PICNIC 0410

by

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FADE IN

EXT. PARK - DAY

Rippling blue WATER. High puffy clouds float gently overhead.

JASON (VO) My life is about rescue. Rescue. Save me. I don't want anything more.

A children's LIFE RING floats by.

JASON (VO) It's a play. It's a play. I'm watching myself dying on the stage, the stage of life and I can't stop it.

A large, dark HAND passes before the SUN and all is -- BLACK.

JASON

Save ... me.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - NIGHT

On TV, a pitchman, DENNIS, 50s. He speaks to a studio audience.

DENNIS

People come to me. They write me letters: 'I'm confused, my life is despair, my life is broken. Help me. Rescue me.' But I'll tell you the simple truth. You can only rescue yourself. When you cross the street, you don't stop in the middle to see if the light is red or green. You just go. You cross the street. But if you get run over, you start to see some rules still kick in. Here is what I have learned. These are my rules: One. Strength needs no excuse. Two. The past is pointless. Three. Never stop to question yourself. And four. Never apologize. For anything. Ever.

JASON, 20s, sits on his dingy sofa. Alone.

His eyes are big. This is a revelation.

He stands, takes a new white shirt from his closet, puts in on, walks out the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

TONY, 40s, neighbor, perpetually smiling, over-dressed salesman, walks by. He mutters to himself.

TONY I hate this. It's unproductive. It's foolish. Have a purpose. I will die one day. Let them know I was here.

JASON (VO) I'm trying to explain my intentions here. But it's hard.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Family picnic. About 20 adults and children sit at connected picnic tables.

Harsh Sun shines.

Dark clouds on the horizon.

Jason's father, PETER, 50s, lectures JASON in front of all of his family members.

PETER You owe me one hundred and fortyseven thousand, nine hundred and fifty-six dollars. Plus interest. How exactly do you expect to pay?

His sister, ROSE, 20s, holds one of her children.

ROSE Jason tends to overreach sometimes. He has his eye on the horizon.

JASON Whatever my debts are, I don't have time to attend to every little detail.

PETER You may find the services of a lawyer useful.

Rose's husband CHRISTOPHER, 30s, scowls at him.

CHRISTOPHER Did you bring anything for the picnic?

JASON I thought you'd say that.

Jason produces several large containers of JUICE -- grape, orange, peach, etc.

The containers are quickly passed around. Glasses are filled.

PETER I was getting tired of Kool-Aid.

Everyone drinks the juice. Smiles all around. Including Jason. But he only pretends to drink.

Within minutes...

GROANS

Sweating, people at the picnic grab their throats.

CAN'T BREATH.

They start to collapse. Fall. Pass out. Die.

Peters sits at his place normally.

Smiles.

Gets up.

JASON

One thing I've learned in that it
only takes one. One decision.
One turn in the path of life.
One sip. Life is not a series of
decisions. It's one big decision,
and it all goes from there.
 (looks around)
This is not so much. What was
the point of it all anyway?
Money? Hardly. I told you.
Rescue. Freedom to go on.
Without judgment. And not look back.

He walks calmly away.