanish wife, and Sarge's advice always seemed to help.

#### **EXT. DESERT - NIGHT**

The protagonist's unit prepares for another mission, donning their heavy chemical warfare gear.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We'd get flown in on helicopters, jump out, and get to work while many times being shot at in the process.

#### **INT. MILITARY CAMP - NIGHT**

The unit gathers around a television, watching news reports of captured pilots being tortured.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Our unit had one television which constantly ran from a generator. We watched the news tell the world where our so-called secret location was.

#### **INT. FIELD KITCHEN - DAY**

The protagonist sketches on a napkin. A pilot, JACKAL, picks it up and requests a custom painting on his bombs.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jackal asked me to paint something special on the bombs loaded on his jet. I painted a Jackal for Jackal.

#### **EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY**

The protagonist paints various designs on the bombs and jets as the other pilots request custom artwork.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Painting came back to me like I never stopped. I painted dragons, the American flag, naked women, and anything else they wanted.

#### **INT. MILITARY TENT - CHRISTMAS DAY**

The unit sits around a makeshift Christmas tree, giving thanks and sharing memories. Andy has decorated Sarge's M16 with socks and underwear.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We all sat down around the makeshift assault Christmas tree and talked about what we were thankful for.

**ERIC** (Smiling) Beer.

**PROTAGONIST** (Smirking) Why did you make me paint that damn curb three different colors?

**SARGE** (Laughing) I wanted to see if you'd do it right the third time.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** He was seeing if he could trust me to do whatever he asked, even if I didn't understand his orders.

**Sarge receives a package from home and excitedly opens it. Inside is a VHS tape.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sarge was as excited as we'd ever seen him. He quickly discovered there was a VHS tape inside.

**The unit gathers around to watch the tape. It quickly becomes apparent that it is something sinister.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As we all gathered to watch Sarge's tape, it didn't take long to realize something was very wrong.

**The tape shows Sarge's wife with another man, asking for a divorce.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** His wife sent him a tape of her having sex with another man, all while mockingly asking him for a divorce.

**PROTAGONIST** (Reaching for the tape) I went to cut off the tape as fast as I could.

**SARGE** (Screaming) NO! LEAVE IT ON!

**The unit is ordered out of the tent. A single gunshot rings out.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We all left, too shocked to say a word. As the single shot rang out, my heart immediately knew what had happened.

**The protagonist and the unit rush back into the tent to find Sarge dead.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Our father, our angel, our hope had killed himself. This death reopened wounds that I knew would never heal.

**EXT. DESERT - NIGHT**

The unit stands in solemn silence as Sarge's body is taken away.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sarge's death and the way it happened seemed to be the pinnacle of what any of us could endure.

**INT. MILITARY PLANE - DAY**

The unit boards the plane back to Spain, each soldier looking lost and broken.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When the cargo planes arrived to take us back to Spain, I don't think anyone really wanted to leave. We all knew we were leaving with much less than what we arrived with.

**EXT. EUROPEAN CITIES - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY**

The protagonist and his friends travel through Europe, visiting landmarks, drinking, and trying to escape their memories.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Our little unmarried group decided to take the first thirty days to travel together throughout Europe and the last thirty to go see our actual families back in the States.

**EXT. ROCK OF GIBRALTAR - DAY**

The protagonist interacts with the tail-less Macaques, laughing as they steal food and play pranks on tourists.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The Rock of Gibraltar was overrun with monkeys, tail-less Macaques to be exact. It was their little island, and they weren't shy about letting everyone know we were the visitors.

**FADE OUT.**

## **Chapter 8: A New Beginning**

### **EXT. ROCK OF GIBRALTAR - DAY**

The camera captures the protagonist and his friends boarding a dated cruise ship heading to Morocco. The sea is calm, and the sun is setting.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** From Gibraltar, we took a cheap and very dated cruise ship to Morocco. Morocco was my least favorite place for many reasons.

### **EXT. MOROCCAN PORT - DAY**

The protagonist and his friends disembark from the ship, now accompanied by a blonde-haired, blue-eyed Spanish girl.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** By this time, we had female company join us on the trip. I took a blonde hair, blue-eyed Spanish girl.

**The group walks through the bustling port city, taking in the sights.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When we arrived in Morocco, it seemed like a very formal country. Even though they had huge sandy beaches, everyone was still all covered up in robes and scarves.

### **EXT. MOROCCAN MCDONALD'S - DAY**

The group enters what appears to be a McDonald's, with golden arches and familiar signage.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We went into what we thought was a McDonald's and ordered what we thought were hamburgers.

**The protagonist takes a bite of his burger and immediately makes a face.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The burger itself tasted like what I could only describe as a warm tongue.

**INT. MOROCCAN BAZAAR - DAY**

The group walks through a crowded bazaar, colorful Persian rugs hanging everywhere.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We started walking through the bazaars, just taking in the country. I honestly felt that Aladdin was going to jump out at any minute and try to sell us a magic carpet ride.

**A villainous-looking man approaches the protagonist.**

**VILLAINOUS MAN** (Grinning) Interested in one of my fine rugs?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** He was wearing a décor that I'd never seen anybody wear outside of a cartoon. He had on red-and-white-striped pants, a pink puffy pleated shirt, and he smelled like rotten tobacco.

**The protagonist politely declines, but the man insists they talk privately.**

**PROTAGONIST** (Concerned) No, thank you.

**The villainous man gestures for the protagonist to follow him around a corner.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I just got back from a war and I didn't trust people directly in front of me, so I knew I didn't want to go around the corner with this character, but reluctantly, I did.

**EXT. MOROCCAN ALLEY - DAY**

The protagonist and the villainous man speak in hushed tones. The man makes an unsettling proposal.

**VILLAINOUS MAN** (Whispering) Trade the blonde girl for one of my rugs.

**PROTAGONIST** (Shocked) What? No way.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** First of all, I didn't own her. Hell, I didn't even know her that well, but I did know we needed to get back to that ship as soon as possible.

**The protagonist and the girl hurry back towards the ship. Someone tries to steal the protagonist's camera, but he holds on tightly.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** On the way back to the ship, someone even tried to steal the camera off of my shoulder. I just held on tight and kept walking, blonde girl and all.

**INT. AIRPLANE - DAY**

The protagonist, now in his military uniform, boards a commercial plane back to Virginia. He is greeted by friendly passengers who offer him drinks.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Flights to the States were always on commercial planes, and we flew for free if we wore our uniforms and had our military ID.

**The protagonist accepts the drinks gratefully, one after another.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I think almost everyone on that plane bought me at least one drink and many bought, two or more. I was so polluted when I reached the terminal at Dulles that I had to have help getting off the plane.

**INT. DULLES AIRPORT - NIGHT**

The protagonist, drunk and disoriented, misses his connecting flight to Richmond. He falls asleep on his duffle bag and wakes up hours later.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I woke up with a headache but also with the realization that I had missed my way home once again.

**He finds the military office in the airport and explains his situation to the sergeant on duty.**

**PROTAGONIST** (Sheepishly) I missed my flight. Can you help me?

**The sergeant, seeing his medals, quickly books him on the next flight to Richmond.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The sergeant didn't care once he saw all of those fake medals across my chest and he quickly booked me on the next flight to Richmond.

**INT. RICHMOND AIRPORT - DAY**

The protagonist finally arrives in Richmond, greeted by his parents and his brother Jacob.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I didn't care, though, because my parents and Jacob were there and that was enough for me.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT**

The protagonist lies in his old bed, staring at the ceiling, memories of the past flooding his mind.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Even though I'd been there what seemed like a million times before, it didn't seem familiar at all to me. Death had come in so many forms that I think it was blocking most of my innocent youthful memories out.

#### **INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT**

The protagonist, reluctant but encouraged by his old friends, goes out for drinks. He catches the eye of a beautiful woman, EMILY, with strawberry blonde hair and hazel brown eyes.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As corny as it sounds, I caught the eye of this beautiful woman sitting with some of her friends and I couldn't stop staring.

**Emily walks over to him, and they begin to talk.**

**EMILY** (Playfully) So, what's your story?

**PROTAGONIST** (Smiling) My story is, I just met my future wife.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** What started in the bar, ended on the beach. After hours of nothing but just getting to know each other, I realized I had never been so smitten with anyone like I was with her.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The protagonist and Emily move in together. They spend their days talking, laughing, and growing closer.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Over the next month like a whirlwind, and way prematurely, we decided to move in together. We both knew we were still getting to know each other.

## **INT. HONEYMOON SUITE - BAHAMAS - DAY**

The couple is on their honeymoon in a dated resort. Rain pours down outside, trapping them indoors.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Unexpectedly, it rained every day we were there. Since we were stuck in the room so much, we talked a lot. We talked about a lot of things we really should have talked about before we ever got to that point.

**Emily shares her traumatic past, and the protagonist opens up about his own pains.**

**EMILY** (Tearfully) I was abused by my father and another family member when I was a child.

**PROTAGONIST** (Supportively) I'm so sorry, Emily. I went through a lot too, and I promise to help you through this.

## **INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The couple returns home, and the protagonist devotes himself to helping Emily. They prepare for the birth of their child.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Now that we were having a baby, we just couldn't dare pass any of our damage on to our child.

## **INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

Emily struggles through a difficult labor, finally giving birth to their daughter, MIA.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** My Mia was born on February 22nd and Emily left us both on April 1st. That was an April Fool's Day I will never forget but it wasn't a joke.

## **EXT. PARK - DAY**

The protagonist walks through a park with baby Mia, cradling her lovingly.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mia deserved so much more than abandonment from her mother. I still can't or won't dare judge the hurt and destruction that Emily's parents put in her life.

## **INT. PROTAGONIST'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The protagonist spends countless hours bonding with Mia, their eyes locking in deep connection.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I looked at my daughter, I often felt remorse that I couldn't stop her mother from leaving us. I even sometimes felt sorry that she got stuck with only me but I was bound and determined not to let her down.

**FADE OUT.**

ChatGPT

## **Chapter 9: The Return of Emily**

### **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Mia and her father are playing with building blocks on the floor. The room is warm and cozy, lit by the soft glow of a lamp. The doorbell rings.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** One evening, Mia and I were playing with building blocks in the middle of the living room floor when the doorbell rang.

**PROTAGONIST** (Smiling) Must be Grandma.

**The protagonist opens the door, expecting his mother. His smile fades as he sees Emily standing there, looking disheveled and nervous.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As I opened the door, it was as if I saw a ghost. It was Emily.

**PROTAGONIST** (Surprised) Emily...

**EMILY** (Timidly) Hi. Can I come in?

**PROTAGONIST** (Softly) Sure, come in.

**Emily steps inside, looking around the familiar space with a sense of nostalgia and regret. She sits on the couch, watching Mia play from a distance.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She timidly watched Mia playing on the floor as if she was too scared or ashamed to go over to her.

**PROTAGONIST** (Encouragingly) Why don't you join her?

**Emily hesitates, then slides off the couch to sit on the floor next to Mia. Mia continues playing, barely acknowledging her mother.**

**PROTAGONIST** (Matter-of-factly) Mia, this is your mommy.

**MIA** (Indifferently) Mommy?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mia had been around other kids, so I think she knew to some degree what a mommy was but I didn't know. She may have just thought it was a daddy with long hair.

**Emily watches Mia play, a mix of emotions on her face. The protagonist sits beside them, feeling the tension.**

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

The protagonist and Emily sit at the kitchen table with cups of coffee. The atmosphere is heavy with unspoken words.

**PROTAGONIST** (Cautiously) So, why are you here, Emily?

**Emily takes a deep breath, trying to find the right words.**

**EMILY** (Softly) I'm moving back. I want to see Mia.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This was Mia's mother, I couldn't or didn't want to say no, but I knew my world was getting ready to change again and it was just when I couldn't have been any happier.

**PROTAGONIST** (Concerned) Okay... How can I help without disrupting our lives?

**Emily breaks down in tears, unable to articulate her needs.**

**EMILY** (Sobbing) I don't know...

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This was kind of a relief because I knew she was telling me the truth and I guess that was a start.

**The protagonist reaches out and holds her hand, offering silent support.**

**EXT. APARTMENT - DAY**

Emily moves in with a friend nearby and begins visiting Mia regularly. The visits start to positively affect Emily, and she begins to look happier and more confident.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** From Emily's visits with our daughter, you could tell Mia was having the same effect on her as she had on me.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Mia plays with her toys while Emily watches, smiling more often. The protagonist observes from a distance, feeling a mix of emotions.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I was happy for her, I really was, but I was used to that being my time, and although I realized I was being selfish, I couldn't help it.

#### **INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Emily and the protagonist sit at the kitchen table again. The atmosphere is tense as they discuss custody arrangements.

**EMILY** (Calmly) I want to start taking Mia out on my own.

**PROTAGONIST** (Resigned) Alright. Let's figure out the best way to do this.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The outcome of court was that we both received joint custody of Mia, which meant I lost more time with my daughter.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Mia has trouble sleeping and often has fits when she is dropped off at Emily's. The protagonist talks to Emily, seeking answers.

**PROTAGONIST** (Worried) Is there something I need to know about Mia?

**EMILY** (Concerned) No, I don't think so. I'm trying to work some things out.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Regardless of our talk, I still knew something wasn't quite right with the situation.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Mia, now a little older, talks about a man named Joe. The protagonist becomes curious.

**MIA** (Happily) Joe read me a story today!

**PROTAGONIST** (Curious) Who's Joe, sweetie?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Joe again, I thought, who the hell is Joe?

**INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Emily nonchalantly tells the protagonist that Joe is someone she has been dating. The protagonist feels a mix of emotions.

**PROTAGONIST** (Neutral) Can I meet him if you think it's getting serious?

**EMILY** (Smiling) Sure, we can arrange that.

**INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY**

The protagonist meets Joe at Mia's favorite McDonald's. Joe arrives in a flashy red Corvette, looking out of place in the casual setting.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Joe arrived in a flashy red Corvette, looking out of place in the casual setting.

**MIA** (Excitedly) Daddy, that's Joe!

**PROTAGONIST** (Smiling) Hi, Joe. Nice to meet you.

**JOE** (Friendly) Nice to meet you too.

**The meeting is cordial, but the protagonist feels an undercurrent of unease.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I had to give Joe a chance and be happy for Emily, because in a way, Sarge told me to.

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist watches from his balcony, seeing Emily's car parked at Joe's house more frequently. He feels a mix of acceptance and frustration.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I wasn't checking up on Emily, or even him necessarily, I just still wasn't very comfortable with anyone around my three-year-old daughter other than us and probably never would be.

**FADE OUT.**

## **Chapter 10: The Incident**

### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The protagonist, sweaty from a workout, enters his apartment and heads towards the shower. As he passes the balcony door, he glances outside and sees Mia playing in Joe's front yard.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** One Saturday, when Emily had Mia, I had just come in from the gym and was headed towards the shower. As I walked past the balcony door, I saw Mia outside in this guy's front yard.

**PROTAGONIST** (Concerned) Mia?

**His heart races as he notices Mia is alone. He rushes downstairs, anxious.**

### **EXT. JOE'S FRONT YARD - DAY**

Mia, a little girl with a big smile, spots her father and shouts excitedly.

**MIA** (Distress) Daddy! Daddy!

**PROTAGONIST** (Panicked) Get back, baby! Stay there! I'll come over to you!

**Mia stops, listening to her father's urgent command. The protagonist reaches her and sweeps her into his arms. He walks towards Joe's front porch, ready to knock.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I made it to Joe's front yard and I was right, there was no one outside with her — she was outside all alone.

**The protagonist starts to ring the doorbell, but the door swings open abruptly. Emily stands there, a towel with ice over her right eye.**

**PROTAGONIST** (Alarmed) Emily, what happened? I found Mia outside alone!

**Emily takes Mia from his arms, hugging her tightly, clearly shaken.**

**EMILY** (Softly) She must have snuck out. I didn't know she was outside by herself.

**PROTAGONIST** (Concerned) What happened to your face?

**EMILY** (Winces) Car accident on my way home from work. I'm okay.

**PROTAGONIST** (Relieved) Do you want me to take Mia for a while?

**EMILY** (Nods) Yes, please.

#### **INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY**

The protagonist and Mia sit at a table, Mia happily munching on chicken nuggets while the protagonist watches her play in the ball pit.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mia deserved some McNuggets after that unplanned and unsupervised adventure.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist and Mia play together, watch TV, and enjoy their time together.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We played and I cooked bad meals. We watched that stupid purple dinosaur show about twenty times a day and enjoyed each other's time together like we always did.

**Mia, with a book in hand, climbs onto the protagonist's lap, ready for storytime.**

**MIA** (Holding book) Read to me, Daddy.

**PROTAGONIST** (Smiling) Alright, baby girl. Let's see where this story takes us.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She was never a rude child but man was she direct for such a little thing. She always knew what she wanted and didn't mind verbally expressing those desires.

**Mia starts to read, making up parts of the story, her imagination running wild.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Her stories were so cute. I was so honored to be in her imaginary adventures taking us wherever it was she wanted to go.

#### **EXT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Emily arrives to pick up Mia. She apologizes profusely for the incident and updates the protagonist on her recovery.

**EMILY** (Apologetic) I'm so sorry about what happened. I'm just glad Mia is okay.

**PROTAGONIST** (Sincerely) Me too. How are you doing?

**EMILY** (Nods) I'm fine. Thank you for taking care of her.

**MIA** (Hugging her father) Bye, Daddy.

**PROTAGONIST** (Hugging Mia) Bye, baby girl. Be good for Mommy.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily's eye was still a little blackened from the car accident but it looked like it was getting better.

#### **EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

The protagonist watches from his balcony as Emily's car becomes a more frequent sight at Joe's house. He feels a mix of emotions, struggling to accept the new reality.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I didn't like it, but it looked like my daughter and her mom were going to be my new neighbors in the not too distant future after all.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist contemplates his feelings, trying to reconcile his emotions about Emily and Joe.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily and I were comfortable with each other, but to me, she felt more like a distant cousin or someone that you only saw on special occasions.

#### **EXT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The protagonist sees Mia outside Joe's house again. She spots him and calls out excitedly.

**MIA** (Excitedly) Daddy! Daddy!

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** My baby girl was calling for me and I was on my way over.

**\*\***As the protagonist approaches, Joe angrily grabs Mia and rushes her inside, slamming the door. The protagonist's rage builds.

**PROTAGONIST** (Furious) What the hell...?

**INT. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

The protagonist rings the doorbell furiously, pounding on the door when there's no answer. A police car arrives, and an officer approaches.

**POLICE OFFICER** (Calmly) What's the problem, sir?

**PROTAGONIST** (Breathless with anger) He grabbed my daughter! I need to see her!

**POLICE OFFICER** (Sternly) You need to go back to your own home.

**The protagonist reluctantly complies, retreating to his apartment while casting furious glances back at Joe's house.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I didn't give a damn about the police or jail or anything other than checking on my daughter.

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The protagonist's phone rings. It's a call from Kathy, delivering tragic news.

**KATHY** (Somber) Eddie just died.

**PROTAGONIST** (Stunned) What...?

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Another dear friend, unexpectedly gone, and gone way too soon — then there was the mess across the street. It was, once again, too much to handle.

**The protagonist sits on the couch, overwhelmed with grief and anger. He tries to call Emily, but she doesn't answer.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I didn't know what I was going to say other than to check on my daughter and whatever else came out of my mouth, but she never answered anyway, and I was still very much going crazy.

**EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The protagonist drives to Emily's house, finding it empty. He drives by several times throughout the night, feeling lost and frustrated.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I eventually went back to my apartment, feeling very unfulfilled and still very out of control of my own emotions.

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The phone rings again. It's Emily, crying and apologizing.

**EMILY** (Sobbing) I'm so sorry. Mia is okay. I'm so sorry.

**PROTAGONIST** (Angry) I just need to know Mia is okay. Can I talk to her?

**Emily hands the phone to Mia.**

**MIA** (Cheerful) Hi, Daddy!

**PROTAGONIST** (Softly) Hi, baby girl. Are you okay?

**MIA** (Happily) Yes, Daddy. I'm okay.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She did let me talk to Mia that did calm me down a bit but I was still very much pissed, and felt I absolutely had to do something substantial to help me understand what was going on a little better, so I did.

**FADE OUT.**

**Chapter 11: Bugging Joe's House**

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist is working on a complex setup of wires and devices on his kitchen table. He methodically connects a police scanner to a tape recorder.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As an ex-electronic warfare specialist, one of the things we learned about were frequencies and radio waves, and how to bug things. This time, I wanted to bug that idiot's house across the street.

**EXT. ROOF OF APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

The protagonist climbs up to the roof, careful not to make any noise. He runs a copper wire across the roof, securing it tightly.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I ran a copper wire across the roof of my apartment building

for the antenna. Then, I ran another wire through my kitchen window and hooked it up to the police scanner I bought from Radio Shack.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The police scanner and tape recorder are set up on the kitchen table. The protagonist adjusts the frequency dial, listening intently.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** At the time, cell phones were rare, but cordless phones were very common. Each had its own frequency. Once I figured out Joe's frequency, the call could be clearly heard and recorded.

**The protagonist's face lights up as the scanner captures a clear signal. He quickly notes down the frequency, 49.666.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Those numbers, like many other things in my life, were ironic. If that devil wanted a fight, he'd get one.

#### **EXT. DAYCARE - DAY**

The protagonist stands outside the daycare, waiting for Mia. He's tense, looking around, as if expecting trouble.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I told Emily that I'd start picking Mia up from her daycare instead of from her house. I felt betrayed and enraged.

**Mia runs out, her face lighting up when she sees her father. She hugs him tightly, and they head off together.**

#### **INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY**

The protagonist and Mia sit at a table, enjoying a meal. Mia plays in the ball pit, occasionally glancing back at her father.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mia deserved some McNuggets after that unplanned and unsupervised adventure.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist is listening to recorded tapes, a mix of tension and determination on his face.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Joe's cordless phone's frequency transmission was 49.666. My setup recorded every call, 24/7.

**EXT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY**

The protagonist walks into a lawyer's office, determined. He speaks with the lawyer, who seems more interested in his fees than in providing advice.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I called a lawyer to see what he recommended. He reminded me of those old colonels who risked our lives senselessly.

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist is deep in thought, listening to more recorded tapes. The tension on his face grows as he hears Joe's conversations.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Every call Joe made or received seemed to have something to do with me. He was a lawyer, which left me in a worse position than I thought.

**The protagonist's anger boils as he hears Joe discuss plans to take his daughter away.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Listening to another man say he was going to take my daughter away was too much.

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The protagonist is trying to hire another lawyer, facing repeated rejections.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Every lawyer I called or visited had a conflict of interest or was too busy. Joe had played his next hand.

**EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY**

The protagonist enters a pawn shop, purchasing a Winchester 308 and a box of bullets. His face is set with grim determination.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I bought a Winchester 308. I hated guns after the military, but life sometimes adjusts our plans for us.

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist sets up his rifle, readying himself for what he believes must be done. He listens to more of Joe's conversations, his resolve hardening.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I was going to the roof to stop Joe.

#### **EXT. ROOF OF APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

The protagonist sets up his rifle, aiming it towards Joe's house. He adjusts the scope, steadying his breath.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I climbed onto the roof, set my scope, and waited.

**Joe's Corvette pulls into the driveway. The protagonist focuses the crosshairs on Joe's head.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This time, there would be finality.

**Just as the protagonist begins to squeeze the trigger, a strong wind picks up. He hears Sarge's voice in the wind.**

**SARGE (V.O.)** I pray you are not hard tested.

**PROTAGONIST (Whispering, angrily)** This is the definition of being hard tested!

**The protagonist struggles with the decision, shaking. He lowers the rifle, unable to go through with it.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I was mortified with myself. I realized I couldn't do it.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist sits, staring at a picture of Mia on the wall, tears streaming down his face. He's exhausted, emotionally drained.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I stayed up most of the night, just staring at Mia's picture, thankful that I didn't go through with it.

**FADE OUT.**

### **Chapter 12: The Numbness**

## **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist, exhausted, falls asleep on the couch. The rifle remains on the roof.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Time stopped, if nowhere else but in my mind. That numbness again, but thank God, this time it was because of life, not death.

## **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The protagonist wakes up, looking disoriented. He glances at the kitchen window, knowing the rifle is still on the roof.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I didn't go up to get the rifle for over a week. I didn't trust myself.

## **EXT. ROOF OF APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

The protagonist cautiously retrieves the rifle. His hands shake as he disassembles it.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I did go up to get it, I didn't keep it long. I destroyed it like it would have done to my life if I used it that night.

## **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist listens to the tapes again, but his demeanor is different, more resigned than enraged.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I still listened to the tapes, but they didn't have the same hold over me. I concentrated on Mia and our time together.

## **INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY**

The protagonist and Mia enjoy a meal. Mia plays in the ball pit, her laughter echoing in the restaurant.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This situation was far from over, but I wasn't a murderer. Love was greater than hate. My love kept Joe alive, even though he'd never know it.

## **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The phone rings. The protagonist answers, his face growing concerned as he listens.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Not long after that night, I got a call from Emily. She was crying, whispering that Joe had hit her.

#### **EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY**

The protagonist rushes to a neighbor's apartment, asking an older lady to watch Mia. He then heads across the street to Joe's house.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I told Emily I'd call the police and be on my way.

#### **INT. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Joe, drunk and waving a gun, yells at Emily. The protagonist enters, trying to deescalate the situation.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I got there, Joe was the one with the gun. Unlike me, I believe he was going to use it.

**The police arrive, trying to calm Joe down. Joe ignores them, continuing his threats.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The police walked in as Joe included them in his threats. Then, like Sarge, he put the barrel in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

**Emily, bloody and shaking, sits slouched in the corner. The protagonist wraps a blanket around her, shielding her from Joe's body.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jesus, I thought. Where does it end? All this death, all the time.

#### **INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT**

The protagonist arrives at the hospital, seeing a commotion. Medical staff work frantically around Emily.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** After arriving at the hospital, Emily tried to kill herself too. That night ended with her in a suicide watch unit.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S PARENTS' HOUSE - EARLY MORNING**

The protagonist picks up Mia, taking her out to McDonald's, needing her comfort.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I took Mia to McDonald's. She was the only one who could give me any relief.

#### **INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY**

The protagonist sits with Mia, memories flooding his mind. Mia talks excitedly about her day.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** All of the events, amplified tenfold, came back. Memories of my family, high school, the military, everyone.

#### **INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

The protagonist visits Emily. They share a gentle smile. Emily, with tears in her eyes, says she needs help.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily admitted she needed help. The doctors recommended a year-long rehabilitation program in California.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Emily talks with Mia, explaining her need to go to California. Mia, serious, pats the cushion next to her, signaling for Emily to sit.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily needed Mia's guidance. I already knew what the outcome would be.

**Mia, with a serious expression, says, "Oh no, mommy, you can do better."**  
**Emily smiles through tears, knowing she must go.**

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily would go to California for a year.

#### **EXT. AIRPORT - DAY**

The protagonist and Mia arrive in California. Emily greets them, glowing with renewed hope. They share a heartfelt reunion.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily met us at the airport. That ridiculous glow was back, radiating from both mother and child.

## **INT. REHABILITATION CENTER - DAY**

The protagonist and Mia attend Emily's graduation ceremony. They celebrate together, a sense of hope and renewal in the air.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily's ceremony was wonderful. It felt like seeing a newborn baby, ready for a fresh start.

## **EXT. AIRPORT - DAY**

The protagonist prepares to leave, knowing Mia will stay with Emily for the remainder of the program.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I headed home, knowing Mia would be okay because Emily was too.

## **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist stares at the ceiling, glowing with the stars he placed there for Mia. He feels a sense of peace and hope for the future.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Emily was reborn. I felt a peace I never had before, an intuition that everything would finally be well.

**FADE OUT.**

## **Chapter 13: Final Goodbyes**

### **INT. AIRPORT - DAY**

The protagonist says goodbye to Emily and Mia, hugging them tightly. He watches them walk away, a bittersweet smile on his face.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I said my goodbyes, knowing I'd see them both in about a month. My life has always been unpredictable with huge highs and deep lows.

### **INT. AIRPLANE - DAY**

The protagonist sits in his seat, looking out the window. Suddenly, he winces, clutching his head.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** On the flight home, my next round of turbulence began. A severe headache hit, and my right side went numb.

**INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist stumbles into his apartment, holding his head in pain. He collapses onto the couch.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I returned home, the issues didn't go away. They got worse, almost unbearable.

**INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

The protagonist sits in a hospital gown, looking frustrated. Doctors run tests, but find nothing.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** After two days, I had no choice but to go to the hospital. On the first visit, they didn't find anything.

**INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

The protagonist undergoes an MRI, the machine loudly clanking around him. He looks anxious, feeling the tugging sensation.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The MRI felt like it was tugging at all my internal organs.

**INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

The protagonist sits across from the doctor, who looks serious. She delivers the news, and he reacts with shock and disbelief.

**DOCTOR** I think you have brain cancer. We need to run more tests to confirm.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The doctor bluntly said, "I think you have brain cancer."

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

The protagonist sits alone at the bar, a drink in hand. He looks lost in thought.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I hadn't drunk any alcohol in a long time, but with this news, I revisited that old friend.

**INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

The protagonist undergoes more tests, looking weary and drained.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** For the next few weeks, I had to go to the hospital every day. Everything I owned was tested, poked, and prodded.

#### **INT. BAR - NIGHT**

The protagonist continues to drink, talking to other patrons. He looks for solace but finds little.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I made a new best friend for those few weeks, and its name was Uber.

#### **INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

The doctor delivers the final diagnosis. The protagonist listens, his face a mix of resignation and disbelief.

**DOCTOR** You have stage 4 pancreatic cancer. It has spread to your brain and other organs.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The doctor didn't lie. She said I had stage 4 pancreatic cancer. It had spread all over my body.

#### **INT. PROTAGONIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The protagonist sits on the couch, staring at a photo of Mia. Tears stream down his face.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I couldn't imagine not seeing my daughter. That would be the real hell for me.

#### **INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY**

The protagonist finalizes his will, ensuring Mia and Emily are taken care of. He looks determined, despite his situation.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I left money for my parents, Jacob, and his family. I bought Mia and Emily a house and made sure Mia could go to any college she wanted.

#### **EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT**

The protagonist sits on his balcony, looking at the stars. Blood trickles from his mouth and nose, but he remains calm.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I sat on my balcony, wondering what was going to happen next. Blood poured from my mouth and nose, making me dizzy.

#### **INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

The protagonist lies in a hospital bed, tubes and wires attached. He looks frail but peaceful.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This was my final trip to the hospital. When Emily and Mia arrived, they had no idea I was sick.

#### **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Emily and Mia enter the room, tears in their eyes. The protagonist smiles weakly at them.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** How could I leave without seeing them one last time?

**EMILY** Tag, you're it.

**MIA** I love you, Daddy.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I didn't have to say goodbye because I'd always be there. I'd be in their hearts, in the sky, and maybe when the wind blew.

**FADE OUT.**

### **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 14: Garden**

**FADE IN:**

#### **EXT. BEAUTIFUL GARDEN - DAY**

*A breathtaking garden filled with vibrant flowers of every color. The sun shines brightly, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The air is filled with the faint sound of angelic music, almost ethereal.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)**

*I looked at my baby girl one last time and winked and said, "I am the sky, you know, and the sky loves you with all of my heart."*

*We see the protagonist, ISRAEL, lying on a bed of flowers, his eyes slowly closing as he whispers to his daughter. The world fades to black around him.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I didn't know what was going to happen after I closed my eyes but regardless, I knew I'd always be with her in some way, and she would definitely always be with me wherever it was I was going.*

**FADE TO:**

**EXT. MYSTICAL LANDSCAPE - UNKNOWN TIME**

*ISRAEL is standing in a surreal, otherworldly landscape. The surroundings are both familiar and foreign, filled with a sense of peace and wonder. A faint, comforting hymn can be heard in the background.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Then I closed my eyes and simply stopped being a part of the world in the way they were. Once and for all, death in one form or another was the unfortunate and unexpected perennial theme of my life.*

*ISRAEL looks around, trying to make sense of his new surroundings.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I've heard people say that you can see your soul leaving your body or that there should be some sort of bright tunnel that you need to head to but for me, that wasn't the case.*

*He notices a bright light in the distance, accompanied by the most pleasant, indescribable music.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I can't say I've woken up from death or if I even knew exactly where I was, but I do know it at least seemed good; maybe even a little more than good -- I don't know for sure yet.*

*ISRAEL starts walking towards the light, his steps slow and hesitant.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I felt like I had been here before, even though I had absolutely no idea where "here" was.*

**FLASHBACK:**

**EXT. VARIOUS SCENES OF WAR AND LOSS - DAY/NIGHT**

*We see vivid flashes of ISRAEL's life, filled with moments of war, loss, and grief. Friends and family members are seen dying in various tragic circumstances.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I was told that after you die, you should see some sort of magnificent bright light, and I did see a light, and it did seem amazing, but it was off in the distance, appearing to be quite far away.*

*The scenes shift to happier moments with MIA, ISRAEL's daughter, bringing a smile to his face.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I could also faintly hear the most pleasant music. That comforting hymn was so glorious that it was beyond anything I could adequately describe with my limited earthly comprehension.*

*The music grows louder, enveloping ISRAEL in a sense of peace.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*If it wasn't for those two, what I can only define as heavenly signs somehow engulfing me in assuredness, I would almost think somehow, I ended up in that other place.*

*ISRAEL stops walking, his face reflecting a mixture of emotions.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I guess I was doing that because as my memories were flashing through my head, I could see with perfect clarity that I didn't have what most would consider an easy life.*

*The camera pans around to show a path covered in flowers, inviting yet mysterious.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I lost so many friends and family member's way before anyone would think their expected time should have been and those visions were flashing through the sky of wherever I was now at.*

*ISRAEL takes a tentative step forward, following the path.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Many of those closest to me died in a terrible war. Some of them took their own lives and many others had their lives abruptly eliminated by whom we considered to be the enemy.*

*As ISRAEL walks, he sees fleeting images of his friends and family, smiling and happy.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Life just didn't seem to give any of us the cards that any of us could expect to win with. Standing there, wherever 'there' was, I was reliving those recollections in full view but this time it was more as a spectator.*

*The path becomes clearer, leading ISRAEL towards the light.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Admittedly, in many ways my life resembled one of constant struggle, but in one very special way, I will be the first to say that I was blessed beyond measure.*

*ISRAEL's face softens as he thinks of MIA.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I think I was just beginning to realize how much of a gift I was given but for whatever reason I had to leave.*

*ISRAEL reaches a beautiful tree, with flower petals swirling around it.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I remembered and actually saw everything, regardless of where I was with perfect clarity. The prominent thought on my mind as it always was and always will be was of Mia.*

*ISRAEL sits under the tree, a peaceful expression on his face.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Mia was such a great and unexpected gift, I often questioned if I ever came close to deserving such a wonderful responsibility.*

*We see flashes of moments with MIA, from her birth to her childhood.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Up until her birth I felt the only constant in my life was death, but not with her. She*

*brought life, a real life, a life that finally made me feel blessed for having but then I had to go.*

*ISRAEL closes his eyes, a tear rolling down his cheek.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I will say though, that little girl enlightened me about how great of a connection that kind of love can bring. From day one, and in so many ways she raised me every bit as much as I ever raised her.*

*The camera zooms in on ISRAEL's face, reflecting his deep connection to MIA.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I don't think I ever fully realized the magnitude of this truth until I got to that place, and right there in that place, I could still feel that eternal link to her.*

*The scene shifts to show ISRAEL standing up, his expression resolute.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I realized I was gone in a sense but I didn't feel gone from her at all. This was a connection that I pray is never taken away no matter where I am.*

*The path before him seems to beckon him forward, glowing softly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Not all fathers allow this acknowledgement but those of us who do, or did in my case, fully understand that the bond between a father and a daughter begins at the first knowledge that such preciousness is in the womb.*

*ISRAEL takes a deep breath and starts walking down the path again.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*That blessed bond grows into a love that for the sake of the child's safety, happiness, or even for an innocent smile of contentment will cause a father to do just about anything.*

*As he walks, the path becomes more illuminated, the light ahead growing brighter.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*As I stood wherever I was in a self-imposed trance pondering what was and questioning what I am now I had three very distinct realizations.*

*ISRAEL pauses, looking around as if he senses something new.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*The first thing I noticed was there was some sort of path that was almost hidden and somewhat covered up underneath my flower-garden-like surroundings.*

*The camera shows a hidden path covered in flowers, leading towards a distant light.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*It nestled itself a very short distance from where I was standing and it appeared to be leading towards where I thought that sweet music and the majestic bright light originated from.*

*ISRAEL starts to move towards the path but hesitates.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*The path itself didn't seem much different than any other you'd see at a local park or in a larger well-groomed backyard, but it did seem to be strangely inviting me towards it for some reason.*

*He takes a tentative step, feeling a pull towards the path.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*When I tried to move though, it was like my body was being pulled towards it, but my mind stubbornly wouldn't let my feet or the rest of me move an inch in its direction.*

*ISRAEL stands frozen, the path just out of reach.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I felt as if I was in one of those dreams where you absolutely know with certainty you're as completely awake as you've ever been, but you're not awake at all. You're just dreaming that you're awake.*

*He struggles, trying to break free from the invisible restraint.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*With those types of lucid dreams you can't move a muscle or snap yourself out of it either. You usually just have to wait it out and see what's next, kind of like what I felt I was going to have to do here.*

*ISRAEL looks frustrated but determined, the path calling to him silently.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I have to admit, this constriction gave me an unsettling feeling that I didn't have before.*

*The light ahead flickers slightly, as if encouraging ISRAEL to keep trying.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*What made those feelings worse was my second realization. This was something else that I was always told when I was alive but definitely wasn't experiencing in any shape or form for myself in this place.*

*ISRAEL looks around, searching for something familiar.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*From an early age I was taught that when you die you are instantly reunited with your family and friends that passed before you. They are the ones that you missed so much while you were left behind.*

*The camera shows empty surroundings, no sign of anyone else.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*What I definitely noticed was I didn't see any of them, anywhere. In fact, I didn't see anyone at all.*

*ISRAEL's expression becomes more confused and worried.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I was in some sort of motionless stupor in the middle of some gigantic garden all by my damn self. The more I looked around the more it just seemed like I was standing in someone's nice backyard instead of anywhere I expected to arrive at in the great beyond.*

*He stands still, feeling both the beauty and the loneliness of his surroundings.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I did have an underlying feeling that there wasn't any reason to be overly distressed but I still wouldn't allow myself to move for some strange reason.*

*ISRAEL's frustration grows, his eyes searching the garden.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*As my uneasy feelings kept escalating my third and strangest awareness came to light.*

*He looks down at his arms, noticing something peculiar.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*This realization was so odd but at least thinking about it took my attention away from the two more serious acknowledgements.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL's right arm, once covered in tattoos, now completely bare.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I got to the point where I felt so strongly that death was such a perennial theme of my life that every time another person I loved died, I would get a tattoo of some sort.*

*He examines his arm, confused and intrigued by the absence of his tattoos.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I got them on my right arm to serve as some sort of a permanently etched remembrance. I felt my heart was always in the right place with my painfully inked memorials, but more so, I genuinely thought I was giving those that I missed so much a visually lasting place in my life once again.*

*ISRAEL runs his fingers over his now smooth skin, lost in thought.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*My justification for anything I ever did was somewhat questionable at best and I guess tattoos were no different for me in that regard.*

*He sits down on the ground, still staring at his arm.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*The problem with all of my well intentioned chiseling's was not one of them ever brought any of my loved ones back. If anything, those tattoos often made things worse because every time I got a glance at my arm, whether on purpose or inadvertently, I'd often feel the pain from their loss all over again.*

*ISRAEL looks up at the sky, deep in thought.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*For me, the many tattoos I got over the years ended up representing my losses more so than the positive memories they were intended for.*

*He sighs, feeling a mix of relief and sadness.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Tattoos are complicated too, they definitely hurt but at the same time they are somewhat addictive. Strangely enough, every time I'd arrive at a tattoo parlor to get another a big part of me wanted that physical pain.*

*ISRAEL closes his eyes, remembering the times he got his tattoos.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*For me, it was almost a deserving punishment for my life continuing while those I thought I was doing it for didn't.*

*He opens his eyes, looking around the garden again.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Now, my third realization, as unexplainably as it is, was, they were all gone. There was nothing on my right arm, no tattoos at all. Nothing but unblemished skin.*

*ISRAEL stands up, feeling his new, smooth skin.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*As a matter of fact, every scar or other imperfection I had anywhere on my body was gone too.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL's entire body, now flawless and glowing slightly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*My skin itself had changed to a more unified shade of amber, kind of like a pale golden tint and it seemed almost regal.*

*He looks at his reflection in a nearby pond, amazed by his transformation.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I really don't know how else to describe my new skin because I'd never seen that color before.*

*ISRAEL touches his face, feeling the smoothness and warmth of his new skin.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Now for some reason I don't have any tattoos or punishment marks anywhere. There was nothing but a naked arm with new skin and a lot of confusion about what's really going on with me in this place.*

*He stands by the pond, staring at his reflection, lost in thought.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I don't know why every time I think I know how something should be it never quite turns out that way. Life and now death once again highlighted how little I actually know about anything.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL looking at the path, a sense of determination growing in him.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*That's the way it was in my life and evidentially that's going to be the same for me in death as well.*

*ISRAEL starts walking towards the path again, more confident this time.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Right before I worked myself up in a total tattooless frenzy, I started hearing something or should I say someone whistling in the distance.*

*The camera zooms in on the silhouette of an old lady wearing a big floppy hat and dark oversized sunglasses, walking towards ISRAEL.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*At first I couldn't see anything but as the high pitched tweeting became louder and more pronounced I began to make out the silhouette of what appeared to be a little old lady.*

*The old lady shuffles her way through the flowers, her presence creating a sense of calm and familiarity.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She was wearing a big floppy hat and dark over-sized sunglasses. Those glasses were so big that they hid half of her face.*

*The camera shows the old lady's warm, hazel eyes peeking out from under her oversized sunglasses.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She slowly shuffled her way to me through what seemed like millions and millions of flowers.*

*ISRAEL watches her approach, feeling a strange sense of recognition.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*As she became closer all of the flower petals that she was shuffling around blew up in the air to make me think a rainbow was headed my way.*

*The flower petals swirl around the old lady, creating a magical, colorful aura.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*They say this place has many mansions and for a second I thought maybe I was just dropped off on the wrong floor because for the life, or death of me, I had no idea who this elderly woman was.*

*The old lady finally reaches ISRAEL, greeting him with a warm smile.*

**ISRAEL**

*Hello.*

*The old lady doesn't respond at first, just continues to circle ISRAEL, inspecting him closely.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She didn't say anything back at first. She just slowly kept circling me as if she was looking for any unwanted scratches on a brand new car.*

*After a few moments, she finally stops and lets out a warm giggle.*

**OLD LADY (Ms. Grace)**

*Hello, Grampy.*

*ISRAEL is taken aback, confused by her familiarity.*

**ISRAEL**

*My name is Israel.*

*Ms. Grace chuckles, her eyes twinkling with mischief.*

**MS. GRACE**

*I know, Grampy. I know.*

*ISRAEL decides to play along, feeling a strange sense of comfort around Ms. Grace.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She may have been old but I have to say, she had the warmest hazel eyes hidden underneath those extra-large sunglasses.*

*The camera zooms in on Ms. Grace's eyes, highlighting their warmth and kindness.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Her glasses really were way too big for her face and crookedly pulled down on her nose. It was almost as if she was trying to hide her eyes for some reason.*

*Ms. Grace takes ISRAEL's hand, leading him towards the path.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*It didn't matter though, I couldn't miss those pronounced golden rings around her delicately aged pupils.*

*The path ahead becomes clearer as they walk together.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She also had the most distinguished looking white hair that was flawlessly tucked to perfection underneath that silly hat of hers.*

*ISRAEL glances at Ms. Grace, feeling a deep sense of trust in her.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Her eyes, her rosy cheeks, and her somewhat plump little body gave her what I felt was a genuinely trustworthy appearance.*

*As they walk, the path begins to glow softly, illuminating their way.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I guess my legs trusted her too because before I realized it we were both headed towards the path. That was the same path I wouldn't let myself go towards on my own earlier.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL and Ms. Grace walking side by side, the light guiding them.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I guess for some reason I was meant to wait for her.*

*They continue down the path, the surroundings becoming more vibrant and magical.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I don't know if I expected guardian angels, St. Peter, or even seventy-two vestal virgins to meet me at the pearly gates but that's definitely not what I got.*

*Ms. Grace hums a gentle tune, her presence radiating warmth and comfort.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Instead, I was tardily received by someone that looked more like one of the Golden Girls in a ridiculously floppy hat and oversized sunglasses.*

*ISRAEL chuckles to himself, finding humor in the unexpected situation.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I have to admit this situation was kind of funny because this little lady evidentially really was my divine tour guide to, I guess literally, God only knows where.*

*As they walk, Ms. Grace's glow becomes more pronounced, illuminating their path.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*After what seemed like just a very few steps on the path I began to see a beautiful cast of light come over her.*

*The camera captures the gentle, radiant glow enveloping Ms. Grace.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Her skin was originally very similar to my new skin but now for her at least, there was an additional glimmer that softly spread to all of our surroundings.*

*ISRAEL watches in awe as the light spreads, creating a magical atmosphere.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*It was almost as if it was lighting our way. It wasn't an overly bright glistening but it was just enough to let me know that there was something very special about this little old lady.*

*The camera focuses on Ms. Grace's serene, glowing face.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*The funny thing is, I actually thought I'd seen such a glow come over someone like that before. When I met Emily, I could have sworn that she had a very similar glow to her as well and then later for Mia as well.*

*Flashes of EMILY and MIA appear, both radiating a similar glow.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*It may not have been as pronounced or spread out as far as Ms. Grace's but I definitely believed it was a signal to me from above.*

*ISRAEL smiles, feeling a deep connection to the memory of EMILY and MIA.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*For Emily, whether I was right or wrong, I thought that it was God's way of showing me who he wanted me to be with.*

*The path ahead becomes even more inviting, the light guiding them forward.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I guess that happened that way because I was probably too slow to figure it out for myself.*

*Ms. Grace's glow intensifies, spreading warmth and light all around.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*For Mia, I knew it was so I'd never forget how much of a blessing she was, and that was something that I did achieve in life.*

*ISRAEL looks at Ms. Grace with a sense of gratitude and awe.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*The hat that Ms. Grace had on was still ridiculous and her glasses still covered too much of her face but her soft beautiful extra glowing appearance brought me to such a peace.*

*Ms. Grace turns to ISRAEL, her smile radiating warmth and kindness.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*It was a peace that permeated throughout my whole body and definitely reached every inch of my soul.*

*ISRAEL feels a profound sense of calm and acceptance.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I guess I could only come to the conclusion that this time, there was no denying that Ms. Grace's glorious radiance was unquestionably real.*

*They continue walking, the path becoming more beautiful with each step.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Although I didn't know where we were going, we were definitely heading somewhere together and she was most definitely leading our way in more ways than one.*

*As they walk, Ms. Grace begins to hum a familiar tune, comforting and soothing.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*As we walked on the path for a while she seemed to already know all of the stories about my life that I was attempting to tell her.*

*ISRAEL looks at Ms. Grace, surprised by her knowledge.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I thought to myself, "Can this lady give me a break? I just croaked here for goodness' sake."*

*Ms. Grace giggles softly, as if she can read ISRAEL's thoughts.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She listened to me but was very selective with her responses, almost as a person would be when they didn't want to give any secrets away.*

*ISRAEL continues to talk, sharing his stories and experiences.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I still didn't know where everyone that I was supposed to see in such a place was, but every time I'd try ask, she'd quickly redirect our conversation towards more of whatever she wanted me to know about instead.*

*Ms. Grace gently guides the conversation, focusing on the beauty around them.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*It was a little frustrating to be truthful but I politely listened to her describing the many different flowers that surrounded us instead of what I really wanted to know about.*

*They walk past rows of beautiful flowers, each one more vibrant than the last.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She also kept calling me "Grampy" for some reason, especially when she wanted my attention directed back towards her.*

*ISRAEL looks at Ms. Grace, feeling a mix of confusion and amusement.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Her voice was so nurturing that I couldn't be overly mad at her because even I wasn't brave enough to get too snappy with a woman who had a definite glow about her.*

*Ms. Grace smiles warmly, her glow growing brighter as they walk.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Our walk seemed more like being on a treadmill than any other sort of path than I'd ever been on.*

*ISRAEL looks around, noticing that they don't seem to be making much progress.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*With a regular path you at least feel like you're making some headway towards reaching an intended destination but not with this path.*

*Ms. Grace continues to hum, her presence calming ISRAEL's frustration.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*This stroll felt more like it went on forever without us truly ever gaining any ground.*

*ISRAEL sighs, feeling a mix of impatience and curiosity.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I think Ms. Grace sensed my frustration even though I did the best I could to hide it.*

*Ms. Grace stops and turns to ISRAEL, her eyes twinkling with understanding.*

**MS. GRACE**

*We've walked enough for the first day, Grampy. Go over to that field next to the tree and get some rest.*

*ISRAEL looks at her, surprised and reluctant.*

**ISRAEL**

*I'm not tired and I don't want to rest.*

*Ms. Grace's smile remains gentle but firm.*

**MS. GRACE**

*Trust me, you need to rest. Go on now.*

*ISRAEL reluctantly heads towards the tree, feeling a mix of confusion and obedience.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I reluctantly yet respectfully followed her directions and departed from the path to make my way towards the field and that particular tree she spoke of.*

*He reaches the tree and notices a makeshift bed of flower petals beneath it.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*When I arrived at the tree I noticed that she had definitely been there before because she had already made me a makeshift bed out of flower petals.*

*ISRAEL lies down on the bed of petals, feeling a strange sense of calm.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I never thought anyone had to take naps in a place like this or even that you'd ever get tired but I was doing exactly both of those things.*

*He looks up at the sky, watching the clouds drift by.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Lying under that tree made me think about my past life once again.*

*ISRAEL closes his eyes, memories flooding back to him.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*When I was younger my brothers and I would spend hour upon hour just lying on our backs pretending that the clouds were animals, cars, people, or of course those infamous women's body parts.*

*The camera shows young ISRAEL and his brothers, laughing and pointing at the clouds.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*We made those puffy white canvases of our imagination into just about anything that we wanted them to be.*

*ISRAEL smiles, lost in the memory.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*As I laid there this time I think I just wanted the clouds that I'd never expected to be looking at again to tell me something instead of me trying to direct what they could become in my imagination.*

*The clouds shift and form images from ISRAEL's past, telling their own story.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*The clouds never seemed to let me down and as I drifted off to what I guess was the greatest sleep of my life or death in this case those beautiful clouds didn't let me down this time either.*

*ISRAEL drifts off to sleep, his expression peaceful and content.*

**DREAM SEQUENCE:**

*We see a young ISRAEL running around with his brothers, carefree and happy.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*At first I dreamed that I was a young boy again. I didn't have a care in the world. I ran around playing with my brothers.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL's parents, always present and smiling.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*In these visions my parents always seemed to be around too.*

*The scene shifts to show ISRAEL's grandparents, filling the screen with warmth and love.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*This was a lot different from reality because in life, my parents worked almost all of the time to provide for their three adventurous knuckleheaded boys.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL's grandparents guiding and nurturing him.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*We were nowhere near being close to angels back then either.*

*The dream shifts, showing ISRAEL in college, looking lost and sad.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I mostly had a wonderful childhood though, that was up until my grandparents and then brother died.*

*ISRAEL is seen running away from his past, trying to escape the pain.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I was in college when my brother passed and something inside of me just snapped. For some reason from that point on and for a long time afterwards I just kept running away.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL joining the military, seeking solace in the distance.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I ran away to college, I ran away to a foreign country, and then, I even joined the military to solidify my attempts to run away as far as I could.*

*ISRAEL's expression reflects the weight of his memories.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*For me, those thoughts were more like hauntings. No matter how far away I ran I just couldn't get away from them.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL returning home, finding peace and acceptance.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*None of that ended until I went back to where they all started, really until I went back home.*

*The scene shifts to ISRAEL standing still, feeling a sense of belonging.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I eventually turned things around and became what I felt was somewhat stationary again even though there would always be a certain very special part of me missing in multiple places.*

*ISRAEL looks up at the sky, feeling a sense of release and acceptance.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I managed handling those feelings by telling myself that Sammy was in a much greater place doing much greater things.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL smiling, feeling a deep sense of peace.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I honestly had to completely buy in to that thought to get a handle on him being gone and then I had to do the same for so many other people.*

*ISRAEL's dreams shift to happier moments, filled with love and joy.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I don't think taking a stroll with an old lady, glowing or not, down a flower laden path was exactly what I expected for him or for me either for that matter.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL sprawled out in the pile of flower petals, smiling in his sleep.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*As I sprawled out further in the pile of flower petals I mostly dreamt about all of the wonderful things that occurred in my life but I also clearly saw the not-so-wonderful as well.*

*The dream shifts to scenes of war, filled with loss and sorrow.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I vividly revisited the war. I once again saw all of my friends that didn't make it home.*

*ISRAEL's expression turns pained as he relives the loss of his friends.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I saw one that I absolutely loved take his own life, and I also saw many others die in so many other ways too.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL's own death, followed by MIA at his funeral.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I could even see my own death and later my little girl's reaction at my funeral. My heart, asleep or not, was crushing as I saw her crying at my grave site.*

*The scene shows a young MIA, tears streaming down her face.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*She was only six when I left and now her daddy is gone. This time gone really does seem like forever.*

*ISRAEL's heart breaks as he watches MIA's sorrow.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*It was happening again, I felt like I was awake and directly experiencing these visions in real time but I wasn't awake at all.*

*The camera shows ISRAEL stirring in his sleep, his dreams intense and vivid.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I don't know how long I slept under what I am going to call my own personal tree of remembrance but when I woke up the rest of me felt like my right arm now appears.*

*ISRAEL wakes up, feeling refreshed and different.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I have to admit I felt refreshed and a little different too. I was cleansed during that sleep somehow.*

*He looks at his arms, noticing the smooth, unblemished skin.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I guess, this is what being made anew means.*

*ISRAEL sits up, feeling a sense of clarity and peace.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Maybe Ms. Grace was right, I did need to rest for a while but that rest, I believe, was supposed to be more like a final good bye to many of my earthly concerns.*

*He stands up, feeling lighter and more at peace.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I then knew that nap had to happen so I could be cleansed for whatever journey lay ahead.*

*ISRAEL looks around, feeling a sense of purpose and direction.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Possibly now I can truly realize that I may actually be in a much greater place and just maybe I too am here to do much greater things.*

*He starts walking back towards the path, feeling a renewed sense of purpose.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*That nap was like a release of all of my leftover emotions from an existence that was no more.*

*ISRAEL feels lighter, his steps more confident and assured.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I didn't forget my life as it was, I just evidentially had baggage that Ms. Grace knew I had to file somewhere to be able to continue on to wherever it was she was taking me.*

*As ISRAEL walks, the path becomes more inviting and clear.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I don't know why I expected my death to be any less confusing than so much of my life was, but I did, and once again my expectations were wrong.*

*Ms. Grace's familiar whistling is heard in the distance, signaling her approach.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*The one thing that I was sure about was it seemed pretty apparent that regardless of where I was or regardless of what I was doing, whenever God wanted me to learn a lesson he always provided some sort of teacher to lead the way.*

*Ms. Grace appears, her glow brighter and more welcoming than before.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*I would have to say that realization started with my parents, then Sammy, then Andy, and Sarge, then of course Mia, but now it's pretty apparent this little old lady in a floppy hat is leading me somewhere too.*

*Ms. Grace greets ISRAEL with a warm smile and a familiar giggle.*

**MS. GRACE**

*Hello, Grampy.*

*ISRAEL smiles back, feeling a deep sense of trust and connection.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*Similar to the first time we met, my current floppy hatted professor, Ms. Grace was approaching and once again her jovial and very much out of tune whistling gave her arrival away.*

*Ms. Grace takes ISRAEL's hand, leading him further down the path.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*This time, as she did the last, she greeted me with a "Hello, Grampy", and then let out a cute little mischievous giggle so much like Mia used to do.*

*ISRAEL feels a profound sense of peace and acceptance.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

*This lady is nuts, I thought. I don't know who in the hell or this odd version of heaven, or wherever I am, this Grampy is, but it was obviously someone that Ms. Grace had a great adoration for, so I guess that would have to be enough for me.*

*They continue walking, the path ahead glowing with a gentle light.*

**MS. GRACE**

*You know I've always been with you, and I always will be too.*

*ISRAEL looks at her, feeling a deep sense of connection and understanding.*

**ISRAEL**

*I don't know how to respond to her then because like I said, I've never seen this lady before now.*

*Ms. Grace's smile remains warm and reassuring, guiding ISRAEL forward.*

**FADE OUT.**

## **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 15: Israel Rain**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. LUSH GARDEN - DAY**

*ISRAEL is walking alongside MS. GRACE, who seems distracted and uneasy. The garden is filled with vibrant flowers and towering trees, the atmosphere serene.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Even more peculiarly, I almost felt Ms. Grace was saying those words for herself as much as she was for me. I think she was trying to ease her own guilt about something, though I didn't know what it was.

*MS. GRACE lets out a nervous giggle, avoiding eye contact with ISRAEL.*

**MS. GRACE** Oh heavens no, but I really have always been with you, and like I said, I always will be too.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This walk upset her so much because she had a job to do, and like mine in the war, she wasn't completely sure how to do it either.

**MS. GRACE** I think it's time for another intermission, Israel. You need to rest.

*ISRAEL looks around, puzzled, but follows her direction. They arrive at a hammock stretched between two towering palm trees.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This second involuntary round of rest came with accommodations even more beautiful than the last. The hammock was made out of huge fuzzy auburn leaves that warmly enveloped my body.

*ISRAEL reluctantly climbs into the hammock, which swaddles him gently. His gaze is drawn to a nearby waterfall, where fish are jumping in the stream.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Its positioning seemed to force me to direct all of my attention to the beautiful waterfall a short distance away.

*As ISRAEL settles in, he sees a young man dashing out through the waterfall. The young man has flowing goldish-brown hair and fiery eyes, making ISRAEL tense up.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This young man was definitely coming towards me but in a much different manner than Ms. Grace did. He was getting to me in a hurry too.

*The young man reaches ISRAEL, and his fiery eyes flicker menacingly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** His eyes looked like something straight out of a horror movie.

*The young man flexes his muscles and lets out a booming laugh.*

**YOUNG MAN** Good day, Good Day!

*ISRAEL, trembling, recognizes the young man's eyes as they return to normal.*

**YOUNG MAN** Israel, Israel Rain!

*ISRAEL's fear turns to shock and recognition.*

**ISRAEL** Sammy?

*SAMMY hugs ISRAEL tightly, lifting him off the ground.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It was my sweet-sweet brother, Sammy. Once he knew that I actually knew it was him I don't think neither one of us wanted the next hug to end.

*They sit on rocks near the waterfall, talking and laughing. SAMMY tunes into the pool of water, showing ISRAEL images of their family and friends.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** He let me know that where I was, was more like a life in between lives, in his words.

*ISRAEL watches the images, his heart aching to see Mia.*

**ISRAEL** Where's Mia?

**SAMMY** She's fine, but it's not time yet, Israel. You're not ready.

*SAMMY tries to lighten the mood by suggesting they mess with Jacob.*

**SAMMY** Want to mess with Jacob?

*They laugh, tuning into Jacob reading a bedtime story to his children.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jacob was always more like our father than we were. He was a little more serious and usually a lot more responsible than we were too.

*After seeing Jacob's heartfelt storytelling, SAMMY and ISRAEL decide against any mischief.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We were honestly getting excited about doing something that we knew we shouldn't but definitely were going to do anyway.

*SAMMY hugs ISRAEL tightly again before leaving.*

**SAMMY** We'll see each other very soon. Good day, Good Day!

*SAMMY disappears through the waterfall, leaving ISRAEL feeling grateful.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I thanked God for both of my brothers and for the blessings from this wonderful day.

*ISRAEL hears a fluttering noise and looks up to see an angel descending from the sky, wings outstretched.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This time it was an angel, an actual angel like so many people have on the top of their Christmas trees.

*The angel, tattered and beaten, lands with pride and honor. ISRAEL recognizes the angel as SARGE, followed by other fallen comrades.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It was Sarge and behind him my other buddies that died in the war.

*ISRAEL breaks rank and hugs each of them tightly, tears streaming down his face.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I hugged each one as hard as I could and almost as hard as Sammy hugged me.

*SARGE smiles warmly at ISRAEL, his eyes filled with wisdom.*

**SARGE** Look what we have here! 'I Am the Sky'.

*SARGE and ISRAEL share a laugh, reminiscing about old times.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sarge stayed for a while longer. We laughed and we cried together.

*As SARGE and the others prepare to leave, ISRAEL asks about his tattered appearance.*

**ISRAEL** Why do you look so beaten up?

**SARGE** Saving souls like yours, 'I Am the Sky,' is hard work, and I guess I wear my work on my new sleeves.

*SARGE and the others fly off, leaving ISRAEL feeling a profound sense of gratitude.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I thanked God for such a gift.

*ISRAEL closes his eyes, feeling his grandparents' presence. He sees their translucent forms, younger and more vibrant.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I felt them with me once again.

*PAPA playfully bips ISRAEL on the back of the head.*

**PAPA** Boy, what are you doing?

*NANNY fusses at PAPA, just like old times.*

**NANNY** Don't hit that boy in the back of the head!

*ISRAEL smiles, feeling the warmth and love of his grandparents.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** They were very recognizable but in a younger, smoother, non-descript skin sort of way.

*They talk about the past, their love for their family evident.*

**PAPA** Look at my new digs.

*NANNY and PAPA assure ISRAEL of their pride and love.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** They also let me know that before long I'd have some pretty big realizations to deal with.

*As they leave, PAPA playfully bips ISRAEL again.*

**PAPA** See ya later.

*NANNY and PAPA disappear, leaving ISRAEL feeling full of love and gratitude.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I thanked God once more.

*MS. GRACE arrives, looking slightly younger and more vibrant.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She was still fully recognizable but a little more youthful in appearance.

*ISRAEL, feeling bold, asks about her appearance.*

**ISRAEL** Feeling a little like Benjamin Buttons?

*MS. GRACE giggles and avoids the question.*

**MS. GRACE** Let's get a move on, Grampy.

*They continue their journey together, the path ahead glowing with promise.*

**FADE OUT.**

## **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 16: Israel Rain**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. GARDEN PATH - DAY**

*ISRAEL walks alongside MS. GRACE, who seems more animated and excited today. They walk through a vibrant garden path filled with flowers and sunlight streaming down.*

**ISRAEL** I have to tell you about my visitors. Sammy, Sarge, my other friends, and my Nanny and Papa.

*MS. GRACE shares in ISRAEL's excitement, nodding and smiling as he talks.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Unlike last time, where I seemed to sadden her with my words, this time she was sharing in my excitement and appreciation for the wonderful gifts I had been given.

*ISRAEL suddenly stops and turns to MS. GRACE, a look of curiosity on his face.*

**ISRAEL** Where is God?

*MS. GRACE smiles broadly and points to herself, then to ISRAEL, and finally gestures all around them.*

**MS. GRACE** God is here, he's there, he's everywhere, and he's in everything.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It wasn't quite the answer I was expecting, but I knew what she meant. He is in all of us.

*MS. GRACE continues, gesturing to a nearby stream.*

**MS. GRACE** God is like this water. Without water, nothing can live, and without God, nothing can either.

*ISRAEL nods, absorbing her words. They continue walking, and MS. GRACE suddenly reveals their destination.*

**MS. GRACE** We're going to a church, and we're almost there.

*ISRAEL laughs, a bit surprised.*

**ISRAEL** I thought this whole place was the ultimate church.

*MS. GRACE smiles but quickly changes the subject back to ISRAEL's visitors, speaking about them with affection.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She spoke about them as if she loved them every bit as much as I did.

*They arrive at an old, dilapidated concrete building that blocks much of the light and muffles the beautiful music.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This wasn't like any church I'd ever seen before. It looked more like the bombed-out building I was forced to stay in during the war.

*ISRAEL hesitates at the steps, but MS. GRACE gently encourages him to go inside.*

**MS. GRACE** Go inside and settle in.

*She hugs him and then disappears into the flowers. ISRAEL steps inside the building, finding it cold and barren.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There was no make-shift bed made out of flower petals, no fuzzy hammock, nothing at all. This life in between lives is so flippin' odd.

*ISRAEL crouches in the corner, trying to rest. As he lowers his head, he notices a line of men forming outside the building.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** A line of men started filing into the building, and one by one, they made their way to me.

*Each man places a hand on ISRAEL's head, offering forgiveness before leaving. ISRAEL looks confused but grateful.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I knew there had to be a million things I needed to be forgiven for, but I didn't know why these men felt they had to give it right then.

*The last man, NASIM AMARI, enters and sits beside ISRAEL, introducing himself.*

**NASIM** I'm Nasim Amari. We were all a big part of each other's lives.

*ISRAEL looks at NASIM, recognition dawning on his face.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I spent so much time blocking that place and those horrors out of my mind, but I guess I was still doing it then.

*ISRAEL realizes who NASIM and the others are, his heart sinking.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There was a time where I could have sworn I saw the souls of all these men leave their bodies, and unfortunately, it was from my own hands and the rifle I held.

*NASIM places a hand on ISRAEL's shoulder, offering comfort.*

**NASIM** We forgive you. All of us do.

*NASIM offers ISRAEL a present, asking if he has trouble seeing his daughter.*

**NASIM** Are you having trouble seeing your daughter?

*ISRAEL, overwhelmed with emotion, nods. NASIM smiles and takes ISRAEL's hands, asking him to bow his head.*

**NASIM** Pray to see her.

*ISRAEL opens one eye skeptically, but NASIM reassures him.*

**NASIM** That's all you need to do.

*They pray together, and a projection from ISRAEL's heart shows Mia. She's older, around ten years old, and playing with her toys.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I could finally see my little girl. Although I'll always feel that connection to her, seeing her gave me an assuredness that I still need regardless of where I was.

*ISRAEL watches as Mia picks up her favorite toys, her sadness evident.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I may not be with her now, but I could finally see her again.

*ISRAEL sees Mia releasing green balloons, praying for her Daddy. He looks to MS. GRACE, who is now beside him, looking emotional.*

**MS. GRACE** It's Mia! She's doing this for you!

*ISRAEL realizes the balloons are a sign of Mia's prayers, and he feels a profound connection to her.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Prayer works in all directions, everywhere, and although I don't know if she'll ever know it, it was working for her too.

*ISRAEL watches Mia, his heart breaking at her sadness.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I know now why everyone kept saying I wasn't ready to see her. When your child hurts, you hurt too, no matter where you are.

*MS. GRACE turns to ISRAEL, her demeanor more somber.*

**ISRAEL** How could that building ever be considered a church?

*MS. GRACE giggles softly and explains.*

**MS. GRACE** It's never the building, or any building for that matter, that makes a church. It's the forgiveness, love, and other gifts that happen when people come together that make a real church.

*ISRAEL nods, understanding her words. They continue walking, MS. GRACE appearing even younger and more vibrant.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There was no question that the path Ms. Grace led me down had deliberate resting spots along the way. Those times not only cleansed my soul a little at a time but also began adding clarity.

*MS. GRACE suddenly stops, her face pale and startled.*

**MS. GRACE** Look, look!

*ISRAEL looks down, seeing green balloons floating through the air.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There were so many green balloons surrounding us that I could barely see the multitude of flowers.

*MS. GRACE explains, her excitement palpable.*

**MS. GRACE** It's Mia! She's doing this for you!

*ISRAEL watches in awe as the green balloons float around them, realizing they are a sign from Mia.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** With her much purer heart, it was working to the amazement of Ms. Grace and to me as well.

*ISRAEL and MS. GRACE direct their prayers to Mia, seeing her releasing the balloons.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It's more than obvious to me now that prayer works in all directions, everywhere.

*ISRAEL watches Mia, feeling a deep sense of connection and love.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I saw her call my phone over and over again to hear my voice. I watched her hold on to everything that was mine as if it was me, and I also saw rivers of tears stream down her little cheeks day after day.

*The camera lingers on ISRAEL's tear-filled eyes, filled with love and determination.*

**FADE OUT.**

## **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 17: Israel Rain**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HEAVENLY GARDEN PATH - DAY**

*ISRAEL walks alone through the garden path, looking around for someone.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** By this time, I was realizing that Ms. Grace seemed to be slacking on her tour guiding duties because I hadn't seen her in a while, and I kind of missed that sweet old lady.

*ISRAEL chuckles to himself.*

**ISRAEL** (to himself) Maybe she got held up in St. Michael's hair salon or Abraham's antiques.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** For the first time since I've been here, I was going to have to find my own resting place.

*ISRAEL walks, deep in thought.*

## **FLASHBACK - EXT. BOATING ACCIDENT - DAY**

*ISRAEL and SAMMY are in a boating accident. SAMMY is hurt badly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Before he died, we were in a boating accident that hurt him pretty badly. Instead of sticking around to help out, I went to Israel on a summer study abroad program.

## **FLASHBACK - INT. ISRAEL STUDIO - DAY**

*ISRAEL paints a mesmerizing masterpiece with Cerulean Blue.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I started painting, I didn't stop until the channeled masterpiece was finished. After Sammy died, I didn't really paint anymore and out of rage from the loss of my brother, I destroyed something that wasn't mine to ruin.

## **BACK TO PRESENT**

### **EXT. WOODS - DAY**

*ISRAEL stumbles upon a full-fledged art set in the middle of the woods.*

**ISRAEL** (smiling) Ms. Grace isn't fooling me. She may be preoccupied, but she's not too busy to give me another gift and directions.

*ISRAEL starts painting with intense focus. Time passes as the canvas fills with vibrant colors.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Once again, I couldn't take credit for this one either. The result was every bit as magical as the last, if not more.

*ISRAEL finishes the painting, exhausted but satisfied. He props the painting next to a tree and lies on his back, looking up at the clouds.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** To me, this day was a glaring metaphor for my life. Many times it was messy, but other times it produced something far greater than I could have ever imagined.

*The leaves rustle. ISRAEL looks up, expecting to see Ms. Grace.*

**ISRAEL** I'm going to get on Ms. Grace for abandoning me.

*But it's not Ms. Grace. A little brown-headed girl, ABBY, approaches.*

**ABBY** (sassy) Hey, Grampy!

**ISRAEL** (surprised) Who are you?

**ABBY** I'm Abigail. Abby for short. We've got a lot to do and not much time to do it!

*ABBY grabs ISRAEL's hand, leading him down the path. She notices his painting.*

**ABBY** Can I borrow this?

**ISRAEL** (surprised) Sure, why not?

*ABBY looks deep into the painting, appreciating it. Then she leads ISRAEL further down the path.*

**ISRAEL** Where's Ms. Grace? Are you her?

**ABBY** (giggling) No, silly. She told you she'd always be with you. Now let's go!

*ABBY leads ISRAEL to a small hill. They reach the top, revealing a gathering of over a hundred people.*

**ABBY** (excited) We're here!

**ISRAEL** (confused) We're where?

*ABBY introduces ISRAEL as Grampy to everyone, who greet him warmly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It reminded me of a giant family reunion. I recognized some people from the past, like my great uncle and older cousins.

*The gathering is filled with laughter and fellowship. ABBY leads ISRAEL to a long table where the oldest people sit.*

**ELDERLY MAN** Welcome, Grampy. We've been expecting you.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** These men and women went back four or more generations. They were so glad to see me.

*After a while, ABBY grabs ISRAEL's hand again.*

**ABBY** We have to get a move on.

*They walk over the hill to see an old dog, PUDDLES, running towards them.*

**ISRAEL** (laughing) Puddles!

*PUDDLES excitedly licks ISRAEL's face. ABBY plays with the dog, giggling.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Puddles was the sweetest dog. Our favorite meal was pizza, and Puddles probably took a hundred slices out of our hands.

*ISRAEL reminisces about Puddles and Sammy's antics.*

**ISRAEL** (looking at ABBY) Abby, do you know where we're headed?

**ABBY** (smiling) You'll see. Now, keep up, Grampy!

*ISRAEL carries ABBY on his back as they walk. She falls asleep, and ISRAEL enjoys the fatherly feeling.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This walk felt so fatherly. This was the kind of thing I missed so much.

*ABBY wakes up, energized again. They continue walking, with ABBY leading the way.*

**ISRAEL** Why do you and Ms. Grace always call me Grampy?

**ABBY** (teasing) It's a secret. Now come on!

*They reach the end of the path, with the light and beautiful music getting closer.*

**ABBY** Look, Grampy. We're almost there.

*ISRAEL looks around, feeling a mix of excitement and nervousness.*

**ISRAEL** Whatever it is, I'm ready.

*They walk towards the light, with ABBY leading the way confidently.*

**FADE OUT.**

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## **EXT. NEAR THE LIGHT - DAY**

*ISRAEL and ABBY continue their journey, the light growing brighter and the music louder. ABBY suddenly stops and looks up at ISRAEL with a big grin.*

**ABBY** We're here, Grampy!

**ISRAEL** (looking around) But where exactly is here?

*ABBY points to the source of the light. A large group of people, including ISRAEL's loved ones, are gathered around, smiling and waiting for him.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I saw my great uncle, older cousins, and even my dear friend Eddie. This place was filled with love and joy.

*ISRAEL steps forward, feeling overwhelmed with happiness and peace. He sees SAMMY, SARGE, and his grandparents among the crowd.*

**ISRAEL** (smiling) Sammy, Sarge, Nanny, Papa... It's so good to see you all.

*They embrace, laughter and tears of joy filling the air.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Finally, I understood. This was the culmination of my journey, the ultimate reunion with my loved ones.

*As the scene continues, ABBY looks up at ISRAEL with a knowing smile.*

**ABBY** Told you we'd get here, Grampy.

**ISRAEL** (grateful) Thank you, Abby. Thank you for bringing me here.

*ABBY hugs ISRAEL tightly. The camera pulls back, showing the entire group celebrating and enjoying each other's company as the light envelops them all.*

**FADE OUT.**

## **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 18: Israel Rain**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HEAVENLY GARDEN PATH - DAY**

*ISRAEL walks alone, looking around and reflecting on his journey.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** By this time, I was realizing that Ms. Grace seemed to be slacking on her tour guiding duties because I hadn't seen her in a while, and I kind of missed that sweet old lady.

*ISRAEL chuckles to himself.*

**ISRAEL** (to himself) Maybe she got held up in St. Michael's hair salon or Abraham's antiques.

*NARRATOR continues as ISRAEL walks through the beautiful, serene garden.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** For the first time since I've been here, I was going to have to find my own resting place. I didn't realize it at first, but I almost got to where I looked forward to those little breaks. Each resting spot always seemed to get me a little closer to that light and the music, and to whatever my final destination was.

*ISRAEL finds a clearing and sits down, thinking deeply.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Along the way, I was able to be reunited with so many of my loved ones here and even a few from where I was, especially Mia.

#### **FLASHBACK - EXT. LAKE - DAY**

*ISRAEL and SAMMY are in a boating accident. SAMMY is hurt badly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Before he died, we were in a boating accident that hurt him pretty badly. He already had so many health problems towards the end, and I felt I added to his problems. Instead of sticking around to help out, I went to Israel on a summer study abroad program.

#### **FLASHBACK - INT. ART STUDIO IN ISRAEL - DAY**

*ISRAEL paints a mesmerizing masterpiece with Cerulean Blue.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I started painting, I didn't stop until the channeled masterpiece was finished. After Sammy died, I didn't really paint anymore, and out of rage from the loss of my brother, I destroyed something that wasn't mine to ruin.

#### **BACK TO PRESENT**

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

*ISRAEL stumbles upon a full-fledged art set in the middle of the woods.*

**ISRAEL** (smiling) Ms. Grace isn't fooling me. She may be preoccupied, but she's not too busy to give me another gift and directions.

*ISRAEL starts painting with intense focus. Time passes as the canvas fills with vibrant colors.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Once again, I couldn't take credit for this one either. The result was every bit as magical as the last, if not more.

*ISRAEL finishes the painting, exhausted but satisfied. He props the painting next to a tree and lies on his back, looking up at the clouds.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** To me, this day was a glaring metaphor for my life. Many times it was messy, but other times it produced something far greater than I could have ever imagined.

*The leaves rustle. ISRAEL looks up, expecting to see Ms. Grace.*

**ISRAEL** I'm going to get on Ms. Grace for abandoning me.

*But it's not Ms. Grace. A little brown-headed girl, ABBY, approaches.*

**ABBY** (sassy) Hey, Grampy!

**ISRAEL** (surprised) Who are you?

**ABBY** I'm Abigail. Abby for short. We've got a lot to do and not much time to do it!

*ABBY grabs ISRAEL's hand, leading him down the path. She notices his painting.*

**ABBY** Can I borrow this?

**ISRAEL** (surprised) Sure, why not?

*ABBY looks deep into the painting, appreciating it. Then she leads ISRAEL further down the path.*

**ISRAEL** Where's Ms. Grace? Are you her?

**ABBY** (giggling) No, silly. She told you she'd always be with you. Now let's go!

*ABBY leads ISRAEL to a small hill. They reach the top, revealing a gathering of over a hundred people.*

**ABBY** (excited) We're here!

**ISRAEL** (confused) We're where?

*ABBY introduces ISRAEL as Grampy to everyone, who greet him warmly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It reminded me of a giant family reunion. I recognized some people from the past, like my great uncle and older cousins.

*The gathering is filled with laughter and fellowship. ABBY leads ISRAEL to a long table where the oldest people sit.*

**ELDERLY MAN** Welcome, Grampy. We've been expecting you.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** These men and women went back four or more generations. They were so glad to see me.

*After a while, ABBY grabs ISRAEL's hand again.*

**ABBY** We have to get a move on.

*They walk over the hill to see an old dog, PUDDLES, running towards them.*

**ISRAEL** (laughing) Puddles!

*PUDDLES excitedly licks ISRAEL's face. ABBY plays with the dog, giggling.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Puddles was the sweetest dog. Our favorite meal was pizza, and Puddles probably took a hundred slices out of our hands.

*ISRAEL reminisces about Puddles and SAMMY's antics.*

**ISRAEL** (looking at ABBY) Abby, do you know where we're headed?

**ABBY** (smiling) You'll see. Now, keep up, Grampy!

*ISRAEL carries ABBY on his back as they walk. She falls asleep, and ISRAEL enjoys the fatherly feeling.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This walk felt so fatherly. This was the kind of thing I missed so much.

*ABBY wakes up, energized again. They continue walking, with ABBY leading the way.*

**ISRAEL** Why do you and Ms. Grace always call me Grampy?

**ABBY** (teasing) It's a secret. Now come on!

*They reach the end of the path, with the light and beautiful music getting closer.*

**ABBY** Look, Grampy. We're almost there.

*ISRAEL looks around, feeling a mix of excitement and nervousness.*

**ISRAEL** Whatever it is, I'm ready.

*They walk towards the light, with ABBY leading the way confidently. The camera pulls back, showing the entire group celebrating and enjoying each other's company as the light envelops them all.*

**FADE OUT.**

## **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 18: Israel Rain**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HEAVENLY GARDEN PATH - DAY**

*ISRAEL walks alone, looking around and reflecting on his journey.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** By this time, I was realizing that Ms. Grace seemed to be slacking on her tour guiding duties because I hadn't seen her in a while, and I kind of missed that sweet old lady.

*ISRAEL chuckles to himself.*

**ISRAEL** (to himself) Maybe she got held up in St. Michael's hair salon or Abraham's antiques.

*NARRATOR continues as ISRAEL walks through the beautiful, serene garden.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** For the first time since I've been here, I was going to have to find my own resting place. I didn't realize it at first, but I almost got to where I looked forward to those little breaks. Each resting spot always seemed to get me a little closer to that light and the music, and to whatever my final destination was.

*ISRAEL finds a clearing and sits down, thinking deeply.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Along the way, I was able to be reunited with so many of my loved ones here and even a few from where I was, especially Mia.

#### **FLASHBACK - EXT. LAKE - DAY**

*ISRAEL and SAMMY are in a boating accident. SAMMY is hurt badly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Before he died, we were in a boating accident that hurt him pretty badly. He already had so many health problems towards the end, and I felt I added to his problems. Instead of sticking around to help out, I went to Israel on a summer study abroad program.

#### **FLASHBACK - INT. ART STUDIO IN ISRAEL - DAY**

*ISRAEL paints a mesmerizing masterpiece with Cerulean Blue.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I started painting, I didn't stop until the channeled masterpiece was finished. After Sammy died, I didn't really paint anymore, and out of rage from the loss of my brother, I destroyed something that wasn't mine to ruin.

#### **BACK TO PRESENT**

#### **EXT. WOODS - DAY**

*ISRAEL stumbles upon a full-fledged art set in the middle of the woods.*

**ISRAEL** (smiling) Ms. Grace isn't fooling me. She may be preoccupied, but she's not too busy to give me another gift and directions.

*ISRAEL starts painting with intense focus. Time passes as the canvas fills with vibrant colors.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Once again, I couldn't take credit for this one either. The result was every bit as magical as the last, if not more.

*ISRAEL finishes the painting, exhausted but satisfied. He props the painting next to a tree and lies on his back, looking up at the clouds.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** To me, this day was a glaring metaphor for my life. Many times it was messy, but other times it produced something far greater than I could have ever imagined.

*The leaves rustle. ISRAEL looks up, expecting to see Ms. Grace.*

**ISRAEL** I'm going to get on Ms. Grace for abandoning me.

*But it's not Ms. Grace. A little brown-headed girl, ABBY, approaches.*

**ABBY** (sassy) Hey, Grampy!

**ISRAEL** (surprised) Who are you?

**ABBY** I'm Abigail. Abby for short. We've got a lot to do and not much time to do it!

*ABBY grabs ISRAEL's hand, leading him down the path. She notices his painting.*

**ABBY** Can I borrow this?

**ISRAEL** (surprised) Sure, why not?

*ABBY looks deep into the painting, appreciating it. Then she leads ISRAEL further down the path.*

**ISRAEL** Where's Ms. Grace? Are you her?

**ABBY** (giggling) No, silly. She told you she'd always be with you. Now let's go!

*ABBY leads ISRAEL to a small hill. They reach the top, revealing a gathering of over a hundred people.*

**ABBY** (excited) We're here!

**ISRAEL** (confused) We're where?

*ABBY introduces ISRAEL as Grampy to everyone, who greet him warmly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It reminded me of a giant family reunion. I recognized some people from the past, like my great uncle and older cousins.

*The gathering is filled with laughter and fellowship. ABBY leads ISRAEL to a long table where the oldest people sit.*

**ELDERLY MAN** Welcome, Grampy. We've been expecting you.

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** These men and women went back four or more generations. They were so glad to see me.

*After a while, ABBY grabs ISRAEL's hand again.*

**ABBY** We have to get a move on.

*They walk over the hill to see an old dog, PUDDLES, running towards them.*

**ISRAEL** (laughing) Puddles!

*PUDDLES excitedly licks ISRAEL's face. ABBY plays with the dog, giggling.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Puddles was the sweetest dog. Our favorite meal was pizza, and Puddles probably took a hundred slices out of our hands.

*ISRAEL reminisces about Puddles and SAMMY's antics.*

**ISRAEL** (looking at ABBY) Abby, do you know where we're headed?

**ABBY** (smiling) You'll see. Now, keep up, Grampy!

*ISRAEL carries ABBY on his back as they walk. She falls asleep, and ISRAEL enjoys the fatherly feeling.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This walk felt so fatherly. This was the kind of thing I missed so much.

*ABBY wakes up, energized again. They continue walking, with ABBY leading the way.*

**ISRAEL** Why do you and Ms. Grace always call me Grampy?

**ABBY** (teasing) It's a secret. Now come on!

*They reach the end of the path, with the light and beautiful music getting closer.*

**ABBY** Look, Grampy. We're almost there.

*ISRAEL looks around, feeling a mix of excitement and nervousness.*

**ISRAEL** Whatever it is, I'm ready.

*They walk towards the light, with ABBY leading the way confidently. The camera pulls back, showing the entire group celebrating and enjoying each other's company as the light envelops them all.*

**FADE OUT.**

## **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 19: Israel Rain**

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HEAVENLY GARDEN PATH - DAY**

*ISRAEL walks with a thoughtful expression, ABBY beside him.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This was a pretty long day I thought, regardless of the funny time here. I knew Abby was glad she stashed that painting somewhere before we went because she really would have crashed after carrying that around all day.

*ISRAEL smiles at ABBY, who skips happily beside him.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Thinking about how funny time is between here and there, I knew when I got a chance I had to see Mia again. I thought to myself, she's probably a senior citizen by now like those elders I just met.

*ISRAEL pauses, feeling an overwhelming need to see Mia. He turns to ABBY.*

**ISRAEL** Abby, can you help me see Mia again?

*ABBY nods eagerly, feeling honored.*

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

*MIA drives down a highway, PAYNE beside her. They talk about their future, laughing and discussing baby names.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As I saw Mia again, this time she wasn't on a front porch getting ready to go to a dance, or even jumping in the house to avoid a Saint Bernard. She was driving down a highway.

*ABBY giggles at ISRAEL, who shakes his head at the conversation.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I felt like I was tuning into some sappy soap opera, but then it registered with me that this was my own daughter spewing out this Hallmark-moment stuff.

*ISRAEL notices a silver Honda, beaten up and driving recklessly.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Abby then tugs on my shirt to get my attention to something I didn't see before; it was a silver Honda.

*The Honda slams into MIA's car, causing it to flip over and catch fire. ISRAEL's heart sinks.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** My heart sank again because this wasn't just a little fender bender, it was a horrific accident.

*ISRAEL and ABBY watch in horror, feeling helpless.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Abby held my hand as tight as she could and wouldn't let go. No matter how hard I tried to help from above in any way I could think of, I was helpless.

*Other drivers try to help, but the flames are too high. A black man in tattered clothes and an old fatigue military jacket appears and drags MIA and PAYNE away from the wreck.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I felt all hope was lost, I saw a black man in tattered clothes and an old fatigue military jacket.

*PAYNE wakes up and prays over MIA's lifeless body. ISRAEL and ABBY join in, praying fervently.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Payne prayed so much and so hard that his prayers even echoed to where Abby and I were.

*The reunion crowd, SAMMY, ISRAEL's grandparents, and military buddies join in praying. SARGE appears last, and their collective prayers are answered.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** We all prayed like we never prayed before. And on that day, our prayers were answered.

*MIA regains consciousness, her injuries minor. PAYNE and MIA embrace, grateful and relieved.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** She had a concussion and minor bumps and bruises that healed in a short amount of time, but she was okay, she was alive.

*SARGE leaves, his mission accomplished.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Sarge didn't stick around after our prayer gathering too long. He's what he's always been in my life, my favorite angel.

*ISRAEL watches as MIA and PAYNE's relationship grows stronger. PAYNE proposes to MIA, and she accepts.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Payne decided to ask Mia to marry him. After seeing him pray for Mia, I knew she'd always be in good hands.

*ISRAEL chuckles, reminiscing about the journey from a dog attack to this moment.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I laughed to myself as I thought about how what started as a dog attack before a dance got to where they are now.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - DAY**

*PAYNE nervously answers JACOB's questions about his intentions with MIA. JACOB asks if he will ever give MIA's heart a tummy ache.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jacob asked if he was ever going to give Mia's heart a tummy ache. Payne was stumped at first, but then smiled with absolute surety and said, "Never."

*JACOB nods approvingly, giving his blessing.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Jacob appreciated and believed the confidence that Payne had in the young couple's future.

**CUT TO:**

## **EXT. WEDDING VENUE - DAY**

*Guests arrive at MIA and PAYNE's wedding. ABBY runs around excitedly, searching for the perfect gift.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Abby heard the news about my daughter getting married and she ran around like she was going to be attending the nuptials live and in person.

*MIA walks down the aisle, escorted by her mother, EMILY. PAYNE waits nervously at the altar.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When Mia started to walk down the aisle, she had that look on her face that I'd always wished she have. She was completely and thoroughly happy.

*The ceremony proceeds, filled with love and joy. After the vows, the couple exits the church to find a red convertible Corvette waiting for them.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Payne rented a little red convertible Corvette. My heart filled again as I heard my daughter's new husband tell her to, "Claim it, girl. Claim it."

*MIA and PAYNE drive off, leaving the guests to head to the reception.*

**CUT TO:**

## **INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT**

*The reception is lively. Guests pin two-dollar bills to MIA and PAYNE during the money dance. MIA is moved to tears.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When Mia saw all of those two dollar bills being pinned to her and Payne's attire, she cried with humble appreciation and also with an everlasting remembrance.

*At the gift table, MIA finds a large, covered rectangular box. She pulls off the tablecloth to reveal ISRAEL's painting.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mia went over and tugged on the corner until the covering slid to the floor. She put both of her hands up to her mouth in astonishment.

*MIA recognizes the painting as ISRAEL's work. Tears of joy and remembrance flow as she embraces the painting.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** It was the painting I just painted. Mia definitely knew I was the one who painted them.

*ABBY looks on with a satisfied smile, knowing she played a part in delivering the perfect gift.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** That guilty look that Abby was trying to hide before turned to one of extreme satisfaction with herself now.

*ISRAEL watches the scene with pride and gratitude, feeling a profound connection to his daughter.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I might not have found the perfect present for Mia's wedding, but Payne, Jacob, and Abby sure did.

*MIA and PAYNE embrace, surrounded by loved ones and feeling the presence of ISRAEL's love.*

**FADE OUT.**

## **Screenplay Adaptation Chapter 20: Israel Rain**

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**FADE IN:**

**INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT**

*ISRAEL stands alone, observing the joyous wedding reception of MIA and PAYNE. The hall is filled with laughter and celebration.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I have no right feeling any other way than grateful, not a bit, but I do even with all of those beautiful gifts from such beautiful people. It's just that I wanted to give Mia something directly from me. I know it sounds selfish, I really do know it does, but I feel I need to do it for both of us.

*ISRAEL looks around, deep in thought.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** After I stopped wallowing in self-pity, I noticed the reception hall had two sides. One of course, is where Mia's and Payne's wedding reception was, the other was another large room that was already being set up for a birthday party, a little girl's seventh birthday party to be specific.

*ISRAEL watches the event crew setting up games and decorations. A delivery truck pulls up, and the driver gets out, frustrated.*

**DRIVER** (to the event manager) Where do you want this load dropped off?

**EVENT MANAGER** (barking orders) Door number two, take the stuff to door number two, and hurry up!

*The driver, irritated, starts flinging huge mesh bags filled with balloons inside the first door he comes to.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** He threw one huge mesh bag in after the other until they were all inside. Then he drove off in disgust about how he'd been treated.

*ISRAEL's eyes light up with an idea.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I knew what I wanted my special wedding gift to my precious daughter to be even if I had to borrow it from a seven-year-old.

*The hall's big fans are turned off, but ISRAEL concentrates, and they start cranking back up, blowing the balloons into the reception area.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** The reception hall had these big fans in each corner. They were so loud that someone went around and turned all of the fans off. I decided to spiritually interact with some of those fans so they'd crank back up.

*Green balloons, Mia's favorite color, start floating around the reception hall, creating a magical atmosphere.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There must have been a thousand of those things already blown up and ready to go just falling out of their huge mesh bags.

*MIA looks around in amazement, recognizing the significance of the green balloons.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** There were hundreds and hundreds of floating green acknowledgments of my eternal connection to Mia floating around the room everywhere.

*MIA's eyes fill with tears as she gathers the balloons, realizing they are from her father.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Now she knows with certainty that her prayers were answered. It may have only been balloons, but I don't think I could have given her a more fitting or conformational present.

*The couple prepares to leave, MIA reluctant for the day to end. She gathers all the green balloons that would fit inside their little red car.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Then she remembered as she gathered all the green balloons that would fit inside of that little red car that her daddy would always be with her wherever she went.

*The car drives off, MIA tweaking the tires one more time, both husband and wife waving to the crowd.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Mia tweaked the tires of that red jet car one more time while both husband and wife were waving to the crowd.

*ISRAEL stands in a self-imposed trance, overwhelmed with joy.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Have you ever had those days where you're almost too happy to move? This was similar to when I got to this place because once again I was definitely in some sort of self-imposed trance.

*ABBY tugs at ISRAEL's shirt, snapping him out of his trance.*

**ABBY** Come on, Grampy! I have to take you somewhere else again.

*ISRAEL and ABBY walk, but there is no path.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As we went to get back on the path, I noticed there wasn't a path to get on. It had ended without me even realizing it.

*They arrive at a radiant place filled with pure light.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** Instead of calling this spot a resting place, like the others, Abby called it a "thanking place."

*ABBY leaves ISRAEL alone in the radiant place.*

**ABBY** No Grampy, it's a thanking place.

*ISRAEL drops to his knees, giving thanks for everyone and everything.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I gave thanks for my brothers and Jacob's family, I gave thanks for my grandparents, and parents. I also gave thanks for Sarge and my buddies, and for my many family members from the reunion over the hill.

*ISRAEL is surrounded by everyone from his journey, including SARGE, SAMMY, his grandparents, and NASIM.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I opened my eyes everyone that I was on this journey with was surrounding me.

*The holiest of holy lights stands in the back, calling ISRAEL over.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** In the back of all of those gathered people, and all of that brightness, stood the holiest of holy lights.

*ISRAEL approaches the light, feeling like a tiny star heading towards the largest planet. The light places its hands on ISRAEL's shoulders.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** When I got to him everything shook as He placed His hands on my shoulders but it wasn't anything to be scared of at all. It was like Sarge used to do but this time with even more fatherly love.

*All of ISRAEL's memories flash through his mind, and he feels at peace.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As His hands were on my shoulders, every single thing that ever happened in my life and afterlife, both good and bad, flashed through my mind all at once.

*The light leaves, but ISRAEL still feels its presence.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I knew He left because I saw Him leave, but I still felt His presence as if He was still completely there with me.

*ISRAEL looks around for ABBY and MS. GRACE but doesn't see them.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I jokingly thought, I don't know what else these people could be doing that could be more important than what just happened, but they weren't there.

*The gathered crowd sits around, talking like a family reunion. A bright sparkler-like light floats to ISRAEL's hands.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As my family surrounded me, there was another light that came from where the brightest light stood.

*ISRAEL looks at his family, who smiles and tells him it's time to see MIA again.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This time I led us to see her and instead of having any fear or feelings that anything was wrong, I knew the plans for her life were greater than even this father could have ever had for her.

*ISRAEL sees MIA going into labor, PAYNE by her side.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** That sparkle that just left my hands lovingly blended into its future and my precious daughter Mia went into labor.

*MIA and PAYNE welcome their new baby girl, tears of joy in their eyes.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** As that precious little sparkle breathed its first breath, both looked up again and smiled.

*Nurses introduce the new baby girl as "Miss Grace Abigail." The room is filled with light, love, and music.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** This wonderful nurse was no different as she said, "Mommy and daddy. Meet your new little girl, Miss Grace Abigail."

*ISRAEL, surrounded by his loved ones, thanks God once more.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** All of the light, love, and music exploded all at once. It was like the fourth of July had a fourth of July, and I thanked God once again.

*ISRAEL watches the scene with pride and love, knowing he will always be with them.*

**NARRATOR (V.O.)** I knew this little girl was my granddaughter and I knew little Miss Grace Abigail, or Abby for short, would always know it too.

**FADE OUT.**