

Stars

The Girl Who Held The Stars In The Sky

Michael A. Barone

The Short Story "Stars" by Michael A. Barone

Michael A. Barone Copyright
(C) 2015

614-285-2741
Herringbone@columbus.rr.com

STARS SCREEN PLAY BY MICHAEL A. BARONE

OPENING SCENE OVER A BACKGROUND OF A NIGHT SKY

Meteorites: Natural fireworks display, an entertainment in the heavens. They are less shooting stars than falling fluff. Meteors are the remnants of comets. These meteors are made by tiny grains, smaller than a mustard seed. On many a clear night, if you look patiently up at the sky, you will see a solitary meteor blazing briefly overhead.- Carl Sagan Cosmos

ACT ONE STARS SCENE ONE "A MERE FORMALITY"

EXT. FLY OVER SHOTS BEAUTIFUL SPRAWLING GROUNDS OF A PALATIAL & WEALTHY ESTATE

A taxi pulls up a long winding driveway through giant marble sculpted lions to a beautifully decorated wrought iron gate with the words CASA MENTEFOLLE emblazoned in Gold Script. The drivers hand is seen pushing the button to the talk box. something nondescript is said and the gates open to what appears to be a swank hotel, large estate, or high end bed and breakfast. There is a mansion at the end of the second long driveway, which is surrounded by extensively manicured shrubbery and lush flowering gardens.

Two men (PHIL and BILL the LAWYER) exit the taxi and wrestle luggage toward the large wooden doors of the structure. Phil is of slight build and in his early thirties. He is unshaven. His hair is messy and his clothes are ruffled like a man who looks like he had a rough night and slept in them. Bill is clean cut with a polished look. He carries a briefcase and wears glasses. He is about Phil's age and although he is wearing a business suit, he has an athletic build.

PHIL

I told you I'm really not comfortable with all this. It's really a bit much don't you think?

BILL

It's a mere formality. Somewhere to stay while the family gathers and the estate makes it's way through probate. You have nothing to worry about, I'll be in constant contact with all parties involved and I'll be reporting back to you on a daily basis.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

But I could have stayed with Mom or one of my...

BILL

(Interrupting) Ah! Here is Dr. Medly! Dr. Medly this is Mr. DiStella

Dr. Medly walks up from one of the many gardens which rim the property. He is an older man in his mid sixties. He is wearing gardening clothes and has a small potted plant in one hand.

DR. CHARLES MEDLY

Mr. DiStella! A real pleasure to have you with us. I truly hope you will enjoy your stay and find it peaceful as well.

The two men shake hands.

PHIL

Please! Call me Phil. I'm...well... Mr. DiStella is er...(pauses) was my grandfather.

DR. MEDLY

Yes of course, I knew him well. We spent many an evening starrng at vintage platt maps and working out some of the oldest property boundaries here at Casa Mentefolle. (motioning to the vast beautifully manicured grounds) So sorry to hear about the accident. John was, well, He was a good man.

PHIL

He was the best!

DR. MEDLY

Certainly! Well don't let me keep you. Go ahead and find your room. My people will have dinner prepared for us around 5:30 unless you prefer a later meal?

PHIL

Please! Tell them not to trouble themselves. I can catch a Subway or something with Bill here when we head back into the city.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Phil, you need your rest after that plane ride. Hung over and jet lagged is no way to face the proceedings. Besides, we agreed you stay here and rest a while and I'll handle the legal stuff and report back to you.

PHIL

(Eyeing Bill with a strange distant look) Yes, I guess that would be better for now. Maybe you could join me for a cappuccino in the morning and catch me up on the legalities.

BILL

Sure Phil! Cappuccino mid-morning tomorrow and a full briefing on the 25 million he left you in the will. (to Dr. Medly) Take good care of him Doc. (winking) He's a rich man now!

DR. MEDLY

(not really paying close attention) What? Oh yes! I'll have the staff round him up some fine Port and a nice Cuban after dinner.

PHIL

Really Dr. Medly I don't want to be a bother to your family here. Maybe I'll just hitch a ride back to the hotel with William and catch dinner there.

BILL

Now Phil, it's all settled. I'll see you in the morning. You just chill out with Dr. Charlie and bunk here for tonight. Tomorrow we'll...

PHIL

(Interrupting) Yes! Yes! Alright I got it. (looking a little forlornly at the large wooden doors) Just bring me the newspaper when you come in the morning.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Got it! (noticing Phil's reticence to enter CASA MENTEFOLLE's doors)
Phil. Remember, it's just a formality.

herringbone@columbus.rr.com Turning to find Dr. Medly has wandered off on the front lawn he picks up his bags and pushes open the large wooden doors.

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE

The wooden doors open into a large lavishly decorated hallway with a hotel like front desk area. A large black and white printed sign saying "Concierge" hangs over the entrance to the front desk counter. There is an old style elevator in the center of the room. Two huge winding staircases branch out from either side of the front desk's counter area with towering angel sculptures guarding the way to each staircase. Along the walls are large tapestries and vibrant oil paintings of vineyard landscapes and lush green forests. At the front desk counter is a pleasant middle aged woman (MRS. BETTY JERROME) with her hair in a bun. She is dressed upscale and professionally to look like a high end hotel manager. With her is a younger woman (SARA) who looks to be in her early twenties. She is dressed more like a housekeeper. Waiting nearby is a young man (EDWARD) who is in his late teens with a very strong build. He is wearing a uniform roughly resembling an up scale bell hop. All turn to see Phil arrive through the doors.

MRS. JERROME

Mr. DiStella I presume. We have been expecting you for a few days now. I'm glad to see you made it here in one piece. (turning to Edward) Eddie get his bags please.

PHIL

I'm sorry, I know you were expecting me but William did not ask Dr. Medly to help me with the introductions you are...?

MRS. JERROME

Please Mr. DiStella feel free to call me Betty. (motioning to Sara) This is Sara, and Eddie will take your bags for you.

PHIL

Phil, please, well I'm Philip actually.. but... Phil just Phil. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

EDWARD

Sure thing Mr. DiStella. Or
...ah... (nodding appreciatively)
Phil. I can run these on up to your
room while they get you
charted...er checked in. I'll be
back down for you in a few minutes.

SARA

(Stepping toward Phil) Sir, Can I
get you a glass of lemonade or
sweet tea? We just made a fresh
batch of each in the kitchen.

PHIL

(rubbing his eyes in a tired
manner) No thank you. (motioning
toward Mrs Jerrome) I don't want to
be any trouble to the household
staff here, I think I just need to
lay down for a bit. It was a long
ride in.

MRS. JERROME

A bother! Nonsense Phil, your
grandfather was a dear friend and
would have wanted us to treat you
as family. Please just follow Eddie
up to you room and we can handle
all this (motioning to the desktop)
later.

PHIL

Thank you uh... Betty. I think I'll
just lay down in my room a bit
until I feel a little more like
myself.

EDWARD

Right this way Mr.Di...er...
sir...I mean (definitively)Phil!

Edward picks up the bags and heads to the elevator. Phil follows him nodding politely to Mrs Jerrome and Sara as he passes by. The elevator doors ring open and Edward waits attentively for Phil to enter first. As Phil Steps into the elevator we see a hypodermic needle jab into his neck and he collapses onto the floor.

PHIL

(Starring up at the face of Dr.
Medly) What the ...

(CONTINUED)

EXT dusk Mauna Kea summit hawaii (HELICOPTER fly over shot)

A car speeds up the last mile of a long stretch of gravel road leading to the summit of the Mauna Kea (Hawaii's inactive volcano) space observatory. As it barely makes the turns it is apparent that the driver is in a hurry. On the last turn nearest the top the car seems to careen out of control for a stretch then gains traction and sputters to a stop.

Two very high energy and excited men Dr. Gadfrey Hoolup and Dr. Steven Fenton emerge from the vehicle and yelling excitedly at each other. It seems one has forgotten to fuel up the car and they are late for something important at the Gemini Telescope. They run, trip and stumble their way over the last few hundred yards finally making it into the Gemini Telescope facility. As they run into the building they pass a small tour group led by a volunteer with a NASA patch on his suit. The tour group is made up of a few college or high school students, some families with small children, and an elderly couple.

TOUR GUIDE

The meteors of the Perseid shower are byproducts of Comets like 109/Swift-Tuttle. Swift-Tuttle leaves a trail of dust and ice behind when it passes Earth's orbit. Each year, Earth passes through this debris field and small particles from the field burn up in our atmosphere. Does anyone know what that causes?

LITTLE BOY

(about 4 or 5 years old yells)
SHOOTIN' STARS!

He makes two imaginary pistols of his hands and shoots a few rounds over his head.

LITTLE BOY CONT.

Bang! Bang! Bang!Bang!

Everyone in the The group laughs.

TOUR GUIDE

Well! Yes, that's right but the scientific term for that is...

UNCLE JAMES

(Interjecting impatiently)

Meteor shower! It's called a meteor shower!

(CONTINUED)

AUNT SUSAN
(Chiding but not really angry)

Oh James! Don't be a show off. No one likes a know it all.

(Turning to the little boy she enthusiastically confirms his terminology.)

AUNT SUSAN CONT.

You were right young man! They're SHOOTIN' STARS!

She mimics his imaginary pistols with her own hands

AUNT SUSAN CONT.
(Weakly)

Bang...uh ...bang bang!

The little boy runs over to Uncle Jimmy and kicks him in the shin.

UNCLE JAMES
(Angry)

Why you little...shhhh...

TOUR GUIDE

(cutting off Uncle Jimmy's obviously foul choice of words he shouts out a greeting to Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton)

Dr. HOOLUP! ... and ...Dr. Fenton!

(He's flustered but grateful for the distraction)

TOUR GUIDE CONT.
Ladies and gentlemen allow me to introduce two of our most brilliant minded astro-physicists. Dr. Gafrey Hoolup and Dr. Steven Fenton.

The group watches in quizzical amazement as the two men race by screaming blame at each other over the car dying and some imminent major event they're about to miss on the telescope. As they fly by in a flurry of blame, noise and confusion they are trading massive amounts of paper and juggling, tracking tools (Maps, charts, lap tops etc.) They never even knowledge the tour guide or the group.

(CONTINUED)

TOUR GUIDE CONT.

They are...uh... they are here...(recovering now he becomes more official sounding) Here studying comets and their effects on our near earth atmosphere...They are astro-physicists here on a grant from Cal Tech. and their work has them currently assigned here at the 4,200 meter high summit of Mauna Kea, Hawaii. Which houses the world's largest observatory for optical, infrared, and submillimeter astronomy.

LITTLE BOY

(tugging on the tour guides pant leg) Mister!?!)

TOUR GUIDE CONT.

(ignoring the child)

They are the interim operators of the Gemini telescope in this building which tracks comets.

LITTLE BOY CONT.

(insistent) MISTER!?!)

TOUR GUIDE CONT.

(still ignoring the child)

Moving right along we have just enough time to visit the gift shop before we close for the night. If you will all step this way.

He shoos the crowd away from the whirling and beeping councils and computer monitors which dominate the room, through a door marked "GEMINI CONTROL ROOM" into an outer hallway and out of the scene. We hear a final fading protestation from the little boy.

LITTLE BOY

MR.!!! I gotta PEEeeee!

INT GEMINI CONTROL ROOM MAUNA KEA SUMMIT HAWAII

DR. HOOLUP

Dammit! Fenton! For the last time it was your turn to fill the tank. You're just lucky we made it here in one piece!

(CONTINUED)

DR. FENTON

Listen Hoolup! I told you last night we were on a quarter tank. When I tell you something like that it becomes both of our responsibility to make sure we don't run out of gas!

DR. HOOLUP

You sorry son of a ...

DR. FENTON

(interrupting and pointing excitedly to the large observatory door being opened above them.)

LOOK! Gadfrey...Just look at the angle we have tonight! (Very excited) We might even... I mean it's conceivable... that we could...

They finish the sentence together

DR. HOOLUP AND DR. FENTON

See it with the naked eye!

They high five each other and rush to their work stations as we see the observatory roof/door open to a sky jam packed with stars.

DR. HOOLUP

(Shouting) do we have the right coordinates set in?

DR. FENTON

RA 16h50m15.59 -41°17'29.1" aug.
10.21 mag Sco

DR. HOOLUP

Ok buckle up and get ready to get some film on her.

DR. FENTON

(To somewhere in the sky above)

C'mon baby! Smile pretty for the camera.

DR. HOOLUP

(Crosses his fingers and kisses them both and makes the sign of the cross three times superstitiously over his chest).

(CONTINUED)

DR. HOOLUP
Now we wait!

INT. LAVISH HOTEL-LIKE BEDROOM

FADE UP FROM BLACK. . We see from Phil's point of view a crystal chandelier directly above his bed that is blowing slightly in the breeze.

FX Tinkling sound (of glass crystals blowing gently above)
Suddenly we see Dr. Medley's face pop into the screen.

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
Phillip? Phil? Can you hear me old man?

PHIL
(Bolting up to a sitting position in his bed.) What the ...I...Where am I...I saw you in the...(feels for his neck).

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
Easy there son. You had a bit of a fall there.

PHIL
(groggy)You were in the elevator I saw you there was a pinch...and I...(struggling to get out of the bed)

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
Hold on now. Just lay back and rest. (Gently pushing Phil back to a reclining position) We think you hit your head when you fell.

PHIL
I...Didn't fall...I was...stuck...with a ...no drugged!

DR. MEDLEY
(Laughing and looking to Edward who is standing at the foot of the bed) Ha!Drugged!Eddie!He is saying he was drugged.(Humorously) Did you drug him?

EDWARD
(Almost scared) No! I was not the... NO!

(CONTINUED)

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
Easy Eddie, Mr. DiStella is not
accusing you of anything he is just
having a post traumatic memory
illusion.

PHIL
Not him! ...YOU! Dr. Medly. You
stuck me with a...(fading) with
a... with something sharp...

EDWARD
(Bewildered) I think he's having a
brain fart of something doc.

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
(Chuckling) Oh so now I'm the bad
guy Eddie not you.

PHIL
There was a, I thought I...You were
in the...

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
(finishing his thought for him)I
was in the elevator. Yes, yes, you
saw me when Eddie came to get me
after you fell. You saw me helping
you up and now your brain is
concocting it's own version of how
you fell.

PHIL
(doubtful and apologetically) I'm
sorry I'm not clear on...this. I'm
...I didn't mean to say you were...

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
(reassuringly) Not a problem son!
You took a pretty rough fall. Why
don't you just rest a bit more and
I'll check in on you later.

PHIL
My head is throbbing.

DR. CHARLES MEDLY
Eddie hand me that bottle of
aspirin on the night stand.

Dr. Medly shakes two pills out of the bottle and gives them
to Phil who pops them into his mouth as Dr. Medly pours a
glass of water from a pitcher by the bed and hands it to
him.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Thanks!

DR. CHARLES MEDLY

Now just rest. I'll drop in a little later.

PHIL

(laying back down) Thanks Doc.

DR. CHARLES MEDLY

(Turning off the bedside light)
C'mon Eddie let's let him get some shut eye. We'll see him in the morning.

EDWARD

(leaving the room with Dr. Medly)
See you Mr. Di...I mean Mr. Phil.

The door closes and the room is darkened. We hear Dr. Medly and Edward walking away. Suddenly we see Phil bolts up in the bed. He turns on the bedside light. He holds his hand to his mouth and spits out the aspirin.

PHIL

(Whispering to himself) Screw this!
I'm outta here!

He begins to move toward the bedside but suddenly stiffens up. As he tosses back the bed sheets we see his legs are strapped to the sides of the bed frame. He fingers the locks on the straps for a minute in disbelief. He struggles for a few more seconds and then begins to shout toward the door in anger and fear.

PHIL

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? WHO ARE YOU
PEOPLE? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO
ME?

We hear footsteps coming down the hall outside the door. The bedroom door opens and Dr. Medly walks into the stark light from an outside window. He has a more serious demeanor now. He is quickly followed into the room by Edward, Sara, and Mrs. Jerrome who approaches with a syringe and a bottle of liquid medicine.

DR. CHARLES MEDLY

Now Phillip, Let's not have any trouble with you. This will all make sense tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Struggling against the restraints the grip of both Edward and Sara as they forcefully push him flat on the bed.

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS? DO YOU KNOW
WHO I AM? GET OFF ME! I HAVE TO GET
OUT OF...this place!

His voice trails off Dr. Medly injects him with the sedative Mrs. Jerrome has prepared.

DR. MEDLY

(In a lilting echoed voice that
sounds very far away) All in due
time my boy. All in due time.

MONTAGE OF TIME PASSING NON-DESCRIPT DAYS AND NIGHTS

We see Dr. Medly taking Phil's pulse or temperature while he sleeps. Also, Phil now has an I.V. in his arm and we see different people Mrs. Jerrome, Sara, Eddie, and some different woman (obviously nurses) sitting by his bed. Phil occasionally tosses and turns but does not wake.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS BUILDINGS NIGHT

A limousine pulls up dims it's headlights twice. A dark figure dressed in a heavy overcoat hurries over to the back passenger window which rolls down silently. We can't see either persons face we just hear voices speaking in hushed tones.

STRANGER ONE

It's all set.

LIMO PASSENGER

Good! It better be.

STRANGER ONE

They're going to wake him up soon.

LIMO PASSENGER

Look I'm taking a huge risk here.
For me to be involved ...well I'd
be looking at hard time if anything
goes...you know...wrong. Make sure
it's done professionally.

We see a thick envelope handed out of the window. Then we hear strong crowd laughter followed by applause coming from one of the campus buildings nearby.

(CONTINUED)

STRANGER ONE

Like I said it's all set. She's a Pro.

LIMO PASSENGER

(Whispering with a hint of menace)
Well she better be!

The limo window abruptly rolls up and the vehicle begins to pull away. As it rolls past him the stranger taps the trunk of the car twice with the thick envelope and then hurries off into the night.

EXT. LARGE CITY LAW BUILDING - DAY

A series of expensive cars pull up one by one to a valet stand. Occupants are assisted out of the cars and the cars are driven off by valet assistants. The people are dressed formally and proceed up the steps and into the building. We see an elderly couple waiting anxiously at the top of the stairs. They are looking intently as each car pulls up and the occupants get out.

UNCLE JIMMY

Where could they be? It's so very late.

He pulls a pocket watch from his vested suit, opens it and snaps it shut quickly.

AUNT SUSAN

They'll be here on time. Just calm down. You're going to give yourself a stroke.

UNCLE JIMMY

(in a loud disgusted
whisper)OH...MILLARD FILLMORE!

The old woman snaps a look at his face as he looks sheepishly back at her.

AUNT SUSAN

Honestly James, I think I preferred it when you just cursed. Look! Here they are now!

She points to a young well dressed couple exiting a BMW and dealing with the valet attendants.

UNCLE JIMMY

(Shouting and waving excitedly)
Bill! Susan! We're up here. UP
HERE!

(CONTINUED)

We see Bill from scene one (carrying his briefcase) and Susan a young pretty woman in her twenties. She looks tired but resolute. The young couple nod and gesture to the elderly pair to wait a moment while the valet attendant issues a tag in exchange for the BMW keys.

SUSAN

(Waving and smiling) Hello Uncle Jimmy! Hello Aunt Sue!

OLD WOMAN

How is my favorite niece and namesake?

They hug and kiss as each approaches the other.

SUSAN

Oh alright I guess. I'll let you know when all this (gestures to the large looming building) is over.

OLD MAN

(rapidly shaking Bill's hand and ushering them along) C'mon, C'mon we don't have time for idol chit chat! We're almost late. Twenty Five million dollars at stake on the line and you two are running late! Judas Priest!

INT. LAW BUILDING - LIBRARY/STUDY/CHAMBER

Judge Foster, a large older man is sipping a tumbler of scotch and smoking a cigar. He is talking with his clerk Bob Simmons about the agenda for the afternoon.

JUDGE FOSTER

What's on the docket this afternoon Simmons? I'd like to make an early escape if I can around three O'clock.

BOB

Not today your honor. (looking at a leather bound folder) You've got the Sanchez case at two and before that your family friend, James DiStella, had requested a meeting about his brother's estate and possibly contesting the will.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER

Contesting the will? Why? It was pretty ironclad when I wrote it.

BOB

Something about the beneficiary (looking at the details in his folder) a Phil DiStella, his nephew I think, right? (Judge Foster nods in affirmation) I think his family is questioning his mental state.

JUDGE FOSTER

(Placing his drink down on his desk and sharply grinding out his cigar. He answers in a slightly annoyed voice.) What? It's not like Jim DiStella to question his brother's decisions. There's never been any family squabbles before. (looking at his watch) Better get to the bottom of this if I can. Let me know when they get here. (robing up for next session) That will be all Bob.

BOB

Yes Sir.

INT DAY PHIL'S ROOM AT CASA MENTEFOLLE

Phil wakes up alone in his room. He takes account of his situation. He can hear voices of people in the hall outside the room but nothing specific. Next he rifles through the bedside night stand and finds a paperclip. He bends it straight and begins to scrape a line into the leather straps on his ankles with the end of the wire. (Time passes) We see a series of dissolves as he battles the straps and they give a little and eventually break. Phil cautiously slips to the ground and creeps to the door. Opening it a crack he sees a woman dressed as a nurse walk by reading a chart. She does not see him peeking out from his room. After seeing no one guarding his room he pulls the door open and sneaks out into the hall.

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD NIGHT.

Phil walks unsteadily down the hall occasionally holding his hands against the wall for support. He goes pretty much unnoticed by individuals who are in various states of sedation and/or agitation. The ward is male and female. Some patients are/become aware of him while others are oblivious to anything around them. The Nurse on the ward looks up from

(CONTINUED)

her desk and nods toward him acknowledging him but offering no explanation of how or why he came to be there. When his back is to her she discreetly picks up a phone and says a few words that we do not hear, hangs up and resumes some work at her desk. Phil continues to walk unsteadily along the corridor at last coming to an alcove of sorts where he sees Michelle. She is young, around late twenties, very thin as if she were a cancer patient. She has a thick robe wrapped around her for warmth. She is sitting at the edge of her seat at a barred window. Her hands are outstretched and upturned palms out as if she is reaching for something. She turns her head only briefly to look at him and then she turns back to the window.

PHIL

(Dazed and confused from the drugs wearing off) Where am I?

MICHELLE

(softly, and kindly) You...are here!

PHIL

(perplexed) What? Where is...here?

MICHELLE

Here... is where you find yourself.

PHIL

Am I crazy...or what...who...?

MICHELLE

(reassuringly) You are not crazy. They are.

PHIL

Who?

Phil is rubbing his eyes and he sinks down into a nearby chair behind her. He slowly begins to notice her posture and follows the line of her sight. We see what he sees, a night sky bursting with stars outside the barred window, but no moon and nothing particularly unusual about the sky.

PHIL

(Becoming more lucid)

What are you doing?

MICHELLE

(softly but firmly and resolute in her belief)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE (cont'd)
I'm holding the stars in the sky!

Phil is stunned and not unexpectedly dismissive)

PHIL
(more to himself than to her)

Ok! So much for first impressions!

(The scene is interrupted by the sudden appearance of the ward nurse who startles Phil with an unexpected declarative voice from behind him.)

NURSE
Mr. DiStella! Please come with me.
Dr. Medly will see you now.

INT. COURTROOM

Judge Foster is listening to a defense attorney making an intense and impassioned closing argument. He is attentive but somewhat agitated as he keeps checking his watch.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY
...and that is why you must declare my client Mr. Rodrico Jesus Sanchez innocent of all charges and free him from the confines of the county jail.

Mr. Sanchez is sitting at the defense table trying to look as innocent and apologetic as possible. Nodding and wringing his hands in a pleading manner.

JUDGE FOSTER
Thank you councilor, I think I've heard about enough now. (addressing Mr. Sanchez) Mr. Sanchez please rise.

The defense attorney quickly trots back to the defense table to stand next to his client. He flashes an "OK" sign to Mr. Sanchez indicating that the finding will be in his favor.

JUDGE FOSTER
Mr. Sanchez your attorney has made an impassioned plea in your favor. It seems the dog did bite you before you ran over it with your...(looks at his notes) with your Harley Davidson. I find in your favor for the count of reckless driving...

(CONTINUED)

Mr. Sanchez and the attorney smile and begin to shake hands.

JUDGE FOSTER
(finishing his thought and
interrupting the festivities) AND
...I sentence you to two weeks and
time served for one count of animal
cruelty with a motor vehicle.

Sanchez turns to his attorney and draws a finger across his
throat mimicking a death sentence for not getting him off on
all charges.

JUDGE FOSTER
Bailiff take Mr. Sanchez back to
jail to ...(Sarcastically) reflect
on his lifestyle choices.

Judge Foster bangs his gavel then turns to Bob Simmons

JUDGE FOSTER
Mr. Simmons, what's the next
case?

BOB SIMMONS
Nothing else today sir. (Then
directly to the judge) Except that
private issue with the DiStella
family. They are in your chambers
waiting for you.

JUDGE FOSTER
Fine! I'm outta here.

Judge Foster gets up and walks through his chamber door.

INT. JUDGES CHAMBER DAY

Judge Foster finds most of the DiStella family gathered in
his office. Uncle James, Aunt Susan, Susan, a few well
dressed but unnamed family members and Phil's attorney
friend Bill.

UNCLE JIMMY
(Cooing to Judge Foster and
greeting him with familiarity,
friendship, and a hardy handshake)
Ned! Ned old man! How the hell are
you?

JUDGE FOSTER
Jimmy! Susan! So good to see you
again! (Addressing everyone in the
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER (cont'd)
 room) So good to see all of you again! Terribly sorry to hear about Johnathan. It was quite a shock to Martha and me. But whats all this I hear about possibly contesting the will?

UNCLE JIMMY

That's just it Ned. That's just the thing I....er we needed to speak to you about today. I'm afraid there's been a huge mistake.

JUDGE FOSTER

(A bit guarded now) A Mistake...in the will? I'm pretty sure I got down what Johnathan wanted to be his final wishes. What seems to be the problem.

James turns to Bill and motions to give him the will which Bill has been pulling out of his briefcase. James takes the official looking papers and hands them to Judge Foster.

UNCLE JIMMY

You see Ned...You see right here. He left the whole thing to Little Phillip. On his death the company had to be sold but the twenty five million dollar profit is all being left to Phillip. It's got to be wrong! A misprint or mistake of some kind. You look and see if it makes any sense to you. Little Phillip with that kind of money! It will ruin us...I mean it will ruin him.

Everyone in the room except Bill begin to add their agreement and affirmations that something isn't right with the will. Judge Foster takes a cursory glance at the will, folds it back up and hands it back to Bill as the room falls silent.

JUDGE FOSTER

Nope!That's what he told me, it's what he wanted, and it's what the law says it is to be. There's no mistake. (Gravely but gently)This was... and is Johnathan's Last Will and Testament.

(CONTINUED)

Everyone is stunned, crestfallen and confused. Looking back and forth at each other and making silent gestures indicating their disbelief. Finally Aunt Susan steps up to Judge Foster.

AUNT SUSAN

But Ned...dear Ned...Phillip is...

She twirls her finger at her temple and mouths the word "Crazy". The room erupts in a cacophony of clamorous voices each trying to be heard over the others as they assail the character of Phil DiStella with all the strange and bizarre deeds of his past. Judge Foster makes his way through the family members as they each tug on his robe and swamp him with objections. He emerges from the small crowd and grabs the first thing he can find on his desk, a wooden statue of "Blind Justice". He bangs it several times on his desk and shouts for order.

JUDGE FOSTER

(Shouting) ORDER! ORDER!

Bob Simmons steps through the door ready to save the judge and, seeing the mayhem, does an abrupt turn and exits before he's noticed. Judge Foster bangs the statue one last time and it crumbles in his hand.

JUDGE FOSTER

ORDER!

The room falls silent. One by one silent apologies are made toward the judge. Uncle Jimmy steps forward.

UNCLE JIMMY

It's true! He is not...(straining to find the right words) mentally fit to handle this kind of... inheritance!

Judge Foster clamors to his chair and, straightening his robe, he looks forlornly at the broken statue in his hand and then at the room.

JUDGE FOSTER

(sadly to no one in particular) Martha gave me this when I was elected. (then holding it up for all to see) This statue might be broken but the law will not be. Not in my chambers and not in this case. Now we are all friends...good friends (he looks at Susan)...not just friends but family. (looking

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER (cont'd)
at the others in the room) Now, I'm
sorry but Johnathan's will is
legitimate and it stands as it was
written.

The room erupts again in mass confusion and noises of protest as everyone tries to be heard over the other. Finally, Aunt Susan puts her fingers to her mouth and blows a shrill whistle quieting them all.

FX Whistle

AUNT SUSAN
 Ned!...He's nuts! Phillip is nuts!
 Plain and simple.

JUDGE FOSTER
Well Susie...If... and I mean IF that can be Properly...lega

The room falls silent as all eyes turn to Bill the attorney.

BILL
 (stammering)uh...he's...kinda...

JUDGE FOSTER
 Yes!?! Speak up man!

BILL
 He's in an asylum for the insane!

All turn defiantly toward Judge Foster who takes a minute to let this declaration sink in. He cocks his head to the side a bit and slumps back down in his chair.

JUDGE FOSTER
 Ok councilor do you want to try to
 catch me up to speed?

BILL
 (Hurriedly) Well you see Ned...

JUDGE FOSTER
 (Clearing his throat and assuming
 an official air) Let's keep it
 "Judge Foster" for the next few
 minutes. I don't want to be accused
 of some kind of dereliction of my
 duties because of familial
 favoritism. What the hell is he
 doing in the Loony Bin?

(CONTINUED)

The room erupts again in the familiar opinions and objections.

JUDGE FOSTER
(a little angry now) QUIET!

BILL
(with urgency) It was the accident!
It was the accident Judge Foster!
He lost his best friend! He lost
his grandfather! (a little more
softly) He lost...Johnathan!

The room murmurs a bit in a sort of sorrowful commiseration at the memory of the man they all knew and loved. Finally Judge Foster waves his hand in a gentle quieting motion.

JUDGE FOSTER
Quite a blow! Yes, quite a blow
indeed! They were VERY close.

Seeing his opportunity to interject and defend his friend Bill continues the judge's thought for him.

BILL
Yes it was Judge Foster! Yes it was quite a blow for all of this family but it was especially crushing on Phil.

JUDGE FOSTER
(relenting on his earlier order to keep things formal) "Ned"...Just "Ned". (softer now) But William... what happened?

BILL
Well he got the news like the rest of us but he was in Botswana building grass huts or something for the Peace Corp. You know Phil always trying to help other people.

JUDGE FOSTER
Yes go on.

BILL
Well he couldn't be here, you know,
he missed the goodbyes at the
hospital. Johnathan hung on for a
few days but by time Phil got the
news and caught a flight

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (cont'd)

stateside...he...well...it was too late. He didn't even make it to the funeral either. It literally crushed him.

JUDGE FOSTER

(Understandingly) Humph! That would be hard on anyone.

BILL

So he's been drinking and living like a homeless person. We really just found him this past week on Friday. I checked with the family and they all agreed we should take him to Dr. Medly at Casa Mentefolle.

JUDGE FOSTER

Mentefolle? Didn't Johnathan once own the land there?

BILL

Yes, yes he did. He granted it to Dr. Charles Medly in the late eighties to be used in his practice for the poor and his patients whose families could not afford treatment. The family didn't want this going public so we just took him there.

JUDGE FOSTER

I see... go on.

BILL

Well we all figured it was the best place to ...(straining)

UNCLE JIMMY

(Definitively) No!...No! we cannot wait and see! He's never been right in the head and this... this break is just the latest thing! He can't be trusted with all that money. He could give it all away! He could burn it in a pile and roast marshmallows over it for all we know! He can't be trusted. That is our family money and our family name on the line!

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER

Ok...ok! Settle down Jim, (to himself) I see...I see. (gravely to everyone) Well this is more complicated than we are going to be able to fix today. Let's agree to sit on this for a bit. Bill... you get Dr. Medly to give me a complete workup on his mental state in the next few weeks and we will see where this all goes. Tell Dr. Medly I'll give him eight weeks to show that Phil mentally stable. Mentally strong and able to handle all this...this cash. (looking at his watch) I'm sorry everyone but I have to be somewhere now. God bless you all and again accept my condolences for Johnathan's passing. Bill here will keep you all apprised of the situation and my decisions in this matter.

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD

Phil is lead by the nurse to a heavy metal door with the words Dr. Charles Arnold Medly, MD printed in bold black letters. There is a small window with wire mesh running through the glass about eye level in the door. The nurse knocks three distinctive times and Dr. Medly's face appears in the window. The door swings open wide and Dr. Medly is standing there with a big smile and a welcoming hand.

DR. MEDLY

Phillip! How are you? Come on in and sit down.

Phil stands stiff and does not move. He is glaring at Dr. Medly and looking around as if he might make a run for it. Seeing no where to go, he moves cautiously into the doctor's office. Without taking his eyes off of Dr. Medley he fishes around with his hands until he finds the back of a chair and sits down uneasily.

PHIL

(Coldly) Why am I here? Where is...here?

Dr. Medly moves slowly behind his desk which is stacked with papers and books. He sits down across from Phil and neatly folds his hands on the desk in front of him in an almost pleading manner.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MEDLY

You are here at your grandfather's old estate Mentefolle.

PHIL

(Angrily) I know where here is. I mean (pointing his finger

DR. MEDLY

Now take it easy Phillip. This is...and always has been for your own good. You were...restrained because you were a danger to yourself. It was very clever how you...escaped. That's how I know you are thinking more clearly now.

PHIL

I want out. I want out RIGHT NOW!

DR. MEDLY

I'm afraid that is not going to be possible right now. I need you to calm down and breathe.

PHIL

Breathe! You want me to ...BREATHE!
I'll show you BREATHING!

Phil jumps up and scatters all the books and papers on Dr. Medly's desk flailing his arms in repeated motion showering Dr. Medly with the contents of his desktop. Phil turns and runs for the door. Running full tilt into Edward's large stocky frame. Phil bounces back into the room like a rag doll as Edward slips into the room and the door shut behind him.

EDWARD

Things Ok in here Doc?

Dr. Medly jumps up and holds his hand out to Phil who is on the floor and shrinks away from him almost as a reflex.

DR. MEDLY

PHIL! No one is trying to hurt you!
We're trying to help.

Phil looks at Dr. Medly, then at Edward who is blocking the door but not in a menacing way.

PHIL

(insincerely) Sure...sure we are all friends here. You Dr. Medly,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (cont'd)
me, and this lackey of yours. We're
all friends. I suppose we're all
going to sit down and play
patty-cake together now.

Edward looks at Phil and moves to pick him up. Phil instinctively moves away but is caught in Edward's grasp and lifted to his feet in a single swift motion. Edward begins to brush him off like a barber who just finished a haircut.

EDWARD
 (boyishly and somewhat oblivious of the situation) Sorry Mr. Phil. I didn't mean to run into you like that. I just heard a commotion and thought I better check in.

Edward releases Phil and looks to Dr. Medly for approval.

DR. MEDLY
 That will be all Eddie...I think we'll be ok in here. Thank you!

EDWARD
 Ok...(turning to Phil) Sorry again Mr. Phil!

Edward opens the door and scoots out into the hallway. The door clangs shut behind him and we can see he is standing right outside the door with his back to it.

DR. MEDLY
 (motioning to the chair)
 Phil...please...sit down.

Phil moves toward the chair watching Dr. Medly with suspicion as the older man begins to pick up the books and papers and arrange them back on his desk.

DR. MEDLY
 (Tentatively) I'm afraid that... things...well I can see that things have gotten off to a very bad start here. I'm not the monster I think you have assumed me to be.

Dr. Medly pulls a picture from his top desk drawer and hands it to Phil. It is a picture of Phil's Grandfather standing next to Dr. Medly and smiling. They are holding an architects rolled up blueprints and pointing at a mock up model of the exterior gardens and the "Casa Mentefolle" gilded gate.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MEDLY CONT.

I want you to know your grandfather
Johnathan trusted me...and so...
you should too. Contrary to what
you think you have experienced and
come to believe. I do want to help
you. Can you trust me? Just a
little?

Phil is holding the picture in his hand and rubbing his head in confusion. Seeing his grandfathers face and smile has hit him very hard and he dissolves into quiet tears.

PHIL

(Gutterally) Grandpa...Grandpa
Johnny... he's gone. He's really
gone.

DR. MEDLY

Yes Phil... Yes he really is. But
he loved you very much and he asked
me to help you.

PHIL

(returning to his angry state)
THAT'S A LIE! He would not have had
you drug me and tie me down.

DR. MEDLY

Phillip! He did ask me to help you.

Dr. Medly walks over to Phil and gently takes the picture away from him. Looking at it himself, he pauses and nods.

DR. MEDLY

He asked me on his deathbed. When
he knew he would not be able to
hold on to life long enough for
them to find you and get you back
to him. He asked me to help you
because he knew what he meant to
you and he knew it would affect you
painfully...that you were not there
at...(gravely)the end. Your family
brought you here after they found
you. You were near dead
yourself...living on the streets
homeless and rambling on in a
perpetual drunken state. That is
not what your grandfather wanted
for you. He didn't want you to
die...just because he did! He asked
me to help you. I promised him I
would.

(CONTINUED)

Phil stares at the ground trying to put it all together. He is realizing he may have been wrong but he still does not trust Dr. Medly very much.

PHIL

Ok...so help me. (resolutely) Help me get out.

DR. MEDLY

Good! Good! That's the spirit! I know it is a lot to take in right now. Will you trust me? At least enough to believe I too... want you to get out of here? Not right now. Probably not tomorrow or very soon. But when you are ready...and not until you are truly ready. Can you trust me just that much...for Johnathan's sake?

Phil looks up slowly and without much emotion until he is staring intensely into Dr. Medly's eyes.

PHIL

We will see doc...we will see.

DR. MEDLY

Good! Now please make yourself at home on the ward. We will meet daily for sessions and try to get you back on your feet.

Phil stands and staggers a little from all the preceding stress. He moves slowly toward the door faints and collapses on the floor. Dr. Medly looks down at him with concern but does not rise to help him. Instead he presses a button on his desk which buzzes out in the hall.

DR. MEDLY

Eddie! Could you step back in here and help Mr. DiStella back to his room.

Without waiting for Edward to enter the room he picks up the phone and dials a number. Speaking into the receiver he whispers the words "He's awake." and hangs up the phone.

INT. JUDGES CHAMBER

Judge Foster is sitting at his desk milling over some papers. Bill is seated in a chair in front of him looking concerned but not anxious.

JUDGE FOSTER

So...he's making some progress?
Medly thinks that's a good sign.
Right?

BILL

Yes I guess. But he is also having relapses as well. I'm not sure where we stand on this. The family is really pressuring Dr. Medly to either get him out or declare him incompetent and a semi permanent ward of the state.

JUDGE FOSTER

It's only been two weeks. the next report is due Monday let's see where things are going then. Have you been up to see him since you took him there?

BILL

No not yet I'm afraid he may be angry with me. I lied to him. I told him it was a resort for retired doctors... not a mental hospital. I've wanted to see him but I don't think he'll want to see me.

JUDGE FOSTER

Look William... you're his friend as well as his attorney. You should go up there. Check with Medly first... but I think you should get a close up view of his state of mind. You know him pretty well. Check him out and let me know what you think. See if he is capable of rational thought.

BILL

Like what? Do you want me to throw a ball out on the lawn and see if he chases it? I really don't think I'm qualified. Yes I'm his friend. Yes I want him to get better. But

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (cont'd)

I'm no shrink and those places give me the willy's. Can't we just wait 'til Monday and see what Dr. Medly's next report says?

JUDGE FOSTER

(sternly) Councilor! Don't get me going. He's your friend. D

BILL

Yes Sir Your honor! But what do you want me to do when I'm there? I'm no expert on his mental state of being.

JUDGE FOSTER

Give him a simple task. See if he can handle it. I don't know

BILL

I'm still not following you judge. You mean have him build a boat in a bottle or assemble a zig saw puzzle? Because those are the only types of projects they do in those places.

JUDGE FOSTER

Hell I don't know! Have him complete something. Learn a new language or something so we know he is there and he can still think on his feet. This is a man who is going to be in charge of twenty five million dollars. I don't want him making paper dolls out of hundred dollar bills. Get him to do something...big. Something with a plan of some sort. Something with a design and a purpose. He likes to help people. He was in the Peace Corp for goodness sake! Have him.. I don't know help Dr. Medly with another patient's problems. Maybe that will bring him back to his old self more. I really don't know what to ask for but something like that would be a demonstration of his sanity. Just get up there and see what you can do!

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Ok your honor...will go.

Bill rises and exits the judge's chamber. the door closes softly behind him. He takes a deep breath. As he walk away he mutters...

BILL

One broomstick of the Wicked Witch
coming right up!

EXT CASA MENTEFOLLE DAY

An ambulance marked Private Ambulatory Service pulls slowly up toward the gilded golden gates of CASA MENTFOLLE. When it gets about fifty yards from the gate it speeds up. All the lights and sirens whirl to life. The gates swing open wide as the ambulance races up the second drive to the front door screeching to a halt the driver and assistant bolt out of the cab and run to the back of the truck. We see Phil, a nurse or two, and a few of the more coherent patients appear at the barred windows looking down and motioning to one another to see the commotion going on below.

INT. AMBULANCE

A young woman (Janna) loosely dressed in a straight jacket, is checking her make up in a compact mirror. She snaps it shut and turns to the driver and assistant who have now opened the back doors of the vehicle and nods. She takes one last look at herself in the shiny metallic surface of a nearby medical tray. She cups her large breasts in both hands and adjusts her bra pulling her shirt down just enough that her chest is bulging a little over the top of her skin tight dress. She nods to the driver and he begins helping her onto a gurney. She turns and twists strategically to enable the ambulance driver and assistant to finish strapping her into a straight jacket.

JANNA

(Directing)

Not too tight I don't want to
suffocate before I'm even inside.

DRIVER

It's supposed to look real right?
This is real!

He pulls the strap tight and she winces

(CONTINUED)

JANNA

(Hoarsely)

Dammit! That's enough! Roll me in already!

The driver and assistant plop her down hard on the gurney and behind her back the assistant makes a mocking gesture of disdain for her bossiness. They exit the ambulance and begin rolling the gurney toward the front doors. They are met by Dr. Medly, Mrs. Jerrome, Edward and Sara.

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE PSYCH WARD

A nurse begins to shoo the patients away from the window like a cop on the beat breaking up a crowd after an auto accident has been cleared.

NURSE

Ok folks! Nothing to see here! Just an average day at Casa Mentefolle! Let's move along...Mr. Habbard your food is getting cold. Mrs. Cransen those are not jelly beans please spit them out! Mr. DiStella please come away from that window. There is nothing going on that you don't see every day here.

PHIL

(To a male patient nearby.)

Wow did you see her! I know a straight jacket is all the rage in Milan this year. But even from here I can see she has quite a figure on her.

MALE PATIENT

Examining his fingers up close and biting his nails.

Yeah! You need to get you some of that! I'd ask her out myself but my friend Tommy here...

He jerks his fingers out of his mouth and motions to an empty space beside him.

MALE PATIENT CONT.

Tommy says he gets first dibs.

(CONTINUED)

Phil looks at the empty place where Tommy the imaginary friend should be sitting and nods respectfully. Then he turns away rolling his eyes and mouthing the word "CRAZY".

Phil looks out the window one last time and sees Edward and Mrs. Jerrome assume control of the gurney as Dr. Medly signs a clip board and walks the two men back to the ambulance to depart. They climb in and Dr. Medly waves as they drive away.

INT. AMBULANCE

The assistant pulls out a phone, dials and hands the phone to the driver.

DRIVER

(In a pseudo-secretive voice)

The package has been delivered!

We hear a voice on the other end ask

VOICE

Any problems?

DRIVER

Nope it's all hunky dory!

INT NON DISCRIPT ROOM

Uncle Jimmy looks into his phone as if the person on the other end is crazy.

UNCLE JIMMY

HUNKY DORY! You baffoon! You wouldn't know hunky dory if it bit you on the ass!

He slams his cell phone shut and sets it down on a table in front of him.

AUNT SUSAN

So she's there?

UNCLE JIMMY

Yes Susan... she made it in. Let's hope she earns her keep.

AUNT SUSAN

She does know what to do right?

(CONTINUED)

UNCLE JIMMY

(A little annoyed) Yes dear! She knows how to handle a man.

AUNT SUSAN

well...she has all the right parts in all the right places. Do you think he'll go for her?

UNCLE JIMMY

With all his bleeding heart tendencies? Peace Corps... Save the Children... (Sarcastically) Nuke the whales! He's a sitting duck.

AUNT SUSAN

Well... he is a good boy at heart. And chivalry is not necessarily dead. How could he refuse a damsel in distress. If I didn't think he would spend all that money on charities and helping people...I'd be inclined to call this whole thing off.

UNCLE JIMMY

(Scolding) Don't go soft on me now Susan! We agreed. We all

AUNT SUSAN

Yes dear... I know. (resolutely)
We'll do what we have to do.

UNCLE JIMMY

Good!

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD EVENING

Phil is sitting at a distance and watching a nurse feed Michelle. She barely has the strength to swallow. He looks at her with pity from across the room but is not actively doing anything to help her. A nurse walks up to him and hands him a plastic cup full of water and a little paper cup with two large pills in it.

NURSE

Time for your meds Mr. DiStella

Still watching Michelle Phil turns away from the nurse as he pretends to swallow the pills which he has secretly dropped into his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

So what's her deal? (nodding toward Michelle) I mean really. She can barely eat and she sleeps all day. But then you people let her sit up all night and play Atlas? I mean what's up with that?

NURSE

Don't know! Don't care! She lost it a long time ago. She's c

Phil reluctantly pulls the pills out of his pocket and pops them in his mouth.

PHIL

(Speaking around the pills) I don't need these!

NURSE

Sure... tell it to the Doc. He may give a rat's behind. Me? I don't care it's just a job. Eat 'em or I'll cram 'em down your throat!

She slaps him hard on the back and he begins to choke on the pills. He grasps for the cup of water in a panic and drinks a great gulp pills and all. He sputters and glares at the nurse. She gives him a wink, turns and leaves. Phil is still glaring in her direction Dr. Medly walks up from behind him.

DR. MEDLY

(announcing) Phil!... You have a visitor!

Phil turns to see Bill following Dr. Medly a few paces back. Bill is holding his briefcase out in front of himself a little like a matador would hold red blanket in front of a bull. It is a gesture of friendship meant to lighten the moment.

DR. MEDLY

I'll leave you two to chat.

Dr. Medly takes a few steps away and picks up a chart from the nurse's desk he is still close by and listening to their conversation, but acts as if he is not.

BILL

How's it going chief?

Phil is too surprised seeing his old friend to be angry and he makes pretend bulls horns with his fingers on either side of his head.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Chief Sitting Bull is in no mood to laugh.

(in a false Spanish accent)

Someone's got some 'splaining to do!

Phil's voice turns colder as he recalls the way Bill left him at Casa Mentefolle.

PHIL

You said it was a technicality and then you left me here.

BILL

(Defensively)

A formality. I said it was a formality.

PHIL

Oh! Ok what it that? Some kind of legalese to justify your sorry ass?

Bill stands accused and his demeanor shows that he knows he has betrayed his friend's trust. Phil's icy mood slowly warms. He looks up at his friend who he knows feels bad and dismisses all the tension with a flip of his hand.

PHIL

(with tempered seriousness)

It's because you're a jerk.

BILL

Yeah I know. I know. Leave no man behind and all that...but dude you were wiggled out.

PHIL

(insistently)Jerk!

BILL

You didn't...you didn't even know me man! You called me "Fritz". Who the hell is Fritz?

PHIL

(pauses for a beat as if deciding whether Bill has suffered enough then still insistent)Jerk!

(CONTINUED)

They both laugh.

BILL

Anyway... you look good to me now.
How are you doing? When can we get
you outta this place? (calls
out)DR. MEDLY!!Let's get this man
back to the real world!

Dr. Medly looks up quickly from his chart and interjects.

DR. MEDLY

Now! Now! ...William. Let's not
jump any gun here. Why don't you
two just relax and talk some
more... and leave the doctoring to
me. I'm going to my office. I'll be
back in a little while. In the
meantime let's keep it
light...shall we?

Dr. Medly turns to leave. Bill leans in and swats at Phil
like a teenager pretending to shadowbox with his friend.
Phil counters.

BILL

Oh I know who Fritz is! He's a cat!
Fritz the cat.

He swats at Phil again. Phil grabs his hand mid swat and the
two shake hands. It's apparent their friendship runs deep.
They settle in laughing and smiling and begin to talk. Bill
watches Dr. Medly walk away out of the corner of his eye.
Once Dr. Medly is out of sight his mood becomes serious.

BILL

Listen! We don't have a lot of time
here. I need you to do something
for me.

PHIL

(Still goofing around)

What? Tie some bed sheets together
and climb out the window? We could
make an escape of it. Orrrr you
could just rip out that drinking
fountain over there and "Indian
Joe" it through the barred windows
for me. Wait am I Nicholson or are
you?

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Dude! I'm being serious here. I need you to listen to me! Th

PHIL

What?...who?

BILL

Jimmy... Susan... the whole family really! They don't want you to get the money Johnathan left to you.

PHIL

What? What are you talking about?
What do you mean the whole family?

BILL

Well... I guess not Sue. And not me...no way! But your Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Susan and the rest...they want the money for themselves. They want you to be declared mentally incompetent so they can take over your...your finances...your healthcare treatments...your inheritance...EVERYTHING! They will control your life. And if they do...they will keep you locked up here forever.

PHIL

(incredulous)

Dude! You've got to be wrong. What have you been smoking? Seriously! You're...this...this...well it isn't funny at all man! Are you messing with me? I mean are you...sure?

BILL

Looking around nervously as he speaks in semi-hushed tones
Absolutely! They actually went to Ned Foster to file an objection to the will.

PHIL

Judge Foster? Wait...what? Why?

BILL

He wrote the will for your grandfather and he was...or

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (cont'd)

...is ...also the executor. He has final say in whatever happens.

PHIL

(getting a little flustered)

But... I'm family! I mean they are my family...(repeating himself with more concern now) They are my family...right? It's not like your going to tell me I was adopted or something...right?

BILL

Trying to reassure his friend but also aware they may not have much time alone together. He looks around nervously while he speaks.

Look! Things are not all against you. I've been meeting with Judge Foster and trying to find a legal loophole or some way to get you out of this mess. I think he's on your side but you gotta do something to prove to him your not coo-coo. Otherwise it's going to be out of his hands. He will have no legal ground to stand on and you will spend your life in here.

PHIL

Stunned by all this and hurt by the massive family betrayal.

I...I...I don't know...maybe I should (defeated and sad) Maybe I should just stay in here. I mean if that's the way they feel about me.

BILL

No! That's not the way they feel about you. It's the way the

PHIL

They can have the damned money!
I'll just sign it over to them.

BILL

You can't. Who gives away twenty five million dollars? Doing that could be seen as crazy and you still end up in here. And they're not going to want to have to see

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (cont'd)
 your face at Christmas dinners
 knowing they ripped you off.

PHIL
 Ok ok. How about Dr. Medly? Does he
 know? Is he part of all this? Does
 he even know Uncle Jimmy and Aunt
 Susan?

BILL
 I can't say. I mean I don't know!
 He was close with your grandfather
 but...I mean that kind of money can
 really screw people up. Their
 loyalties...I don't know...they
 blur and fade in the face of the
 almighty dollar.

PHIL
 A little angry now.
 Well if that's how they want it. I
 mean if that's the way this is
 going to be played...What do I need
 to do? What does he...I mean
 Ned...I mean Judge Foster! What
 does he need me to do?

BILL
I don't know. He is not sure either. But it needs to be some

PHIL
 How! Like what am I supposed to do
 here? (exasperated) Grow a plant?
 Grow a garden? Make a finger
 painting of the Sistine Chapel? I
 mean COME ON! What can I do in here
 that he's going to see out there?

BILL
 (Gesturing to keep it down as if others might hear)
 I don't know. The Judge does not
 either...help someone here with a
 problem to get better. Have one of
 these guys to speak in a coherent
 sentence instead of babbling and
 drooling. You saw "Awakenings" I
 don't know!?! Something big...or
 big for in here at least.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Yeah right! So now I'm Robin Williams! Are you crazy?

BILL

I don't know what to tell you. Foster is getting weekly reports from Dr. Medly. I don't know if Medly knows why he is requesting them. But it's cover your butt time. Don't let on... or talk to him about this... just in case. And find something...anything that will show you had a plan, a design, and a purpose. Successful or not. It doesn't matter. Foster said that was the key to your getting out.

PHIL

Shaking his head in disbelief.

Damn!...Bill...just...damn!

Looking around over Bill's shoulder his eyes come to rest on a familiar scene. He sees the nurse spoon feeding Michelle.

PHIL

(Coming slowly to an idea or thought)

A project huh? Something big...

Hmmmm.

We see a house fly buzz by them. We follow it as it lands in a potted plant on the nurse's desk a few feet away. Going in close we see a small microphone hidden in the plant.

INT DR. MEDLY'S OFFICE

Dr. Medly is sitting and staring at the picture of himself with Phil's grandfather. We hear Bill's voice clearly on a speaker on Dr. Medly's desk.

BILL

Remember... it needs to show a plan...a design...and a purpose. For legal reasons... got it. And don't tell anyone.

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD SAME EVENING

BILL CONT.
One more bad bit of news.

PHIL
Oh c'mon...what else could possibly
add to this pile of my own fresh
Hell?

BILL
We've only got six weeks!

INT DR. MEDLY'S OFFICE

Dr. Medly clicks the speaker off and pulls his phone from his pocket. He deftly taps in a number and waits until he hears someone pick up. He speaks curtly into the phone.

DR. MEDLY
We have a situation here...

He listens intently to the phone frowning as he does and then answers.

DR. MEDLY CONT.
Now what do you want me to do?

He listens intently to the phone again.

DR. MEDLY CONT.
It will be ...handled!

He snaps the phone shut and stares back at the picture.

DR. MEDLY
Blurred Loyalties...

He presses a button on the desk and speak into the counsel

DR. MEDLY CONT.
Send her in!

We hear the voice of Mrs. Jerrome crackle back through the speaker.

MRS. JERROME
Right away Doctor!

INT GEMINI CONTROL ROOM MAUNA KEA SUMMIT HAWAII

Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton mill over charts and photographs of the comet they filmed earlier in the month.

DR. FENTON

These were great shots of the comet. The tail stretched out 3.5 million miles farther than we thought. If your predictions match up with my calculations...counting the time since we took these (holding up the pictures)earth should swing right through the remnants of the last part of her tail in just a few weeks. So if we have a clear couple of nights the inner atmosphere activity will be off the charts!

DR. HOOLUP

If! If! AND If!...Just pray we get that open window in the weather.

DR. FENTON

Beaming at a beautiful pictures of the comet. He is in awe of what he thinks will happen.

It will be...spectacular! Like nothing we have ever seen before.

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD CAFETERIA AREA EVENING

Michelle is seated in a wheelchair being fed as is the nightly course of things. Phil is seated across the room picking at a meal that appears to be untouched. A nurse finishes feeding Michelle. She wipes Michelle's mouth with a napkin and clears away the cafeteria style trays and plates.

NURSE

There! All done and all cleaned up. Do you need anything else?

Michelle indicates that she does not and makes a gesture of gratitude toward the nurse.

NURSE CONT.

Ok well give me a minute to put this stuff away and I'll take you to the sitting room.

The nurse exits carrying the tray and dishes.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly the locked metal doors of the ward open and in walks Mrs. Jerrome followed by Janna who is leaning heavily on Edward and flanked by Sara. They walk her into the room and plunk her down on a chair next to Phil.

MRS. JERROME

Mr. DiStella... this is Janna.
She's going to be staying with us
for a while. Janna this is Phillip
DiStella. Why don't the two of you
get acquainted while I let the
nurses know about Janna.

Mrs. Jerrome walks to the nurses desk with Janna's chart and hands it to the nurse at the station they begin to discuss something while pointing to the chart. Edward and Sara are still standing on either side of Janna as she stares deeply into Phil's eyes.

JANNA

(Seductively) How do you doooo?!

PHIL

I'm...I'm fine. And yourself?

He is not sure what is going on but feels a little awkward. She is clearly coming on to him and they just met. She leans in way too close invading his personal space. Phil naturally leans back and away from her.

JANNA

Why is such a big strong man like
yourself all locked up in a nasty
old place like this?

Phil is looking past her at the nurse feeding Michelle. Mainly just to have somewhere to look other than Janna's chest which she keeps pushing out and rubbing up against his shoulder and upper arm.

PHIL

I'm uh...I've been a little under
the weather lately... Not really
feeling myself...you know?

JANNA

**Well... I bet I could make you feel
all better.**

PHIL

Trying to be polite.

(CONTINUED)

So what's uh... why are you here ? Are you a friend of Dr. Medly or something?

JANNA

Friends? Why no... we just met a little while ago. He's going to help me.

PHIL

He is... well that's... good! Will you ..uh will you excuse me I need to..uh I need to go to my room.

He stands as if to leave but she pulls him down abruptly. He lands awkwardly on her lap.

JANNA

Well don't run away so fast! I won't bite you. Don't you wanna know why I'm here.

PHIL

(Very uncomfortable now is squirming to free himself from her grip)

I'm uh...not quite sure... I need to know anything...right this instant. I mean...I

JANNA

(Interrupting him she blurts out)
NYMPHOMANIA!

Her voice is a little loud and everyone on the ward including Mrs. Jerrome, Edward, Sara and the nurses, stop and look at her. Phil is baffled and has a look of great concern on his face. He really wants to get away from her.

JANNA CONT.

(Whispering now) He's gonna cure me of my Nymphomania. I'm a Nymphomaniac.

EDWARD

Nympha-whaty-ack?

SARA

(answering Edwards question)
Nymphomaniac. She wants sex all the time and can't get enough of it.

EDWARD

(naively) Oh I've read about that
in some of my ...uh ...magazines!

An extremely awkward silence falls on the room as they all look at Edward with varying degrees of disgust. Mrs. Jerrome is the first to speak.

MRS. JERROME

Edward! Sara! That is quite enough!...Sara? Don't you have s

PHIL

(to everyone) I'm sorry I really
have to check on something in my
room...(to Janna) Um... maybe I'll
see you...later...or ...whatever...

JANNA

(As he walks away) Well.. Ok see
you soon I hope.

Mrs. Jerrome gives her a very suspicious and catty look. They clearly share a secret and she thinks Janna has been too bold.

Phil heads toward his room but as soon as he is away from Janna and the others he turns back surreptitiously and after seeing he was not followed he moves toward Michelle who is still sitting at her table.

PHIL

Trying to start up a conversation
So...are you gonna catch the
evening news before you start
tonight...you know...holding up the
sky?

MICHELLE

No the stars.

PHIL

No? The news is important. You need
to know what's going on...you know
outside this place.

MICHELLE

**No. Not the news...and not the sky.
The stars. (Weakly) I need to hold
the stars.**

PHIL

Right! The Stars! Sorry...That is what I meant.

MICHELLE

No it wasn't...your just having your fun. Fooling around with the crazy lady. Playing with the nuts. I get it. What was wrong with the floozy over there. Not your type? Or are you ...you know... not interested in women?

PHIL

(Flustered by the insinuation)

No! No..really I'm interested in women...I mean I'm...a guy...so... I'm not interested in her sex...that is I mean specifically sex of hers...of her...or...um with her.

MICHELLE

(disinterested in his ramblings)

Ok... whatever. Please calm down. You are a man...I get it.

PHIL

No...see... I'm interested in other things...I'm ...well I'm

He stands up and moves a few tables closer to her.

I just ...thought you... or we ... might try watching the ne

MICHELLE

Ok...well it's still just the stars.

PHIL

What?

MICHELLE

Just the stars...(semi indignant)
You said I was holding up the the moon and the planets too. I'm not holding up the moon...or the planets. That would be insane!

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Right! The stars! Just the stars!

At the mention and repeating of the word "Stars" Michelle becomes more forgiving and open to him each time it is said. Now beaming at the thought of her nightly routine she smiles gracefully.

MICHELLE CONT.

I'm holding up the stars!

Phil watches as her whole entire being lightens up and her face seems almost radiant as she says these last few words. He's a little stunned by her demeanor.

PHIL

Ok...well I...I mean we could catch the weather at least...(Stumbling around for a coherent thought) you know...clouds...and that sort of thing. Clouds. Hmmm..yeah clouds do they get in the way? I mean of the whole holding ... thingy?

Phil is waving his hand around in the air loosely like a juggler with no balls to juggle.

Michelle casts a doubting blank look at him as if he is really stupid. The nurse returns and begins to wheel Michelle out of the room and toward the sitting room. Phil halfheartedly calls after her knowing he clearly blew it like a guy who struck out on his attempt at a first date.

PHIL

So no! No...on the whole news slash weather thing?!? Got it! Ok well enjoy your evening...doing your little thing there...(his voice trails off) holding...stars
...up...

He starts to follow her and the nurse but he catches sight of Janna who now has her back to him and is glaring at two or three of the male patients who have surrounded her and started picking food off her plate. They are barely aware that she is there and have no interest at all in her. She is clearly not used to being ignored by men. Even these men. She is sitting with her arms folded and looking vulnerable and angry.

PHIL CONT.

(to himself)

(MORE)

Now this...this is a nightmare!

From where he is standing he can see and hear what's going on in the sitting room.

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD SITTING ROOM NIGHT.

The nurse wheels Michelle into the room and over to the large window. She draws back the curtains and rolls up the shade revealing a clear sky at dusk outside the heavily barred window. Michelle sits up suddenly in her wheel chair as if magnetically draw toward the sky. The nurse notices but is indifferent to this action she has seen it before and dismisses it as just part of the actions of a delusional patient.

NURSE

Ok Michelle. See you in the morning!

The nurse slightly adjusts the wheelchair centering it up as if to give Michelle a better view. She flips the brakes on the wheelchair and walks out of the room. Phil tries to creep toward the sitting room but is almost seen again by Janna. Not wanting to attract her attention Phil does an abrupt about face and heads for his room.

EXT CASA MENTEFOLLE SUN SET

The sun slowly dips down and disappears below the horizon

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD SITTING ROOM NIGHT

Michelle leans forward suddenly and sits up straight in her chair. At this point she seems totally normal and healthy. we see the color of the sunset reflect off her face in a way that restores color to her normally pale features. This is a beauty shot of Michelle. She looks radiant and beautiful.

MICHELLE

OH! YES! Oh wow!...There you are
...you're beautiful!

Michelle slowly raises her hands toward the sky outside the window. She is beaming with interior joy. A small tear rolls down her cheek but she does not notice it. She is enraptured with whatever it is she is looking at outside the window.

MICHELLE CONT.

Star light...star bright! The first
star I see tonight. I wish I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE CONT. (cont'd)
may...have the might...to hold you
in the sky tonight!

POV MICHELLE

A single star twinkles in the dusky sky.

We see Michelle's face. She laughs happily, peacefully, she is thrilled.

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD DAY.

Phil and Bill are sitting together in a huddle of sorts strategizing their next move.

BILL
So this star girl...is she
responding to you at all?

PHIL
Nothing yet. I just tried to talk
to her last night.

BILL
So why do you think she is the one?
Can't you help Bert over here?

Bill motions to Bert Silver who is sitting a table or two away. Bert is a familiar patient we have seen him in background shots on the ward. Bert is currently picking lint from his navel and slightly drooling with his tongue stuck part of the way out of his mouth.

BILL CONT.
You know...to stop drooling or
something? (then to Bert) Finding
anything there pal?

Bert looks up, smiles, and waves. He then goes back to picking at his navel.

BILL CONT.
Jeeeeeze! Is there anyone here that
is closer to ...normal? I mean you
need to make something happen with
someone and soon. We're losing a
lot of valuable time here.

PHIL
Well there's Jenna!

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Janna?

PHIL

Yeah...shes a nymphomaniac.
Gorgeous...goofy...and quite grabby
too. They brought her in yesterday.
She was all over me like bad butter
on hot toast.

BILL

Some guys have all the luck!

PHIL

No,

BILL

No?

PHIL

No! Definitely not my type!

BILL

Ok back to Star Girl...

PHIL

*It's Michelle...Her name is
Michelle. It should be her. I
actually think I can reach her. I
just need to think of my plan of
attack. I have to find an in with
her. Then if I can get her to trust
me I can...I don't know ...snap her
out of it.*

BILL

I don't know Phil...she seems
pretty far gone to me. I mean from
what your saying about the whole
moon and stars thing...

PHIL

(interrupting) Stars!Just Stars!

BILL CONT.

What?

PHIL CONT.

(Some what defensively) It's just
the stars. She is not holding up
the moon too. (insistent) Just the
stars!

(CONTINUED)

Bill slaps Phil on the cheek. Not hard but like a worried football coach trying to wake up a player with a concussion.

BILL
Stay with me dude! Focus!

Phil recoils slightly then realizes he's sounding crazy

PHIL
Sorry! Man... it's just that I'm stuck here with crazies all the time. (now self aware and worried) Oh hell! I think it's actually starting to affect me!

BILL
Dude! That's why we have to get you out of here (forcefully)

PHIL
No! Dammit everyone here is crazy! That's what I'm trying to tell you! I'm LOSING IT MAN!

BILL
Calm down! We can't have Dr. Medly seeing you like this. Just chill.

PHIL
(regaining his composure) I'm...I'm ok now. I just...you know...I'm ok let's just go over my plan.

BILL
Ok! You get her to trust you...

PHIL
Right! I'm going to buy all her crap about the stars. I'll listen to everything she says. I'll get her to train me in the masterful art of Star Holding or whatever.

BILL
She's got to believe it. Can you pull it off? Can you convince her you are for real?

PHIL
C'mon man it's me you're talking to. Remember 3rd grade? I had the lead roll in Mrs. Thame's play "The Life of Sir Issac Newton"

(CONTINUED)

BILL
(Incredulous) You were a tree!

PHIL
Correction my friend. I was
the tree. The apple tree.

BILL
Yeah but that wasn't acting. All
you had to do was drop an apple on
Jessie Martin's head. (pauses) And
if I recall you missed and hit him
in the crotch!

PHIL
Totally meant to do that. He stole
my lunch money.

BILL
You were still just a tree.

PHIL
I was the tree responsible for the greatest scientific discovery

BILL
(Slightly annoyed) Ok Mr. Macintosh
let's focus up here again.

PHIL
Right. So I play it cool. I let her
teach me. I get her to trust me.
And then BINGO!

BILL
Bingo? What bingo?

PHIL
I get her to let me take over for
her. You know... (mockingly)
holding all those little buggers in
the sky. And when she has let go of
them I will simply drop them all.

BILL
What? Drop them all?!? How are you
going to do that? I mean...what do
you mean?

PHIL
Well you kind of have to be here to
see it. She goes through this
little routine every night. It's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (cont'd)
all kooky and whatnot but she holds
her hand out like this.

Phil mimics Michelle's stance as he has seen her do it many times now.

BILL
(Questioning the relevance of this demonstration)

Ok so...?

PHIL
(Answering) Ok so...Like this...

Phil turns his hands over palms down and drops them on his knees with a deliberate slap.

PHIL CONT.
I drop them!

BILL
(Still questioning the relevance of all this pantomiming)

And???

PHIL
And voila! She is cured!

BILL
I don't get it. How does that cure her? What happens?

PHIL
Nothing!

BILL
Nothing... Nothing?

PHIL
**No...thing. Nothing happens at all!
No Stars fall out of the sky! And she is forced to face the reality of it all. (leading Bill down the thought) If she lets me hold them... and I stop holding them...and they don't drop out of the sky. She will see she's been wasting her time and she will be cured!**

BILL

Cured?

PHIL

Well at least a breakthrough!
Right? I mean Judge Foster is
looking for a plan...a design...and
a purpose right? Even if she
doesn't get cured all at once she
has a breakthrough. At least it's
more than Dr. Medly or these nurses
have been able to accomplish with
her. I mean they just buy into the
whole thing. You should see it.
They leave her out all night long.
She sits there at that window
unless it rains. She just sits
there and holds her arms out for
hours. I mean I couldn't hold my
arms out like that for more than a
few minutes without a reason. I
mean I would go crazy just from the
muscle fatigue after a while.
Wouldn't you?

BILL

Ok yeah...

PHIL CONT.

So they just let her do it. Every
freaking night. She's half dead by
morning. Then they spend an hour
rubbing her down with Ben Gay or
something. It's painful. I mean
it's really painful to watch. The
nurse told me that her muscles
twitch and convulse for hours while
she tries to sleep through the day.
All that pain and all that
humiliating treatment...just to get
up at night and do it all again.
They really should be ashamed of
themselves for letting her go on
like that. But I don't think she
has any family or anyone to stand
up for her. I mean I'd just have
her sedated and try to make her
comfortable in her situation...
just being stuck here.

BILL

Sounds like a pretty bleak
existence. I wonder why they have

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (cont'd)
not done anything more to help her?

PHIL
They don't really care. To most of them she is just a job. This whole place is just a job. My grandfather would be sad if he had known what a scam they are running here.

BILL
Ok well back to your situation. Do you think it will work? Can you get her to trust you.

PHIL
(With bravado) Bow to the tree my friend! Bow to the Macintosh of Destiny!

BILL
Yeah? Well it better work or you will be living large with the Looneys at Dr. Medly's Maniac Menagerie for the rest of your life!

PHIL
(Mimicking again in his third grade voice) We might all just float away!

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD SITTING ROOM NIGHT.

Michelle is sitting at her window as before (holding her stars in the sky). Phil approaches from behind slightly smirking to himself. He is totally contemptuous of her reality and fairly unimpressed with this nightly ritual. He believes she is delusional but he needs her for his sanity project.

PHIL
(Trying to make small talk, he slides up a chair behind her)
So...how is it going?

Michelle remains silent and facing the window but she is aware he is there. She is a little suspicious of why he is paying attention to her but she accepts that he is trying to engage her in conversation)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL CONT.

Holding everything up
ok?...I'm...uh... feeling a little
stupid...or self conscious...with
this one sided conversation. Can
you actually talk while you do that
or... (a bit sarcastically) is it
against the rules?

Michelle sighs heavily

MICHELLE

What's there to say? You think this
is all silly. I know you have
nothing but contempt for me. For
what I do. For my art. But I serve
a greater purpose than you can
perceive. You're so wrapped up in
your own little mischief that you
can't even begin to appreciate what
I do.

Phil realizes he has an opening and tries to exploit the
opportunity knowing she does not trust him.

PHIL

No! No... you've got me all wrong.
I want to...understand it. I mean
you...I want to understand you and
what you're doing.

Michelle considers his words for a few seconds as if they
might be true. Then she dismisses the thought with a self
admonishing laugh.

MICHELLE

Hah! Right!(She shakes her head)

PHIL

(trying to sound sincere)

No...really...is it hard? Are they
heavy? I mean that's a lot of
stars...

He looks up out the window for the first time and is a bit
taken back by the beauty of it all.

PHIL CONT.

**Wow! That is a lot of stars! It
must...they must weigh a
lot...right?**

(CONTINUED)

Michelle answers him tentatively trying to see if he is just messing with her.

MICHELLE

No...No it's really not like that.
They're actually quite light.

PHIL CONT.

Well they are made of gas so I
guess they would be...

MICHELLE

No it's not that. Not that at all.
They don't weigh
anything...really... to me. I mean
they are not pressing down on me.
They're letting me hold them. Like
a bird that could fly away but
doesn't. They are letting me hold
them where they are. Hold them in
their place...sort of. Do you see
what I mean? Do you understand.

She is suddenly feeling very self conscious and becomes guarded in her tone.

MICHELLE CONT.

Mr. DiStella! Your having your fun
with me. Why don't you just leave
me alone? Go watch your worldly
news. I'm sure all the killing and
fighting that is going on out there
is of much more interest to you
than my work here. Please!...Just
leave me alone.

PHIL

Oh no! It's not that way at all.
Please.. let me stay and watch.
I'll be quiet. I'll just watch.
That's all...and listen!...You were
saying they could fly away like a
bird but they don't...

MICHELLE

(reluctantly) Yes... well sort of.
It's sort of like that. If you
really want to know...if your
really serious ...

MICHELLE CONT.

(to herself) I can't believe I'm
even thinking this...

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE CONT.
(to Phil) I could...teach...you.

PHIL
 YES!(too enthusiastically) I mean
 ...(Trying to be nonchalant) Yeah
 sure if you know... you have the
 time.

MICHELLE CONT.
 That's just it Mr. DiStella. I
 don't have the time. I don't have
 much time at all.

Phil becomes overly concerned because his "Sanity Project"
 might be taken away from him. It's completely self serving
 since he does not really care about Michelle as a person.

PHIL
 What do you mean? You're not going
 anywhere are you? You're here every
 night. Is your family taking you
 home or is Dr. Medly having you
 moved to a different ward or
 something?

MICHELLE
 (guarded again) No Mr. DiStella.
 It's not anything like that. Not
 that you care.

Phil recognizes he has stepped over a line and has almost
 tipped his hand. He becomes apologetic in his demeanor and
 tries to regain lost ground.

PHIL
 No! No...I do care! I care a lot. I
 just want to know...you know...what
 you are doing. I want to know all
 about the stars...

He points back to the sky outside the window trying to
 gently get her back on track.

PHIL CONT.
 I want to learn from you. It's
 important to me. I just...want
 to...understand it all. If you have
 the time to teach me.

MICHELLE
 (Quietly) I'm dying Mr. DiStella.

(CONTINUED)

Phil is visibly shaken by this declaration. He sinks down into a chair behind her staring at his hands. Realizing he has placed all his bets on Michelle's recovery, this is devastating news. He stands up fast and then sinks back down again not knowing exactly what to do. He jumps back up again and looks fearfully at her.

MICHELLE

Relax Mr. Distella! It's not catching. My condition is not a communicable disease.

Phil is baffled and out of his element. He does not know what to say or do. He is embarrassed and stressed. He stands there trying to be nonchalant and starts straightening the potted plants and knickknacks on the furniture in the room.

PHIL

No! I'm Fine... I mean you're fine. I mean you're not fine fine but it's cool. You're ok now...I mean right this minute your alright...right? Do...Do you need anything? Because I can go get Dr. Medly or one of the nurses If you... you know..need something...anything...

MICHELLE

Mr. Distella...

PHIL

Phil! Just call me Phil...I'm just...I'm.. you know Phil...that is all.

MICHELLE CONT.

(Calmly but assertively)

Phil! Please...sit. I'm not dying right this minute. Please calm down.

PHIL

Of course not! You're fine...You're...Just fine.

MICHELLE

Ok breathe! (Slowly) In...and out...in and out.

Suddenly Jenna bursts into the room.

JANNA

There you are you silly boy!

Totally ignoring Michelle she flits across the room and wraps herself around Phil like a python wrapping its prey.

PHIL

Janna! What a surprise! How are...you this evening?

JANNA

Hot!... I'm Hot Phil! I'm always hot!

She starts to grind up against him and he politely steps away. Trying desperately to divert her attention he points to Michelle.

PHIL

This is Michelle!...Michelle! This is ... well this...is Janna!

MICHELLE

(Weakly) Hello.

JANNA

Oh look you're in a wheelchair. Don't your legs work?

Turning back to Phil

JANNA CONT.

(Seductively) My legs work Phil...My legs work just fine. Here feel them.

She grabs his hand and slaps it down on her butt. Phil is shocked and overwhelmed.

PHIL

Whoa! Whoa...there Nelly!

He quickly pulls his hand out from under hers and unconsciously wipes it on his shirt as if it were now somehow contaminated.

JANNA

(Genuinely perplexed) Nelly? Who's Nelly? I'm Janna remember. As in...I wanna...do Janna.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Ok well that's quite alright now. I think we need to check with Dr. Medly about those meds he's been giving you.

JANNA

What about them?

PHIL

(Patronizing her a little)

Well...they're... just not... working!

JANNA

(Confused) Whah???

She looks at Phil and then at Michelle and then back at Phil.

JANNA

(pointing at Michelle's Outstretched hands) What's she doing?

PHIL

She is ...well she's...

MICHELLE

I'm holding the stars in the sky.

PHIL

Yes that's right she's holding the stars in the sky.

There is an awkward silence as Janna feels that she has become the butt of a joke.

JANNA

You know it's not nice to make fun of people.

PHIL

No she's... I mean we are... were not making fun of you... we're just...

JANNA

(Slowly) Oh I see! I'm interrupting you two here.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

No! no it's nothing like that...I mean... well it is a little like that.

He turns to Michelle to support his claim.

MICHELLE

(affirming)It's nothing like that.

Phil looks pleadingly at Michelle as if to beg her for help. She relents and turns her head to look at Jenna, but her hands remain outstretched toward the sky.

MICHELLE CONT.

We were having a moment there before you came in. It's no bi

JANNA

I'm not sure I like your tone little miss "my legs don't work so feel sorry for me". I'm not going to stay where I'm not welcome. Come on Phil let's go have a talk of our own in my room. I have some bubble bath I snuck by Mrs. Jerrome. I'll let you wash my...hair!

Phil is looking panicked and slightly sick.

PHIL

Um I'll make you a deal, Why don't you ask Dr. Medly or one of those really nice nurses to bring you some more of your medicine and I'll come and tuck you in a little later.

JANNA

You mean later when I'm... in bed!?!

PHIL

Yes! Later... much later... when you're (he swallows hard at the thought) in bed.

Michelle flashes him a cynical look. He shrugs his shoulders as if to say it was the only way out.

JANNA

Ok It's a deal!

She turns to leave,

(CONTINUED)

JANNA CONT.

(cautioning) But not too much later...right?

PHIL

No not too much... run along now and get those meds from Dr. Medly or one of the nurses!

JANNA

Ok (she softly blows a kiss toward Phil) Bye!

PHIL

Bye!

Janna leaves and skitters off somewhere. Michelle looks doubtfully at Phil.

MICHELLE

That was a lot to take for one night. I need to get back to my work here if you don't mind.

PHIL

(Calmer now) Oh uh sure. I'm sorry about all that. So you were saying you could teach me how you...do what you do.

MICHELLE

I was serious about dying Phil. I don't have a lot of time and I need to show someone how this is done. I've been praying for someone to come and help me. I just don't think that person is you.

PHIL

But wait...I can learn...I can be taught. I really can help you. I want to help you.

MICHELLE

Please be honest with me. You wouldn't lie to a dying woman would you? I'm no great judge of character but...there is just no one else (looking at the stars she begins weep)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

(feeling bad now he tries to comfort her) Michelle...What do you need me to do?

MICHELLE

(sniffling softly she begins to speak as she regains her composure)
Ok well...listen...just
listen...and watch and learn. If
you want to know...if you really
want to know. I can show you. But
please don't fool with me if you're
putting me on. I only have a little
while left. I only have a
little...precious time... and I
need someone who will listen and
really try to help me.

PHIL

Moving toward her

Ok. I can do that. I can listen. I can learn.

MICHELLE

Ok for tonight just watch...listen... and learn.

INT. JUDGES CHAMBER

Judge Foster is on the phone slowly pacing back and forth as he converses. Bill is sitting in a chair in front of the judges desk watching him intently for any hints of good or bad news.

JUDGE FOSTER

Yes Doc. I have your latest report right here... So he's making good progress right? (pause)...Ok well I'd like to come up and see him soon if you think that would work. (pauses) in about a month? Ok...if you think he'd be better...(pauses as Dr. Medly reply) Ok..a month it is! I'll have my secretary call up there and arrange a date with your people. (Pauses) Umm Hmmm Goodbye!

BILL

Well? What's he saying? Is Phil better? Should I go back up there for another visit.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER

Sounds like he's working on the project you mentioned. Medly says he has taken quite an interest in the star-woman.

BILL

Michelle...

JUDGE FOSTER

Who?

BILL

It's Michelle...her name is Michelle Phillips...Your Honor.

JUDGE FOSTER

Phillips eh' Ironic...wouldn't you say?

BILL

Yes... I guess so. I never thought of that until now. But whatever. He's got a plan. It's got a design. It's got a purpose. That is what you said were the necessary components for a legal finding in his favor.

JUDGE FOSTER

Yes. Yes I did. but I don't want him screwing around with anyone else's health.

BILL

He's not. Really... he's just trying to...help her out.

JUDGE FOSTER

I understand councilor. But if I catch wind of anything that might harm this woman...Miss Phillips...I'm going to shut you both down in a heartbeat! Got it!

BILL

Yes Your Honor.

JUDGE FOSTER

I'm on his side here. I owe it to Johnathan to look out for his grandson. But if he harms someone in his bid for freedom...all my

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER (cont'd)
 familial loyalties will not stop me
 from locking him up for good.

BILL
 I understand.

JUDGE FOSTER

Yes. I know you do. Make sure he does.

BILL
 I will sir. I will.

JUDGE FOSTER
 You got a month. I can't hold the
 legal proceedings off past that.
 You had better get on it.

BILL
 Yes Sir!

JUDGE FOSTER
 Very well...that'll be all.

Bill get up shakes hands with Judge Foster and exits the
 judges chamber. Out in the hall he breathes a sigh of relief
 again.

BILL
 (to the ceiling) Ok Grandpa
 Johnathan... we got him four and a
 half weeks!

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD SITTING ROOM DIFFERENT NIGHT.

Michelle is at the window arms outstretched palms up and
 speaking in a soft clear voice. Phil is beside her in a
 chair.

MICHELLE
 Ok then let's begin...last week I
 just had you watch. Tonight we'll
 move ahead. First I need to know a
 little more about you. That will
 show me how you learn so i will
 know how to teach...So let's begin
 this way...Tell me about
 yourself...Who is Phil DiStella

Phil begins telling her about his life. He is beside her and
 looking back and forth between her face and the night sky
 out the window.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

I don't know...see from time to time I've questioned things. When I was in college. I double majored in Philosophy and Theology. I've run the gambit of Wonder... Phenomenon... Religion and Persuasion.

MICHELLE

She nods that she is listening but she does not take her eyes off the stars.

Ok...go on...

PHIL CONT.

Everything...I mean everything is intertwined with everything else. I seen it all from Synchronicity to torture. I've seen human minds melt under the pressure of day to day living. I've also seen people whose beliefs couldn't be stronger if they were set in stone. I think that for generations people have lived at the edge of their minds own limits. Waiting, for Christ to return, or Buddha to reincarnate, or for Godot to arrive for that matter. We're always matching what we feel with what we are told we should feel. We're constantly reaching for goals within the system instead of within themselves. Performing some crazy balancing act... the good and bad things we do... you know...against the time we think we have left. We're always juggling life and death to reconcile our souls before it's too late. If we just had one Truth! One unassailable Truth...Everything could be built on that.

MICHELLE

One Truth? You're looking for one true thing? Right?

PHIL

Yes! Because I've seen just how sorry someone can be at finding out that "Miscalculation" is what being

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (cont'd)

"Damned" is all about. You know? I mean... to be human... is to be at risk. Our lives are a game to make it in on time... under the wire... safe at home plate. With our choice for an umpire... Is it God? Is it myself? Is it the Cosmos? (Suddenly aware he has been rambling) Wow...I give this who am I speech so often I've never given it to someone who actually might chose the cosmos as a judge.(He laughs awkwardly at his sudden self consciousness)

MICHELLE

Phil...Go on! You are making perfect sense to me. I understand you. I think I really do understand you. And that's why i think you will understand me. And with that as a basis I believe I can teach you what I know...Please go on...

PHIL

Ok...well they told me I thought too much.

MICHELLE

Who? Who told you that?

PHIL

They... Them... the ominous... omniscient... omnipotent... ever-present... always ambiguous... collective batch of bastards that we let rule us. Michelle...They rule our actions... our minds... our lives. We lend them some...I don't know some Pseudo-collegiate masters degree in "Life Living". And then we proceed to make our quaint little queries to their wisdom as to how we should deal with a given situation. You know? This way we... kind of buy an insurance deal against our choosing wrongly in any given situation. Then later we say "Hey They told me I should or shouldn't!" and when we say that we're just relieving ourselves from accepting responsibility for our actions.

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE

Yes I get you... but who are you letting judge you like that? Who are you appealing to for your sense of self and self worth?

PHIL

I don't know... lots of types of people. Politicians...like am I a Right-wing Patriotic Flag-waving Conservative Champion of the United States Constitution...or am I a Bleeding Heart Liberal Champion of the People? we...I let people judge me all the time. Take lawyers for instance...

MICHELLE

Lawyers? Why?

PHIL

Bill...my best friend is a lawyer and I'm always asking him if he thinks I'm crazy for doing the things I do. And of course Doctors. Doctors suck! Look at Dr. Medly. He basically owns me right now. If he says I'm nuts I'm going to spend the rest of my life here...

MICHELLE

Oh...really?

PHIL

Yes! There is this whole thing with my family and the will...

(He stops realizing he's revealing his true self to her. She turns to him and nods for him to continue)

PHIL CONT.

You have your own set of judges...yours are going to be different than mine. Each person's set is tailor made by themselves through genetics... environment... and a collection of their own unique, experiences. Your set is carefully constructed, individually...to meet the needs of your own ego. To keep you all together metaphorically speaking. We're each a corralled identity

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL CONT. (cont'd)
 with a common name that we all use
 to mean ourselves, ME. It's not so
 much that who you are defines who
 you choose as your judges... but
 who you choose as your judges more
 likely defines you.

MICHELLE
 You are talking about labels.
 You're smart enough to see they are
 just that...labels! They're not who
 you really are.

PHIL

Yes...but we live with labels all our lives. Things like "Mo

MICHELLE
Phil. I appreciate the sentiment.
Really I do. But don't be sad for
me. I'm going...well I'm going
away... but that's only away from
here. I'll also be going to
somewhere...and I'm looking forward
to that.

PHIL
 I think...I Love you...Michelle.

MICHELLE
 (Sarcastically) Don't be silly. Of
 course you do. I'm so perfect all
 crunched up in this body... in this
 chair.

PHIL

(Sincerely) No I mean it. Your pure perfection. I mean... yo

MICHELLE
 Yes! Alive for now. But dying
 slowly...or maybe quickly...I'm not
 sure.

PHIL
 You don't have to ...die. I mean I
 can't save you. Not physically. But
 I can save who you are...I can save
 what you do...I said I think I love
 you. I really think I do. I love
 you enough to want to keep you
 here. I'll stay here... when you're
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (cont'd)
gone. I'll stay here and try to be
as strong and pure as you. I'll
hold your stars. I'll hold them
until I die. You know? Until I'm
somewhere with you again. Teach
me... Teach me so I can hold them
for you.

Suddenly their conversation is interrupted by a giggle. It's
Janna and she has crept into the sitting room and is hiding
behind one of the large upholstered chairs.

MICHELLE
Who is it Phil? Who is there?

JANNA
It's MEEEEEEEEeeeeee!

Janna pops up from behind the chair she is wrapped only in a
towel with a bow in her hair and a ribbon tied in a bow
around her waist.

PHIL
JANNA...What are you doing here?
Why are you...naked.

(With her back to the action Michelle can't see what's going
on)

MICHELLE
**Phil...Whats going on? She's
naked ???**

Michelle starts to giggle a little now at the absurdity of
the whole thing. She can't see Janna but she has some idea
of how ridiculous she must look to a guy like Phil.

PHIL
Well not naked...not...

Janna unties the ribbon and the towel falls to the floor.

JANNA
TAH DAH!

PHIL CONT.

(Stammering) now...naked...yes now she's naked. All the way

JANNA

All this is for you! I'm all here for you! I waited all last week for you to come and tuck me in like you promised. But you never came by. Night after night. So here I am to show you what you've been missing. (joyfully) I'M HERE FOR YOU!

MICHELLE

(giggling and then laughing hysterically) I'm not interested! Really I'm not!(she begins coughing hard)

JANNA

Not for you silly...I'm all here for Philip. Are you ready to tuck me into bed?

Turning to see Michelle is in serious danger from her coughing he grabs Janna and angrily shoves her out of the room.

PHIL

You stupid...wench...leave us ALONE!

He runs to the sink and gets a glass of water. He runs back to Michelle who is hacking and wheezing but still holding out her hands.

PHIL

(To Michelle) Here drink this...Soothingly) breathe... just breathe!

Janna comes back into the sitting room. Flustered and angry at being treated so harshly by Phil.

JANNA

YOU BIG DUMMY! YOU COULD HAVE HAD ALL THIS!

(She points to her naked body like a hand model on an infomercial selling a vacuum cleaner)

JANNA CONT.

What's wrong with you...are you Gay or something???

Phil turns violently away from Michelle. He picks up one of the flower vases in the room, yanks the flowers out, and splashes Janna with the water from the vase.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
GET OUT! NOW!

JANNA
(Screaming) EEEEEK!

Janna flashes him a look of hate and leaves mumbling under her breath. Phil turns to Michelle and puts his arms around her. She has stopped coughing but is breathing very hard. Her hands have dropped down from where they normally hold the stars but they are not all the way down. She is struggling to maintain their position.

MICHELLE
My arms... Phil... Please help
me...Help me hold them up.

Phil kneels in front of her and takes her hands by the wrists and extends them to where they were.

PHIL
I'm here Michelle! I'm here...Just
breathe.

She breathes in deeply and looks him in the eyes.

MICHELLE
This is not how I normally would
teach you.

PHIL
(Confused) What do you mean?

MICHELLE
Don't look now but you're holding
them too.

PHIL
(Suddenly aware of his position) I
am? I am! Is this it? Is this all
there is to it. Is this what i need
to do?

MICHELLE
Almost! I'm doing all the work here
but you are...helping me.

PHIL
**Really? This is great! I get it
now. Thank you for showing me...all
this. Everything...But when can I
go solo? When do I get to hold the
stars?**

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE

Soon Phil...really soon! There's just a few more things to know...in a few more nights...we will try! Together for now... but you can try it alone soon...

INT. LIMOUSINE DAY

Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Susan are riding in the limo. Uncle Jimmy is on the phone. He is speaking angrily and curtly into the phone. Aunt Susan is listening to his side of the conversation and looking disturbed and worried.

UNCLE JIMMY

Listen you! we paid an awful lot of money for you. You said you knew what you were doing.(he pauses)

AUNT SUSAN

Jimmy...

UNCLE JIMMY CONT.

Well if he won't respond to sugar then give him spice instead.(pauses)

AUNT SUSAN CONT.

Jim...

UNCLE JIMMY CONT.

Dammit woman! You're supposed to be the professional. You wowed them at that silly college theater arts program...(pauses) Well why can't you handle this one simple thing?

AUNT SUSAN

(Sternly) JAMES! (Calmly) Give me the phone!

Uncle Jimmy looks at her and realizes she is serious. He hands her the phone.

AUNT SUSAN

Janna. If it's not working then go to plan B. Use the drugs. (pauses) We have about a week before this all blows up on us. If we don't get what we want...you'll never work again...do I make myself clear? (pauses) Good... you have the hallucinogens? (pauses) Good then

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AUNT SUSAN (cont'd)
stick him if you have to...(coldly)
but get the job done!

INT. LAW BUILDING - JUDGES CHAMBER DAY

Judge Foster is talking with Bob Simmons about the agenda for the day.

JUDGE FOSTER
Well Bob what's on the docket for today?

BOB SIMMONS
You have the Ondontae Twins case this morning and if you get that done there is the Sugarman Case this afternoon...

JUDGE FOSTER
Ondontae... Hmmm... Wife wants out... Husband is... what was it?

BOB SIMMONS
Cross dressing sir.

JUDGE FOSTER
Oh yes. I remember. It's weird but not grounds for divorce in this here state. They've sought counseling?

BOB SIMMONS
As you ordered last time...yes. She's back and claiming he's prettier than she is now...

JUDGE FOSTER
Weirder! But still not grounds for divorce! And The Sugarman case?

BOB SIMMONS
Guy claims a monkey stole his wallet and is using his credit cards. He's suing the city zoo for damages.

JUDGE FOSTER
What! Is he nuts?

BOB SIMMONS
Ummm... Not necessarily. He does work at the zoo and he did report it was stolen last year sometime.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER

What?(Exasperated) why does he think a monkey stole it?

BOB SIMMONS

I guess because of the three thousand dollar charge for bananas...sir!

JUDGE FOSTER

Bob are you fooling with me again?

BOB SIMMONS

Yes sir! Thought it might brighten your day sir. The Sugarman case is the guy with the fifteen parking tickets. It was pretty boring so I thought I'd spice it up a little for you.

The judge begins to pull on his black robe.

JUDGE FOSTER

Great! Simmons

BOB SIMMONS

Sir?

JUDGE FOSTER

That will be all.

BOB SIMMONS

Yes sir.

There is a soft knock on the chamber door. Bob walks over and opens it. Bill walks in.

BILL

Hello Bob. Is the judge in?

BOB SIMMONS

Sure! (over his shoulder to the judge) but don't keep him too long he's got some bananas to peel today!

JUDGE FOSTER

I'm gonna peel you in a minute. Get outta here!

Bob winks at Bill and walks out of the room. Bill is left standing in the entrance facing the judge who is trying to get his robe straighten out.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER CONT.

What can I do for you son?

BILL

Just checking in on your visit to Casa Mentfolle Sir. It's this week right?

JUDGE FOSTER

Mentefolle? Mente...Oh yes The DiStella will issue...yes.. yes. Wednesday.. no Friday I think... if Dr. Medly has confirmed it.

BILL

Yes sir. It's this coming Friday.

JUDGE FOSTER

(Expectantly) And?

BILL

And I was wondering if we could ride up together?

JUDGE FOSTER

(looking seriously over his glasses at Bill)

Why? Do you feel you need to butter me up or something?

BILL

No...NO! No... (unconvincingly)
just ...looking to hitch a ride.

JUDGE FOSTER

Um Hmmm!Fine. But I'll make my decision on what these two eyes see. (pointing to his glasses) Not on what these two ears hear from you on the way up there.

BILL

Yes sir...Your Honor!I'll be here Friday at 8 AM.

JUDGE FOSTER

See that you're not late Councillor or I may charge you with obstruction of justice!

BILL

(Concerned) Really? I mean I can just drive myself if...

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER

Chill out young man! I'm only joking.

BILL

(Slightly flustered) Oh yes...got it...

He tries to laugh but it comes out more like a gagging sound.

JUDGE FOSTER

It'd be more like contempt of court!

Bill looks concerned again.

JUDGE FOSTER CONT.

Get out of here!

BILL

(Stammering) Yes Sir...See...See you Friday!

He jumps out of the door and when it closes behind him he breathes a sign of relief.

BILL

(to Himself Resolutely)Friday!

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD EVENING

Phil is spoon feeding Michelle. He has taken over the feeding duty from the nurse and is deeply concerned at her appearance. She is refusing to eat much and seems to be fading fast. Janna Approaches from behind Phil. Her voice is different now with little or no signs of flirtation. She is carrying a tray with two Styrofoam cups of coffee.

JANNA

Mr. DiStella. Mrs. Phillips. I want to apologize for my behavior the other night. I'm better now...I'm taking the medication Dr. Medly has prescribed for me. I'm really sorry and I'm embarrassed about how I've been acting toward both of you.

Michelle opens her eyes for a moment and then closes them as if she were falling asleep. She is clearly weaker than she has been.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

(Cautiously) Um Ok. Well... you seem different...better now...I guess.

JANNA

Oh I am! I'm totally different now. I'm... well I'm on my way to a whole lot better. I brought you both some coffee to help you stay awake...you know... while you do your thing tonight.

She begins to set the coffee cups down. One next to Phil and the other she pushes toward Michelle's side of the table.

PHIL

Oh...well...thank you that was nice of you to...

His words are cut off by Michelle who suddely sputters and coughs hard. Phil turns back to Michelle to make sure she is not choking. Seeing that she has dozed off he begins cleaning her up. Janna takes advantage of his momentary interest in Michelle. She quickly drops a few pills into the coffee mug nearest to Phil he turns back and just in time he grabs her hand.

PHIL

(Accusingly) What are you doing?

JANNA

(acting shocked at he action)I'm just adding a little sugar. The nurse said you take sugar in yours.

He is holding her wrist tight. She winces a little and turns her hand over to reveal an empty sugar packet she has had hidden in the palm of her hand .

PHIL

(Contrite) I'm sorry! It's just after the other night...well I just...I'm sorry...thanks you!

In a gesture of condolence he picks up the coffee cup and drinks it.

PHIL

Thanks really... that was a nice thing to do.

(CONTINUED)

JANNA

Please! Mr. DiStella don't mention it. I was very bad. I'm so very ashamed of myself. I'll just leave you two alone...

Janna turns and walks away. The look of contrite sorrow on her face turns to one of sinister glee. She exits the room.

INT. CAR EVENING

Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton are driving along.

DR. HOOLUP

Fenton. By my calculations the activity could actually go on for three days or more.

DR. FENTON

Quite right. If it is as big as I think it is... it's going to out-do the Leonid meteor shower from Comet Tempel-Tuttle in 1998.

DR. HOOLUP

(Enchanted) Three days of glory!

DR. FENTON

(Correcting his friend)

Nights! Three nights!...Maybe more! I'll be able to calculate the exact time of when the earth exits the remnant once we record the beginning of the event.

DR. HOOLUP

Three nights of Glory! Just think of it!

DR. FENTON

I have been... for three years now.

INT HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD EVENING

Michelle is wheeled into the sitting room by Phil. The nurse follows and watches to make sure all is well. When she sees Michelle is in her normal state she gestures a goodbye wave to Phil.

NURSE

Michelle...I'll see you a bit later. Mr. DiStella...Take good care of her.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

I will.

MICHELLE

(Weakly) Thank you so much!

(Phil goes to the window and pulls back the curtain and then rolls up the shade. The amber sky is clear and the sun is a big orange ball on the horizon.

PHIL

It won't be long now. Just a few more minutes. Why don't you pick up where we left off before? Can you go on or are you too tired?

Michelle opens her eyes and realizing where she is she gains some strength. She sits up a little and looks directly at Phil who is looking closely into her eyes.

MICHELLE

Ok Phil. Ok Here is what you need to know...Here is my secret...This is the last bit of knowledge I need to pass on to you... Are you really listening?

PHIL

I'm here Michelle. I'm listening! I want to know what I need to do for you. For Us! For them!

Phil gestures to the window and the sky.

MICHELLE

Ok...the final lesson... (With certainty) Your own mind believes things before they are fact all the time. Two plus two equals four. You say "I knew that." and you did in fact know that. But you learned it by assuming it first. When you were young someone said Two plus two equals four. At which point you assumed they were telling the truth. Ok, so Two plus two equals four... how does it work? Then they showed you how it worked. Maybe they use this example or one like it. With four apples in hand they gave you two and stated "I have two apples. You have two apples. If I give you my two apples you will

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE (cont'd)

have four apples." Then they gave you the other two apples and you had four. Now what your mind did back then was grasp the concrete example of apples in hand through your sensory perception and with trust in the teacher you learned to account, in fact, for the magic of math. But you did not know, in fact, that two plus two equals four until that moment when you were handed the second two apples and a voice inside you counted " One, two, and one, two, makes one, two, three... and four. But, it's easy with the concrete example of the apples to see this fact that was once only speculation or assumption on your part. It is much harder to apply this reasoning to philosophy or religious miracle working. Simply put: Believe it and it is true for you. Prove it and it is true for others. While your teacher knew two plus two equals four it was only true to him or her. When it was presented to you, it was true enough for your teacher to prove it to you... But it was not yours to keep until you had it demonstrated to you.

PHIL

But that is just learning...basic learning...Learning basic math. How is that anything with all this?

He gestures toward her and the window and the sky.

MICHELLE

It's Dumbo's Feather.

PHIL

(perplexed) Dumbo's what?

MICHELLE

(insistent) Dumbo's Feather! Didn't you ever see the Walt Disney movie when you were a child? Dumbo is the elephant with the big ears who learns to fly.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

I guess I sort of remember. What's the point it was a child's cartoon?

MICHELLE

The point is he could always fly. The ability was always there. But he was too scarred to try. So the crows who are teaching him tell him all he needs is a feather and he will be able to fly. They give him the feather and he actually believes in it enough to try to fly. There's always a Dumbo's feather or a sprinkling of pixie dust before you can fly. Your belief in me...That's your pixie dust. It's your Dumbo's feather. It's something concrete that you can hold onto when making a leap of faith. Do you trust your teacher? Do you trust me?

PHIL

Trust? I guess it's based on character. I trust your character does that mean I trust you? I think so...

MICHELLE

The student must trust the teacher! you must trust the teacher is telling the truth and from there the bond is formed where a student can truly learn from the teacher. A student who does not trust the teacher can not learn from them. I mean basics yes...like math. But they can't learn anything that matters that is not until they trust. And not everything is demonstrable like math is. We don't always have apples to count.

PHIL

Ok so...

MICHELLE

Like I said...when it was presented to you, it was true enough for your teacher to prove it to you. You could ...let's say.... remove ignorance with trust and in

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE (cont'd)
acceptance of truth through
trusting... your truth would later
be vitalized and realized as fact.
After the apple game both you and
your teacher beheld the truth. Now
if became fact to you too... you
could then teach it in fact to
others. What we are talking about
is like absolute value in math.
That is... the invariable truth.
How far a number is from zero. Yes
but much more...what is it worth.
Forget negative or positive values.
It is the distance from the zero
which is the absolute and true
value of the number.

PHIL
I'm not sure where all this is
going.

MICHELLE
When some-thing is within the
brackets of absolute value it is
exactly what it is. It is truth. It
is correct... it is only... and all
of what it is, but nothing else. I
believe that only God himself knows
a thing at or in this truest form.
That is to say, He alone has the
correct perspective of all things.
I believe this because I believe
God created all things, and sees
them all as they truly are... as he
made them or let them grow to be.
You and I have a perspective that
is clouded by imperfect... or at
least... non-godly sensory
perceptions. We... are like a print
made from the original, and we are
not as perfect as it. As we
continue from the point of our
creation we are changed more and
more... by our environment... our
teachers and their teachers...our
experiences and those experiences
of- our teachers all come together
to form our unique individual Me.
God sees perfectly by his sense
alone. We see by the collective sum
of all our cognitive tributaries.
We may therefore see...feel, or

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE (cont'd)
 experience... something very
 different from God's perception.
 This is not to say we are wrong...
 right... good or bad to do so. It
 is just to illustrate the point
 that we don't have the same
 perception as God or perceive
 things at or in their own absolute
 value.

PHIL
 This is all very
 confusing! Examples... Can you give
 me examples?

MICHELLE

Ok...let's say I am standing with you and God happens along.

PHIL
 I'm lost.

MICHELLE CONT.
 Now...behold these stars I'm
 holding.

PHIL
 Ok now we are getting somewhere.

MICHELLE

If you can trust me...I can teach you. Right now...it's only

PHIL
 (repeating her words as if it will
 make sense in a minute.)

What if the wall is blue?...I got
 nothing...

MICHELLE
If the wall really is blue then I
 really am holding the stars in the
 sky. Let go of your limited worldly
 idea of reality and see the truth.
 The wall is blue! Phil...the wall
 is blue. Do you trust me enough to
 take a real look at it and see that
 it is really blue? This is all
 about trust. If you trust your
 teacher you can see alternate
 realities which you were blind to
 without that trust.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

(with some degree of certainty)
So... the wall is blue. Really
Blue!

MICHELLE

(sensing that he is getting it)
Yes! The wall is Blue! Good!
Because I am holding the stars in
the sky and you will begin to see
that now. Once you trust me about
that... I can really show you the
truth and how to hold them for me
when I'm gone.

PHIL

(Dazed and confused) So... the wall
is blue...got it. I trust you
Michelle. I trust you that the wall
is blue.

MICHELLE

You believe it now right?

PHIL

I do Michelle. I believe it because
I believe you.

MICHELLE

That's it! That's all you needed.
That's the pixie dust...your
Dumbo's feather... It's all you
needed. It's all you ever really
needed.

PHIL

But am I ready? Am I ready to solo?
I believe. Is that enough?

MICHELLE

Yes! That is it. I'm so proud of
you. You get it...you really get
it...Good for you Phil... I'm so
happy! I had hoped for you to be
the one. I know it now that you are
here. You can believe. I knew you
would... once I found you. You know
even your name means "Of the
Stars".

PHIL

Really I was always told it means
"lover of horses"...

(CONTINUED)

MICHELLE

Umm Maybe that is what Philip means...I don't know. But DiStella means "Of the Stars."

PHIL

(Marveling he slowly repeats) Of The Stars...

INT. CAR DAY

Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton are talking excitedly about something as they pull up toward the final turn to the MAUNA KEA SUMMIT Observatory. Hoolup is driving. We see him secretly press down the clutch pedal in the floor board and the car pulls to a slow stop.

DR. HOOLUP

(Shouting pretending to be angry)

FENTON YOU SOB! Were out of gas again!

DR. FENTON

Nice try I saw you clutch!

They laugh at the shared joke. Hoolup eases out the clutch and the car resumes the trip upward.

DR. HOOLUP

(Singing from West Side Story)

Tonight!...Tonight! We'll see the stars tonight! And they'll all be bright in the sky!

DR. FENTON

(Taking up on the joke)

Tonight! Tonight! Our work is done tonight! If we just prove the theory we've been working on!

He is off rhythm from the song and clearly out of pitch as well.

DR. HOOLUP

It's a good thing your a scientist rather than a singer...you really suck at singing!

(CONTINUED)

DR. FENTON

Yes I know but I'm a hell of a good predictor of inner-atmospherics and an expert on meteorites in general!

DR. HOOLUP

Fine...Dr. Expert! What Time should we be expecting our event tonight.

DR. FENTON

(In a fake German accent) Vell ve moost see vat de Charts hawve to say about dis deng you are asking...

DR. HOOLUP

Seriously you suck worse at German accents even more than you suck at singing.

DR. FENTON

Hey! I was channeling my inner Albert Einstein!

DR. HOOLUP

(Mocking) Vell you sook at dis as vell. Vat time is dee Shower?

DR. FENTON

Precisely at eight oh five...it shall begin!

DR. HOOLUP

Eight-o-five! Eight-o-five it has a nice ring to it. At eight oh five our last 3 years of work shall be vindicated with the biggest meteor shower of the century. I smell a Nobel prize in the my future.

DR. FENTON

(Correcting) You mean in our future!

DR. HOOLUP

(joking) No I meant in my future. I plan to kill you and hide your body under the floorboards just as soon as my theory is proven.

DR. FENTON

Ok well that will be precisely at eight oh five tonight!

(CONTINUED)

DR. HOOLUP AND DR. FENTON
(Singing) Tonight! Tonight!...

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE SITTING ROOM EVENING

Michelle is sitting in her chair by the window. But tonight she off to the side a bit. In her normal place is Phil. He is looking out the window at the beautiful sunset. there are a few clouds so it is spectacular in scope and vivid in color. He looks a little nervous but otherwise he seems ready for something big. Michelle is slumped over and watching him from her wheelchair. She does not look good and seems to have faded quite a bit since we last saw her. She speaks softly but with labored breath.

MICHELLE
Phil...it will just be a few more moments now.

PHIL
(Serious) I'm nervous! But I'm excited too.

MICHELLE
Just be ready... like we practiced. You know what's supposed to happen just let yourself do it...just believe you can...and you will...

PHIL
I'm ready now I'm going to raise my hands ok?

MICHELLE
Not yet not until you see the first one.

PHIL
(Looking intently at the sky)

(Excitedly) I think I see it! Look! Look!

Phil points at the sky rapidly jabbing his finger toward something near the horizon. Michelle does not look. She speaks softly.

MICHELLE
Slow down. Calm down. Is it twinkling?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
Ummm. (excitedly) Yes!

MICHELLE
Is it moving?

PHIL
Ummm (pauses and then answers
disappointingly) Yes!

MICHELLE
It's a plane... either a jet way up
there... or a satillite.

PHIL
(perplexed) How did you know? You
didn't even look.

MICHELLE
I just know. Like a mother knows
her children. I can sense them. I
know when they are near. I yearn
for their embrace.

PHIL
ok ... well you let me know when to
start. I'm just going to sit here
and be quiet for a few minutes. I
mean part of me feels like I ought
to have on a tin foil hat and a
nineteen eighties jogging suit.

MICHELLE
(jokingly) You mean you feel crazy?
(Weakly) Well you're in the right
place for it.

PHIL
(Anxiously) C'mon C'mon... where
are you guys?

MICHELLE
Phil...

PHIL
Yes?

MICHELLE
Do you see that little light about
an inch above the large oak in the
yard.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Yes...why?

MICHELLE

(happily) There you go!Go get him!

PHIL

What? oh...OH...Is this it? Where do I...What do I?...Help!

MICHELLE

(Calmly) Star light...Star bright...

PHIL

Oh yeah! (joining in with her) the first star I see tonight.

PHIL AND MICHELLE

I wish I may...have the might... to hold you in the sky tonight!

Michelle suddenly comes to life. It is an almost magic transition. (This is another seriously beautiful shot of her) Again she has here strength and the color and natural beauty returns to her face. She sits up straight and grasps his hands and raises them to the sky.

MICHELLE

(almost singing) OK Like... this!

PHIL

Ok is this it? Is it working am I holding them?

MICHELLE

What do you feel?

PHIL

I feel...I feel ridiculous but I feel pretty good..oh wait!

Phil sits up straighter in the chair we see his face up close. His eyes suddenly dilate the hair on his arms stands up. He smiles a great big smile like a person tasting a wonderful flavor of icecream for the first time!

PHIL CONT.

...this is...THIS IS WONDERFUL! I'm warm! I mean I'm not hot or anything...I just feel the warmth...I feel their warmth...Oh my God! This is amazing! I never knew...I never really knew...

(He stops talking completely stunned by what he is experiencing He is unable to speak. We see a tear slip down his cheek. He is enraptured. We see Michelle is holding his hands out and we see/hear the clock on the wall strike 8:00PM)

INT GEMINI CONTROL ROOM MAUNA KEA SUMMIT HAWAII

Dr. Fenton and Hoolup are anxiously eyeing the sky and the digital clock on the computer screen. The large roof door of the Gemini Telescope observatory has been opened and they are making final preparations to record the stellar event that they have predicted and have come to believe will happen momentarily. Outside the sky is jammed full of stars.

DR. HOOLUP

Is the clock right?

DR. FENTON

Yes! It's right!

DR. HOOLUP

Did you start the recording?

DR. FENTON

Are you crazy? We started it together a half hour ago.

DR. HOOLUP

Did you load the film and the tapes?

DR. FENTON

They're digital! Remember? Man what century are you living in?

DR. HOOLUP

I'm living in the century where my associate is an idiot and half the time he forgets to gas up the car. So sue me if I double check his work because we get exactly one shot at this and if we're wrong we are the laughing stock of Cal Tech, the modern world of science, and let's not forget the Nobel Prize board!

DR. FENTON

Relax! The film is in. The digital recorder is recording and the car has plenty of gas so we can race back down when this is all over and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. FENTON (cont'd)
celebrate with our fellow man at a
serious drinking establishment!

DR. HOOLUP
I can't stand it...what the clock
say?

DR. FENTON
Well if it's going to happen....and
we are going to be famous... the
earth will enter the remnants of
the Comet's tail in exactly 43
seconds...42...41...

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE PSYCH WARD SITTING ROOM NIGHT

MICHELLE
You have it Phil. I'm letting go
now.

PHIL
(Gently) Michelle...no don't let
go...stay with me.

MICHELLE
I can't Phil... you have to do this
on your own...

PHIL
It's beautiful...it's all so
beautiful but I'm scarred I can't
keep this up...I can't do it
alone...

MICHELLE
Yes you can I'm letting go now...

Michelle lets go of his hands and slowly lowers her own to
her knees. She looks at him with pride and peace. he is
holding the stars for her.

INT GEMINI CONTROL ROOM MAUNA KEA SUMMIT HAWAII

DR. FENTON AND DR. HOOLUP
Five...four...THREE...TWO...

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE PSYCH WARD SITTING ROOM NIGHT

PHIL

Michelle? Michelle! Somethings
wrong. I feel like I'm dizzy. I'm
dizzy I can't... I can't hold...
THEM!!!!

INT GEMINI CONTROL ROOM MAUNA KEA SUMMIT HAWAII

DR. HOOLUP AND DR. FENTON

ONE!...

DR. HOOLUP

LOOK! IT'S HAPPENING! IT'S REALLY
HAPPENING! SHOOTIN' STARS! SHOOTIN'
STARS!

EXT. MAUNA KEA SUMMIT HAWAII NIGHT

We see a huge flood of meteorites and the earth flies into the remnant debris of the tail of the long passed comet. The sky is literally showered with meteors and meteorites. It is spectacular.

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE SITTING ROOM NIGHT

We see from Philip's point of view. Outside it's the same meteor shower coursing down out of the sky. The window is spinning and the stars outside are falling. The room is violently surging back and forth as in an earthquake. We hear Michelle scream! He turns to see her face. She is terrified. Hearing the commotion the nurse rushes in. To her nothing is happening. She does not notice the meteor shower outside. She assumes this is some mental break that Phil is suffering and Michelle is merely a witness to. Phil is swatting at the window like a person being attacked by a hive of bees.

NURSE

Mr. DiStella! Mr. DiStella! Please
SIT DOWN!

Michelle raises up out of her wheelchair and falls toward the window. She drags herself across the floor and pulls herself up using the large window sill. She reaches for the sky with one hand.

MICHELLE

(Screaming) NO! NO! NO!

Phil is in a dead panic

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

(Screaming) I CAN'T! I CAN'T...
STOP THEM! THERE'S TOO MANY! I
CAN'T...THEY'RE FALLING! OH GOD
HELP ME THEY'RE FALLING!

Michelle crumples to the floor whimpering

MICHELLE CONT.

(Softly through tears) No! No! No!

We see a second nurse rush in. She grabs Michelle and pulls her off the floor into her wheelchair. She pulls back a panel in the wall and hits a big red button. The ward lights up in red flashing lights and a siren begins to squeal. The nurse looks momentarily at Phil who is standing at the window staring into space and flailing his arms everywhere making little cups with his hands and banging them against the barred window. She turns to Michelle and races her out of the room. The second nurse grabs Phil around the waste and begins to wrestle him to the ground. Suddenly Edward and Mrs. Jerrome and Sara rush into the room. Edward grabs Phil and forces him to the ground. Mrs. Jerrome is barking out orders to the room and Sara is shooing away concerned patients who have all come out of their rooms to see what is going on.

MRS. JERROME

MR. DISTELLA! CALM DOWN!

Phil is writhing on the floor trying to buck Edward off.

PHIL

(Shouting at first then drifting to
a moan of sorts)

I COULDN'T STOP THEM...I couldn't
stop them! I Can't do it!
Michelle... I can't do it. I can't
do it alone!

INT. GEMINI CONTROL ROOM

Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton stare at the sky outside the telescope roof.

DR. HOOLUP

(Amazed) It's beautiful!It's just
beautiful!

DR. FENTON

Stellar! It's Stellar!

(CONTINUED)

Dr. Hoolup looks at him for a brief moment and lightly slaps him on the back of his head!

DR. HOOLUP
Dummy! Of course it's Stellar It's
Shooting Stars!

DR. FENTON
Let's get a selfie for twitter!

He pulls out a cell phone and the two of them freeze smiling broadly and giving a thumbs up sign as the phone camera flash goes off.

DR. HOOLUP
This is so going on the web!

They both smile, shake hands, and high five each other.

INT. JUDGES CHAMBER DAY

A city pageboy knocks on the judges chamber door.

JUDGE FOSTER
Come in!

He is lining up a short putt on a little plastic putting green in his office.

PAGE BOY
Newspaper sir!

JUDGE FOSTER
No time to read it now boy. I'm trying to win the Augusta National here. Every see a Master win the Masters?

PAGE BOY
No sir! but I gotta run! Papers to deliver and all!

JUDGE FOSTER
Just toss it on my desk... I'll get to it later.

The page hurriedly tosses the newspaper on the judges desk and turns to leave. The paper slides across the desk and over the edge. It teeters for a brief second and then drops neatly into a trash receptacle next to the desk. The judge does not see the paper or realize it has fallen into the trash. He is too engrossed in his golf putt. He swings his putter and makes the shot.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER

It's in the hole! It's in the hole!

He raises his hands in a sign of victory and waves the putter over his head.

PAGE BOY

Great shot your honor.

As he bolts out the chamber door.

JUDGE FOSTER

(calling after him) Fetch my green jacket boy!

The pageboy does not hear him and the door closes.

JUDGE FOSTER

(to himself) Little ingrate! He wouldn't treat Tiger Woods that way.

He looks at his watch

JUDGE FOSTER CONT.

(to himself) Goodness! Look at the time! I better get in there. He grabs his robe and rushes out the door to the court room.

We see the front page of the newspaper. The headline reads: "Dynamic Duo Doctors Predict Historic Meteor Madness!" On the front page is the selfie picture of Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton beaming in front of the Gemini Telescope controls.

INT. PHIL'S LAVISH HOTEL-LIKE BEDROOM

Phil is in bed half asleep and moaning.

PHIL

I couldn't do it... I wasn't ready... Michelle don't let go... They're spinning out of control... I couldn't do it... I'm not ready... They're falling... It's all falling... I'm not ready...

Dr. Medly is standing and listening to Phil. He speaks to Mrs. Jerrome in hushed tones.

DR. MEDLY

He's clearly delirious! He's had a huge mental break... I don't know

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. MEDLY (cont'd)

what went on in that room last night but I'm going to get to the bottom of it. I assure you. Where was the nurse on duty? What do we know?

MRS. JERROME

She was just down the hall Doctor. She said it was a normal evening. She let Mr. DiStella feed Miss Phillips and she saw them to the sitting room.

DR. MEDLY

And that's it? That's all she knows? Everything was normal...(Harshly) We look like idiots here! One patient dead...another is missing...one delirious and in a near coma for seventeen hours!

MRS. JERROME

I'm sorry Doctor. Nurse Randall has been suspended indefinitely until we know all the facts. I'd discipline her further... even dismiss her if I felt she were culpable in some way... but she said there was nothing to see... Nothing out of the ordinary Everything was normal and then suddenly... Chaos! She acted appropriately she did all she could do.

DR. MEDLY

Yes well! It wasn't enough! Oh all the hell we're going to have rain down on us now. We may not survive it. The DiStella family is not very quick to forgive. If he doesn't snap out of this... and SOON. We had better hope they find Janna Hamilton and that she can fill us in on what happened...When did they notice her missing?

MRS. JERROME

It was early this morning sometime after breakfast. They told the patients that Miss Phillips had

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. JERROME (cont'd)
 passed during the night. Miss
 Hamilton seemed very upset by the
 announcement. I think there's more
 to it than just a coincidence. But
 I don't know what to make of it...

DR. MEDLY

Well we better hope they find her and she can shed some light

MRS. JERROME
 Yes Doctor!...(adding sheepishly)
 and Miss Phillips? I mean...who do
 you want me to call? She had no
 living relatives that we could find
 over the years...

DR. MEDLY
 Yes. She was a ward of the state.
 Call the city morgue and tell them
 to send someone over for the body.
 It's probably for the best. At
 least she is at rest now. (sadly)
 Poor thing. I never could reach
 her. We never really did help her
 at all.

MRS. JERROME
 Yes Doctor. I'll make the call.

She leaves the room.

DR. MEDLY
(urgently shaking Phil) Philip?
Philip! You need to wake up! can
you hear me boy? Can you hear me?

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT AFTERNOON/EVENING

A beat up old car with a serious muffler problem pulls into the parking lot of The Motel Hemingway. The passenger door opens up and Janna rolls out onto the pavement. She is obviously drunk and ranting. She clutches a brown paper bag to her chest, crawls up the side of the car and slams the door shut. She leans in through the window and yells something obscene at the driver. The car speeds away choking and banging it's way down the road. Janna is left in the parking lot swaying back and forth, slurring her words and cursing like a sailor.

(CONTINUED)

JANNA

That Son of a bitch. He stole my purse too. (yelling after the car which is long gone) I'll kill you too! Stealing my purse! I'm a cold blooded killer. Don't you know that? I'll kill you too.

A young mother emerges from her second story motel room with two small children. They are dressed to go swimming at the motel pool. She sees Janna in their path and does an abrupt about face herding her now confused and frightened children back inside, like a Sheppard who has spotted a wolf on the prowl.

MOTHER

(Yelling) HAVE SOME RESPECT FOR YOURSELF! GO AWAY!

She turns and runs into the motel room slamming the door behind her. Janna is temporarily stunned into silence. She considers the woman's request and shrugs.

JANNA

I'd like to do what you're asking lady.... but I'm a cold blooded killer... and I have no soul.

MOTHER

Screaming at her through the motel room window.
GO AWAY! I'M CALLING THE POLICE!

JANNA

Go ahead...go on and...call them.
Call everyone and let them know...
I killed her ... I'll kill them all
if they don't pay me...what they
owe me.

Janna turns sharply and loses her balance she does a direct face plant into the blacktop. She rolls over onto her back and lays there in the parking lot. Her face is bloodied. Her nose is cut and broken. She stares at the mid afternoon sky.

JANNA CONT.

There's no stars now!... No stars in the sky... at all now. I killed her and... they all fell. They all fell out of the sky...when I killed her.

(CONTINUED)

We hear a siren in the distance and within seconds three police cars pull up to the scene. Janna is laying flat on the blacktop still clutching her brown paper bag. She is looking at the sky and crying softly. A police officer steps out of the nearest squad car. With one hand he un-clips his holstered gun and begins to approach her cautiously palming the butt of the gun in trained readiness.

POLICE OFFICER

Ma'am! Have we been drinking a little today?

JANNA

Yes. In all honesty I have had one or two... But I didn't mean to kill her... I meant to make him crazy... But he couldn't do it...Not alone... He dropped the stars...She couldn't help him...and he dropped them all over the sky...They fell and she died. But I didn't mean to kill her...just make him crazy.

(Janna begins to weep)

POLICE OFFICER

(Snapping the clip back on his holstered gun) Yes Ma'am!

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE PHIL'S LAVISH HOTEL-LIKE BEDROOM

Phil is standing up in complete control of himself. He is fine. He is folding up his clothes and packing them into his suitcase. While he works he is talking to an elderly gentleman who is dressed as a funeral director sitting in a chair by Phil's bed.

ELDERLY MAN

So Dr. Medly wanted me to assure you that all the arrangements have been made. She will be well taken care of. Are you feeling better?

PHIL

Thank you! and yes...I'm ok now really. I totally get it. That's just the way things go right?

ELDERLY MAN

That's right Philip. Sometimes we can't help another person. The soul is a tender thing. You tried! That's all you can do. She was a loon really. You did all you could.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Yes that's what Bill and Dr. Medly said to me too. There really wasn't anything I could do. I mean "Holding the Stars in the sky" (he gestures) Crazy! right?

ELDERLY MAN

Yes. Phil she was crazy. So take your time and pack up and let's get you out of here.

PHIL

Yeah sure. Well do you know where... you know...she is now?

ELDERLY MAN

(kindly) Don't worry I'll take good care of her. I'll take her with me when I go.

PHIL

Thanks! I appreciate that because you know for all the crazy talk...I really did love her. I mean I really fell in love with her.

ELDERLY MAN

I totally understand. there's really just one thing left to do...

PHIL

What? What can I do?

The old man suddenly jumps up and grabs Phil by the shirt and violently shoves him into the bed.

ELDERLY MAN

THIS! WAKE UP! WAKE UP!

PHIL

(Struggling to get free from the grip of this exceptionally strong elderly gentleman) BUT WHY GRANDPA? WHY?

ELDERLY MAN

Because the sky is falling!

The elderly man suddenly disappears and in his place sitting radiantly at the foot of the bed is Michelle. She smiles at him and slowly rises up to stand by him. She is resplendent in beauty and form. No longer the sickly living skeleton

(CONTINUED)

confined to a wheelchair she is radiant and perfect. She motions to Phil to follow her to the window.

PHIL

I can't! I can't Michelle! There still falling. They have been falling for days now. I can't.

Michelle beckons him to her side and although he resists at first he is lifted gently by unseen forces and glides as if by magic to her ethereal form standing by the window. She pulls back the shade to show a night sky full of meteors. Phil shrinks back.

PHIL

I know...I know! Please don't torment me!

MICHELLE

All is forgiven Phillip. Just try!

Michelle suddenly passes through Phil and appears standing behind him facing his back. She lifts up his hands with hers.

MICHELLE CONT.

Like this...You and I can do it together...Just like this.

PHIL

(reluctant) But I can't do it alone!

MICHELLE

Look!

The meteors become fewer and fewer. They dwindle in number and then they cease. Michelle slowly disappears and the Phil is left standing at the window with his arms up to the sky.

INT. GEMINI CONTROL ROOM

Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton are speaking to a large group of scientist who are gathered to observe the end of the three day inner atmospheric phenomenon. They count out the last seconds of their astrological prediction.

DR. HOOLUP

We should see it end precisely in 20 seconds 19...18

(CONTINUED)

DR. FENTON

We appreciate you all being here to witness the second part of the exact calculations. We predict that we...or ...the earth will be passing out of the comet's tail remnants momentarily.

DR. HOOLUP

It's been an honor and a privilege to share our work with you...

DR. FENTON

You will notice there will be a lessening or slowing of activity...and
5...4...3...2...1...All done!

The room erupts in applause as the meteors slow and then cease exactly as if they had been trained by Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton to do as they commanded.

DR. HOOLUP

That concludes our demonstration of inner atmospheric comet remnant activity for this year. Join us in a century or two to see a repeat of the action!

The room murmurs with polite laughter.

DR. FENTON

(joking)Please stop by the gift shop before you leave. WE DO HAVE T-SHIRTS!

Polite laughter and gentle applause

INT. LIMOUSINE DAY

Judge Foster and Bill are talking excitedly about a police report. Riding along with them are two uniformed officers who follow the conversation but do not join in.

BILL

So this Janna Hamilton has confessed everything to them. She was hired by the DiStella's... well just Jim and Susan... to do whatever she could to keep Phil locked up. When she couldn't get him in a compromising situation sexually... she drugged him with LSD.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER

But I still don't get the star girl...Miss...

BILL

Phillips...Michelle Phillips!

JUDGE FOSTER

Yes...Miss Phillips. How is it that Miss Hamilton believes she killed Miss Phillips. She never touched her from what I can see in the report. She only drugged Philip. Why does she think she is guilty of murder?

BILL

I'm not sure. Once the police got her initial statement she called Uncle Jimmy. He saw to it that she lawyer-ed up and he claims she is mentally unstable.

JUDGE FOSTER

Yes.. well he is going to have to explain in a court of law how exactly she knew his private unpublished phone number and why she called him first when she sobered up. I think the case against Phillip is over. In light of this criminal intent to keep him against his will and directly interfere with his mental well being. Jame F. DiStella and Susan P. DiStella are probably going to be spending some time behind bars.

BILL

So Phil is free! Right? I mean he deserves to be let out of there.

JUDGE FOSTER

Well it remains to be seen if he has not been completely destroyed by this whole rotten shenanigans. I'll declare him sane. But it's possible...and I want you to brace yourself for the fact that he might not be ready to leave now. Even if this case started unjustly against him. The amount of LSD that Miss Hamilton admitted to giving him

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER (cont'd)
would be enough to melt his mind.

BILL
What are you saying Ned? If he's
not ok he still has to stay there?
That is wrong. It's not fair and
it's wrong.

JUDGE FOSTER
Look Bill...I'm going to give him
every possible chance. There is no
time limit on this thing now. As
far as I'm concerned if he can pick
up a crayon and scratch out his
first name...I'll leave the whole
thing open ended. But whether Jimmy
and Susan go to jail or not is not
going to bring Phil back to his
right mind. If he needs to be
committed as a ward of the state.
I'll have to do that. I won't want
to...but I'll be bound by law and
my own conscience to make sure he
is safe and taken care of if he
needs to be.

BILL
Sometime law just sucks!

JUDGE FOSTER
(nodding sadly in agreement)
Yes...son... sometimes it does!

The limo pulls up to the gates of Casa Mentefolle and the
four men walk in silence to the large wooden doors. Bill
reaches up and rings the bell.

INT. Phil's LAVISH HOTEL-LIKE BEDROOM Day

A nurse bursts through the door followed by Dr. Medly and
Mrs. Jerrome. Phil is standing at the window looking out
across the lawn.

NURSE
You see? That's where I found him.
Just looking out the window. He
seems as right as rain.

DR. MEDLY
Has he been there all night?

(CONTINUED)

NURSE

I don't know I just...

PHIL

(Politely interrupting her)

Why is everyone speaking about me
as if I were not here?

DR. MEDLY

Phil? Are you alright? Do you know
what has been going on the last
three days?

PHIL

Yes! Dr. Medly. I know exactly what
has been going on for the last
three days. You might say I know
and have known what has been going
on for the last six weeks!

JUDGE FOSTER

DO TELL! Mr. DiStella! What exactly
do you know?

Judge Foster and Bill have entered the room unnoticed from
behind them all.

DR. MEDLY

(Flustered) Judge Foster! Bill! How
did you get in...here/

He looks over and sees the answer to his own question as
Sara and Edward wave sheepishly at him.

EDWARD

I'm sorry Doc. The judge insisted
that he see Mr. Di...er Mr. Phil
right away.

SARA

Sorry!

DR. MEDLY

This is highly unusual to come here
unannounced. I'm afraid I must ask
you to leave. Mr. DiStella is in no
condition to see anyone but
staff...

JUDGE FOSTER

If you don't mind Doc.... I'll be
the "judge" of that!

(CONTINUED)

(He winks at Bill and Phil)

JUDGE FOSTER CONT.

Mr. DiStella do you want to tell me what exactly is going on here?

DR. MEDLY

Remember Judge Foster he has been under the influence of serious mind altering drugs the last 72 hours LSD is a powerful hallucinogen...anything he says is not admissible in court.

JUDGE FOSTER

You might want to shut up now Doc. before I ask you how you knew he was under the influence of LSD.

JUDGE FOSTER CONT.

(To Bill) Those police reports have not been made public yet have they councilor?

BILL

(Sternly and officially)

No your honor! No they have not.
You and I ...and these fine
officers here

(he points to the uniformed officers who have also enter the room)

...are the only four people outside the Warren County public defenders office who know what kind of drugs Miss Hamilton confessed to giving to my client!

DR. MEDLY

(back peddling)

I'm a professional. A psychiatric doctor... I know the signs of a hallucinogenic when i see them.

JUDGE FOSTER

Yes but no one said what kind of hallucinogenic drugs. How did you specifically identify LSD as the culprit?

(CONTINUED)

DR. MEDLY

Well I...We here have ways of...

Seeing he has accidentally tipped his hand he makes a run for it. He shoves Sara into the two police officers and bolts from the room.

MRS. JERROME

RUN CHARLES! RUN!

BILL

To Judge Foster

SIR! HE'S GETTING AWAY!

FIRST UNIFORMED OFFICER

No he's not!

The first policeman gives chase and shortly after we hear Dr. Medly shout in pain as he is apparently tackled in the hall outside the room.

MRS. JERROME

NOOOO!

She grabs a syringe from the medical tray by the bed and tries to hold the second officer at bay as he approaches to arrest her. As she is backing her way toward the door she grabs Sara and holds the large menacing needle to her neck. Sara looks terrified. Suddenly from behind Edward smacks Mrs. Jerrome over the head with a framed picture he has lifted silently off the wall. Mrs. Jerrome crumples to the ground unconscious. The uniformed officer grabs her hands and employs his handcuffs. Sara runs into Edwards arms and they hug tightly.

SARA

I was so scared!

EDWARD

I had you back...baby!

They kiss! Then everyone slowly comes to their senses as Judge Foster turns back to Phil.

JUDGE FOSTER

(Calmly) Mr. DiStella? Phillip? Are you really ok?

Phil is silently standing with his back to them. He is staring out the window at the manicured lawn below. Bill rushes over to him and gently turns him around. He leads his friend over to a large cushioned chair and sits him down.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Phil...are you ok? Can I... can we
get you anything?

Phil takes a long slow look around at the room and at all their faces. He looks longingly toward the window for a moment and then turns back to them.

PHIL

My grandfather Johnathan DiStella
is not dead! I was just speaking
with him awhile ago.

BILL

(Dreading the mental state of his friend)
No Phil...No... Johnathan is...he's
been gone for a while now.

Bill looks at the judge pleadingly. Judge Foster has a serious look on his face. He shakes his head slowly realizing Phil is not ok.

BILL

(Pleading) Judge Foster! Ned! I can
help him... I'll live here with
him... He just needs some time. I
know him. I know he's all there.

Judge Foster looks sadly at Bill and shakes his head again.

JUDGE FOSTER

I'm afraid that won't be possible.
He need more help than you can give
him.

Phil turns and looks back toward the window again.

PHIL

It's getting late and sunset is
kind of early tonight.

BILL

(shaking him)

PHIL! NO! PHIL SNAP OUT OF IT!

Judge Foster moves toward Bill and shouts

JUDGE FOSTER

Councilor! BILL!... leave him
alone. It's no use right now. I
can't declare him sane if hes
talking to...

(CONTINUED)

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN O.S.
A DEAD MAN!

They all turn toward the door and Johnathan DiStella walks into the room.

PHIL
(calmly) Hello Pops!

BILL
Holy Sh...

JUDGE FOSTER
...IT!

Everyone stands stunned for a few seconds. Judge Foster is the first to speak.

JUDGE FOSTER
*It's not often that I get to say
this to a man who has been declared
legally dead by me but...Welcome
Back???*

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN
Thank you Ned! Or should it be
Judge Foster??? Since it is a
fairly legal quandary we find
ourselves in at the moment.

JUDGE FOSTER
Ned will do just fine...for now
Johnathan. Do you want to help me
get my head around this before I
toss everyone in jail?

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN
(Chuckling) Well... here's the
deal...

PHIL
(Interrupting) No Pops let me tell
them. You've been dead for a while
now why don't you just rest.

BILL
Phil... are you ok? Really? I mean
it's really you?

PHIL
Yeah Buddy I'm fine.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE FOSTER
(A little perturbed)

Mr. DiStella! I think we are all waiting to hear exactly what you have to say. If you wouldn't mind getting on with it!

Phil stand up and walks slowly to the window. He looks out Worriedly and longingly at the sky. No one in the room can see his face at this point. He takes a deep breath and his features return to normal. The look of concern and worry disappear as he forces a smile. He turns to face the room. All eyes are upon him as he begins slowly speaking in a normal voice...

PHIL
It all started when I was in Africa. Grandpa Johnathan contacted me by letter. He had some concerns about the improper use of this place Casa Mentefolle. It seemed that Dr. Medly and Mrs. Jerrome here were running a scam and not really helping people at all. They had hired a bunch of second rate nurses who cared more about a pay check than the people they were supposed to be helping. He asked me if I could help him investigate the whole thing. He said if it was true he would revoke the gift and take Casa Mentefolle away from Dr. Medly and give it to someone who really cared for the patients here.

JUDGE FOSTER

Turning to Grandpa Johnathan.
But you died. I mean You're dead legally even if your not really.
How did you pull that off.

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN
Well...The accident was real. I was hit pretty hard. But Phil here was on his way back from Africa due to my letter. Before I was ever hurt. The rest of the family did not know about the letter or my asking Phil to help me investigate Dr. Medly. So in a sense we had the jump on everyone.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

So that's why we couldn't find you over there. You were already stateside.

PHIL

Yes. Sorry about worrying you like that but it was the perfect cover. When I saw Pops here in the hospital I saw him the first night he was there. We came up with this plan and I wired my friends in the Peace Corps to have them buy me some time. You were pretty shaken up that first night weren't you Pops?

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN

I sure was!

PHIL

Tell them why. Tell them who it was that caused the accident.

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN

It was Jimmy and Susan. They ran me down like a dog in the street. They thought they would get the money. They didn't know I had left it to Phil here.

PHIL

So we assumed they would try to keep Pops from letting people know that they tried to kill him. And before they could attempt to finish the job in the hospital. We made it look like he was worse off than he was and we faked his death.

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN

Only before we did I summoned my good friend Dr. Charles Arnold Medly to my supposed deathbed and made him promise me to help my poor dear grandson who I knew would be terribly broken up at my passing. He took the bait hook...line...and sinker!

PHIL

And that is just about everything.

JUDGE FOSTER

And this Michelle Phillips woman.
How did she figure into all this?

PHIL

(sadly)She...well she was a tragic victim of the scam Dr. Medly and Mrs. Jerrome were running here. The state was paying for her treatment and they weren't doing anything for her. They were just letting her live in her delusional state and ensuring the money would keep rolling in. Half the patients her could probably be helped if there was a truly caring person in charge. Dr. Medly was in it for Casa MenteFolle but I think he knew about the money in the will too.

BILL

Yes I think you're right. There are a few phone numbers and calls made in Miss Hamilton's cell phone that I believe are going to connect some dots for us and show That Dr. Medly ...Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Susan had a few conversations at very suspicious dates and times. My guess is they offered him money to keep you locked up in here Phil.

JUDGE FOSTER

Yes! I'm afraid this is going to end very badly for all of them. Miss Hamilton's confession and records of a few badly timed phone calls just may seal their fate.

GRANDPA JOHNATHAN

So Phil will you stay on here at Casa Mentefolle and help me find a true replacement for Dr. Medly? You already know the inside story... the patients... and the staff. You know who to keep and who to fire. It's not the Peace Corps or Africa but it sure must be wild! And it's a real chance to help people. Isn't that what you always meant to do?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Yes Pops! I'll stay. At least for a while.

Then turning to Bill

PHIL CONT.

I'm sorry we put you through this William. But there was no other way to keep me safe in here with Dr. Medly. Unless I had a friend on the outside who cared enough about me to keep fighting for me. Thank you! You are a good friend. I owe you my life! (turning to Judge Foster) So Your Honor...am I free to go? Or should I say...am I free to stay... in a room here without a lock on the door.?

JUDGE FOSTER

I have half a mind to sentence you to life in prison... but I guess you've already served your time.

PHIL

Turning back to Bill

So...are we cool? It was a hell of a thing I did to you?

BILL

I'm pretty pissed at you right now! you could have told me it was all an act.

PHIL

I did! I told you...remember? when I said to "BOW TO THE TREE MY FRIEND BOW TO THE MACINTOSH OF KNOWLEDGE!"

BILL

OH YOU SUCK!

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE EVENING

Phil is sitting in a chair in Dr. Medly's office. Only now he is behind the desk not in front of it. He is on the phone with Bill.

(CONTINUED)

BILL
(on the speaker phone)

So you are sure you are fine? That was a lot of LSD she gave you. Even if you had a high tolerance. You need to take it easy for a while my friend. There could be residual effects.

PHIL
I'm fine! I'm sitting here in Medly office going over the records. He was really a terrible man. There are all these patients that came and went. He never helped any of them and just kept collecting money from their families or the state until they passed on. It is really sad.

BILL
Well between you and your grandfather's money I'm sure you will be able to hire a few real doctors who can really help those poor souls!

PHIL
Yeah...I think I can really make a difference at least for a few of them. (eyeing sky out the office window) well It's getting late. I'll talk to you again tomorrow. Remember man... I Love You...you are a great friend!

BILL
Yes! I am a great friend and you still... SUCK!

PHIL
Bow to the tree! Are you bowing down to the Macintosh of Destiny? I can't sense you bowing over the phone? Are You?!?

BILL
(Joking) YOU TOTALLY SUCK!

Bill hangs up on him. The line goes dead and Phil smiles to himself.

He stands and walks to the other side of the room.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Well Bert shall we see what stars
we need to hold up tonight?

We see that Bert Silver has been sitting at the desk across from Phil. He is examining His navel for lint and drooling slightly as always. He looks at Phil and smiles then he returns to his task.

PHIL

You don't say too much do you Bert?
Well that's Ok tomorrow I'm going
to find some doctors who will
really care for you. Just hang in
there. It's time for you to run now
I've got something I need to do.
Ok?

Bert nods stands up and give Phil a big hug.

PHIL CONT.

Ok big guy! I love you too. Go get
some cookies from Miss Sara. She
made them for Eddie but I think she
made some for you too.

Bert nods and shuffles out of the office. Phil watches him shuffle down the hallway to Sara's desk. She is eating a cookie and reading a book. Edward is asleep in a chair next to her. She offers Bert a cookie, he takes it and smiles. He turns to wave back at Phil.

PHIL

(Cheering quietly) Yay Bert! You
got a cookie!

Phil turns and walks back into the office. All seems well. He gently shuts the door behind him, he walks over to the window and pulls up a chair. He sits facing the outside. The sky is turning amber again with the setting sun and as it begins to dip under the horizon we see Phil's face. He is smiling. Suddenly he sits up and raises his hands toward the window.

PHIL

Star light... Star Bright... The
first Star I see tonight... I wish
I may...have the might.... to hold
you in the sky tonight...

INT. GEMINI CONTROL ROOM

Dr. Hoolup and Dr. Fenton pour over the data collected by their recording the meteor shower. They are beaming with satisfaction as they are continuously being congratulated by their colleagues. A young intern comes into the room with a pile of mail addressed to them.

INTERN

Doctors... here is today's
congratulatory tidings.

She dumps a pile of mail on their desks, flips her hair in a flirtatious way and leaves the room.

DR. HOOLUP

What's all this? How many
colleagues did we have before we
published our work?

DR. FENTON

Twelve or thirteen at the most...
give or take a few.

DR. HOOLUP

Yes! And now everyone knows us!

DR. FENTON

It's the price of Fame!

DR. HOOLUP

Yes. And a terrible price it is.

Dr. Fenton grabs a handful of envelopes and starts opening them Dr. Hoolup does the same. Dr. Hoolup begins to read one and becomes very excited.

DR. HOOLUP

FENTON! FENTON! FENTON!

DR. FENTON

Why are you freaking out? Is it a
naked selfie or something?

DR. HOOLUP

No it's a request to build another
even bigger scope to study the
effect of meteors...

DR. FENTON

So? We get all kinds of crazy
requests now. So what?

(CONTINUED)

DR. HOOLUP
So this one came with a TEN MILLION
DOLLAR CHECK!!!!

DR. FENTON
No! No! For Real? Are there any
strings attached?

DR. HOOLUP
The benefactor wants it to be named
Michelle. That is all!

The two doctors marvel at their good fortune and stare
happily at the check.

INT. CASA MENTEFOLLE DR MEDLY'S OFFICE NIGHT

Phil is sitting in the same chair at the window with his
hands held out to the sky. He is smiling and looking out the
window at a sky jam packed with stars.

PHIL
(Quietly) Don't worry...I got you!

FADE TO BLACK

Copyright (C) 2014

Michael A. Barone