ONE LAST CHRISTMAS

By

Jon Barton

First Draft December 2009 Jonathan Barton

jjmbarton@hotmail.com

EXT. FRONT PORCH - EVENING

A front porch on a residential street in the ol' U.S. of A. Mid-December. A wreath hangs on the door, lights draped round the frame. A layer of snow covers the street.

A group of CAROL SINGERS stands in front of the door. Two men and women at the back, two boys and girls at the front. One of the women - MRS. CARTER, 40s - gently pushes one of the girls - MARY-ELLEN, 8 - forward.

> MRS. CARTER Go on Mary-Ellen, ring the bell.

Mary-Ellen smiles, reaches up and presses the button. She scampers back into position. Her breath hangs in front of her happy, red-cheeked face.

The group begins to sing a classic Christmas carol in perfect harmony, filling the porch with sweet singing.

The door is opened by STAN, 40s, friendly-looking. He smiles at the sight, listens to them for a few seconds, then reaches into his pocket and digs out his wallet.

He pulls out a TWENTY-DOLLAR BILL and holds it out for Mary-Ellen, who takes it with an angelic smile.

MARY-ELLEN Thank you, mister!

STAN You're welcome, sweetie. Merry Christmas, you guys.

GROUP Merry Christmas!

He shuts the door. Chattering happily amongst themselves, the group files off the porch out onto the street.

MARY-ELLEN Let's try the next one!

EXT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

This porch has no wreath, no Christmas lights - no decorations of any kind. A sign displayed in the window says: 'NO SOLICITORS'.

The same routine. The group lines up into two rows, Mary-Ellen shuffles forward and presses the doorbell. The group starts to sing a different song, as beautifully as before.

The door opens.

The group continues to sing, the children's angelic faces smiling up. Mary-Ellen sings loudest and smiles widest.

A JET OF WATER hits her in the face. The singing falters, stops. The jet passes across the front row, soaking the children. Their smiles are gone.

Mary-Ellen starts to sob gently.

The door SLAMS SHUT.

INT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

EDDIE, late 60s, leans against the door, water pistol in hand.

EDDIE

Stupid kids.

He puts the water pistol in an umbrella stand by the door, walks away down the hallway.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A dark, cluttered living room, filled with ornaments and yellowing newspapers. The furniture looks old, worn.

Eddie enters, eases himself down into an armchair with a grunt. He reaches for the remote, switches the TV on.

A CHRISTMAS COMMERCIAL appears onscreen, showing a happy family seated round a table laden with food. Eddie gives a disapproving grunt, changes the channel.

Another Christmas commercial.

He tries again - this time, it's a news report coming from inside a department store stocked with Christmas goods.

EDDIE Oh, for God's sake! Can I not have a moment's peace?

He STABS at the TV with the remote, switching it off, then hauls himself out of his chair.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A simple kitchen with old appliances. Dirty dishes are stacked in the kitchen sink.

Eddie reaches up to a cupboard, pulls out a tin of cocoa and a mug. He sets the mug down on the counter, takes the top off the tin, and looks down into it.

He turns it upside down over the mug. A few sorry grains of powder trickle out. He sets it down with a sigh.

EDDIE

Perfect.

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is as cluttered as the rest of the house. A small, single bed sits against the back wall.

Eddie goes to the bedside table, opens the drawer and pulls out his wallet.

Just as he is about to leave he stops and looks down at something standing on the table - a framed PHOTO of a smiling young woman and a laughing baby.

He looks at it for a few seconds, then turns and leaves.

EXT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MINUTES LATER

Eddie shuts the front door behind him. He straightens the collar of his jacket, finishes pulling on his gloves.

STAN (O.S.) Evening, Eddie.

Eddie looks up. Stan is out on his porch, unraveling a pack of fairy lights.

EDDIE

Stan.

STAN Merry Christmas!

EDDIE Christmas is seven days away, Stan. One whole week.

He notices what Stan is doing.

EDDIE (CONTD.) You really sure you need more lights? I reckon your porch is garish enough as it is.

STAN

Oh, these are going on the roof. The girls want to be absolutely certain Santa's not going to miss our house. Isn't that sweet?

EDDIE (dripping sarcasm) Adorable.

He starts down the steps onto the street.

STAN You not putting up any decorations this year, Eddie?

EDDIE Nope, don't think so.

STAN You sure? Kinda letting the street down a bit on the festive front, don't ya think?

EDDIE It's just another month of the year, Stan. Just another month of the year.

He walks away, crunching through the snow. Stan sighs.

STAN Grumpy old -

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - EVENING

Eddie walks down the aisle past shelves of cat food, toilet paper, cereal, until he finds the cocoa. He takes a tin off the shelf, heads for the counter.

The owner, AMIR - Arabic, 40s - stands waiting. He opens his arms wide as Eddie approaches. A nodding plastic Santa sits on the counter next to the till.

AMIR Hey, it's my favourite customer! Merry Christmas, Mister Neezer. EDDIE Ah Jeez, Amir, not you too.

He bangs his tin down on the counter, fishes change out of his wallet. Amir scans the item.

AMIR Six-fifty please, Mister Neezer.

Eddie hands him the money.

EDDIE Aren't you Hindu, anyway? I thought you didn't celebrate Christmas.

Amir hands him his change, mock-outrage on his face.

AMIR What? Who doesn't celebrate Christmas? It is the greatest time of the year! And besides, Mister Neezer, I am Muslim.

EDDIE Same difference. See ya.

He picks up his tin and leaves, opening the door and stepping out into the street.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Eddie walks away from the store. A CHARITY COLLECTOR, a woman in her 20s, comes up. She holds out a collection tin.

COLLECTOR Evening, sir. Got any change to spare for some poor, adorable, abandoned puppies?

Eddie pats his pockets, sighs apologetically.

EDDIE Darn it, I seem to have left my wallet at home. Old age, you know, starting to forget stuff...

COLLECTOR Don't you worry about it, sir. You have a nice evening, now.

EDDIE

Thanks.

He smiles, walks away. He glances back over his shoulder, cackles to himself.

EDDIE

Sucker.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Eddie walks up the street towards his house.

A SNOWBALL FIGHT rages in the road. A GROUP OF KIDS run around, shrieking with laughter, throwing snowballs and ducking for cover.

Eddie sees them, sighs.

EDDIE

Ah, great.

As Eddie passes Stan's now-empty porch, a stray snowball WHACKS into the side of his head.

Eddie freezes. The kids' laughter instantly stops.

Slowly, Eddie turns to face them. He speaks in a quiet voice as cold as the snow.

EDDIE Who threw that?

He glares at the group. One little boy hides behind his bigger brother. They all look down at the ground.

A little GIRL slowly raises her hand.

EDDIE

You?

Terrified, she nods, still looking at her feet. She mumbles something incomprehensible.

EDDIE (CONTD.) What did you say?

GIRL (still quiet) I'm sorry.

EDDIE Sorry? SORRY?!

Eddie advances. The kids all step backwards away from him.

EDDIE (CONTD.) What the hell do you think you're all doing? Standing here in the middle of the road throwing snow at each other? You goddamn reprobates. Don't you punks have homes to go to? Parents to annoy? Or have they realised just how pointless and irritating you all actually are?! God I hate the snow, and I hate this time of year!

STAN (O.S.) You okay, Eddie?

Eddie spins round. Stan stands on the porch, a concerned look on his face. He steps down into the street.

EDDIE

No, Stan, I'm not. I'm not okay. I'm not okay with the fact that as soon as Thanksgiving ends, it's suddenly Christmas! For four long weeks every year all I ever hear is 'Jingle Bells' this and 'Jingle Bells' that. Wherever you go, wherever you look, all you ever see, hear, <u>get</u> is Christmas! Well guess what? I don't want it! I don't want any of it. I don't want the carols, or the presents, or the cold, or the lame-ass movies, or the turkey, or the lights --

He pushes past Stan, grabs some of the fairy lights and RIPS them down.

STAN

Hey!

EDDIE

-- I don't want the stockings, or the trees, or the commercials, or the cards, I don't want the crackers with their god-awful jokes, or the candy canes, or the festive cheer...and I especially don't want the merry fat man in his fluffy red clothes. He steps back past Stan, points a menacing finger at the kids.

EDDIE

In fact you know what, kids? You know my 'Christmas wish' this year? I wish jolly old Saint Nick would just drop down -

He stops.

Frowns.

Then his EYES WIDEN.

He straightens up, suddenly unable to breathe. He CLAPS a hand to his chest, above his heart. He staggers backwards, arms FLAILING wildly.

STAN

Eddie?

Eddie TRIPS over the curb and falls flat on his back. He stares up into the sky, open mouthed, straining for breath. Stan falls to his knees beside him.

STAN (CONTD.) Oh my God, Eddie! Someone call 911! It's gonna be okay, Eddie, it's gonna be okay...

The sound of the surroundings fade as Eddie lays on his back, looking up at the sky. His short breaths come out in a CLOUD OF VAPOUR.

As he stares up with wide, unblinking eyes, the world around him FADES TO WHITE.

A few seconds of nothing.

Just peace and quiet.

Then, slowly, the world FADES BACK IN.

INT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

Eddie is asleep in bed, all tucked up with only his head showing. He stirs.

Slowly, he opens his eyes. He stretches, pushing his arms out in front of him, but stops when he notices they are in jacket sleeves. He lifts up the duvet, then throws it off. He is wearing the SAME CLOTHES as he was on the street, even the boots.

EDDIE

Huh?

With a grunt he pushes himself up, sits on the edge of the bed. He looks around the room, then climbs to his feet and crosses the room. He yawns, stretching as he walks.

His yawn continues as he turns the handle, opens the door, and steps out into a --

INT. STRANGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- with white walls, white ceiling, white floor. Eddie freezes, his mouth still open, then slowly moves forward, looking around him with wide eyes.

Definitely not his house.

EDDIE

What the hell?

He turns back towards his room, but the door has somehow DISAPPEARED, replaced by just plain white wall.

Eddie touches the smooth surface, runs his hands across it, then puts his ear against it and knocks in various places, listening intently to the sound.

Every knock has the same result: the sound of thick, solid wall. Eddie straightens up, scratching his head.

EDDIE Somethin' fishy going on here...

He turns around again, and narrows his eyes in suspicion.

A SIGN has appeared on the wall opposite him.

It shows an arrow pointing right, down the corridor, with the words 'TO THE TERMINAL' written above.

Eddie looks around him, eyes still narrowed. He calls out into the emptiness --

EDDIE Hey, is this some kinda joke? One of those 'hidden camera' things? If it is, you can come out now! You got me. His words just echo off the walls. Eddie waits for a few seconds, then sighs, looking once again at the sign.

EDDIE (CONTD.) This is nuts.

He looks the way the arrow is pointing and trudges off in that direction.

AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR is a door. Attached to the door is a sign saying 'THE TERMINAL.'

Eddie puts a hand on the door-knob, twists it and pushes the door open. BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT AND NOISE pour into the corridor, causing him throw an arm up to cover his eyes. He steps forward, through the doorway, into --

INT. THE TERMINAL - MAIN DEPARTURE LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

-- The Terminal.

It looks for all the world like an airport departure lounge, only on a colossal scale. The ceiling is high up like a cathedral's, the walls far-off horizons.

On the floor: rows and rows of bench-seats, the ones you see in any airport departure lounge anywhere in the world. Only here, they stretch far out into the distance, endlessly.

On the chairs sit BILLIONS OF PEOPLE.

Tens of billions.

Of all ages, all races. Wearing different clothes from across history, Romans sitting next to cavemen sitting next to sharp-suited Wall Street-types. Many of them have the same vacant look: mouths slightly open, eyes half-closed.

Plenty are alert, however. They wander between the rows, some drifting aimlessly, others walking with purpose.

Moving among them are PEOPLE IN WHITE SUITS, smiling at everyone they pass.

They have WINGS folded behind their backs.

Eddie moves forward, trying to take it all in. An ATTENDANT wanders close by, smiling at Eddie as she passes.

ATTENDANT 1 Welcome to The Terminal!

Eddie is unable to reply. He just nods as she continues off.

Ahead of him is a DEPARTURE BOARD. He walks towards it, staring up. It has two columns: 'DESTINATION' and 'STATUS'. Every entry under the former reads 'HEAVEN'. Every entry under the latter reads 'DELAYED'.

Eddie turns away.

EDDIE It's a dream. It's...it's gotta be a dream.

He rolls up his jacket sleeve a bit, pinches his arm.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Ow!

He rubs the pinch-marks, then rolls his sleeve back down.

Eddie walks over to the chairs where a MAN sits in full 19th-century British army uniform, complete with redcoat and musket. He stares straight ahead, eyes vacant.

> EDDIE Hey, I'm Eddie. What the hell is this place?

No response. The solider continues to stare, unblinkingly.

Eddie snaps his fingers in front of the guy's face. He doesn't react.

EDDIE Hey. Buddy. Over here.

He gently pushes the soldier's hat. His head flops backwards, before coming back to rest in exactly the same position. Eddie straightens up, frowning.

EDDIE (CONTD.) That's weird.

He spots another ATTENDANT passing by and walks towards him, throwing a hand up.

EDDIE Hey, you! The guy in the suit!

The attendant stops, smiles, comes over.

ATTENDANT 2 Can I help you, sir? EDDIE Yeah. Where the hell am I?

ATTENDANT 2 You're in The Terminal, sir.

EDDIE I gathered that. What I mean is -

ATTENDANT 2 Sir, we have a helpline with operators standing by to answer all your questions. The phones are right over there.

He points into the distance towards a ROW OF PAYPHONES. Eddie narrows his eyes, peers at them.

EDDIE

Huh.

He looks back at the attendant, notices his wings for the first time. Eddie steps back, eyes widening.

EDDIE (CONTD.) What's with the wings?

ATTENDANT 2 Why, all angels have them, sir. You have a good day now.

He walks off. Eddie watches him go.

EDDIE Angels, right...

He turns back towards the phones.

EDDIE (CONTD.) I gotta get out of here.

He marches off in their direction.

ELSEWHERE IN THE MAIN DEPARTURE LOUNGE

Eddie arrives at the payphones. Most of the phones are in use, people shouting different languages into the handsets.

Above each payphone is a sticker that reads 'GOT A QUESTION? NEED ADVICE? DIAL 1-800-P-R-A-Y-E-R FOR OUR HELPLINE'.

Eddie reads at the number, lifts the handset and dials. He raises the phone to his ear as it rings.

A RECORDED VOICE, bright and cheerful, cuts in.

RECORDED VOICE (O.S.) Hello, and thank you for calling The Terminal helpline. You are currently in a queue. Please hold until an operator becomes available to take your call.

The voice stops, replaced by CLASSICAL MUSIC. Eddie rolls his eyes, waits. A few seconds later, the voice returns.

RECORDED VOICE (O.S., CONTD.) Thank you for your patience. You are still in a queue. There are 1-9-2-3-3-5 people ahead of you. Please continue to hold until an operator becomes available. Your soul is important to us, and we will get to you as soon as we can.

The voice stops once more, and the music cuts back in. Eddie hangs up with a growl.

Eddie wanders over and sits in a nearby chair. He sighs, stares up at the ceiling. He looks back down, then turns his head to one side.

Sitting next to him is a NAKED MAN, his hands covering his lap. He looks embarrassed. And cold.

NAKED MAN

Bonjour. (awkward pause) Ca va?

Eddie raises an eyebrow, turns to face forward.

EDDIE

That's it.

He marches up to the nearest assistant - who wears a name-badge saying 'PHANUEL' - and blocks his path.

EDDIE Okay, buster, I've had enough. I dunno where am I or what I'm doing here...

PHANUEL You're in The TerEDDIE I know I'm in the goddamn 'Terminal'! Jeez, is that all you people can say? I wanna see the manager.

The attendant glances up towards the ceiling.

PHANUEL

I really don't think that's gonna happen, sir.

EDDIE What do you mean, not 'gonna happen'?! I wanna see the manager!

A small crowd has begun to form, people drawn by the noise. The attendant glances round, embarrassed.

PHANUEL

Sir, if you could just lower your voice -

EDDIE You're telling me what to do? What are you, security?

PHANUEL No, sir, you're just causing a bit of a scene...

EDDIE Well, then I want to see a supervisor. Take me to someone who'll actually give me some answers, goddamn it!

INT. THE TERMINAL - OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Another attendant sits behind a desk. He seems young, friendly. His name is GABRIEL.

The door opens, and Eddie is led in by Phanuel, who leaves and shuts the door. Gabriel looks up, smiles.

> GABRIEL Hi, I'm Gabriel.

Eddie stops, frowns.

EDDIE 'The' angel Gabriel?

GABRIEL No no, just 'an' angel Gabriel.

EDDIE Oh. Right. (under his breath) <u>Real</u> original...

Gabriel just smiles, gestures towards a chair in front of the desk.

GABRIEL If you'd just like to take a seat, Mister Neezer.

Eddie does so, looks suspiciously round the office.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) Great. Now, let me tell you a little something about what I do. I'm an Afterlife Acclimatisation Assistant, which means I'm here to help the recently-deceased during their time with us in The Terminal. You've been assigned to me, so any questions or issues, any concerns, just come and ask. I'm here for you. Okay?

EDDIE

Uh...

GABRIEL Super. Now, Eddie - do you mind if I call you Eddie? Great. Well, Eddie, I understand you're having some trouble adjusting to your new situation?

Eddie scoffs.

EDDIE Huh! You could say that.

GABRIEL

Well, that's what I'm here for. I appreciate this must all be pretty hard for you to process. Got any questions for me? Anything that'll make this easier to understand? EDDIE Where am I? (quickly) I mean, I know it's called 'The Terminal', but what actually <u>is</u> this place?

GABRIEL That's an easy one. You, my friend, are in Limbo.

EDDIE

Limbo?

GABRIEL

Limbo. A state of afterlife between Heaven and Hell, where those not righteous enough for paradise but not wicked enough for damnation wait to be judged.

EDDIE

Oh. Why, exactly, does Limbo look like an airport departure lounge?

GABRIEL

We change the appearance to keep up to date with contemporary tastes on Earth. To start with, it was just a cave. A thousand years ago, it was the Great Hall of a castle. Right now, it's an airport. We find it makes the transition easier for our new arrivals if they can relate to their surroundings. Did you ever fly, Eddie?

EDDIE

No.

GABRIEL That's a shame. I hear airplanes are pretty cool. Not the same as flying without one, but still.

Eddie thinks for a second, before asking his next question.

EDDIE I got another one. How come there so many people here? I mean, God's supposed to be all-powerful, right? (MORE) EDDIE (cont'd) So why doesn't he just wave everyone through?

Gabriel nods understandingly.

GABRIEL

Design flaw.

EDDIE Design flaw?

GABRIEL

Uh-huh. There's only one gate to Heaven, you see. And one person manning it. Poor old Peter has to process everyone here one person at a time, and you can see how that might take a while.

EDDIE Wow. Sucks to be him.

GABRIEL Yes, it does.

EDDIE And that's the only way out of here?

GABRIEL Well, there is another way...

Eddie's eyes light up.

EDDIE

What? Where? How do I take it? Do I have to wait for that, too?

GABRIEL

Oh no, you can just walk right on through that way. You just follow the stairs down.

Eddie frowns.

EDDIE

Down?

GABRIEL

Yep. Just keep following them all the way down, and you'll be outta here in a jiffy. I gotta warn you, (MORE) GABRIEL (cont'd) though - it's not somewhere you'd really want to go.

EDDIE Oh. I see. Maybe not.

Eddie still seems uncomfortable. Gabriel tilts his head, speaks coaxingly.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) What is it, Eddie? I can tell something else is bothering you. Come on, open up to me.

Eddie shifts in his chair.

EDDIE Well, it's just... (pause) What am I doing here? Sure, I wasn't perfect, but I wasn't too bad a guy. I mean, it's not like I ever killed anyone!

GABRIEL Hmm. I see. Well, let's have a flick through your file.

He opens a drawer in the desk, and pulls out a bulky box-file with the name 'EDDIE NEEZER' on it. He opens the lid, sifts through the contents.

He pulls file after file of varying size out of it, examining them and then discarding them into a pile on the desk. There seems to be an impossible amount in there - he continues to pull them out, Mary-Poppins-carpet-bag-style.

He eventually pulls out the one he's looking for, a slim file marked 'PRELIMINARY LIFE ASSESSMENT'.

GABRIEL There we go. Now let's have a look.

He opens it up and thumbs through the pages, scanning them.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) Uhuh. Uhuh. Oh right, I see...

EDDIE Just tell me, goddamn it!

He puts the file down on the desk, looks at Eddie.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) Well, it's pretty simple, Eddie. Your main problem is you were just too...<u>mean</u>.

Eddie sits stunned for a moment.

EDDIE

Mean?

GABRIEL Way too mean.

EDDIE I'm not allowed into Heaven because I was mean?

GABRIEL Pretty much, yeah.

EDDIE But that's...ridiculous! That's not a reason!

GABRIEL It is, actually.

EDDIE Well, it's a stupid one. And I wasn't that mean, anyway!

Gabriel taps the folder.

GABRIEL Eddie, this whole file is full of examples of you being mean to people throughout your life. It's all in here. I'm afraid it's pretty open-and-shut.

EDDIE Oh yeah? Prove it. I swear wasn't as mean as you say I was!

GABRIEL

Fine. I will.

Gabriel stands, picks up the file, and walks to ANOTHER DOOR set in the wall behind his desk. He puts a hand on the handle, turns back towards Eddie. Eddie frowns at him, disbelievingly.

Then he rolls his eyes, stands and crosses to the door. Gabriel opens it, and the two step through into a flash of BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT. The door swings shut behind them.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A living room in 1930s America. Two WOMEN sit at on the sofa, drinking coffee and chatting away.

A YOUNG BOY plays with some building blocks. He carefully stacks one on top of the rest, building a little tower.

Eddie and Gabriel appear in a FLASH OF WHITE. Eddie blinks rapidly, rubs his eyes.

EDDIE Whoa. That was weird.

He looks around him.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Hey, wait a minute...

A smile slowly grows. He turns back to Gabriel, excited.

EDDIE (CONTD.) I know this house! This is my old home, right? That's incredible!

He notices the little boy, squints at him.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Isn't that...?

GABRIEL Yep, that's Jimmy, your childhood friend. You two used to play together all the time, remember?

A TODDLER crawls past Eddie and Gabriel, heading for Jimmy. Gabriel looks down, points at him.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) And that's you.

Eddie stares, shakes his head with a low whistle.

EDDIE Wow. That's pretty crazy.

Baby Eddie crawls over to Jimmy, stops next to the blocks and hauls himself into an upright position. He stares at the blocks as Jimmy carefully balances yet another one on top.

Suddenly, with a happy cry, Baby Eddie swipes at the tower, SMASHING it to pieces. Jimmy stares at the pile in shock. Slowly, he starts to cry.

The two women on the sofa stop and look over. Jimmy's mom stands up, crosses over and scoops up her child. She carries him away, cradling him and speaking in a soothing voice.

> JIMMY'S MOM Aww, poor baby. Was Eddie mean to you? Shh, it's okay...

She sits down on the sofa, rocking her dismayed son back and forth. Baby Eddie still giggles happily.

Eddie and Gabriel watch from the other side of the room.

GABRIEL

You see?

EDDIE

Ah come on, I was two years old! All kids are jerks at that age. You can't hold something that happened seventy years ago against me!

GABRIEL

Maybe not, but you didn't grow out of being mean, did you? Let me show you something else.

The two FADE AWAY, eventually disappearing into thin air.

EXT. DINER - EVENING

THREE TEENAGE BOYS stand in front of an American diner in the '50s, peering in through the window. Their attention is on a GIRL in a green dress, who sits with her back to them.

Eddie and Gabriel appear in another FLASH.

EDDIE Hey, Lou's Cafe! I used to hang out here all the time. Jeez, I haven't thought about this place in years! He looks at the boys.

EDDIE (CONTD.) And that's me!

JIMMY, now 17, turns to face another of the boys - a 17 YEAR-OLD EDDIE.

JIMMY Oh boy, this was a great idea, Eddie. She looks so miserable!

The teenage Eddie just smiles, keeps staring through the window. The other boy - PAULIE - looks troubled.

PAULIE I feel kinda bad for her...oughtn't one of us say something?

Teenage Eddie turns to face him.

TEENAGE EDDIE No, Paulie, we 'oughtn't'. Are you Jimmy's buddy, or what? Huh?

PAULIE Yeah, I'm Jimmy's buddy. It's just...this feels a bit mean.

TEENAGE EDDIE Hell, she'll live. C'mon, let's get out of here. She has to know nobody's coming by now.

The three boys wander off down the street. Eddie stares after his teenage self.

EDDIE Was my hair always that bad?

GABRIEL Do you remember this, Eddie?

EDDIE I gotta admit, I don't.

The two of them move forward, peer in through the window.

The girl in the green dress is LINDA - 17, blonde, pretty. She sits in a booth, sadly drinking a milkshake through a straw. She is the only customer.

BETTY, a waitress in her 30s, comes over. She stands next to the table, speaks down in a gentle voice.

BETTY

We're shutting up soon, hon.

LINDA

Okay.

She doesn't look up from her milkshake. Betty looks down at her with sympathy.

BETTY

But you take as long as you want with your milkshake, you hear? And don't you worry about paying for it - that one's on the house.

LINDA

Thanks.

She manages a half-smile. Betty moves away to wipe a nearby table. Gabriel looks at Eddie.

GABRIEL

Asking the girl out on a date and then never turning up? That's not nice, Eddie.

EDDIE

Wait a minute, I <u>do</u> remember this. That's Linda Newton, right? Ah heck, that girl deserved it.

GABRIEL How do you figure that?

EDDIE

The week before this one of my buddies had asked her out and she did exactly the same thing to them. We reckoned she could do with a little payback.

GABRIEL

That still doesn't make it okay. Haven't you heard the saying, 'Two wrongs don't make a right?' EDDIE

And haven't you heard the saying, 'An eye for an eye?' You should have, it comes from the same book as you do. Nah, you'd better pick another example, buster. I don't feel guilty about this one at all.

Gabriel sighs.

GABRIEL Fair enough. Let's try something more recent.

They disappear, leaving Linda all alone.

EXT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Eddie's porch, the night he died.

The carol singers sing, sweetly. The door opens, revealing Eddie standing there, water-pistol in hand. He soaks the row of children, a smile on his face.

The children start to cry. Eddie slams the door shut. The children turn and cling to their shocked parents.

Eddie and Gabriel stand on the street, just down from the porch. Gabriel looks disapproving, but Eddie chuckles to himself. He notices Gabriel's expression.

EDDIE Oh, lighten up! Where's your sense of humor?

GABRIEL It's not funny, Eddie. It's exactly the kind of thing I'm talking about.

EDDIE Oh, baloney. Those guys deserve what they get. Turning up on folks' doorsteps, demanding money...I was carrying out a public service!

The carol singers retreat from Eddie's doorstep, parents comforting their children. They pass right in front of Eddie and Gabriel. GABRIEL They don't seem very appreciative.

Mary-Ellen passes by, crying into her mother's coat.

MARY-ELLEN Why did he do that, Mommy? I only wanted to sing for him!

MRS. CARTER I don't know, honey. I don't know.

She turns to another parent, shaking her head.

MRS. CARTER That guy's such an asshole. What kind of person does that?

Eddie looks indignant.

EDDIE

Hey! I'm right here, you know!

The carol singers move off down the street. Eddie turns to Gabriel.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Does that not count as being mean? Or is it only not okay if \underline{I} do it?

GABRIEL

Come on, Eddie! You just sprayed her daughter in the face with a water-pistol.

EDDIE She's over-reacting. And so are you. It was just a bit of harmless fun! It's not like it hurt anybody

GABRIEL

Oh, really?

The two of them FADE AWAY.

INT. MARY-ELLEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mary-Ellen lies in bed, propped up in pillows. She is pale, and coughs feebly.

Her mother sits in a chair by her bed. She pours cough medicine into a small, plastic pot. She holds the dose out.

MRS. CARTER There we go. This'll make you better.

Mary-Ellen's face crumples.

MARY-ELLEN I don't want it, Mommy. It tastes horrible!

MRS. CARTER I know, sweetie. But the sooner you drink it, the sooner you'll shake off your nasty cold...

She leans in, cough mixture in hand.

Eddie and Gabriel stand by the door, watching.

GABRIEL You see? Actions have consequences, Eddie. What you do can hurt people.

Eddie frowns at Mary-Ellen - suddenly it's not so funny.

EDDIE She'll be okay, right?

GABRIEL

Yes, she'll be fine. But that's not the point. Throughout your life, you made people feel this way, without even caring. Of course, all of this is nothing compared to what happened to your wife...

Eddie visibly bristles. He turns, real anger suddenly on his face, and points a threatening finger at Gabriel.

EDDIE

Hey. Don't you dare talk about her. She's off-limits, you got that? You might find it funny, stepping in and out of my life like flicking through a photo album, but enough's enough. Do <u>not</u> show me her, okay?

The two begin to fade away, Eddie still shouting --

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Okay?!

They disappear.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

London, England. The present day.

A woman - ISOBEL, 30s, nicely dressed - sits alone at a table against the back wall, absently stirring her coffee with a spoon. A magazine is open in front of her.

Eddie and Gabriel appear in exactly the same position as they were before - Eddie angry, a finger pointed at Gabriel.

Eddie looks around him.

EDDIE Are you not listening to me? What happened between us forty years ago is none of your goddamn business, you hear?

GABRIEL It's all my business, Eddie. But don't worry, she's not here.

EDDIE Oh. Right. (beat) Then what are we doing here?

Isobel shifts in her seat, idly flicking through her magazine without taking it in.

A MAN comes up, places his hands on the back of the empty chair opposite her.

MAN Excuse me - is this seat taken?

Isobel looks up at him, then at the seat. She sighs.

ISOBEL Of course not. Why would it be?

MAN

Err...sorry?

ISOBEL Oh, nothing. Just being melodramatic. It's all yours.

He smiles at her, takes the seat and carries it away. Gabriel nods in Isobel's direction. Eddie looks at her, squints.

EDDIE Nope. Never seen her before.

GABRIEL

You sure?

He looks again.

EDDIE Yeah, I'm sure. Why? Should I recognise her? Who is she?

GABRIEL Oh, no-one. My mistake.

Eddie looks at him suspiciously.

EDDIE Mistake. Right...

GABRIEL I think that's enough. Come on, let's go back to my office.

He holds out his arm. Eddie looks down at it, eyebrow raised, then looks back up at Gabriel.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) We're heading back to Limbo now, Eddie. You have to take my arm. That's how it works.

With a sigh, Eddie lays a hand on Gabriel's forearm. They stand there for a moment, not moving.

EDDIE So what happens n --

In a FLASH OF WHITE, the two DISAPPEAR.

THE VOID - CONTINUOUS

Eddie tumbles head over heels as all kinds of OBJECTS AND SHAPES fly by. Snatches from his past, shining galaxies, sweeping clock hands - all of them rush by as Eddie tumbles through oblivion... INT. GABRIEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

...until he suddenly LANDS in his chair with a bump. Eddie catches his breath, looks around the room.

EDDIE

Whoa, let's not do that again.

Gabriel sits at his desk, completely composed. He still wears a serious expression.

GABRIEL

Now do you see what I was talking about, Eddie? You <u>were</u> mean. You hurt people either because you thought it was funny, or because of your own selfishness, without stopping to consider the effect it might have on them.

Eddie sighs, holds his hands up.

EDDIE

Okay, okay. You got me. Maybe I was a little...inconsiderate. Once in a while. I've learned my lesson, okay? I swear. So what happens now?

GABRIEL Now? Why, you get in line.

Eddie blinks at him.

EDDIE

Excuse me?

GABRIEL

You get in line, and wait to be processed like everyone else. What else did you expect?

EDDIE What?! But there are billions of people out there.

GABRIEL It's a long line. Don't worry, we'll get to you eventually.

EDDIE No. I wanna go now! GABRIEL

I thought you said you'd learned your lesson about being selfish?

EDDIE I lied, okay? I don't wanna join some 'line'! I don't wanna wait with everyone else!

GABRIEL You don't really have a choice, Eddie...

EDDIE No! I refuse, goddammit! You can't show me what I've done wrong and not give me a chance to make amends. There's gotta be something I can do, right? Please!

He stands up, clasps his hands together.

EDDIE (CONTD.) I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry I was mean. I truly, truly am, from the bottom of my heart. I don't wanna be stuck here for ever. What can I do to make it right? I'll do anything. Anything!

He falls to his knees, head bowed, hands thrust out. Gabriel looks down at him from his chair. He narrows his eyes, thinks for a few seconds.

Then he sighs.

GABRIEL Well, there is one way.

Eddie looks up, fresh hope in his eyes.

EDDIE

Way? Way to what?

GABRIEL

A way to skip the queue. A way to get straight to Heaven without waiting. It only gets offered to those who ask for it, which hardly anyone does. And not everyone is eligible - but I think your record is clean enough that you'd probably be sent upstairs eventually anyway. (MORE) GABRIEL (cont'd) I mean, I don't like that you just lied to me, but based on what's in your file...

He reaches for Eddie's file, flicks to the front and reads the first page. Eddie clambers back into his chair.

> GABRIEL (CONTD.) (reading) Yeah. I think it could work.

He puts the folder down, leans forward, looks seriously at Eddie.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) What I'm about to offer you is a chance that hardly anyone gets, Eddie. If you succeed, then you get to go straight to Heaven. If you fail, you end up right back here, at the back of the line, and you'll have to wait your turn.

Eddie frowns.

EDDIE Wait - 'right back here'? Whaddaya mean by that? Do I get a trial period in Heaven, or something?

GABRIEL No, nothing like that.

EDDIE Then what do I have to do?

GABRIEL

It's called the 'Personal Penance Program.' You get sent back to Earth to commit a good deed, specifically one that you wouldn't have committed during your lifetime. If you manage to do it, then you earn your ticket out of here. It's that simple.

Eddie leans back, thinking.

EDDIE

'Good deed'? What kind of good deed? Saving a drowning kitten? Helping someone cross the street? GABRIEL

I can't tell you until you actually start the program. I'll explain everything once you commit to taking part.

Still Eddie considers.

EDDIE Do I get to pick my own good deed?

Gabriel smiles.

GABRIEL

No. Actually, I do. And I've got the perfect one in mind for you. Like I say, I'll tell you what it is as soon as you commit to taking part. So are you in?

He holds out a hand. Eddie looks at it, then sighs and shrugs. He reaches out to shake.

EDDIE I guess. What have I got to lose?

They shake. Gabriel stands up, picks up the file.

GABRIEL Excellent. Let's get started, then.

MAIN DEPARTURE LOUNGE - MINUTES LATER

Gabriel strides along the edge of the hall, the 'Preliminary Life Assessment' file in his hand. Eddie has to jog to stay next to him.

> EDDIE Slow down, will ya? Where are we even going?

GABRIEL You'll see. The sooner we get there, the sooner we get started.

The pair pass a big CHRISTMAS TREE, covered in fancy decorations. Eddie looks at it with disgust.

EDDIE Ah, Jeez. You got Christmas up here, too? GABRIEL

Like I said, we try to make it as smooth a transition as possible. If it's Christmas on Earth, it's Christmas in The Terminal. And anyway, who doesn't like Christmas?

Eddie says nothing, just keeps walking.

Ahead is a MAN AND WOMAN dressed in dirty peasant clothes. The man stands completely still, arms hanging by his side, the vacant expression on his face. The woman plucks at his shirt and shakes him, desperately trying to get a response.

When she sees Gabriel she rushes towards him, gesturing towards the man imploringly.

RUSSIAN WOMAN (in Russian) Please, help me, he won't answer. We've been waiting such a long time...please, won't you help us?

GABRIEL (also in Russian) I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do. You must wait. I'm sorry.

He walks straight past the man. Eddie stares at the man as he passes by him. He hurries to catch up with Gabriel.

> EDDIE What was wrong with that guy? Why do some of the people here just act like they're brain-dead?

> > GABRIEL

Because they pretty much are. It happens to some people when they've been waiting here a long time. We don't know why it affects some people more quickly than others, but what we do know is that they stay that way even when they finally get upstairs. They don't change back - they're stuck like that forever. It's a real shame.

Eddie glances back over his shoulder at the man. The woman has fallen to her knees and tugs at his sleeve, crying.

Gabriel suddenly comes to a halt.

GABRIEL Here we are. This is it.

Eddie stops and looks. The pair stand outside a door marked 'PERSONAL PENANCE PROGRAM - PENANCES AND DEPARTURE POINT'. Gabriel opens the door, gestures for Eddie to go inside.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) Come on. Can't back out now.

Eddie stares at the doorway. He looks back towards the Russian couple, then turns back towards the door.

He steps through the doorway. Gabriel shuts the door behind them.

INT. THE TERMINAL - PPP OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

One wall is completely covered in FILING CABINETS, almost stretching up to the high ceiling. A sign saying 'GOOD DEEDS' hangs above them. The opposite wall is blank except for an ELEVATOR DOOR, with a panel with one DOWN BUTTON.

Another attendant, MICHAEL, stands in front of a filing cabinet, sorting through files. He turns when he hears the door, then smiles.

MICHAEL Gabriel! How are you? What brings you to my humble office?

GABRIEL Hey, Michael. Got someone signed up to the PPP.

He gestures towards Eddie. Michael claps his hands.

MICHAEL Excellent! You got his file?

Gabriel holds out the file. Michael takes it and opens it. He walks away, studying the first page.

> MICHAEL (reading) Hmm...interesting.

He looks up towards Gabriel.

MICHAEL You got a deed in mind, or do you want me to pick something?

GABRIEL No, I think I've a good one, actually.

He steps up towards Michael, and whispers into his ear. Michael laughs in delight.

MICHAEL Oh yes! That is great. Let the punishment fit the crime, eh? I'm sure we can find someone suitable.

He hands the file to Gabriel and then crosses back to the filing cabinets. He leans a ladder against one, climbs up and opens a drawer near the top. He starts rifling through the files.

Eddie edges towards Gabriel.

EDDIE Why is he so happy? What the hell are you gonna do to me?

GABRIEL It's not what we're going to do to you. It's what <u>you're</u> going to do for someone else.

EDDIE And that is?

Before Gabriel can respond, Michael shouts out, holding a folder aloft. He wears a look of triumph on his face.

MICHAEL This is it! This is the one.

He climbs down, walks over and hands it to Gabriel. Gabriel opens it and flicks through the pages, a smile growing.

GABRIEL Oh yes, this is...perfect. <u>Perfect.</u> Good job, Mike.

He closes the file, looks up at Eddie.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) Your whole life, you were mean, Eddie. You were selfish, solitary, (MORE) GABRIEL (CONTD.) (cont'd) and mean. You never did anything for anyone else, even when people did things for you. You didn't spread any happiness in the world all the years you were alive, and so that's gonna be your penance. You're gonna make one person happy. This person, to be exact.

He taps the folder.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) If you can make this one person happy, if you can bring some joy into their world, then you get your ticket to Paradise. Do you understand?

Eddie frowns.

EDDIE

How do I know you're not kidding around with me? That I'm gonna do this 'good deed' and just end up right back here?

GABRIEL We're angels, Eddie. We don't lie. I promise you, this is for real. So are you in?

EDDIE But what exactly do I have to do? How do I make this person 'happy'?

GABRIEL I'll get into the specifics when we arrive. All I need is for you to say the word 'yes', and then we're on our way. So - Are. You. In?

Eddie thinks for a few seconds. Then he sighs, throws his hands up.

EDDIE Ah, what the hell. I'm in.

Michael appears from nowhere, thrusting a clipboard, form and pen under his nose. He points to two places on the form. Eddie stares at him, then takes the pen and does as he's told. Michael hovers next to him, and takes the form and pen off him the second he finishes.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

He walks off, slipping the form into Eddie's folder.

GABRIEL

Follow me.

He walks over to the ELEVATOR DOORS. Eddie follows him.

Gabriel presses the button on the pad. After a few seconds, the elevator arrives with a 'BING!'. The doors slide smoothly open.

Gabriel and Eddie step inside what looks like a normal elevator. The pad inside has just one button: 'THE WORLD'. Gabriel presses it, the words lighting up.

The elevator doors close. As they shut, Michael waves and calls out --

MICHAEL Good luck, Mister Neezer!

The doors shut, obscuring him from view. Gabriel turns, gives Eddie a half-salute.

GABRIEL See you down there.

Eddie looks at him, just blinks.

EDDIE

Huh?

And then the floor DROPS AWAY.

Eddie FALLS, hands grabbing at empty air. Just like before, all kinds of COLOURS, SHAPES AND IMAGES rush by as he plummets down, yelling all the way.

He carries on falling, seemingly into infinity...

EXT. TIM'S HOUSE - EVENING

A semi-detached house in a quiet suburb in England. Christmas lights wind their way around the structure.

INT. TIM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TIM, 9, somehow small-looking, sits curled up in an armchair - arms around his legs, knees up to his chest. His eyes are on a Christmas cooking show on the TV, but his attention is elsewhere.

The door to the living room is closed, but the sounds of the ARGUMENT raging outside in the hallway are still audible.

A WOMAN'S SHRIEK cuts clearly through --

WOMAN'S SHRIEK Here's what I think of your stupid vase, you bastard!

-- followed by the SMASH of breaking china. The shouting increases in volume. A BABY starts wailing somewhere.

Tim glances towards the door. He picks up the remote and TURNS UP the volume on the TV, trying to drown out the shouting. He puts the remote down, hugs his legs tighter.

The view THROUGH THE WINDOW is of the front lawn. Unseen and unheard to Tim, a faint CRY slowly becomes audible, growing LOUDER AND LOUDER. It seems to be coming from nowhere --

-- until A SHAPE drops out of the sky and LANDS on the lawn. The yell instantly stops.

Tim carries on watching TV, oblivious.

EXT. TIM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

EDDIE lies flat on his back on the grass, motionless. He opens his eyes and slowly sits up with a groan. He looks up into the clear, black, starry sky.

> EDDIE So what, they just dropped me from the sky? Real nice.

He rubs his forehead, groans.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Oh, my head...what are they tryin' to do, kill me all over again?

GABRIEL (O.S.) What would be the point of that?

Eddie jumps at the sound of Gabriel's voice. He looks up. Gabriel stands near the living room window, watching him.

With difficulty, Eddie clambers to his feet.

EDDIE Huh! You tell me. I really don't get you people at all.

He dusts himself down, looks around again.

EDDIE (CONTD.) So where exactly are we?

Gabriel raises a finger to his lips, beckons him over.

GABRIEL Ssh! Come over here.

He turns to look through the window. Eddie rolls his eyes, but staggers over to join him.

Tim still sits in the armchair, eyes on the TV screen.

EDDIE Who's the runt?

GABRIEL That 'runt', Eddie, is the person you're going to make happy. His name is Tim.

INT. TIM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens slightly and JULIE, 40s, pokes her head into the room.

JULIE Hi, love. Mind if I come in?

Tim doesn't acknowledge her presence.

Julie slips into the room, pulling the door to behind her. She crosses over to the chair and perches on the arm. JULIE (CONTD.) What you watching?

Tim shrugs slightly, making a sound to match. He picks up the remote and begins flicking through the channels, still not looking at her.

> JULIE (CONTD.) We're not arguing about you, you know. I don't want you to think that.

She reaches out, touches his shoulder.

JULIE (CONTD.) Talk to me, Timbo. What's up?

He mumbles into his knees.

TIM You and Pete don't want me here anymore.

JULIE

What?

He finally looks away from the TV, up at her.

TIM

You don't want me. That's it, isn't it? That's why you're arguing.

JULIE

No! That's not it at all. Grown-ups fight sometimes, you know that. Pete and I are so happy that you're here with us. This is your home, okay?

Tim's eyes return to the screen. He stares at it for a few seconds, then unwinds himself.

TIM I'm going to bed.

He slips out of the chair and hurries out of the room. Julie calls after him --

JULIE

Tim!

-- but the only response is the sound of FOOTSTEPS running up the stairs. She slides down off the arm and into the chair with a sigh. INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tim barges into the room and throws himself down on the bed. He lies face down on the duvet, not moving.

Eddie and Gabriel watch from the corner. Eddie's lip is curled, his eyebrow raised.

EDDIE Seriously? This kid?

GABRIEL What's so bad about this kid?

EDDIE

Look at him! He's so miserable! He's pathetic! And he's <u>British</u>! Could you not do better than a miserable, pathetic, British kid?

GABRIEL

You're really not grasping this 'not being mean' thing, are you? Why don't you try saying something nice for a change?

EDDIE Alright, alright...

He looks around the room for inspiration.

EDDIE (CONTD.) ...umm, I like his lava lamp.

GABRIEL That's a start. Right, now let me explain the rules. This is Tim. As you can see, he's not happy. Your task is to make him happy.

EDDIE And how will I know if he's getting happier?

GABRIEL By using this.

Gabriel reaches into his left-hand pocket and pulls out a GLASS TUBE that looks like a thermometer. It is filled with a shimmering, shining gold liquid.

He holds it up for Eddie to see.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) This device is a happiometer. It works just like a standard thermometer - the higher the liquid, the happier the person.

The skeptical look on Eddie's face grows more pronounced.

EDDIE

Seriously? A 'happiometer'? What do you measure happiness in, puppies?

GABRIEL

No, 'glows'.

EDDIE

Of course.

He hands the happiometer to Eddie, who turns it in his hands, studying it.

GABRIEL

The scale goes up to one hundred glows. At the moment it's reading around ten to fifteen. You've gotta get that up to at least ninety in order to complete the program.

Eddie looks at the happiometer again. The liquid's current level and the '90' line seem very far apart.

EDDIE Ninety? Isn't that a bit high?

GABRIEL You're earning a ticket to Paradise, Eddie, not a free dessert. Ninety is perfectly reasonable. The other thing to note is that this thing doesn't measure superficial happiness. For example, if you tickle him --

EDDIE Which I <u>won't</u> be doing.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) (ignoring him) -- it's not gonna affect his glow reading. You've gotta make him truly, fundamentally happy in order to boost it up. That means finding out what he really wants, and (MORE) GABRIEL (CONTD.) (cont'd) making it happen. Which brings me on to point number two.

He reaches into his other pocket, pulls out a little hourglass. It is filled with SILVER POWDER. The top is completely full, the bottom completely empty.

> GABRIEL (CONTD.) This little thing is your 'angelic energy gauge'.

EDDIE My say-what gauge?

GABRIEL

Angelic energy. We angels produce infinite amounts of angelic energy. It's what allows us to jump through time and space, pass through solid objects, catch people who've jumped from tall buildings...it can even be used to impregnate adolescents, if the occasion calls for it. With this stuff, you can pretty much do anything. You, however, are not a fully-fledged angel...at least not yet. So you only get a finite amount of it to help you make Tim happy. Anything you do will drain your supply of this energy, okay? <u>Anything.</u> And once it's all gone, you don't get any more. So be careful with it.

He hands it to Eddie, who takes it carefully and peers at it with wonder.

EDDIE What kind of things can I do?

GABRIEL

Almost anything you can imagine. Well, as long as it doesn't hurt anybody. You can teleport anywhere in the world, but you can't jump through time - you're not allowed to do that. You're invisible to everyone except Tim, but if you want to make him temporarily invisible or become visible to other people, you can do that too. You can control or affect pretty

(MORE)

GABRIEL (cont'd) much any inanimate object. But remember, the bigger the act, the more energy it'll use. Don't waste it fooling around.

EDDIE

And how do I use these powers? Is there like a magic word, or something?

GABRIEL

No, it's really just about faith. Picture in your head what you want to do, believe you can do it, and it'll happen. Try switching on that light for practice.

He points at a light on the desk.

Eddie follows his gaze, stares at the lamp. He narrows his eyes, scrunches up his forehead. He breathes in, deeper and deeper, staring at the light, his hands clenching into fists. His face slowly turns red.

Nothing happens.

Eddie gives up, exhales in one big breath.

EDDIE

I can't do it.

GABRIEL

You can. Just relax. Visualise.

Eddie breathes in deeply, breathes out. He narrows his eyes again, stretches out a hand in front of him.

EDDIE Let there be light.

And - BING! - the light turns on. Eddie's eyes widen. He turns to Gabriel, smiling.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Hey, I did it!

GABRIEL And look at your energy gauge.

Eddie holds it up, looks at it. A few grains of powder have fallen through into the bottom of the hourglass.

GABRIEL (CONTD.) See? The more you do, the less energy you have left. So be sensible. That's about it, I think. Any questions?

EDDIE

Yeah. Can I tell the kid the reason I'm here?

GABRIEL

You can tell him you're here to make him happy, but not why. Not that it would help - you can't pressurise someone into happiness.

EDDIE

Right. Uh...can I return to Limbo at some point? If it's urgent?

GABRIEL

Yeah, if you want to. But that'll use up a good chunk of your energy, so try to keep those trips to a minimum.

EDDIE

Okay. Oh! And one more thing. Do I have some kind of deadline?

Gabriel claps a hand to his forehead.

GABRIEL

Of course! I completely forgot. You have three days to make Tim happy. Today is four days after you died, which makes it December twenty-second, which means that --

EDDIE -- the deadline is Christmas Day.

GABRIEL

Right.

EDDIE There's just one problem, buster. I hate Christmas.

GABRIEL I know. That's why I picked it. This is a penance Eddie, not a vacation. This time you're gonna (MORE) GABRIEL (cont'd) enjoy Christmas, and you're gonna make sure <u>he</u> does, too. Got that? From the second I disappear, you'll be visible to him, so you better get started. Good luck!

With a wave, Gabriel FADES AWAY.

EDDIE

Wait!

But Gabriel is gone. Eddie sighs, turns to look at Tim who is still lying face-down on the bed.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Perfect.

Tim remains motionless. Eddie puts the happiometer and angelic energy gauge in his pockets, and then looks back up at him.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Well, here goes nothing.

He shuffles up to the bed, reaches out and gently shakes Tim's shoulder.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Hey. Hey, kid.

Tim looks up. He peers at Eddie in confusion for a moment. Then his EYES WIDEN. He rolls over, away from Eddie, stares at him in terror, and then opens his mouth and YELLS.

> TIM AAH! Julie! Pete! HELP!

He scrambles across the bed and off the other side, using it as a barrier. Eddie holds his hands up pleadingly.

> EDDIE Hey! It's okay! Seriously, kid, stop screaming!

TIM

Help! Help!

The sound of FOOTSTEPS running up the stairs. A muffled voice comes from the other side of the door.

JULIE (O.S.) Tim? I'm coming!

Eddie whips round, stares at the door.

EDDIE

Ah, nuts.

He looks around the room for somewhere to hide. He spots the door of a closet, and runs straight towards it.

But instead of opening the door, he PASSES STRAIGHT THROUGH IT, out of sight.

Tim instantly stops yelling. He stares at the door, awed.

At that moment Julie BURSTS into the room.

JULIE Timmy! What is it? What's wrong?

Tim cannot find the words. He just stares at where Eddie disappeared, open-mouthed. Julie hurries over to him, pulls him into a hug.

JULIE What's the matter, huh? You were screaming loud enough to wake the dead! It's okay...

PETE, 40s, tough-looking, walks into the room.

PETE What does he want now? More attention, I suppose.

JULIE Knock it off, Pete. Leave us alone.

PETE Don't you talk to me like that --

JULIE

Just GET OUT!

Pete scowls, but leaves, SLAMMING the door behind him.

JULIE (CONTD.) It's okay, Tim. What's wrong, hey?

Tim still stares at the door.

TIM I had a nightmare.

JULIE

A nightmare?

TIM That's all. I'm okay now. Honest.

JULIE You sure? You want me to stay with you while you go back to sleep?

TIM No, I'm really fine. I'm sorry I yelled. I'll go back to bed now.

He wriggles out of her arms, sits down on the edge of the bed. Julie looks down at him, concerned, but moves towards the door. She opens it, pauses in the doorway.

JULIE You just shout if you need anything, okay? Night, love.

She shuts the door.

Tim waits for a second, then stands up. He tentatively creeps towards the door, reaches out for the door handle --

-- but EDDIE'S HEAD suddenly pops through the door, making Tim jump back in fright.

The two stare at each other.

EDDIE You done yelling?

Tim nods, eyes wide.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Good.

Ne steps out through the door into the room. Every time he steps forward, Tim steps back.

Eddie pulls out the angelic energy gauge and studies it. A few more grains of powder lie at the bottom.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Ah, great. That's your fault, kid. This stuff ain't easy to come by!

Tim sits down on the bed, speaks in a shaky voice.

TIM Are you a ghost?

EDDIE

No, I'm not a ghost. I'm...well, I guess you could say I'm your guardian angel. At least, for the next few days. Name's Eddie.

He holds out a hand. Tim just stares at it.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Don't wanna shake? Fair enough.

He drops his hand, wanders off across the room. He examines a collection of rocks on a shelf. Tim watches him.

TIM Err, excuse me...

EDDIE

Eddie.

TIM Right. Excuse me, Eddie, but what are you doing in my room?

EDDIE I was sent here. As your temporary

guardian angel, it's my job to make sure you have a happy Christmas.

TIM

Oh, okay. And how, exactly, are you going to do that?

EDDIE

Well, that's what you and me are going to work out. With our combined brain-power and my superpowers --

Tim brightens up.

TIM Superpowers? Like Spiderman?

EDDIE Well no, not exactly. Maybe 'superpowers' is the wrong word, but they're definitely 'powers'... TIM Like what? What can you do?

EDDIE All kinds of stuff.

TIM

Show me.

EDDIE I don't know if that's --

TIM

Please!

Eddie sighs.

EDDIE I'm kinda on a tight budget here, but okay.

He closes his eyes, extends out a hand towards the rocks. After a moment, all of them RISE INTO THE AIR, hovering a foot above the shelf.

TIM Oh my -- that's amazing!

Eddie relaxes, opens his eyes. The rocks CLATTER back down.

EDDIE

Convinced?

Tim nods.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Great. So, as I was saying, combined brainpower and my powers should mean we can't fail. Right?

TIM

Right.

Tim doesn't sound too sure.

EDDIE Hey, I just had a great idea! Why don't you write a list of stuff you'd like to do? Stuff that would make you happy. TIM

Like what?

EDDIE

Heck, I don't know - places you'd like to go, things you'd like to try. Just whatever comes to mind! Then we can go through them, make you feel all warm'n'fuzzy inside and hey presto! Success.

TIM

Okay! I'll write a list. Julie always writes lists whenever we go shopping.

EDDIE 'Julie'...how long have you called your parents by their first name?

TIM They're not my parents. They're my foster parents.

EDDIE Oh, okay. Where are your real folks?

Tim's face crumples slightly. Eddie quickly steers the conversation away from that.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Never mind! None of my business anyway. Nothing to do with me. I'm here for you, and you alone. Tell you what, you get going with your list. I'll be back in a minute, okay?

TIM Err, okay. What are you going to do, go downstairs?

EDDIE Oh no, much better. Watch this.

Eddie disappears in a FLASH.

TIM

Cool.

He goes over to a bookshelf, gets a pad of paper and a pen and then goes back to his bed. He picks up the pad, pulls the lid off his pen, sticks the other end in his mouth and adopts a thoughtful expression, head slightly to one side.

> TIM Now, what do I want to do...

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE EDDIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

The street is still covered in snow. Eddie appears in the middle of the road in a FLASH. He looks around with a smile.

EDDIE Home sweet home.

He looks at Stan's porch - the lights Eddie ripped down have been put back up.

Eddie turns his head, looks at his own porch. It looks bare and uninviting.

EDDIE

Maybe I should have decorated.

MONTAGE:

- In the HALLWAY, Eddie picks up his water pistol. He can't help a smile.

- Eddie looks around his LIVING ROOM, which is exactly how he left it. He wanders through to the KITCHEN, where the dirty dishes still sit in the sink.

- In his BEDROOM, Eddie reaches down and picks up the framed photo of a woman and a baby. He touches their faces with the tips of his fingers.

- OUTSIDE once more, Eddie walks down the steps from his porch. He turns to face his home, sighs.

EDDIE

So long, house.

He gives a small wave, and then DISAPPEARS.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT Eddie appears in Tim's bedroom, which is completely dark. EDDIE (whispering) Tim? He shuffles forward, bangs into something in the blackness. EDDIE Ow! Where's the goddamn light switch... He flicks the lights on. Tim stirs in bed. TIM Whossat? EDDIE Hey, it's Eddie. You fell asleep already? I was only gone a few minutes! Rubbing his eyes, Tim peers at a clock on his bedside table. TIM You were gone for si hours. Eddie blinks in surprise. EDDIE What? No way. You must be wrong. TIM Nope. It was six o'clock when you left, and now it's twelve o'clock. Six hours. Eddie frowns at the clock's digital display. EDDIE Huh. That's weird. He shrugs. EDDIE (CONTD.) Anyway, you got your list? TIM Yes! He opens the drawer in his bedside table, pulls it out and

hands it to Eddie, who sits on the bed and studies it.

53.

EDDIE

(reading aloud)
"Ice skating at 'Somerset House'."
Where's that?

TIM It's up in London. Julie and Pete took me there once a couple of years ago.

EDDIE Okay, that should be pretty straightforward. You get dressed in winter clothes, and then I'll get us there when you're done.

TIM

Okay!

Tim leaps out of bed and dashes for his wardrobe.

EXT. SOMERSET HOUSE ICE RINK - NIGHT

Eddie and Tim appear in the courtyard of Somerset House, London.

A tall fir tree stands in front of them and, beyond that, an ICE RINK stands, quiet and deserted.

Eddie looks around.

He points a finger towards the ice rink, and instantly, the whole thing RUMBLES INTO LIFE. Eddie turns to Tim, grinning.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Well, would you look at that!

Tim stares at the rink, mouth open.

TIM How did you do that?

EDDIE How do you think? Magic, kid. Now come on, we're here 'cause of you so are we skating, or what?

He approaches the rink.

TIM Hey, wait for me!

Tim hurries after him.

MONTAGE:

- Eddie staggers his way uneasily across the ice on skates. Tim watches from by the wall, holding the wall for support. Eddie tries to straighten up, still moving forward.

> EDDIE Hey, I'm getting the hang of this!

And that's when he slips over. Tim laughs.

- Eddie comes over to Tim, offers a hand. Tim takes it and gingerly steps away from the wall.

- Eddie tries to chase Tim across the ice, who yells in mock fear as he tries to escape.

END MONTAGE

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - NIGHT

Tim and Eddie walk through Trafalgar Square, which is almost deserted on this cold winter night.

They walk up the massive CHRISTMAS TREE which stands in the centre of the square, covered in lights and decorations.

TIM Amazing, isn't it?

EDDIE Sure, if that's the kind of stuff you're into.

Tim looks at Eddie.

TIM Do you not like Christmas, Eddie?

EDDIE

Nope.

TIM Why not? Everyone loves Christmas.

EDDIE

Well, I don't. I can't even remember the last time I enjoyed one. I never receive any presents, and I never send anybody any. I don't mind being alone - in fact I prefer it. But Christmas is the one (MORE) EDDIE (cont'd) time year where not being with someone seems to matter.

By the end he is speaking more to himself than Tim, who looks up towards the top of the tree.

TIM

I like the star.

Eddie reaches into his pocket, digs out Tim's list.

EDDIE (reading aloud) 'Snowball fight'. Really? Just that? Any wish you wanted, and that's what you came up with? Couldn't you do that anyway?

TIM Maybe, but it's not snowing here, is it?

Eddie frowns, then smiles suddenly.

EDDIE I've got an idea. Take my hand.

Tim does. They disappear in a FLASH.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The two appear in a forest of PINE TREES.

Tim looks around, teeth chattering.

TIM Where are we?

EDDIE Lapland, inside the Arctic Circle. You wanted a snowball fight - why not have one here?

Tim looks at him, and smiles.

MONTAGE:

- The two dart between the pine trees, throwing snowballs and reaching for new ammunition.

- Eddie sneaks round a tree, but is ambushed by Tim, who smacks him in the face with a snowball.

END MONTAGE

Eddie and Tim are in the midst of a close-range exchange of snowballs when suddenly --

EDDIE

Ssh!

Tim freezes. Eddie scans between the trees, then points.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Look.

Tim looks. A HERD OF REINDEER picks its way through the trees, moving through the night. The two watch them pass in silence.

Eddie comes over to Tim, who is really shivering.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Ready to go home?

Tim nods. Eddie puts a hand on his shoulder, and the two of them DISAPPEAR.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim and Eddie two appear in the middle of the room. Tim, rubbing his arms to get warm, goes to sit down on his bed.

TIM That was so much fun.

Eddie looks down at the happiometer in his hand. The level is still only around the '40' line.

EDDIE Damn it. Not even close! I'd kinda hoped a couple of trips would do the trick.

He sighs, sits down on the bed next to Tim.

Help me out here, kid. I want you to be happy. I'm trying to make that happen. But all I seem to be able to do is make you happy - what was that word? 'Superficially.' Yeah, that was it.

TIM

Sorry.

EDDIE

What are apologising for? You haven't done anything wrong...it's obviously harder to make a kid happier than I thought, that's all.

TIM Did you have kids, Eddie?

Eddie winces slightly at the question. He sighs.

EDDIE

I did, yeah. I had a girl. Haven't seen her in a long time.

TIM

Why not?

EDDIE Jeez, enough with the questions! What are you, a cop?

He stands up and walks away, irritated. Tim speaks in a small voice.

TIM

Sorry.

Eddie sighs, turns round.

EDDIE

No, that's okay. Sorry I snapped at you. It's just...it's painful talking about it, you know? Even after so long.

TIM Julie always says a problem shared is a problem halved.

He pats the duvet next to him, gesturing for Eddie to sit.

EDDIE (smiling) Oh, she does, does she?

He crosses back to the bed, sits down next to Tim. He pauses, then speaks.

EDDIE

I had a little girl. She was the cutest thing in the whole wide world. Big brown eyes, curly chestnut hair - the prettiest little kid you ever saw. I loved her so much. But back then...

His voice falters. He looks up at Tim.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

You gotta understand, Timbo, I wasn't a bad person. I never stole nor hurt anyone. But there's stuff I'd change about my life, if I had the chance. That's the same for everyone though I guess, right? Everyone would do it different, if they got another go around.

He stops again.

EDDIE (CONTD.) When I was younger, I used to drink. I drank to make myself feel better, and then I'd feel guilty about drinking so I drank to feel better about that...I couldn't break the cycle. I didn't hit my wife - nothing like that. But I wasn't much of a husband. She tried to help me, stayed longer than she really wanted to, I think, for my sake, but eventually she left me, and she took our little girl with her. By the time I pulled myself together, I couldn't find any trace of where they went. My little girl

could be anywhere. Hell, she could be dead for all I know. Still, it's my own damn fault.

The two sit in silence. Eddie laughs gently.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Sorry, kid. I know that's a bit intense for you to listen to.

TIM That's okay. Grown-ups do silly things all the time. At least you're sorry about it, that's important. I bet your daughter would forgive you if you met.

EDDIE

I don't know about that.

TIM

Oh, I bet she would. Even if they're horrible people, your mum is still your mum and your dad is still dad. I'd love to meet my real mum. I bet she's amazing.

Something strange happens to the happiometer. The level of fluid LEAPS up the scale for a moment, to around '55', before it drops back down again.

Eddie's eyebrows twitch.

EDDIE Hey, talk about her again.

TIM What? Who?

EDDIE Your mom! Talk about your mom!

Again, the happiometer goes haywire. Eddie begins to smile.

EDDIE That's it! Oh baby, that's it! Hallelujah! Yee-ha!

He breaks into a little jig, shuffling round the room. Tim watches from the bed.

TIM What? What's it?

EDDIE That's what's gonna fill this baby up and get me on the next plane to Paradise! I am going to reunite you with your mom. A moment's silence while Tim processes.

TIM (daring to hope) Really?

EDDIE Sure, how hard can it be? I track her down, put the two of you together, you get happy and boom! Mission accomplished.

TIM Oh, wait - Eddie...

Eddie ignores him, keeps shuffling round the room.

EDDIE

It'll be perfect. The two of you, together again after all these years - we could even do it at some special location....

TIM

Eddie...

EDDIE Hey, I know! How about that giant tree in that square in London? Yeah, that'd be great.

TIM

EDDIE!

Eddie stops dancing.

EDDIE

What?

TIM There's just one problem.

EDDIE 'Problem'? No no, no problems...

MIT

I have no idea where she is. Nobody does. I asked Julie about it, and she said there was some big mystery about exactly where I came from. So how are you going to track her down, if there's no record of her? EDDIE Huh. That is a problem.

He paces the room, stroking his chin in thought.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Got it!

He puts up a triumphant finger, spins round.

EDDIE (CONTD.) I'll go back up to The Terminal! They've got files on everything up there, every little bit of every person's life. There's nothing they don't know! They're <u>bound</u> to have a file on your mom. I'll give it a read, find where she is, and boom. We're in business.

He walks to the centre of the room.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Sit tight, okay? I'll go back up, grab the file and come straight back down. Then we'll head for London, and it'll be reunion time.

He turns his face up to the ceiling.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Okay, here we go.

He closes his eyes, spreads his arms wide.

Nothing happens.

TIM Can't you do it?

Eddie looks down at him, annoyed.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Yes, I can do it. I've just never done this journey before, that's all. Gimme a minute.

He looks back towards the ceiling, closes his eyes.

EDDIE Hey, I feel something. I think it's working... Eddie disappears in a BLINDING FLASH that grows until it fills the entire room with white light. When it fades, Eddie is gone.

THE VOID - CONTINUOUS

Once again, Eddie tumbles through time and space, past all sorts of strange, indistinguishable things.

His mouth is stretched wide open as he yells all the way...

INT. THE TERMINAL - PPP OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MICHAEL stands on the ladder, putting a file into a high-up drawer. He whistles tunelessly to himself.

A 'BING!' from the elevator. The doors slide smoothly open, revealing the perfectly-ordinary looking interior. Michael looks in its direction, curious.

In another FLASH OF WHITE, Eddie appears from the back wall of the lift, still yelling. He flies out headfirst through the doors, landing HARD on the office floor.

> EDDIE Oh boy, that hurt...

As he lies groaning, the elevator doors shut behind him. Michael hops down from his ladder and hurries over.

> MICHAEL Mr. Neezer! What are you doing here? You haven't completed your penance yet!

EDDIE Yeah, I know, I know. Help me up, would ya?

With Michael's assistance, Eddie clambers up onto his feet.

He fishes the angelic energy meter out of his pocket and studies it. The top of the hourglass is NOTICEABLY EMPTIER than it was before, now more empty than full.

Eddie gives a low whistle, shakes his head.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Boy, Gabriel wasn't kidding. That journey sure does suck the juice.

He slips it back in his pocket, pats himself down.

EDDIE (CONTD.) He around, by the way? Gabriel? I need to speak to him.

MICHAEL You can't see him, Mr. Neezer.

Eddie stops, looks up at Michael.

EDDIE

Whadaya mean, 'I can't see him'?

MICHAEL

That's how it works. Someone taking part in the PPP can't communicate with the person who gave them their penance until the deadline. They're the rules.

EDDIE

Jeez, you guys and your 'rules'! Can't you bend them, just once?

MICHAEL

No.

EDDIE

Please!

MICHAEL No. I didn't do it for Elvis, and I'm not gonna do it for you.

EDDIE But --(stops) -- wait, Elvis? Elvis did a penance?

MICHAEL

Yep.

EDDIE Can I ask what it was?

MICHAEL

Yep.

EDDIE Would you tell me?

MICHAEL Nope. EDDIE Huh. Fair enough. (beat) Did he pass? MICHAEL Yes, he passed. Eddie nods in satisfaction. EDDIE Darn right he did. He pauses, looks at Michael with a frown. EDDIE (CONTD.) Why did I come up here again? MICHAEL Something about wanting to see Gabriel... EDDIE Oh yeah! Please, Mike, you gotta let me see him. I'm gonna fail my penance if you don't! MICHAEL It's not gonna happen, Eddie. EDDIE But --MICHAEL Eddie! Read my lips. It's. Not. Happening. Rules are rules. That's just the way it is, okay? Eddie sighs, throws up his hands resignedly. EDDIE Okay, I got it. Michael sighs. MICHAEL What did you want from Gabriel, anyway?

EDDIE

Oh, just a bit of information on Tim's past. I wanna find his real mother.

MICHAEL Well, I could give you that.

Eddie turns to face him with an expression of renewed hope.

EDDIE You could?

MICHAEL Sure. It'll be in his file.

Michael goes to one of the filing cabinets and pulls out a file. The cover page reads 'TIM LITTLE'. He flicks through the file, eventually pulling out one single sheet of paper. He hands it to Eddie.

EDDIE You, Michael, are a saint. Saint Michael! If I see you in Heaven, I'm buying you a drink.

MICHAEL I'll hold you to that.

Eddie scans the piece of paper.

EDDIE (reading aloud) Kennington, South London. Gotcha.

MICHAEL I'd go straight down now, Mister Neezer. Finish the job.

EDDIE There's no rush. I still have a couple of days.

Michael checks the watch on his wrist.

MICHAEL Not according to this, you don't. It's Christmas Eve already.

Eddie looks up from the file.

EDDIE

What?

MICHAEL

Yep. It's the evening of Christmas Eve in the UK. Your deadline is about three hours away.

EDDIE

But that's not possible! It wasn't Christmas Eve when I left, and I've only been up here a few minutes. How can that much time have passed?

MICHAEL

When you jump around between locations, you lose your grip on time, too. If you're not careful, hours, days, even weeks can go by. It's even worse when you travel between Earth and The Terminal. Sometimes it doesn't happen, but if you don't concentrate in every jump, you can never be sure. Did Gabriel not explain that to you?

EDDIE (gritted teeth) I guess it slipped his mind.

MICHAEL

Ah.

Eddie hurries over to the elevator doors, presses the button, enters.

EDDIE Wish me luck, Michael.

MICHAEL Good luck, Mister Neezer. Nearly there now!

Before Eddie can reply, he starts to DROP.

THE VOID - CONTINUOUS

Eddie tumbles once more through the Void, only this time he is more in control. He straightens himself out, flying like an arrow instead of a crumpled heap like before. INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie appears in a WHITE FLASH, but this time manages to land on his feet.

EDDIE Hey! I'm getting better at that.

The bedroom is dark and quiet. Eddie goes over and flicks the light switch.

The bed is made and empty. Eddie looks round.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Tim?

Eddie scratches his head in confusion. He glances towards the window, and double-takes.

EDDIE (CONTD.) What the...?

He nudges the curtain to one side and looks out.

A NEWS STATION VAN is parked opposite the house. A REPORTER delivers a report from the pavement. TWO POLICE CARS are parked nearby, and a small crowd is gathered round, watched by FOUR POLICEMEN. Eddie surveys the scene with wide eyes.

He spins back round, looking more urgently round the room.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

Tim!

INT. TIM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julie sits on the sofa, dabbing at her eyes with a tissue. Pete sits next to her, a comforting arm round her shoulders.

A POLICEMAN stands nearby.

POLICEMAN I promise you we're doing everything we can, Mrs. Peters.

JULIE Oh, my poor little darling...

POLICEMAN It's only been thirty-six hours. There's no reason to believe he's come to any harm. JULIE It's just not right - a boy his age wandering the streets all alone on Christmas Eve. Anything could happen to him, poor little mite!

Pete rubs her arm, pulls her into a hug.

PETE It's going to be okay, love. He's going to be okay.

Eddie turns away from the scene, screws his eyes shut and clenches his hands into fists.

EDDIE (to himself) I'll find ya, kiddo. I'm coming...

He disappears in a FLASH.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Eddie appears in a deserted park. A full moon and stars provide the only light. The place is eerily silent.

He looks both ways down the path -- no-one in sight.

EDDIE

Tim?

No response from anywhere. Eddie takes a few steps one way, then a few steps another way, peering into the gloom.

```
EDDIE (CONTD.)
(louder)
Tim?
```

A COUGH comes from his left. Eddie spins to face that way.

He spots a huddled shape at the bottom of one of the trees and creeps towards it, tentatively.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Tim? That you, buddy?

The shape stirs slightly. A voice drifts weakly out of the darkness.

TIM

Eddie?

EDDIE Yeah, it's me.

He hurries over and crouches down next to Tim, who is shivering from the cold. Eddie pulls off his coat and wraps it around the boy.

> EDDIE (CONTD.) Well, found ya. It's your turn to seek now.

Tim springs at Eddie and buries his head in his chest. Eddie looks surprised for a moment, before, giving him a hug.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Hey, hey, it's okay.

He pulls Tim away, holds him at arm's-length.

EDDIE (CONTD.) What were you thinking running off, huh? Your foster mom was worried about you!

TIM I waited for you all night, but you didn't come back. I thought you'd forgotten about me, so I tried to

get to Trafalgar Square by myself.

EDDIE Forgotten about you? Nah, I wouldn't do that. You're my buddy. C'mon, let's get you home.

He starts to stand up. Tim grabs his sleeve.

TIM No! Please. Can we still go to Trafalgar Square? I really want to see my mum. Did you manage to find her?

Eddie pulls the folded piece of paper out of his pocket.

EDDIE You bet I did. Come on then, take my hand.

He holds out his hand. Tim grabs it, pulls himself upright. He stands next to Eddie. EDDIE (CONTD.) You ready? Hold on tight, now.

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - NIGHT

The two APPEAR in Trafalgar Square, next to the big tree. Eddie puts his hands on Tim's shoulders.

> EDDIE You wait here, okay? I'll be back with your mom before you know it.

TIM Promise you won't take so long this time?

EDDIE I promise. See you soon.

He stands up, takes a step back, and DISAPPEARS.

INT. ISOBEL'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Isobel - the woman from the coffee shop earlier on - sits in an armchair reading a book, curled up in the same way as Tim. Her living room is tidy and largely impersonal.

Eddie appears in a FLASH. A BEEPING comes from his pocket. He pulls out the angelic energy meter and checks the levels - only a few grains of powder remain at the top of the hourglass.

> EDDIE Damn. Nearly out.

He puts the angelic energy meter back in his pocket, then looks up at Isobel.

EDDIE Can she see me? Or hear me?

He shouts at her, as loudly as he can.

EDDIE Hey! Lady! Over here!

No response.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Huh. Apparently not. EDDIE (CONTD.) How can I do this without her seeing me? I can't. Hey, you!

He jumps up and down, waving his arms about. She walks straight past him back to the chair, completely oblivious to his presence. Eddie waves his hands in front of her face, but she makes no reaction.

Eddie paces back and forward, hand on his chin.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Think, Eddie, think. She can't see or hear you when you're fighting to be seen. So try something else. Try the opposite.

He stops, breathes in and exhales slowly. He stretches his arms out either side, palms facing down. He shuts his eyes.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Just relax. Let your guard down, and just maybe...

And as Isobel glances up from her book, Eddie suddenly FADES IN, now visible to her. Her mouth drops open.

Eddie smiles sheepishly at her.

EDDIE From the look on your face I'm guessing you can see me now, huh?

Isobel looks away from him, down at the wine glass in her hand. She sets it down on the coffee table.

ISOBEL I must have had too much wine.

EDDIE

Oh no, you're not drunk. You're not imagining me - I'm really here.

Isobel still doesn't look at him.

ISOBEL

I can <u>hear</u> him. The hallucination I can understand - too much wine, or maybe the fish was off - but <u>hearing</u> him? I should call Dr. Jones... She stands up, walks towards the door. Eddie gently steps into her path, blocking her escape. She pulls up a metre short of him.

ISOBEL (CONTD.) And now he's stopping me from leaving. Is that normal? Are your hallucinations supposed to stop you from leaving rooms? Maybe I should just call an ambulance...

EDDIE

Look, I'm not a hallucination, okay? I'm real. There's no time for you to freak out.

ISOBEL Okay, he's talking to me. This definitely isn't normal. I should definitely call an ambulance.

She steps forward. Eddie throws up a hand to stop her. The instant Eddie's fingers touch her she leaps back with a SCREAM.

She stares at him, wild-eyed.

ISOBEL (CONTD.) Wh-what are you?

EDDIE I'm here to help you, okay?

ISOBEL Help me, right...

She sinks back down into the chair.

ISOBEL (CONTD.) I've gone mad.

EDDIE No, you haven't gone mad. Look, I need your help too.

They talk over each other, Isobel completely ignoring Eddie.

ISOBEL

They're going to come a lock me away in a mental hospital. It'll be just like that one in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, with a horrible nurse that'll pick on everybody and make it her mission to break me and'll eventually have me lobotomized... EDDIE

I promise you, you're not mad. I'm really here, look! Please, I don't have time for this, I'm on a very tight schedule and we've gotta head out, right now, if we're gonna make it on time. Please, listen to me. Will you please just -(louder) - I know where your son is!

That gets Isobel's attention. Slowly, she looks up at Eddie, and speaks in barely a whisper.

ISOBEL

My son?

EDDIE

Yeah, your son. The one you abandoned on a church doorstep when you were twenty-three. The one who you haven't seen in almost twelve years despite your efforts to track him down and the one who is, right this minute, just three miles away.

Isobel stares at him.

ISOBEL

Who are you? How do you know so much about me...and how the hell do you know I had a son?

EDDIE It'd take too long to explain. Just believe me when I tell you all I want in the world right now is to see the two of you reunited. So are you coming, or --

Eddie stops mid-sentence. His eyes WIDEN.

He crosses to a shelf and picks up a framed photo. He stares at it, mouth hanging open. Slowly, he turns towards Isobel.

> EDDIE Where did you get this photo?

He holds it up for her to see. It is a black-and-white shot of a mother holding her baby - EXACTLY THE SAME PHOTO that Eddie had by his bed. ISOBEL

What?

EDDIE This photo. Where did you get it?

ISOBEL My mum gave it to me. It's a picture of us. What's it to you?

But Eddie has turned away, no longer listening. fishes the piece of paper out of his pocket, unfolds it. He reads it.

EDDIE It...it can't be.

ISOBEL Are you alright? What is it?

He looks up at her, speaks with wonder in his voice.

EDDIE I think you're my daughter.

He staggers backwards, lands in an armchair.

ISOBEL Daughter? What are you on about?

EDDIE What's your name? Is it --

He mouths it as she says it.

ISOBEL

Isobel.

EDDIE Isobel. My God.

He looks up at a clock hanging on the wall. It reads 11:13.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Oh Jeez! I'm almost out of time! Quick, we gotta leave now!

He leaps to his feet.

ISOBEL Wait a minute - you can't just claim you're my father and then change the subject! EDDIE

I'll explain everything on the way, I swear. Please just trust me when I tell you that you and Tim <u>have</u> to be reunited within the next forty-five minutes.

Isobel looks at him, really studying his face. She sizes him up, and then makes her decision. She nods.

ISOBEL

Okay. It all sounds completely crazy, but who can tell what and what isn't mad anymore? I'm in.

EDDIE Thank you. Thank you so much.

He pulls the angelic energy meter out of his pocket, holds it up to look at it.

The top is completely empty.

EDDIE

Oh no.

ISOBEL What's wrong?

EDDIE It's all gone. I can't teleport without this stuff. What do we do?

ISOBEL Wait, 'teleport'? What are you, a superhero?

EDDIE That's just what Tim said...no, I'm not a superhero. I'm a temporary angel that can't teleport once I've run out of angelic energy. So what the hell do we do?

ISOBEL Do? We do what normal people do. We call a taxi.

She heads out of the room. Eddie looks up at clock on the wall - the time is 11:15.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ISOBEL'S FLAT - MINUTES LATER

Eddie and Isobel climb into a black cab. Isobel shuts the door and shouts out to the driver --

ISOBEL Trafalgar Square, please, as fast as you can!

The taxi accelerates away.

INT./EXT. TAXI - NIGHT

The taxi hurries through the street of London.

INSIDE, Isobel and Eddie sit opposite each other. Isobel stares at Eddie with a mixture of fear, awe, and anger.

ISOBEL You left my son all alone in a busy square in London on a freezing winter night?

EDDIE Hey, he's fine. I wanted the reunion to be a special occassion. Besides, you left him on a church doorstep - which is worse?

Isobel just scowls at him.

EDDIE (CONTD.) That wasn't fair. I'm sorry. I know all about what happened, why you had to give him up. The father wanted an abortion - he'd never have let you keep him.

A second of silence. Isobel looks out the window, then back again to ask a question.

ISOBEL You weren't serious before, were you? About the teleporting thing?

EDDIE

Yeah, I was.

ISOBEL But teleportation's impossible. Everyone knows that. EDDIE Impossible for people, yeah. But not for angels.

ISOBEL (disbelieving) And you're an angel, are you?

EDDIE No, not yet. But if everything goes well, then I could become one within the next few minutes.

ISOBEL

You're mad.

They lapse into silence.

ISOBEL So what did you mean when you said I was your daughter?

EDDIE I meant what I said.

ISOBEL But it's impossible. I mean, I've never even met you before. You just appeared in my living room, literally out of thin air.

EDDIE Your mom's name was Delilah, right? Delilah Knight?

ISOBEL

Yes...

EDDIE She was my wife.

Isobel can only blink at him.

EDDIE (CONTD.) We were married straight out of high school and stayed married for nearly ten years, until I managed to drive her away. You look just like her, you know?

Isobel instinctively reacts with a coy smile, brushing a strand of hair behind her ear.

EDDIE (CONTD.) I loved her, and I drove her away. Obviously she came over to England and built a new life here. Did she ever talk about me?

ISOBEL

Yes. (pause) She never forgave you, you know. (pause) I don't know if I ever could, either.

Another moment of silence.

EDDIE Izzie --ISOBEL

We're here.

Eddie turns to look out the window, and sure enough he sees Trafalgar Square, with the tall Christmas tree at the centre.

ISOBEL (CONTD.) Here! Stop here!

She hands Eddie some money.

ISOBEL (CONTD.) You pay him. I want to find my son.

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - NIGHT

The taxi comes to a halt at the edge of Trafalgar Square.

A door flies open and Isobel clambers out. Eddie follows, stops at the window and presses money into the driver's hand.

> EDDIE Keep the change, buddy!

The taxi drives off. Isobel stands, scanning the area.

ISOBEL Where is he? I don't see him. Is he here?

80.

EDDIE Yeah, he's here. Tim!

A few of the people standing around glance at Eddie as he staggers forward, calling Tim's name. Isobel follows.

ISOBEL

Tim!

EDDIE Tim! Where are you, kid?

The two of them stop and look all around. Isobel raises a hand to her forehead.

ISOBEL I can't see him!

But Eddie has stopped. A smile grows on his face. He raises a hand, points directly in front of him.

EDDIE

There he is.

He points towards the tall Christmas tree that stands in the centre of Trafalgar Square. At the bottom, sitting on the ground, is Tim.

Eddie waves. Slowly, Tim stands up. He waves back.

EDDIE (CONTD.)

This way.

He walks towards Tim, Isobel alongside him.

They stop about three metres apart, mother and son staring at each other. Eddie smiles.

EDDIE Tim, this is your mom.

ISOBEL

Hello.

A moment of utter awkwardness.

Then, Tim breaks into a wide smile and rushes towards his mother, who sweeps him up in an embrace.

TIM

Mum!

In the background, BIG BEN begins to strike twelve.

Eddie pulls the happiometer out of his pocket. The entire tube SHINES, full of shimmering gold liquid. Eddie smiles, his face lit up by the glow.

> EDDIE Hey, would you look at that.

He looks up towards Tim and Isobel, when from behind him --

GABRIEL (O.S.)

Eddie.

Eddie turns round.

GABRIEL stands there, a gentle smile on face.

GABRIEL (CONTD.)

It's time.

Eddie looks at him, then back at Tim and Isobel.

EDDIE You knew? You knew all along he was my grandson?

GABRIEL

Yes.

EDDIE But why, why --

GABRIEL

Why didn't I tell you? Because I wanted you to be able to find out on your own. To help Tim for unselfish reasons. You've changed that little boy's life, Eddie, and you did it without knowing who he was. You succeeded.

EDDIE

You mean...?

Gabriel nods.

GABRIEL Go and say goodbye to your family. It's time to go.

Eddie looks at him with wide eyes. Then, suddenly, he launches himself at Gabriel, sweeping him up into a hug. Gabriel seems shocked, but smiles he hugs him back.

EDDIE

Thank you. Thank you.

He breaks, and walks over to Tim and Isobel. Eddie taps Tim on the shoulder.

EDDIE

Hey, Timbo.

Tim pulls away from Isobel, looks at Eddie.

EDDIE (CONTD.) It's time for me to head off, kid.

TIM Really? You have to leave <u>now</u>? Can't you stay?

EDDIE

'Fraid not, buddy. I've done what I came back to do. My time's up.

Tim launches himself at Eddie, clinging onto his waist.

TIM But you can't leave! We just met! What am I going do without you?

EDDIE Hey, you've got your mom now. And there's Julie, Pete...plenty of folks care about you, Tim. You're a good kid. You're gonna be alright.

Tim just hugs him tighter.

TIM I'll miss you.

Eddie winces, bites his lip to stop tears leaking out.

EDDIE I'll miss you too. But you're not gonna forget me, right?

Tim shakes his head vigorously.

EDDIE (CONTD.) And I'm not gonna forget you. I'll be watching over you, okay?

TIM

Okay.

Eddie looks up from the top of Tim's head. Isobel stands where she is, staring up at him.

EDDIE

I'm sorry for everything, Izzie. But you do better, you hear? You look after this one. Family's the most important thing in the world. Ain't nothing that matters more than looking after the ones you love. And that's the truth.

She nods. Eddie gently prises Tim off him, holds him at arm's length.

EDDIE Look after your mom for me, okay?

Tim nods. Eddie pulls him in for one last hug, a quick one, then turns and walks away.

Gabriel stands waiting. He smiles, holds out his arm.

GABRIEL

You ready?

Eddie breathes in, takes it.

EDDIE

I'm ready.

He calls out --

EDDIE

Hey, Tim.

Tim looks up. Eddie smiles, not quite believing what he is about to say.

EDDIE (CONTD.) Merry Christmas.

And with that, the two of them disappear, FADING INTO DUST.

The dust swirls, then streaks up, a GOLDEN RIBBON against the black sky. It streaks into the STAR at the top of the Christmas tree, which glows brighter for a moment.

And then --

-- they are gone.

Tim looks up at the star, his eyes bright.

TIM Merry Christmas, Eddie.

The snow drifts gently down, and the sweet sound of carols fills the air. The majestic tree shines out into the crisp night and somehow, at least right here, right now, in this one moment, all feels good and right with the world.

FADE OUT