

EUDEMONIA

by

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EUDEMONIA

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is dimly lit.

PHIL, a middle-aged businessman, walks through the hallway. He is wearing an expensive-looking suit and is clean-shaven. His shoes click with every step.

The noise of people chatting and music playing echoes through the hallway. The noise grows louder and louder as Phil approaches a bright light.

The light is coming from the BALLROOM. Phil stops and peeps inside.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It's a party.

BUSINESSMEN and BUSINESSWOMEN are mingling with one another and drinking wine. From the music and clothes we get that it's the 1980's.

WAITERS are serving drinks. Round tables covered with white cloths are set up around the room. Buffet tables are set up against the walls. A couple of the Businessmen and Businesswomen are sitting down eating.

A DRUNK is wobbling through the crowd, holding a wine glass.

The Drunk walks up to a group of businesswomen and opens his mouth. Just as he's about to speak, the businesswomen roll their eyes and walk away.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Phil notices a man in his 30s wearing a janitor's uniform standing to his right.

The Janitor is looking inside the ballroom. He smiles as he watches the party. He appears to be day-dreaming. The name tag on his shirt reads ALCANDER CUSACK, under the word JANITOR.

Phil approaches Alcander.

PHIL
Some party, huh?

Startled, Alcander jumps. He looks at Phil.

Phil points towards the party.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I think the drunk adds a nice
touch.

ALCANDER
I...I'm sorry I was just--

PHIL
Watching some of the most empty
people on this planet?

Alcander smiles and shrugs.

ALCANDER
Well, their pockets sure aren't
empty.

Phil chuckles and shakes his head.

PHIL
But their lives are.

Alcander looks inside the ballroom and raises his eyebrow.

ALCANDER
Hmm...they look pretty happy to me.

PHIL
Believe me, most of the people you
see in there are anything but.

ALCANDER
(Chuckles)
Considering they have everything.

PHIL
Is that right?

Alcander nods. Phil looks at the party.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You know...

(Beat)

I heard the guy they're throwing this party for is a complete mess. One of the richest guys in their firm. Forty-something, no life, no cares, no family. Well, he had a family, but he left them for his secretary, who left him the very next day.

ALCANDER

At least he still has his money.

Phil looks at Alcander.

PHIL

Money won't make a person content with his or her life.

ALCANDER

You can say that 'cause you're not a janitor.

APPLAUSE is heard from down the hall.

Alcander and Phil look down the hallway. A WOMAN is exiting a SMALLER BALLROOM. Bright light shines into the hallway.

PHIL

What's going on over there?

ALCANDER

(Makes quote gesture on "metaphysics")
Some "metaphysics" convention.

PHIL

Metaphysics?

Alcander nods.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Very interesting subject.

ALCANDER

(Scoffs)
If you think so.

PHIL

Yeah. I do.

(Beat)

I mean, don't you ever think about your life as a whole? Why you're living the life you're living?

ALCANDER

(Shakes his head)

What good are thoughts like that? Probably just make you miserable.

PHIL

Come on. You never think about the universe? How there might be some world out there bigger than you and me? A world that us humans will never experience unless...unless we're chosen to, or something?

Alcander shakes his head.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Why not?

ALCANDER

Seriously, why bother? It won't change anything.

There's an awkward silence. Phil sways and looks down at his feet. His hands are in his pockets. He looks up at Alcander and smiles. His smile is surprisingly comforting and warm. He sticks out his hand towards Alcander.

PHIL

It was nice meeting you...Alcander.

ALCANDER

Yeah. You, too...

PHIL

Phil. Phil Vogel.

They shake hands.

ALCANDER

Nice talking to ya, Phil.

Phil nods.

PHIL
I better get going.

ALCANDER
Yeah, I've got to get back to work.
This place doesn't clean itself.

PHIL
(Smiling)
Take care.

Phil begins to walk off, and then stops. He turns around.

PHIL (CONT'D)
And sometimes questioning and
thinking isn't such a bad thing. It
can help you make sense of the
impossible.
(Beat)
You should try it sometime.

ALCANDER
(Chuckles)
Maybe in another lifetime.

Phil smiles and turns back around. He straightens his tie,
and then walks into the large ballroom. Alcander watches him.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Phil walks in. A RANDOM BUSINESSMAN notices him and raises
his wine glass.

RANDOM BUSINESSMAN
(Loudly)
Hey, everyone. It's Phil Vogel, the
man of the hour!

The Businessmen and Businesswomen stop what they're doing and
applaud Phil, who smiles his acknowledgement.

The Drunk raises his glass. He's slightly swaying.

DRUNK MAN
Hey Phil. This is your parr-r-tayyy.
You da man!

PHIL
 (To Drunken Man)
 Thanks Mike...You might wanna slow
 down on the wine.

The Businessmen and Businesswomen laugh. They go back to what they were doing. Phil walks farther into the party shaking hands.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As before. Alcander is watching Phil. He laughs.

ALCANDER
 Man of the hour...

Alcander's pager starts BUZZING. He jerks and pulls the pager out of his pocket. He holds the pager up, looks at it, and stuffs it back into his pocket.

INT. HOTEL - JANITOR'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Alcander walks inside the room, and turns on the lights. He walks up to a small, messy desk and moves aside a large stack of papers, revealing a phone underneath.

He dials. Through the phone we hear the line he is calling ring a few times.

MARTHA (V.O.-FILTER)
 Hello?

ALCANDER
 Hi Martha, you called...is
 everything alright?

INT. ALCANDER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is small. The carpet is stained, and the paint around the window frames is chipping.

MARTHA, a woman in her 30s, is sitting on a rundown sofa. She has the phone pinned between her ear and shoulder and is folding clothes.

MARTHA
 (Into phone)
 Yeah.
 (MORE)

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I was just calling to check up on you. When do you think you'll be home?

INT. HOTEL - JANITOR'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

As Before. Alcander scratches the back of his head, and then picks up a random sheet of paper. He examines the paper, and places it back down.

ALCANDER

(Into phone)

Uh...I'm gonna be late tonight.

MARTHA(V.O.-FILTER)

Alcander, come on! It's your birthday.

Alcander picks up another sheet of paper. It's a drawing of two stick figures. One is tall, and the other is short. They are holding hands. The coloring is horrible, and resembles scribbles. The top of the paper reads ME AND DADDY in child-like writing. Alcander smiles.

ALCANDER

There's two events happening here tonight. We need the extra money.

MARTHA(V.O.-FILTER)

I know.

INT. ALCANDER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As before. Martha is still folding clothes.

MARTHA

(Into phone)

Okay. I just hate having to tell Penelope.

YOUNG PENELOPE, six years old, runs into the living room.

YOUNG PENELOPE

Is that Daddy?

Young Penelope jumps on the sofa. The folded clothes on the cushion next to Martha fall on the ground.

MARTHA

Penelope!

Martha gets up and hands Young Penelope the phone.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Here.

Young Penelope, smiling, grabs the phone.

YOUNG PENELOPE

(Into phone)

Hi Daddy! Happy Birthday! Guess
what?

Martha begins to pick up the fallen clothes, and place them
back on the sofa cushion.

INT. HOTEL - JANITOR'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

As before. Alcander is still looking at the drawing. He
smiles, using his finger to trace the outlines of the stick
figures.

ALCANDER

(Into phone)

Hey Button.

YOUNG PENELOPE (V.O.-FILTER)

Guess what?

ALCANDER

What?

YOUNG PENELOPE (V.O.-FILTER)

We made you a cake! And I made you
a present.

ALCANDER

Oh did you!?

YOUNG PENELOPE (V.O.-FILTER)

It's a surprise. Are you on your
way home?

ALCANDER

No. Not yet.

INT. ALCANDER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As before. Young Penelope is sitting on the sofa. Martha is still picking up the clothes.

YOUNG PENELOPE
(Into phone)
But we made you a cake.

ALCANDER (V.O.-FILTER)
I know, thank you. We can eat it
tomorrow, okay?

YOUNG PENELOPE
(Disappointed)
Okay. Here's Mommy.

Martha picks up the last piece of clothing. Young Penelope hands Martha the phone, and then walks out of the room with her head hung low.

Martha watches Young Penelope and sighs. She sits back down and places the phone to her ear.

MARTHA
(Into phone)
I'm gonna go put her to bed. I'll
see you when you get home.

INT. HOTEL - JANITOR'S CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

As before. Alcander is on the phone.

ALCANDER
(Into phone)
Okay.
(Beat)
And Martha?

MARTHA (V.O.-FILTER)
What?

ALCANDER
I...I'm sorry.

MARTHA (V.O.-FILTER)
Good.

Martha hangs up.

Alcander is still holding the phone. The dial tone gets louder. He hangs up the phone and puts down the drawing. His eyes begin to water. He takes a deep breath in and closes his eyes.

INT. HOTEL - BATHROOM - HOURS LATER

Alcander, eyes closed, breathes out and opens his eyes. He looks exhausted. He has a mop in his hand and a bucket by his shoes. The bucket water is brown and foamy.

He dips the mop in the bucket, and begins mopping the floors. His strokes are slow and consistent.

He opens one of the bathroom stalls. The toilet water is yellowish-brown; the floor is wet, covered with tissue. Alcander's eyes widen, he flinches. *Nasty!*

INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - HOURS LATER

Alcander walks in pushing his JANITOR CART.

The place is a mess; wine glasses and dinner dishes are still on the tables. Confetti is all over the floor. Alcander sighs.

Alcander picks up a piece of confetti and examines it. He releases the confetti, letting it spiral down.

He walks over to one of the tables, leaving his cart behind.

A wine glass on the table is still full. Alcander looks around the room suspiciously, holds up the glass, and takes a sip. He closes his eyes and slightly smiles. *Good stuff.*

ALCANDER

Ahhh...Happy birthday, Pal.

INT. HOTEL - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Alcander walks toward the entrance door. He's wearing jeans and a T-shirt.

A SECURITY GUARD holds the door open.

ALCANDER

Bye, Bob. Give Nelle and the kids
my
love.

SECURITY GUARD

Will do... and tell Martha and
Penelope I said hi. Okay?

ALCANDER

You've got it.

SECURITY GUARD

By the way, happy birthday, Man.
How old are ya this year, huh?

ALCANDER

I'm growing younger.

SECURITY GUARD

You don't look any younger to me.

ALCANDER

Neither do you.

Alcander waves, and walks out of the door. The security guard waves, and chuckles.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NIGHT

A beat-up FORD is driving behind a TRUCK on a two-lane street. Alcander is driving the Ford. He honks his horn.

The TRUCK DRIVER sticks his hand out the window and flips the bird.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - NIGHT

Alcander notices the Truck Driver flipping the bird.

ALCANDER

Thanks...

Alcander looks down at his speedometer. The arrow is pointing to 35.

ALCANDER (CONT'D)

In a 55 zone. Oh come on!

He looks in his rear view mirror, and then around the truck.
All clear.

Alcander quickly turns the steering wheel, and pulls onto the other lane.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Alcander's Ford moves onto the other lane. He is driving side by side with the truck.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - CONTINUOUS

Alcander looks inside the truck. A shadow is cast over the Truck Driver's face, making it impossible to see him.

Out of nowhere, Alcander is blinded by another car's headlights.

The car is coming straight at him! A horn HONKS!

ALCANDER

Crap!

Alcander rapidly turns the steering wheel.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Alcander's car swerves around the car coming towards him. His tires SCREECH!

His car runs off the road, and onto a grassy area.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - CONTINUOUS

Alcander is struggling to steady the steering wheel. He looks up, and his eyes widen. He gasps. A shadow slowly covers his face.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

BAM! Alcander's car slams into a tree.

Through the car windows, we see Alcander's body jolting back and fourth from the impact.

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

INT. ALCANDER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Martha is sleeping in her bed with Penelope snuggled against her.

We hear a LOUD KNOCKING NOISE.

Martha moans, and turns to her side. The knocking starts up again.

Young Penelope wakes up. She shakes Martha.

YOUNG PENELOPE

Mommy?

MARTHA

Hmm?

YOUNG PENELOPE

Someone's here.

MARTHA

What?

There's another knock. Martha opens her eyes.

YOUNG PENELOPE

See!

MARTHA

(Sighs)

Daddy probably misplaced his keys again.

Martha slowly gets up. She rubs Penelope's back.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Go back to sleep, Honey.

Martha walks out of the room.

INT. ALCANDER'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Martha opens the front door. A POLICEMAN is standing on the other side; INEXPLICABLY, THE POLICEMAN IS ACTUALLY PHIL FROM THE HOTEL. Martha opens her mouth, but nothing comes out.

PHIL (AS POLICEMAN)
Hello Ma'am. I'm officer Jim Cohen.
(Beat)
Are you Martha Cusack?

MARTHA
(Nods)
What's wrong?

The Policeman takes off his hat.

PHIL (AS POLICEMAN)
It's about your husband, Alcander.

MARTHA
What--

Young Penelope walks in. She's rubbing her eyes. Martha and the Policeman look over at her. She stands next to Martha and looks up at the Policeman. She tugs Martha's arm.

YOUNG PENELOPE
Where's Daddy?

MARTHA
Honey, go back to bed.

YOUNG PENELOPE
But where-- ?

Martha tears up.

MARTHA
Penelope, please!

YOUNG PENELOPE
But--

MARTHA

Just go back to bed. I'll be right there.

Young Penelope looks at the Policeman, and then walks out of the room.

INT. ALCANDER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Young Penelope walks in the room. She gets in bed and pulls the blankets over her.

MARTHA (V.O.)

(Sobbing)

No...No!

Young Penelope's eyes widen. She stares blankly around the room, breathing heavily. We can hear Martha sobbing.

Young Penelope jumps out of the bed, and rushes out of the room.

INT. ALCANDER'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Young Penelope steps into the hallway and looks towards the door.

We can see Martha sobbing. She sinks to the floor. The Policeman catches her, as she slowly falls.

Young Penelope stops in her tracks and stares at Martha. Her eyes begin to water.

EXT. CEMETERY - BURIAL CEREMONY - DAY

The sky is grey. A soft wind rustles the leaves of surrounding trees, making a faint whistling noise.

A CROWD of people are surrounding a CASKET. Martha and Young Penelope are standing in the front. Martha, eyes watering, stares blankly at the casket.

A PRIEST stands in front of the casket, facing the crowd. He's smiling, but you can see the sadness in his face.

PRIEST

Not only was Alcander a devout member of the church, he was also a very close friend of mine. And it is a tragedy to have lost him at such a young age.

Young Penelope is looking down at her hands. She is holding a white piece of paper. We can only see the back.

Martha puts her arm around Young Penelope's shoulders and draws her in.

PRIEST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He may no longer be with us in body, but he will always be with us in memory, in our hearts.

Young Penelope stares at the white paper. We still can't see what is on the other side.

PRIEST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'll miss him every day. I'm sure we all will. And I know for a fact that we'll never forget him.

One of Young Penelope's tears drops on the white paper. From the back of the paper, we can see a yellow tear drop tracking down the other side, but still cannot see what's on the front.

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

INT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - PENELOPE'S ROOM - MORNING

SUPER: PRESENT DAY

It's a very modern-looking bedroom. There's a flat screen TV on the wall. A digital alarm clock is on the nightstand near the bed. One wall of the bedroom is all glass, revealing green trees on the outside.

PENELOPE, now a late 30-something year-old woman, is sleeping in the bed.

NORA, her 17 year-old daughter, runs in the room and jumps on Penelope's bed. Penelope moans.

NORA
Come on, Mom. Wake up.

PENELOPE
Do I have to?

NORA
Yes. We've gotta leave soon. Come
on...

Penelope turns away from Nora.

Nora gets up and walks to the foot of the bed. She pulls Penelope's blankets up and starts tickling her feet.

Penelope begins squirming around and laughing.

PENELOPE
(Between laughter)
Okay... Okay. I'm getting up.
(Beat)
Are you ready?

Nora stops tickling Penelope.

NORA
All packed, dressed, and ready to
go as soon as you are.

Penelope sits up and smiles.

PENELOPE
Give me a half hour.

NORA
You mean an hour?

PENELOPE
(Nods)
Mm hmm.

NORA
Fine. But please, Mom, no longer.

PENELOPE
Okay. One hour, max. I promise.

Nora smiles and walks out of the room.

Penelope slides back down and pulls the blanket over her head.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

NICHOLAS AGNITIO, a middle-aged man, is sleeping. His covers are pulled over his head, so we don't yet see his face.

His room is messy. Books are stacked on top of each other in a book case. Clothes are piled on the ground. Papers with edit marks and comments written in ink are scattered all over his nightstand.

There's an ALARM CLOCK on top of the papers.

The alarm clock goes off. He takes one of his hands from beneath his blanket and slams the snooze button. The alarm turns off. He pulls his covers in closer to him.

INT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

There's an island in the middle of the kitchen dividing the kitchen appliances from the dining area. The refrigerator is decorated with pictures of Penelope and Nora together, Nora at various ages.

A box of cereal and a milk carton are rested on the island.

A coffee maker is steaming on the counter.

INT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Pictures of Martha and Penelope are in frames all over the living room.

Nora is sitting on a sofa, eating cereal, and watching TV. She's on her cell phone.

NORA

(Into phone)

I know, I've been waiting for this trip. I promise I'll bring you something back.

Two beats.

NORA (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

I'm only missing a few days of school. I'll be fine.

A very faint GAGGING NOISE is heard. Nora becomes silent. She tilts her head. *What's that noise?*

INT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - PENELOPE'S ROOM - MORNING

Penelope is no longer in bed. The sound of gagging grows louder and louder.

The bathroom door in Penelope's room is cracked open. The gagging noise is coming from inside.

INT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

As before. Nora is sitting on the couch, eating cereal, on the phone. The gagging noise is no longer evident.

Through the phone we can here someone whining.

Nora shakes her head.

NORA

(Into phone)

Sorry. I thought I heard something.

(Beat)

What were you saying?

INT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

Penelope is bent over the toilet vomiting.

Penelope stops and wipes her mouth. She sits up, presses her stomach, and squints her eyes in pain.

Penelope flushes the toilet, stands up, and looks at herself in the mirror. She looks horrible. She turns away from the mirror and then turns on the shower.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

As before. Nicholas is still sleeping. His alarm clock goes off again. He turns it off.

Nicholas moans and sits up. He rolls his head from side to side, stretches his shoulders, and stands up.

Nicholas walks over to the BATHROOM door. While walking he yanks on the back of his pants, pulling out a wedgy. We still can't see his face.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

The shower is on. Nicholas' figure is seen through the frosted glass door. He's standing still, leaning against the tile, with his head hanging down.

The sound of snoring becomes evident. A LOUD SNORE is heard. Nicholas' head jolts up and moves around. He scratches the back of his head.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Nicholas walks into the kitchen. He is dressed in a suit jacket and jeans. We still can't see his face.

He opens the refrigerator and looks inside. It's nearly empty. There's an open container of yogurt, and a loaf of bread.

He pulls the loaf of bread out of the refrigerator. He turns the loaf over, revealing dark green mold. We hear him letting out an amused snort.

EXT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Penelope puts a piece of luggage in the trunk and slams it shut. Nora is sitting in the passenger sit, listening to her iPod.

INT. PENELOPE'S CAR - DAY

Penelope gets in the driver's sit and closes the door. Nora takes out her iPod headphones.

PENELOPE

Are you excited?

NORA

(Smiling)

Of course! Are you kidding me?

PENELOPE

This should be good for us. We haven't had a lot of mother/daughter time lately.

(Beat)

We have a lot to talk about.

NORA

A lot to talk about?... Great.

PENELOPE

Oh stop it, Nora. This will be fun.

NORA

Mom, the last time we had a mother/daughter talk, it got kind of awkward.

Penelope laughs.

NORA (CONT'D)

(Smiling)

Seriously, I don't think I can explain the facts of life to you again.

PENELOPE

That was only a one-time thing. You can't hold it against me.

Nora chuckles. Penelope sticks her keys in the ignition, and starts the car.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I don't plan on embarrassing myself again. Promise.

NORA

Good.

Penelope smiles at Nora. Nora smiles back, and then turns her head the other way, looking out her window.

EXT. PENELOPE'S HOUSE - DRIVE WAY - DAY

Penelope's car backs out of the driveway and drives off. Through the passenger's window, we can see Nora looking outside.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

A not too new LEXUS is seen driving on a busy street. Nicholas is inside. We still can't see his face.

INT. NICHOLAS' LEXUS - DAY

Nicholas is driving. A coffee cup is in the cup holder near his armrest.

Nicholas reaches for the coffee cup, keeping his eyes on the road. He wraps his fingers around the coffee cup and pulls it up. His fingers slip and coffee SPILLS all over his lap. He jerks back. Steam raises from his lap.

NICHOLAS
(Painfully)
Ah!

Nicholas takes his eyes off the road and looks down at his lap. His pants are stained with coffee.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Aw, come on.

Nicholas begins wiping the coffee off his pants. We still can't see his face.

EXT. BUSY STREET - CONTINUOUS

All the cars next to Nicholas stop. The light turns RED.

Through the driver's window, we can see Nicholas wiping his pants. He runs the red light.

Cars going the other direction begin to HONK.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NIGHT (FANTASY/FLASHBACK)

It's the night of Alcander's death. A car is coming straight at Alcander, honking. Alcander swerves around the car.

INT. NICHOLAS' LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas looks around frantically. He clenches the steering wheel. We still can't see his face.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - NIGHT (FANTASY/FLASHBACK)

Alcander rapidly turns the steering wheel. His tires SCREECH, and his car swerves off the road.

INT. NICHOLAS' LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas shakes his head and blinks. We can only see his eyes. He rapidly turns his steering wheel, dodging cars.

NICHOLAS

Crap!

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - CONTINUOUS (FANTASY/FLASHBACK)

Alcander is struggling to steady the steering wheel. He looks up, and his eyes widen. He gasps.

INT. NICHOLAS' LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas is looking out the front window of the car. We can only see his eyes. His eyes widen.

He quickly turns the steering wheel to his side, and squints.

EXT. BUSY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas' car is seen sliding towards a BIG TRUCK. He is seen through the windows of his car turning his steering wheel wildly. BAM! Nicholas' car SLAMS into the truck.

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - NICHOLAS' ROOM - DAY

Nicholas is sitting up in his bed. We can only see his back.

JASON, a middle-aged man, walks into the room. Like the policeman in the earlier scene, HE IS ACTUALLY PHIL FROM THE HOTEL BALLROOM.

NICHOLAS

Hey.

JASON

Nick. You okay, Man?

NICHOLAS

I'm fine.

(Beat)

Got a souvenir.

Nicholas holds up his left arm. It's wrapped in a white cast.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Fractured my ulna, and totaled my car.

JASON

Better that than the other way around.

(Shakes his head)

So what the hell were you thinking?

NICHOLAS

I don't know. It wasn't exactly premeditated.

JASON

(Chuckles)

Wanna get out of here?

NICHOLAS

Yeah. I tried to talk them out of it but they made me stay overnight. And my class starts in an hour.

JASON

I swear I'm always getting you out of something.

NICHOLAS

And I'd swear it's the other way around.

JASON

Guess that's what friends are for, right?

NICHOLAS

Yeah, yeah. Let's just go.

Nicholas stands up. They walk out the room.

INT. PENELOPE'S CAR - DAY

Penelope is at the steering wheel, driving. Nora is in the passenger seat.

Nora has her seat reclined and her feet on the dashboard. She's listening to her iPod, eyes closed and head bobbing.

Penelope looks at Nora.

PENELOPE

Hey!

Nora opens her eyes and looks up at Penelope. She takes off her headphones.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

We're almost there.

NORA

Really?

Nora sits up and looks outside the window.

PENELOPE

I haven't been back to NYU since I graduated.

NORA

I can't believe I got in.

PENELOPE

It's funny, I thought I'd feel old...but I feel younger seeing you off to NYU. I'm getting the college vibe back again.

NORA

Who knows? Maybe you'll become my roommate.

PENELOPE

I don't feel that young.

Nora laughs.

NORA

You know I want to audit Professor Agnitio's class. Are we gonna make it on time?

PENELOPE
We'll be there.

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - DAY

Nicholas is teaching a class of STUDENTS. His back is turned and he is writing on a white board with his right hand. His left arm is still in the white cast.

PROFESSOR NICHOLAS AGNITIO is written on the corner of the board next to INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY.

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - BACK OF ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nora and Penelope walk into the classroom through the back door.

NORA
(Whispering nervously)
Mom, the class already started!

Penelope is looking around the room.

PENELOPE
(Whispering)
Sorry.

Penelope points to two empty seats and walks towards them. Nora follows her. They sit down.

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas writes SOCRATES on the board and WISDOM underneath. He turns around, revealing his face. HE IS ACTUALLY ALCANDER CUSACK, THE JANITOR WHO DIED EARLIER.

Penelope squints her eyes, and looks Nicholas up and down. Nora's mouth drops.

NORA
Oh my god, Mom. He looks just like that picture of your Dad we have on the mantel.
(Beat)
Crazy, right?

Penelope's eyes widen.

NICHOLAS

So consider this scenario.

(Beat)

A homeless man and a scientist are
at dinner.

A few students chuckle.

Nicholas begins to slowly pace back and forth. His shoes
click with every step.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

They're talking about universal
truths. The homeless man admits he
knows nothing about what is true or
not. But the scientist says he
knows a great deal about universal
truths, and recites theories.
According to Socrates who is wiser?

Nicholas stops pacing and looks straight at his students. A
FEMALE STUDENT in the front row who is slouched over in her
chair answers:

FEMALE STUDENT

The homeless man.

NICHOLAS

Why?

FEMALE STUDENT

Well, Socrates believed "He who is
wisest admits he knows nothing."
Wisdom is admitting ignorance.

NICHOLAS

Good.

Nicholas walks over to a MALE STUDENT who is playing around
on his LAPTOP.

The Male Student is playing SOLITAIRE, and does not notice
Nicholas standing over him.

Nicholas clears his throat. The Male Student looks up at him,
and quickly closes the laptop screen.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

So, what do you think?

(Beat)

(MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
About Socrates... Not about the
game you were playing on your
laptop.

MALE STUDENT
Uh...
(Beat)
Well, honestly, I think Socrates is
wrong.

Nicholas stares at the Male Student. *Are you kidding me!?*

NICHOLAS
Care to explain?

MALE STUDENT
I just don't see how we can we be
wise if we know nothing. I mean, we
wouldn't be able to read, write--

Nicholas chuckles.

NICHOLAS
That's a good point.
(Beat)
But that's not what he meant by
knowing nothing. We can assume
Socrates promoted literacy.

Nicholas walks away from the Male Student, and faces the rest
of his classroom.

Penelope can't stop staring at Nicholas.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Socrates found it wise to admit to
knowing nothing because it allows
us to question.

Nora turns to Penelope.

NORA
(Whispering)
Mom, are you okay?

NICHOLAS
And questioning allows us to gain
truth and understanding.

Penelope, wide-eyed, continues to look at Nicholas. Nora tugs on Penelope's shirt. Penelope blinks, and then looks at Nora.

NORA
What's the matter?

Penelope opens her mouth but nothing comes out. She looks lost in thought.

NORA (CONT'D)
You look all flushed. Like you're sick. Do you want to leave? I won't mind.

PENELOPE
(Softly)
No.

Penelope looks back towards Nicholas, who is now writing on the board.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
We should stay.

EXT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - OUTSIDE OF PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - DAY

A large crowd of students walks out of the classroom. Nora and Penelope walk out with the crowd. The students disperse in different directions.

Nora and Penelope sit down on a nearby bench.

NORA
You sure you're okay?

PENELOPE
(Nods, confused)
It's just...he looks so much like my father. I...

NORA
Maybe he's a distant cousin?

PENELOPE
Can't be. I mean, we have no relatives on my dad's side, but...

NORA
But?

Penelope opens her purse and pulls a folded picture from her wallet. She unfolds the picture, revealing Alcander, Young Penelope, and Martha, sitting down on a water fountain in a beautiful green garden. They're smiling. Young Penelope is sitting on Alcander's lap.

Penelope glances at the picture and hands it to Nora.

NORA (CONT'D)
 (looking at it)
 Whoa.

PENELOPE
 Even if they're related, how can
 they be that identical?

Nora shrugs.

NORA
 I...I have no idea.

There's a silence. Nora looks up at Penelope.

NORA (CONT'D)
 Why don't we just ask him?

Penelope looks down, pondering her thoughts.

PENELOPE
 I'll think about it.

EXT. PARK - DAY

ATHLETES are jogging. LOVERS are having picnics. PEOPLE are walking their dogs. YOUNG CHILDREN are playing on swings, slides, merry-go-rounds, and monkey bars. MOMS are sitting on benches, talking to one another, occasionally looking towards the play area for their children.

Nicholas, carrying a briefcase, smiles as he walks by a birthday party.

ADULTS and CHILDREN are gathered around a table. A LADY is lighting candles on a cake. A MAN approaches the party. Something catches Nicholas' attention and he stops to watch, growing more intent with every second.

LADY
 He's finally here!

PEOPLE AT THE PARTY
(All at once)
Happy Birthday!

The Lady hugs the man and kisses him on the cheek.

A LITTLE GIRL is sitting under a TREE, picking flowers by the party. She looks up at the man.

LITTLE GIRL
Daddy!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS (FANTASY)

The Little Girl reaches for another flower. Suddenly a tree limb slowly reaches down and wraps around her. She laughs.

The tree limb pulls her up, and places her on a branch. The tree starts to grow uncontrollably. Soon the Little Girl is fifty feet up in the air.

Nicholas stares. He opens his mouth to say something, but nothing comes out.

The Little Girl is still laughing. She is holding a bundle of flowers in her hand. She looks towards the man at the party.

LITTLE GIRL
Daddy! We made you a cake!

The man looks over at the Little Girl.

The tree continues to grow. Branches and twigs swirl around the tree. The Little Girl seems to be a hundred feet up in the air.

MAN
Sweetie, get down from there.

LITTLE GIRL
We made you a cake!

The Man walks over to the tree. As he approaches the tree, it gets smaller and smaller. When he reaches the tree, it is only about six feet tall. The Man reaches up towards the Little Girl. She extends her arms towards him.

Then suddenly Nicholas is standing in front of the tree, right where he Man was, with his arms extended. Now the Little Girl is Young Penelope, reaching for him, smiling.

Nicholas looks around frantically, and then back at Young Penelope. *What's happening?*

He grabs Young Penelope and places her safely on the ground. She grabs his hand and leads him towards the tables. Nicholas is confused but he follows her.

PENELOPE

Over here, Daddy! We made you a cake!

NICHOLAS

I--

PENELOPE

And I made you a present!

(Beat)

It's a surprise.

They reach the table.

Martha Cusack and a bunch of PARTY GUESTS are surrounding a table. A cake is lit with candles. Everyone is wearing 1980's attire, including Nicholas and Penelope. Nicholas examines his clothes. *What am I wearing!?*

Nicholas puts his hand on his forehead. He squints in pain.

1980's music is playing from a boom box on the table.

MARTHA

(To Nicholas)

Alcander. Time to blow out your candles. Come on, Honey.

NICHOLAS

Huh? Who?

MARTHA

We're gonna sing "Happy Birthday."
Come on.

Martha waves her hand around, signaling Nicholas to stand next to her. Nicholas slowly walks over and stands by Martha.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Come here, Penelope.

Martha picks up Young Penelope and holds her. The Other People at the party begin to sing. Martha and Penelope join them.

OTHER PEOPLE, MARTHA, AND YOUNG
PENELOPE

(Singing)

"Happy birthday to you. Happy
Birthday to you. Happy birthday
dear Al-can-der."

NICHOLAS

(Softly, to himself)

Alcander?

OTHER PEOPLE, MARTHA, AND SIX YEAR OLD

(Singing)

"Happy birthday to you!"

They all cheer.

YOUNG PENELOPE

Make a wish, Daddy!

NICHOLAS

What?

YOUNG PENELOPE

Make a wish!

Nicholas looks around. Everyone is smiling and staring at him. Reluctantly, he bends over and blows out the candles, turning everything to:

BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

As before.

Nicholas has his eyes closed. He opens them and looks at the party. The people at the party are singing "Happy Birthday" to the Man. The Lady is holding the Little Girl.

Nicholas looks around, confused. He shakes his head and pinches the bridge of his nose. He begins to walk off.

Then he steps on a pile of DOG POOP. He slips and slides, struggling to keep his balance. He catches his balance and lifts up his shoe, examining the bottom. Poop is smeared all over the sole of his shoe. He groans.

Nicholas scraps his foot on the gravel and walks up to a nearby stop light.

Across the street, a bright orange hand is flashing on a walk sign.

Nicholas looks down at his WATCH, and quickly jogs across the street towards a SUBWAY ENTRANCE. He reaches the entrance and jogs down the steps.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - EVENING

The inside of the SUBWAY TRAIN is crowded and noisy. A few people are standing up holding onto metal poles in the middle of the aisles.

Nicholas is sitting between a WELL-DRESSED MAN and a JANITOR. He is slouched back in his seat, his briefcase laying on top of his lap. Eyes closed and mouth slightly opened, his head slowly begins to fall back.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT (FANTASY/FLASHBACK)

It's the night of Alcander's death.

Phil and Alcander are standing in the hallway together.

Phil sways and looks down at his feet, his hands in his pockets. He looks back up at Alcander and smiles.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - EVENING

As before.

NICHOLAS
(Blurts)
Jason!

Everyone in the train turns their heads and stares at Nicholas. He looks around at them and awkwardly smiles. Everyone turns back around.

Nicholas looks over at the Well-Dressed Man and the Janitor.

INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT - EVENING

The restaurant is lightly lit. People are sitting around tables and booths eating pizza. Waiters and waitresses are carrying pizza pans to and from tables.

Nora and Penelope are sitting at a booth.

A WAITER approaches the table carrying a pizza. He places the pizza down.

WAITER

You ladies enjoy.

PENELOPE

Thank you.

The Waiter smiles and walks off. As he walks off, he passes a table diagonal from Martha and Nora's booth. Jason is sitting at the table.

Jason is looking at a menu. As the Waiter passes him, he looks away from the menu and over at Nora and Penelope from the corner of his eye.

Nora cuts a slice of pizza and places it on her plate.

NORA

Mm. This smells so good.

Nora hands Penelope the pizza cutter. Penelope takes the pizza cutter and places it down on the table. Nora looks up, confused.

NORA (CONT'D)

You're not going to eat?

PENELOPE

I'm not that hungry.

NORA

I can't eat a large pizza by myself!

Nora takes a bit of her pizza.

PENELOPE

Whatever you don't eat we can take
back to the hotel room.

Nora stops eating.

NORA

But you haven't eaten like all day.

PENELOPE

I'll eat later.

NORA

Mom...what's wrong? You've been
acting weird lately.

(Beat)

And you've lost a lot of weight.

PENELOPE

Since when do you notice anything
about how I look?

NORA

Don't change the subject.

Penelope looks down.

PENELOPE

It's nothing, Nora...I just thought
I should shed a few pounds, since
summer's coming up.

Nora looks away from Penelope.

NORA

I can tell when you're lying to me.

PENELOPE

Why would I be lying to you?

NORA

You tell me.

PENELOPE

Everything's fine. Don't get your
panties in a bunch over nothing.

Nora chuckles.

NORA

Okay.

PENELOPE

I'll be right back.

Penelope gets up.

INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Penelope walks into the bathroom. She puts her purse on the counter, and then looks in the mirror. Her eyes are watering. She wipes her eyes, squints, and rubs her temples.

Penelope opens her purse and takes out a PILL BOTTLE. She opens the bottle, pours a pill in her hand, and turns on the faucet. She puts the pill in her mouth and rinses it down with water.

Penelope looks in the mirror and shakes her head. She puts her pills back in her purse and walks out of the bathroom.

INT. NICHOLAS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nicholas walks in. He takes off his shoes.

NICHOLAS

Home sweet home.

INT. NICHOLAS'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Nicholas opens the freezer and takes out a TV dinner. He walks over to the microwave and pops in the TV dinner.

He looks inside the microwave. The microwave is still going. He begins pacing back and forth. He looks inside again.

DING! The microwave stops. Nicholas takes out his food, grabs a soda, and walks out the room.

INT. NICHOLAS'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - HOURS LATER

Nicholas is sleeping on his couch. The TV dinner is on the floor, empty. The TV is blank, white static fills the screen.

Nicholas is twitching in his sleep. His eyelids are flinching.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Nicholas is seen through his car windows wiping his pants.

The cars going in the other direction are stopped at a red light. A BIG TRUCK is lined up behind a few cars.

The street light, directing Nicholas' side of street, turns from green to yellow.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

It's the scene of Alcander's car crash. Alcander's Ford is seen driving behind a truck.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The Truck Driver's face is covered by a shadow. He glances at his rear view mirror.

In the rear view mirror we can see Alcander's Ford driving side by side with the truck.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

As Alcander drives next to the truck, he looks inside the driver's window. The truck driver's face is still covered by a shadow. Alcander looks away.

The truck drives under a street light. The shadow slowly moves away from the Truck Driver's face. It's Phil.

Alcander looks back inside the truck. He notices Phil and squints his eyes.

INT. NICHOLAS' CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Nicholas is still wiping his pants. The cars next to him stop. He runs the light.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

As Before. Alcander is still looking inside the truck. Out of nowhere he is blinded by another car's headlights.

INT. NICHOLAS' CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Nicholas looks up, his eyes widen. He swerves his car around the other cars.

NICHOLAS

Crap!

He rapidly turns his steering wheel. The big truck appears before him.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Alcander is rapidly turning his steering wheel. His tires SCREECH.

Through the front window, we can see the headlights of the car approaching Alcander.

INT. CAR APPROACHING NICHOLAS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Through the front window, we can see Alcander's headlights. Alcander swerves around the car and runs off the road.

The DRIVER looks at Alcander's car. Moonlight from the outside shines into the car and lightens the Driver's face. It's Phil (Jason).

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Alcander car runs off the road, and onto a grassy area.

BAM! Alcander's car slams into a tree.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

BAM! Nicholas' car slams into the truck.

INT. NICHOLAS'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

As before. Nicholas is still sleeping. His eyes quickly open. He bolts up, gasping for air. His chest moves up and down slowly. He is sweating. He wipes his forehead.

Light shines in from the window and into Nicholas' eyes. He shields his eyes with his hand. He sits up and stares blankly, his breathing still labored.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Nicholas is sitting at a table with Jason.

Jason has two doughnuts in front of him. Nicholas is drinking a very large coffee.

JASON

I don't see how you can drink all that coffee.

NICHOLAS

I need it.

JASON

That's what all the caffeine addicts say.

Jason picks up a doughnut and takes a bite.

NICHOLAS

I haven't been sleeping well lately.

JASON

Judging from the size of that coffee, I can guess why.

NICHOLAS

It's not the caffeine. It's just every time I go to sleep I have these...I don't know...they're like nightmares, but they don't feel like dreams, more like memories.

Jason leans in towards Nicholas. He looks intrigued.

JASON

Memories?

Nicholas stares off blankly. He takes a sip of his coffee.

NICHOLAS

It's weird.

(Beat.)

(MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
I know I haven't experienced what
I'm seeing, but in some way...I
have.

Jason looks down, thinking.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
You know what's even more strange?

JASON
Hmm?

NICHOLAS
I was in this crash--

JASON
I know. You were in a car crash.

NICHOLAS
Not that one. A different one. You
were driving this truck I was
trying to pass.

Jason's eyes widen. There's a silence. He takes a bite of his
doughnut.

JASON
Hmm... I guess that is kind of
weird.

Nicholas looks down at his watch.

NICHOLAS
I've gotta get going. My class
starts soon.

Nicholas stands up.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Catch you later.

JASON
Yeah.

Nicholas walks off, and throws his cup away in a nearby trash
can. He exits the coffee shop.

Jason remains sitting at the table. He smiles to himself.

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - BACK OF ROOM - DAY

Penelope and Nora are sitting down amidst a large body of students. A few students are talking to one another, while others are reading or texting.

Nicholas walks in. Penelope turns, taking a hard, long look at him.

NICHOLAS

Sorry I'm late. Let's get right to it.

Nicholas writes DEATH on the board.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Death. What is death?

MALE STUDENT

According to Socrates, death is either the migration of the soul or an endless sleep.

INT. ALCANDER'S FORD - NIGHT (FANTASY/FLASHBACK)

Out of nowhere Alcander is blinded by another car's headlights. The car is coming towards him is honking.

White light covers Alcander's face.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - DAY

As before.

Nicholas is standing in front of the class, eyes glazed, shaken.

The sound of a pencil dropping to the floor is heard. Nicholas blinks and looks around.

A student is seen reaching towards the ground, picking up a pencil.

Nicholas looks at the Male Student.

NICHOLAS

I'm sorry, can you repeat that?

MALE STUDENT

I said, death is the migration of the soul or an endless sleep.

Nicholas nods.

NICHOLAS

Neither sounds too bad.

A few students laugh.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

But I want to focus more on the migration of the soul.

(Beat)

Let's bring Plato into the mix.

The students begin typing on their LAPTOPS.

Nicholas walks over to the board. He picks up a marker and draws a stick figure stuck in a jail cell.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Plato believed the body was the prison of the soul, and when we die our souls are freed.

He draws an arrow pointing to the jail cell and writes DESIRES/ EMOTIONS.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

The body is irrational. It's full of desires and emotions that distract the soul from having wisdom, courage, and temperance.

Nicholas turns around and walks toward his students.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

He also believed when the soul separates from the body through death, it learns what it forgot when it was in the body.

Nicholas walks over to the white board and writes EUDEMOMIA on the board. He turns around and faces his students again.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Can someone explain Eudemonia?

FEMALE STUDENT
It's happiness.

NICHOLAS
Indeed. Eudemonia: The happiness
the soul receives by living a life
outside of the body, gaining pure
virtue and knowledge.

Faint clicking noises are heard, as the students type on
their laptops. Nicholas turns back around and begins writing
on the board.

EXT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - OUTSIDE OF PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM -
DAY

Nicholas is walking away from the classroom. A bunch a
students are walking around, going off in different
directions.

NORA
Professor Agnitio! Wait!

Nicholas turns around. Nora is speed-walking towards him.
Penelope is a couple feet behind her.

Nicholas tilts his head. *What do they want!?*

Penelope walks up to Nicholas. Nora is by her side.

NICHOLAS
Can I help you?

PENELOPE
Hi, Professor. My name is Penelope,
and this is my daughter, Nora.
She'll be taking your class in the
Fall.

NICHOLAS
Oh, great, Well... Hi.

Nora smiles at Nicholas.

PENELOPE

This is going to sound crazy, but
are you by any way related to a man
named Alcander Cusack?

EXT. PARK - DAY (FANTASY)

Nicholas and Young Penelope walk up to the birthday table, as
in the other scene. The cake is lit with candles.

MARTHA

(To Nicholas)

Alcander. Time to blow out your
candles. Come on, Honey.

EXT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - OUTSIDE OF PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM -
CONTINUOUS

As before.

NICHOLAS

Who?

PENELOPE

Alcander Cusack. He was my father.
He died in a car crash years ago.

Nicholas stares at Penelope.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NIGHT (FANTASY/FLASHBACK)

BAM! Alcander's car slams into a tree.

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - OUTSIDE OF PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM -
CONTINUOUS

As before.

Penelope is still talking. She is holding the picture of
Alcander, Young Penelope and Martha out towards Nicholas.

PENELOPE

Here's a picture...

Nicholas blinks and looks up at the picture. He begins to
breathe heavily. He looks at Penelope and Nora.

NICHOLAS

Who is this?

PENELOPE

That's my father. Does his name ring any bells?

NICHOLAS

Yes...Sort of...I don't know. What did you say your names were again?

PENELOPE

I'm Penelope. And this is Nora.

Nicholas looks at the picture. He looks at Alcander holding Young Penelope. He points to Young Penelope.

NICHOLAS

Who is that?

PENELOPE

Me.

EXT. PARK - DAY (FANTASY)(FLASHBACK)

Nicholas is standing in front of the TREE with his arms extended. Young Penelope is in the tree with her arms extended toward him. She's smiling.

EXT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY - OUTSIDE OF PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

As before. Nicholas looks up at Nora and Penelope, confused and agitated.

NICHOLAS

I...I have to go.

He starts to go.

PENELOPE

Wait!

Nicholas stops and turns around. Penelope walks up and hands him a card.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Look, here's my card. My cell number is on the back.

(Beat)

Please just call if you think of anything.

Nicholas looks at the card and stuffs it in his pocket.

NICHOLAS

Thanks.

He turns around and hurries off. He turns a corner, disappearing out of Nora's and Penelope's sight.

NORA

Umm...What just happened?

PENELOPE

I'm not sure.

EXT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Nicholas is walking fast through the campus. He looks confused. He reaches in his pocket and takes out the card Penelope gave him. He looks at it.

NICHOLAS

(To himself.)

Penelope...

(Beat)

Penelope!

Nicholas smiles.

Just then his cell phone starts buzzing.

The screen says: NEW TEXT MESSAGE FROM JASON. He opens it: MEET ME IN THE PARK. HOT DOG STAND. IT'S URGENT.

Nicholas closes the message and stuffs his phone and Penelope's card back in his pocket. He stares blankly for a beat and walks off.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jason is sitting on a bench, eating a hotdog, looking around. He spots Nicholas walking towards him and waves.

Nicholas walks up to Jason.

JASON
(off hotdog)
Want one?

NICHOLAS
(Shakes his head)
What's so urgent?

Jason pats the bench. Nicholas sits down. There's a silence.

JASON
You've met her?

NICHOLAS
Who?

JASON
Your daughter... Penelope.

NICHOLAS
How did--

Nicholas looks at Jason. Jason puts his hand in front of Nicholas eyes and slowly waves. Nicholas closes his eyes. Jason puts his hand down.

EXT. PARK - DAY (FANTASY)

Nicholas slowly opens his eyes.

The park begins to fade away. All the color in the park fades and the people slowly dissolve, until everything is white.

The bench begins to spin. Nicholas clenches onto the metal arms.

A tornado of white light swirls around Nicholas and Jason. The wind from the tornado breezes over them. It's loud.

Jason looks very calm, as if nothing is happening. Nicholas is freaking out, looking around rapidly.

NICHOLAS
(Screaming)
What's happening!

Jason smiles at Nicholas. He turns away from Nicholas and looks forward.

Colors start to pour into the tornado and swirl around each other.

The wind dies down. Nicholas looks around at all the colors, hypnotized.

The tornado stops. All the colors crash down like a huge wave and disperse.

The colors move around and begin to take shape, coloring in the whiteness. The colors create a BEAUTIFUL GREEN GARDEN. Water is heard dripping.

The bench gently lands on the floor. Nicholas looks around, baffled.

EXT. BEAUTIFUL GREEN GARDEN - DAY (FANTASY)

Nicholas and Jason are sitting on a bench in the garden, under a willow tree. The branches from the tree hang down low around Nicholas and Jason, making it hard for them to see. The branches slowly sway from side to side.

People are walking around the garden. From the way they are dressed, we can tell that it's the 1980's.

A fountain is in the middle of the garden. It's the fountain from the picture Penelope has of Alcander, Martha, and Young Penelope. The sound of the water dripping from the fountain is evident.

There are trees with colorful flowers scattered all over the garden. The flowers from the trees are spiralling down and floating like butterflies through the air.

Vines from the trees slither across the ground, like snakes.

Nicholas looks around. Jason looks at Nicholas.

JASON

You're starting to remember.

NICHOLAS

Remember what?

JASON

Your past.

(Beat)

You died before Nicholas...as
Alcander.

NICHOLAS

What are you...How do you know--

Nicholas stops talking. He tilts his head as if he is trying to listen to something.

YOUNG PENELOPE (V.O.)

(Very faint)

Daddy, Mommy. Look...

Nicholas stares blankly and gets off the bench. He steps forward and sticks out his hands. He gently parts the low branches from the willow tree and walks out.

Young Penelope is running towards the fountain. Alcander and Martha are walking behind her. Alcander has a camera hanging around his neck.

YOUNG PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Look at the water fountain! It's so pretty.

Young Penelope stands next to the fountain. She bends over and runs her hand through the water. Martha and Alcander walk up behind her.

MARTHA

How's the water?

YOUNG PENELOPE

(Laughing)

It's freezing.

Young Penelope takes her hand out of the water and shakes it.

Nicholas is still staring blankly. He is walking towards the fountain. Nobody notices him. He stands in front of Alcander, Martha, and Young Penelope.

Young Penelope sticks her hand out towards Alcander.

YOUNG PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Daddy, feel how cold my hand is.

Alcander places his hand against Penelope's.

ALCANDER

That's cold.

YOUNG PENELOPE

I know.

Martha looks around at the scenery.

MARTHA

We should take a picture here. It's beautiful.

PENELOPE

Yeah!

Young Penelope looks up at Alcander. She tugs on his hand.

YOUNG PENELOPE

Can we, Daddy? Can we take a picture?

Alcander smiles.

ALCANDER

Sure, Button.

Alcander takes the camera from around his neck. He walks up to Nicholas and stops.

Nicholas stares at Alcander. His eyes widen. They're completely identical.

ALCANDER (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Sir. Would you mind taking a picture of me and my family?

(Beat)

Please?

Alcander smiles and holds out the camera towards Nicholas.

Nicholas reaches for the camera. Just as he is about to take the camera from Alcander's hand, another hand reaches through his torso and grabs the camera.

AN OLD MAN steps through Nicholas as if he wasn't there. He is holding the camera.

OLD MAN

Over by the fountain?

ALCANDER

Yeah.

Alcander walks back over to the fountain and sits. Martha and Young Penelope sit next to him. Alcander grabs Young Penelope and places her on his lap.

The Old Man stands in front of the fountain.

OLD MAN

(To Alcander, Martha and
Young Penelope)

Ready?

(Beat)

One, Two...Three!

Alcander, Martha, and Young Penelope all smile. They look just as they do in the picture Penelope showed Nicholas.

Nicholas gasps. Jason walks up to him.

Nicholas looks up at Jason. He looks scared. Jason looks over at the fountain. Nicholas follows his gaze.

The water from the fountain shoots up like a tidal wave and crashes down, covering Alcander, Martha, and Young Penelope; and knocking over Nicholas.

The water rushes over the entire garden. Nicholas struggles to stay afloat. He gasps for air.

The wave thins out until it is completely gone.

Nicholas rolls on the floor. He gasps for air and coughs. He is is laying on short green grass. He slowly stands up and feels his clothes. His clothes are dry. He looks up. He is in a cemetery.

EXT. NICHOLAS' FANTASY - CEMETERY - DAY (FANTASY)

In front of Nicholas, there's a crowd surrounding a casket. Nicholas approaches the crowd.

He looks around. *Where am I?*

A man standing in the back out the crowd turns around. It's Jason. He looks at Nicholas and turns his head towards the casket.

Nicholas puts his hand on his head and squints in pain.

PRIEST (V.O.)

Not only was Alcander a devout
member of the church, he was also a
very close friend of mine.

(MORE)

PRIEST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And it is a tragedy to have lost
him at such a young age.

Nicholas walks past Jason and into the crowd. He maneuvers himself around people in the crowd.

Nicholas reaches the front of the crowd and looks at the Priest talking. He looks around the man. And sees the casket.

Nicholas walks up to the casket and runs his hand along the surface. A tear rolls down his face. He tightly closes his eyes and looks away from the casket.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

He will always live in our
memories.

Nicholas opens his eyes and sees Martha and Young Penelope standing in the front row of the crowd. He slowly walks over to them.

Young Penelope is looking down at her hands. She's holding a piece of white paper. We can only see the back of the paper.

PRIEST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'll miss him every day. I'm sure
we all will. And I know for a fact
that we'll never forget him.

Nicholas stands in front of Martha. She's crying. He brushes her face with his thumb. Martha doesn't move. She can't feel him.

Nicholas looks down at Young Penelope. He notices she is holding a piece of paper. He looks down towards her hands.

Young Penelope is holding a drawing of three stick figures on a grassy plain. The three stick figures are labeled: DADDY, ME, and MOMMY. The stick figures are standing hand in hand. A bright sun shines behind them. The top of the paper reads: HAPPY BIRTHDAY DADDY. Nicholas' eyes water.

A tear rolls down Young Penelope's face and drops on her drawing. Her tear falls on the sun behind the stick figures. Yellow marker from the sun runs down the page and passes through the stick figure labeled Daddy.

NICHOLAS

(Softly)

Penelope.

Nicholas reaches out to touch Penelope. Before his hand reaches her, the sun from Penelope's drawing begins to shine brightly. Nicholas covers his eyes. He squints trying to see.

The whole cemetery becomes a blur. He reaches towards the drawing, trying to cover the sun. He slams his hand against the drawing, but his hand doesn't hit anything. He falls through the drawing. He begins falling down through air. Everything around him is white.

Nicholas spirals down, screaming. He's moving his arms and legs around frantically.

Below him, Jason is sitting on a bench. He looks up and waves at Nicholas.

Nicholas closes his eyes as he approaches Jason. He falls on the bench.

EXT. PARK - DAY

As before.

Jason and Nicholas are sitting in the park, on the bench. Nicholas has his eyes closed. He jolts and opens his eyes.

Nicholas looks around frantically. Everything looks the same as it did when he first met up with Jason.

Jason looks at Nicholas. He places his hand on Nicholas' shoulder.

JASON

(Calmly)

You're not crazy.

(Beat)

It happened.

Nicholas stops looking around. He looks at Jason, his eyes beginning to water.

JASON (CONT'D)

Nicholas...

Nicholas is staring off into space. He opens his mouth, but nothing comes out.

NICHOLAS

I...I remember. Everything.

JASON

I know. It was expected.

Nicholas stares at Jason.

NICHOLAS

What's happening?

(Beat)

Who are you?

JASON

Nicholas...you're different.

(Beat)

When people die, they're sent back to this world. But they don't look the same or remember anything about their past lives.

NICHOLAS

Then why do I?

JASON

Because you were chosen.

NICHOLAS

Chosen? What are you--

JASON

I'm not from this world, Nick.

(Beat, laughs)

I guess you can say I'm from...a "higher place."

Nicholas awkwardly looks up towards the sky. He looks back at Jason. Jason nods.

JASON (CONT'D)

It's my job to make sure people are redirected into other lives without memory of their past. Because remembering hinders your ability to move on and learn. Not knowing our past allows us to become wise.

NICHOLAS

He who is wise, knows nothing...

Jason nods.

JASON

Nicholas, I chose you to be my guinea pig, my experiment.

NICHOLAS

I'm an experiment? What are you talking about?

JASON

I wanted to see if there was some kind of... Loophole. A way to remember your past without any negative consequences.

Nicholas looks down, thinking.

JASON (CONT'D)

So I let you reenter this world. But I didn't intrude. I didn't make changes. I let you keep your memory, and I thought... I thought if you kept your physical appearance, it would, perhaps... Perhaps it would help you remember faster. But I was wrong. I was. And I was so glad when it looked like the experiment had failed, that you would never remember. But then the crash jolted your memory--

Nicholas looks up. He stars off blankly.

NICHOLAS

All these years I thought I was your friend. But I was a lab rat and you were the mad, alien scientist? No. I don't believe you.

JASON

Nick-- Don't you feel it, deep down? Don't you know I'm telling you the truth. And we are friends. Better friends than you know.

NICHOLAS

Why me?

JASON

Well--

NICHOLAS

Why did you choose me?!

JASON

As Alcander, you were the perfect target. You never questioned anything. You just accepted whatever happened. So I--

NICHOLAS

Took me from my family.

JASON

Nick, it's not--

NICHOLAS

The lady I met today. That's Penelope. She's my Penelope?

Nicholas looks at Jason. Jason nods. Nicholas stands up.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I have to talk to her.

JASON

Nicholas, the experiment, the whole idea... I was wrong. It's been tried with others. There's too much pain. Too much confusion. I've stayed with you all this time. But now it's time to go home.

NICHOLAS

I need to see Penelope!

JASON

Don't cause her any more pain. She's already suffering.

NICHOLAS

What do you mean, she's suffering?

JASON

Nick. You just can't, okay?

Nicholas begins to walk away. Jason stands up and grabs Nicholas' arm. Nicholas turns around.

JASON (CONT'D)
You have to come with me.
(Beat)
Come home, Nick.

NICHOLAS
Home? What is home?

Jason looks up at the sky. Nicholas follows his gaze.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
You mean I'd have to die again? Oh,
no way.

JASON
But you must come back. For your
own good. For Penelope's.

Nicholas shakes Phil's hand off his arm.

NICHOLAS
And what if I don't?

Jason looks away from Nicholas.

JASON
There isn't a loophole. The
experiment isn't working, Nick.

NICHOLAS
What?

JASON
Whenever you remember your
past...there's a block, a mental
block. And soon enough, it will
leak into your waking life.
(Beat)
It will only cause pain. A pain
that can't be cured in this world.

Nicholas stares at Jason, breathing heavily.

JASON (CONT'D)
If you stay, you'll always suffer.

Jason reaches out his hand.

JASON (CONT'D)
Come. Please.

Nicholas stares at Jason's hand. He slowly reaches towards Jason's hand, and then pulls his hand back.

NICHOLAS

No...I left Penelope once. I'm not doing it again!

JASON

Nick--

Nicholas turns around and walks away, his steps going faster until he is running. Jason lingers in the background.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - DAY

Nicholas walks in. He quickly walks down the hallway and turns into a room.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nicholas walks over to his bookcase. He starts pulling books off his shelf and throwing them on the ground. He picks up a book and reads the title. He shakes his head and throws it.

Nicholas picks up another book. The cover reads: DEATH AND REINCARNATION: SOCRATES, PLATO, AND PYTHAGORAS. He opens the book.

INT. HOTEL - PENELOPE'S ROOM - EVENING

Penelope and Nora are watching TV, laughing. Penelope's cell starts RINGING.

PENELOPE

Pause it, please.

Nora pauses the movie.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

Hello?

Static is heard on the other line.

NICHOLAS (V.O.-FILTER)

Hi...Pen...elo...pe.

PENELOPE

Hello!?

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - EVENING

Nicholas is sitting on a crowded subway train. He's on his phone.

NICHOLAS

(Into phone)

Hello?

PENELOPE (V.O.-FILTER)

Hello?

Nicholas stands up. A TEENAGER who was standing up takes his seat. Nicholas looks at the Teenager, squints his eyes, and shakes his head. The Teenager shrugs.

Nicholas turns away from the Teenager, holds up his cell phone, and puts it back on his ear.

NICHOLAS

Penelope? Can you hear me?

PENELOPE (V.O.-FILTER)

What!?

NICHOLAS

Can you hear me?

PENELOPE (V.O.-FILTER)

Yeah. I can hear you. Who is this?

INT. HOTEL - PENELOPE'S ROOM - EVENING

As before. Penelope is on her phone.

NICHOLAS (V.O.-FILTER)

It's Professor Nicholas Agnitio.

NORA

(Whispering. To Penelope)

Who is it?

Penelope swats Nora away.

PENELOPE

Hi, Professor.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - EVENING

As before. Nicholas is on his phone.

NICHOLAS
 (Into phone)
 Please, call me Nick.

PENELOPE (V.O.-FILTER)
 Okay. Nick.

Beat.

NICHOLAS
 I need to talk to you.
 (Beat)
 It's about your father...

INT. HOTEL - CAFE - NIGHT

People are sitting down at little round tables having lunch, drinking coffee, and talking to one another. Waiters are walking taking orders, bringing food.

Penelope, Nora, and Nicholas are sitting down, eating.

PENELOPE
 My mom told me we didn't have relatives on my dad's side, but I never believed her.

Nicholas looks up at Penelope.

NICHOLAS
 I don't exactly think I'm related to your father.

Penelope's smile fades.

PENELOPE
 What? But you just--

NICHOLAS
 Nora, you've studied philosophy before, right?

NORA
 Yeah, I've taken a few classes.

NICHOLAS

Are you familiar with Pythagoras?

Nora nods.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Then you must know about his whole theory on reincarnation. How he believed the soul was immortal and merely resides in the body.

Nora and Penelope exchange glances. *What in the world is he talking about?*

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

How the soul goes through a series of rebirths. He even claimed to remember a number of his past lives and--

PENELOPE

I'm sorry. I don't see where this is going.

NICHOLAS

What I'm trying to say is...Uh...

Nicholas scratches the back of his head.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Well, I...I'm...

PENELOPE

You're what?

Nicholas opens his mouth to speak. Just then a WAITRESS walks up to their table.

WAITRESS

How's everything going?

PENELOPE

(Impatiently)

Fine. Thank you.

Nicholas looks annoyed. The Waitress smiles and walks away.

Penelope and Nora look back at Nicholas.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. What were you saying?

NICHOLAS

Um...

Nicholas lets out a faint sigh.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I think I'm, I mean, I know I'm
your...

PENELOPE

What?

NICHOLAS

(Blurts)

I'm your father. Or at least I used
to be.

There's an awkward silence. Penelope leans in closer to
Nicholas. Nora looks at Nicholas like he's crazy.

PENELOPE

What is this, some kind of sick
joke?

NICHOLAS

No. I know you must think I'm
crazy, but I'm telling the truth.

(Beat)

It was an experiment, to see if
people could handle more than one
life, and I--

Penelope stands up and looks at Nora.

PENELOPE

Come on, Nora.

Nora hesitates and then stands. Penelope turns away and
begins to walk off. Nicholas stands up and grabs Penelope's
arm, stopping her in her tracks.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Let go of me!

NICHOLAS

Please, just hear me out.

PENELOPE

LET GO OF ME!

People are staring. Penelope shakes Nicholas' hand off her arm. Nicholas steps in front of her. They're face-to-face. Nora looks scared.

Penelope steps to her side. Nicholas steps to the side, blocking her. He places his hands in front of her.

NICHOLAS
Please. One minute.

Penelope looks at Nora. Nora slightly nods.

Penelope looks around, trying to avoid eye contact. Nicholas steps closer to her.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
I, um...I used to call you Button.

Penelope stops looking around and stares at Nicholas.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
And you used to draw for me.
(Smiles)
You loved making me drawings.

Penelope looks down, thinking. Her eyes start to water. She smiles.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
You drew me a picture for my
birthday. Little stick figures. But
you never gave it to me because of
the crash.

Penelope looks back up at Nicholas.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
The day I died, you--

A tear rolls down Penelope cheek. She slowly backs away from Nicholas.

PENELOPE
(Softly)
Stop...

NICHOLAS
Penelope--

Penelope puts her hand up, signaling Nicholas to stop talking.

PENELOPE
No, just stop. Please.

Penelope looks at Nora.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
(Softy)
Come on. We have to go.

Nora looks at Nicholas and then back at Penelope. Penelope pushes Nicholas aside and walks off. Nora follows her.

NICHOLAS
Penelope! I know you're suffering
with something. Let me help you.

Penelope stops in her tracks. She turns around and looks at Nicholas.

NORA
Mom. What is he talking about?

PENELOPE
Nothing, Nora.

Nora looks at Nicholas.

NORA
What do you mean she's "suffering?"

NICHOLAS
She's--

Penelope is still looking at Nicholas.

PENELOPE
Don't listen to him. He doesn't
know what he's talking about.

NORA
But--

PENELOPE
We're leaving.

Penelope begins to walk away. Nora and Nicholas follow her. Nicholas grabs her hand. Penelope shakes his hand off. She turns around to face him.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
You stay away from me.

Penelope turns back around and walks off.

Nora looks at Nicholas as if she wants to say something. She turns around and follows Penelope.

Nicholas watches them walk away. He doesn't move.

INT. HOTEL - PENELOPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Penelope and Nora walk into the room. Penelope is walking in front of Nora. She looks upset.

NORA
Mom! Will you just stop!

PENELOPE
What Nora!

NORA
What's going on? What did he mean
about you suffering?

Penelope looks down.

NORA (CONT'D)
Tell me!

PENELOPE
Nora it's noth--

Nora throws up her hands.

NORA
Ugh! Forget it.
(Beat)
I can't do this anymore. I can't go
on pretending nothing's wrong, when
I know you're keeping something
from me.

A beat.

PENELOPE
(Softly)
Okay.

Penelope walks over to one of the beds. She sits down and pats the mattress. Nora sits down next to her.

Penelope looks at Nora and then looks away. There's a silence. Penelope takes a deep breath and exhales.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Nora, I...I haven't been doing that well.

Penelope stops talking. She takes a deep breath. Her eyes start to water. She looks down. She is fidgeting around with her hands.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

I...I'm sick. I'm really sick.

Nora's lip starts to quiver. She shakes her head. *I don't want to hear.*

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

About a month ago, I went to the doctor for stomach and back pains.

(Beat)

I didn't think too much of it...I didn't want to.

Penelope stops talking she takes a deep breath.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

The doctor ran some tests. He sent me to another doctor, who sent me to another one, then another.

(Beat)

Nora, I have cancer. It's... It's in my pancreas. And it's... Spreading...

There's a silence. Nora is staring off blankly. Her eyes are watering and her breathing is heavy.

NORA

(Whispers)

No. This isn't happening. It isn't... It isn't real.

PENELOPE

I just couldn't... Honey, I couldn't seem to find the strength to tell you... I know it was wrong... But I couldn't...

NORA

How could you keep this from me?!

PENELOPE

I--

NORA

When I would ask you if you were fine...you lied to me. You lied to me so many times.

PENELOPE

I had to--

NORA

No, you didn't! You could have told me the truth!

PENELOPE

That's easier said than done, Nora.

A beat.

NORA

I know it's just...how can this be happening? You can't have...

(Beat)

I don't want to believe it...I can't.

Nora puts her head in her hands and cries. Penelope rubs her back. Nora looks up.

NORA (CONT'D)

Are you going to be okay?

Penelope faintly smiles. You can see the sadness on her face.

PENELOPE

Well, I started chemo about two weeks ago--

NORA

Gagging.

PENELOPE

What?

NORA

I keep thinking I'm hearing
gagging, late at night sometimes,
early in the morning... It's you,
isn't it? Throwing up.

Penelope nods.

NORA (CONT'D)

Well. Then it's going to be okay,
right? Chemo cures cancer.

Penelope shakes her head.

PENELOPE

(Beat)

I don't think it's going to be
okay.

Nora opens her mouth, but nothing comes out except sobs.
Penelope wraps her arm around Penelope and draws her in
closer.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOTEL - NIGHT

Nicholas walks along a sidewalk surrounding the hotel. His
head is hung low and his hands are in his pockets. People are
walking around.

The street lights along the sidewalk light up the streets.
Nicholas walks under a light. The light flickers. He looks
up, but the flickering has stopped.

A family walks past him. A MOTHER is pushing a stroller. A
FATHER, walking behind her, is balancing their small DAUGHTER
on his shoulders. The daughter is moving her hands around in
her father's hair, laughing.

Nicholas stares at them, and slightly smiles. He looks sad.
As the family passes, the daughter turns around, smiles, and
waves at Nicholas.

Nicholas smiles back at her, slowly walking away backwards,
waving to her.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOTEL - CONTINUOUS (FANTASY)

All of a sudden, the sidewalk begins to ripple like huge
waves. The cement crackles.

The family disappears. Nicholas frantically looks around. There's no one walking around.

The street lights bend like willow tree branches, and sway back and forth. Their lights change from a dim yellow color to a bright white. Nicholas shields his eyes.

The lights form a circle around Nicholas and begin spinning rapidly. They make a WHOOSHING sound.

The sidewalk ripples, faster and faster as the lights spin.

Nicholas removes his hands from over his eyes. The lights beam into his eyes, and he screams with pain.

He squints, unable to stand the light. He wobbles, struggling to keep his balance on the sidewalk.

The lights dim down and the sidewalk slowly stops rippling. Nicholas opens his eyes.

The lights die out completely, making everything go black.

Nicholas is heard breathing heavily.

A light flickers and turns on. Nicholas is now standing in:

INT. HOTEL - DIMLY LIT HALLWAY - NIGHT (FANTASY)

Nicholas looks around. The sound of chattering is evident. Nicholas looks down the hallway and sees a Well-Dressed Man standing next to a Janitor. Nicholas walks towards them.

Nicholas approaches them. He stares.

The Janitor is Alcander. The Businessman is Phil.

NICHOLAS

Jason?

Phil and Alcander do not move. They don't notice Nicholas.

Nicholas stands in front of Alcander. He tilts his head and stares at him. He reaches out at strokes his face.

A loud APPLAUDING noise is heard from a distance. Nicholas pulls his hand back and looks down the hallway.

The doors to a BALLROOM are opened. The light from the room shines into the hallway. Nicholas walks towards the light.

PHIL (V.O.)
What's going on over there?

ALCANDER (V.O.)
Some metaphysics convention.

Alcander walks up to the ballroom doors. He steps inside.

INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - NIGHT (FANTASY)

Nicholas walks around. Everything in the ballroom is blurry except him.

Blurry human figures are seen walking around, traces of colors following them. People are heard laughing and chatting.

Nicholas places his hand on his head and squints his eyes. He sighs in pain.

NICHOLAS
(To himself)
It's so small.

Nicholas looks around and maneuvers himself around the figures.

PHIL (V.O.)
You never think about the universe?
How there might be some world out
there bigger than you and me. A
world that us humans will never
experience unless...

A blurry figure walks past Nicholas. Traces of colors flow behind the figure. Nicholas sticks his hand and touches the colors.

PHIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Unless we're chosen to or
something?

The colors wrap around his hand, slithering up his arm like a snake.

Nicholas watches as the colors wrap around his whole body. He turns his arms from side to side observing the colors.

The colors wrapping around Nicholas morph into vines, squeezing his arms.

Nicholas painfully moans. The vines continue to wrap around his arms and legs. Nicholas begins tugging on the vines, trying to loosen himself.

The blurry figures are still walking around, colors gracefully flowing behind them.

The vines begin to lift Nicholas off the ground. He is still struggling to loosen himself. The vines squeeze him tighter. He moans.

There is a chandelier on the ceiling. It becomes blurry as the vines lift Nicholas closer and closer to it. Nicholas faces the chandelier.

The chandelier becomes a complete blur and white light bursts out of it. Nicholas squints in pain. He tries to cover his eyes with his hands, but the vines yank his arms back down. He is forced to stare at the light.

Jason's face slowly appears in the white light. He stares at Nicholas. His face ripples like a still body of water after a rock has been thrown in.

JASON

Look at the truth, Nick.

Nicholas opens his eyes and then squints.

NICHOLAS

It burns.

JASON

Open your eyes.

Nicholas opens eyes. The vines are no longer tugging on him.

The vines slowly unravel themselves from around Nicholas. He floats in the air. He looks down. Below him blurry figures are still moving around.

JASON (CONT'D)

Can you see now?

(Beat)

Do you understand?

Nicholas stares at Jason and shakes his head. He squints his eyes in pain and grasps his forehead.

NICHOLAS

It hurts...The way I see the world,
the way I think...it's so small.

Jason nods.

JASON

That was your way of looking at the
world as Alcander. You never
questioned. You limited your world.

NICHOLAS

(snidely)

Oh. So being a janitor, being poor.
You call that being limited?

JASON

His work and lack of money have
nothing to with anything. I think
you know that.

(Beat)

You restricted yourself to the
physical. Many of the rich and
powerful have done the same.

Nicholas stares blankly into the light. Nicholas squints his
eyes again.

JASON (CONT'D)

The pain you feel, that's the pain
of remembering Alcander's life.

(Beat)

Because now, your entire life
revolves around opening your mind
to a wide spectrum of thoughts and
questions. It's your job to do so;
you study philosophy.

Nicholas looks at Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)

You will never fully understand
Alcander. You can't...the mental
block is too strong.

(Beat)

Your way of thinking and
questioning will never match up
with his....You can't go back into
the dark once you've seen the
light.

Nicholas looks lost in thought.

JASON (CONT'D)

When I chose you, I really thought you'd be the one. I thought you'd be able to handle the knowledge of your past--

NICHOLAS

I just want my family.

JASON

I was wrong. And you can't have what isn't yours.

NICHOLAS

Penelope is my daughter!

The light shines brighter. Nicholas shields his eyes.

JASON

She was Alcander's daughter. You remember your life as Alcander... but you're not him.

NICHOLAS

She's my daughter. I know she is, I can feel it.

Nicholas removes his hands from in front of his eyes. Jason smiles.

JASON

Maybe you only think you feel a connection, because you want to.

Phil steps out of the chandelier light and floats next to Nicholas. They slowly lower to the ground. They are surrounded by blurring figures and traces of color.

Jason reaches out his hand towards Nicholas.

JASON (CONT'D)

You need to come with me. Come home Nick. You can't live torn between your lives. It's not working.

Nicholas backs away from Jason.

NICHOLAS

You can't take me again.

Nicholas turns around and runs around the blurry figures. He turns around. Jason is no where to be seen. He turns back around and Jason is standing in front of him. He freezes in his tracks.

Nicholas begins to run through the crowd of blurred figures. Jason sticks out his arm. His arms begin to stretch following Nicholas.

Nicholas drives into a group of blurred figures. The blurry colors begin to swirl around him like a whirlpool.

Nicholas falls to the ground. He looks up at the colors and moves his head around frantically.

JASON (V.O.)

You need to come back.

Nicholas shakes his head.

NICHOLAS

Not now...not now.

Nicholas tightly closes his eyes.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOTEL - NIGHT

As before.

Nicholas opens his eyes, scared. He is standing on the sidewalk in the exact same place. He looks in the distance, at the family that passed him walking down the street.

He leans on the wall of the hotel and slides down. He places his head in his hands and sobs.

INT. HOTEL - PENELOPE'S ROOM - DAY

Nora is sleeping. Penelope's bed covers are messed up, but she isn't in the bed.

Nora wakes up and stretches under her covers. She slowly sits up.

A faint gagging noise is heard in the bathroom. Penelope is obviously throwing up. Nora looks at the bathroom door.

Nora looks away from the door, pondering her thoughts. Her eyes widen. She jumps off the bed and walks over to Penelope's purse laying on a counter.

Nora opens Penelope's purse, takes out a cell phone, and opens a list of recent calls. She grabs a pen and writes down a number.

The gagging noise has stopped. Nora quickly puts Penelope's phone back in her purse.

NORA
Mom? Are you okay?

PENELOPE (O.S.)
I'm fine.

NORA
Uh, I kind of feel like doing some shopping. Is that okay with you?

PENELOPE (O.S.)
If you give me half an hour, I can come with you.

NORA
No, you should stay here and rest. You don't sound too good. I'll only be an hour or so.

Nora pulls a sweater over her pajama top and puts on some jeans. She puts the piece of note pad paper in her pocket.

Nora takes her LAPTOP CASE out of the closet and swings the strap around her shoulder.

PENELOPE (V.O.)
Okay then. Bye. I love you.
(Beat)
Be safe.

NORA
Bye...I love you too.

Nora hurries out the door.

INT. HOTEL - CAFE - DAY

Nora is sitting a table, working on her laptop. She stops typing and looks at the screen.

An internet page titled PANCREATIC CANCER is on the laptop monitor.

Nora clicks on a link titled TREATMENTS. A LIST OF CANCER TREATMENTS pop up. She glances over them.

Nora clicks on a link titled SURVIVAL RATES. She scrolls down the page. In bold letters a sentence states THE MEAN SURVIVAL RATE FOR ADVANCED PANCREATIC CANCER IS ABOUT 6 MONTHS.

Nora gasps. She quickly closes her computer screen.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Nora is walking, her cell phone to her ear. We hear the phone she is calling ring.

NICHOLAS (V.O.-FILTER)

Hello?

NORA

Hello? Hi! It's Nora. Penelope's daughter.

NICHOLAS (V.O.-FILTER)

Nora? Hi.

(Beat)

Didn't think I'd be hearing back from you guys.

NORA

No. It's just me.

NICHOLAS (V.O.-FILTER)

Is everything alright?

There's a silence. Nora brushes her hair.

NORA

Sort of...Can I meet you somewhere?

NICHOLAS (V.O.-FILTER)

(Confused)

Sure.

INT. HOTEL - PENELOPE'S ROOM - DAY

Penelope walks out of the bathroom. She is still in her pajamas. She looks horrible.

Her eyes are dark underneath and her hair is pulled back in a messy bun. She sluggishly walks over to the nightstand near her bed.

There's a glass of water and a pill on the nightstand.

Penelope grabs the side of her stomach, and squints in pain, then takes a pill.

She lays down in her bed, turns on the TV, and pulls the blankets close.

INT. DINER - DAY

The place has a 1950's theme and the waitresses are wearing pink poodle skirts.

Nicholas and Nora are sitting down at a table. The both have milk shakes in front of them.

NORA

How do you think all this...
Whatever it is... How'd it happen?

NICHOLAS

I don't even know where to begin.

Nicholas takes a sip of his shake.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I guess for starters, I was in a
car accident a couple days ago.

Nicholas holds up his left arm. Showing Nora the cast.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Nothing serious, but the whole
scene somehow jolted my memory.

Nora looks down. She begins spinning her straw around.

NORA

And... Just like that... In, like,
some weird way, you're my
grandfather?

NICHOLAS

I guess you can put it that way.

NORA

This is so surreal.

NICHOLAS

(Nods)

One day I'm living my life as I
always do and the next I'm
completely thrown off track.

NORA

That's exactly how I feel.

NICHOLAS

But you believe me.

She nods.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Why?

NORA

If there's one thing I've learned
from studying philosophy, it's to
always consider the illogical and
keep your mind open to all sorts of
ideas.

NICHOLAS

Philosophy probably helps, but
really, why do you believe me?

A waitress walks by. Nora stares at her poodle skirt.

NORA

I don't know. I guess it gives me
hope.

NICHOLAS

Hope?

Nora continues to spin her straw.

NORA

You were right...about my Mom
suffering.

Nora takes a sip of her shake. She looks down, pondering her
thoughts, and then back up.

NORA (CONT'D)

She, um... she has cancer.

(Beat)

And it's... It's bad. Really bad.

Nicholas' eyes widen.

NICHOLAS

That's...my God.

Nora wipes the corner of her eyes.

NORA

I didn't know until last night.

NICHOLAS

But I just found her. How can she
be-- ?

Nora looks around the diner, avoiding eye contact with
Nicholas.

NORA

All last night, I keep thinking
about what you said. About
everything you said is happening to
you.

(Beat)

If she does die, and what you're
saying is true... Then maybe, just
maybe, I'll... I'll be able to see
her again... Do you see...?

Nicholas places his hand over Nora's.

NICHOLAS

I'd hope for that, too.

INT. HOTEL - PENELOPE'S ROOM - DAY

The TV is on. Penelope is sleeping. Nora is sitting on her
bed watching Penelope.

Penelope begins to move around. She opens her eyes and sees
Nora.

NORA

Hi, Mom.

PENELOPE

Hey.

Penelope slowly sits up and faces Nora.

NORA

How are you feeling?

PENELOPE

Better.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

So how was shopping? What did you get?

NORA

I didn't exactly go shopping.

(Beat)

I met up with Nicholas, I mean Nick.

PENELOPE

Nora! What in the world were you thinking?! He could have hurt you.

NORA

He didn't hurt me.

PENELOPE

That's not the point!

(Beat, sighs)

If it was so important to you, I'd have gone with you.

NORA

Mom, I believe him.

PENELOPE

What?

NORA

I said, I believe him.

PENELOPE

Nora don't start this. I have too much going on already.

NORA

You know what I think? I think there's a part of you that believes too.

Penelope looks away from Nora.

NORA (CONT'D)

But you're too afraid to admit it, because it doesn't seem logical.

PENELOPE

It's not.

NORA

Why can't you just open your eyes for one second and consider the illogical. Maybe Nicholas looks like your Dad because he was your Dad!

Penelope doesn't respond. Nora's eyes begin to water.

NORA (CONT'D)

Can't you feel it?

Penelope looks up at Nora. She doesn't say anything.

Nora begins to cry. Penelope sits down next to Nora.

NORA (CONT'D)

If he is your father, it proves it... It proves it, don't you see...?

PENELOPE

Honey, what does it prove?

NORA

(Whispers)

That something comes after we die... That there's life...

PENELOPE

Nora...

NORA

Don't you want to believe we can be together again?!

Penelope wraps her arms around Nora.

PENELOPE
We're together right now.

NORA
But what about the future? What if
something happens to you?

PENELOPE
I'll still be with you.

Penelope places her hand over Nora's heart.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
Right there. No matter what
happens.

NORA
(Softly)
That's not good enough.

PENELOPE
I know.

They hug.

NORA
Will you at least talk to him? For
me?

Beat. Penelope nods her head reluctantly.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Penelope and Nicholas are walking on the sidewalk.

PENELOPE
I'm only doing this because Nora
asked me to.

NICHOLAS
I know. Thank you.

A MAN RIDING A BIKE rides up behind them. They move aside to
let him pass and then continue walking.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I don't know how I can convince you
I'm your father, or if I even
should.

There's an awkward silence.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You came here to have a
trip with your daughter and I
dumped this in your lap.

PENELOPE

You've got that right.

(Beat)

This wasn't just about NYU. I was
planning on telling her about my
condition.

NICHOLAS

I'm really sorry.

PENELOPE

Good.

Nicholas laughs.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

NICHOLAS

Your mother used to say that too.
Whenever I'd apologize she'd just
say "Good."

Penelope smiles.

PENELOPE

Yeah. She used to--

(her smile fades abruptly)

How did you know that?!

Nicholas smiles and shrugs. Penelope tries to take it in.
They walk together in silence.

To their side a YOUNG BOY is flying a kite with his FATHER.
The Young Boy holds the string and the Father runs with the
kite.

Penelope stops walking and stares at the kite. Nicholas stands next to her. Penelope smiles.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
Have you ever flown a kite?

NICHOLAS
I've tried.

PENELOPE
I remember when I was little, my
Dad got me this kite, it was
white...

Nicholas smiles.

NICHOLAS
...with little red lady bugs. You
loved that thing...for about a day.
I remember we went to fly it at the
park the day we got it.

Penelope stops smiling. She stares at the kite. Nicholas laughs.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
We couldn't get the darn thing up
in the air. Took us an hour to get
it five feet off the ground. We
never used it again.

Penelope looks at Nicholas.

PENELOPE
(Whispers)
You can't know all this. It's not
possible.

NICHOLAS
Penelope, I got you that kite.

Penelope's breathing becomes labored. She sits down on a bench off to their side. Nicholas sits down next to her.

PENELOPE
I...

Penelope looks up at Nicholas.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
I don't understand how this could
happen. Why it would happen.

Nicholas smiles.

NICHOLAS
Just luck, I guess.

EXT. SIDEWALK -DAY

Nora is walking on a sidewalk. She approaches a SCHOOL YARD.

LITTLE KIDS are playing on swings, monkey bars and slides.
They're laughing, having fun.

Nora smiles as she watches the activity. She looks away and
walks off.

EXT. PARK - DAY

As before. Penelope and Nicholas are sitting on a bench
talking. Penelope looks up at Nicholas. She's crying.

PENELOPE
(Smiles)
I...I've missed you.

The Little Boy flying his kite walks by. Penelope smiles as
she watches him.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
It was so hard for me and Mom when
you passed.

NICHOLAS
It must have been.

PENELOPE
I can't stand the idea of Nora...I
just can't.

Nicholas stares at Penelope as if he wants to say something
but he can't think of anything.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
Maybe meeting you...there's some
good in it all.
(Beat)
(MORE)

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Maybe you can check up on Nora next year when she's here?

NICHOLAS

(Nods)

Of course.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Nora is standing next to a MERRY-GO-ROUND in a SMALL PARK. She grabs onto the bars and begins running around, making the merry-go-round turn.

Nora jumps on the merry-go-round. It's moving around in circles fast. Everything around Nora seems to be spinning uncontrollably. Nora leans her head back and smiles as the wind rushes over her.

Nora's hands clench around the bars. They begin to slip. Her body begins to lean back. She tries pulling herself forward.

Nora hands slip off the merry-go-round bars and she goes flying to the ground. She lays there breathing heavily, looking up toward the sky.

EXT. PARK - DAY

As before. Nicholas and Penelope are sitting down on the bench. Penelope gets up. Nicholas stands up next to her.

PENELOPE

I should go check on Nora.

NICHOLAS

That's a good idea...She's a good kid.

PENELOPE

(Nods)

She is.

Penelope hugs Nicholas.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

I'm glad your crazy fate brought us together.

NICHOLAS

Me too.

Penelope unwraps her arms from around Nicholas.

PENELOPE
I'll call you later. We can have
dinner. The three of us. Okay?

NICHOLAS
I'd like that.

INT. HOTEL - PENELOPE'S ROOM - DAY

Penelope walks into the hotel room and finds Nora there.

NORA
Hi.

PENELOPE
Hi. So what did you do while I was
gone?

NORA
I went on the merry-go-round.

PENELOPE
What? The merry-go-round?

NORA
I thought I could hold on, but I
couldn't. I fell right off.

PENELOPE
Are you feeling okay?

NORA
(Nods, beat)
So...?

PENELOPE
So...?

NORA
How did everything go?

Penelope kicks her shoes off by the door.

PENELOPE
Well. It went... Really well.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

You were right...I was too afraid to admit it. But deep down... I feel the connection. I do. And something tells me I can trust him.

Nora smiles. Penelope bursts into tears.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

I just never thought I'd see my father again.

NORA

I know.

Nora hugs her, stroking her hair, as if for the moment, she is the mother now.

NORA (CONT'D)

Mom?

PENELOPE

Mm hmm?

NORA

I don't think I can do this. I can't move to New York knowing you'll be sick at home.

Penelope places her hand over Nora's.

PENELOPE

You don't have to worry about me. What you do have to do is go to college.

NORA

But maybe I can go to a community college first and then transfer?

PENELOPE

No. Nothing would hurt me more than knowing I held you back from your dreams.

NORA

But--

PENELOPE

No Nora. I won't let you.

NORA

What if something happens when I'm gone?

PENELOPE

I'm a grown lady. I can take care of myself.

NORA

It's just always gonna be in the back of my head.

PENELOPE

And you'll always be in the front of mine.

Nora doesn't want to let it go, but she holds her tongue.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

I love you so much. Don't you ever forget that.

NORA

Never.

(Beat)

I love you too.

They hug.

PENELOPE

So what do you say we go get some ice cream or something?

NORA

Okay.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - DAY

Nicholas walks into his apartment and closes the door behind him.

INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS (FANTASY)

The ceiling lights in the room begin to flicker. The room becomes windy and things start flying around.

The ceiling lights lower, hanging from their wires. They shine brightly.

Nicholas turns around in circles frantically looking around. The lights wrap around him like snakes. He struggles to unravel.

The WOODEN floor underneath him spins like a whirlpool. He slowly begins to sink into the floor, as if it were quicksand. He screams. He scrapes the floor around him with his nails as he is sucked down.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

Everything in the room is white. There is no beginning or end to the room. No shadows. A screaming noise is heard. It's Nicholas' voice

Nicholas is falling down. He hits the ground with a thud and rolls. He stops rolling and looks around him. He slowly stands up.

Jason is approaching him.

JASON
It's time, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS
No.

JASON
You can't stay.
(Beat)
It's for your own good.

NICHOLAS
I think I know what's best for me.

JASON
You just think you do.

NICHOLAS
I have to stay.

JASON
If you stay you'll always be torn
between two parallel minds. The
pain--

NICHOLAS
Is worth it. Penelope needs me.

Nicholas walks up to Jason.

JASON

Nick--

NICHOLAS

She's dying!

JASON

(calmly)

I know.

NICHOLAS

Nora needs me.

Jason looks down.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Please. Don't take me away from my family again.

Jason looks to his side avoiding eye contact with Nicholas. Nicholas stares straight at him.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Let me watch over Nora. Please.

Jason looks up at Nicholas. He nods and smiles. He holds his hand up and waves it slowly in front of Nicholas' face. Nicholas closes his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

SUPER: 6 YEARS LATER

Nicholas has his eyes closed, rubbing his temples. He opens his eyes. He's aged a bit.

He's sitting at a table. He pops a pill in his mouth and washes it down with water. He looks up and smiles. He waves.

Nora is walking towards him. She looks older and is wearing business attire. She's carrying a BROWN PAPER BAG.

Nora reaches the table.

NORA

(Off the pill bottle,
concerned)

You okay?

NICHOLAS

It's getting harder but I'll be okay. I just never know when they'll hit -- the dreams, memories, whatever.

NORA

I worry about you.

NICHOLAS

It's all worth it. I have you. And hey, thanks for having lunch with me. I know you've been busy.

NORA

When did life get so hectic?

NICHOLAS

Life has a way of sneaking up on you when you're not looking. You know, your mom would be really proud of you.

NORA

Thanks.

Nora takes TWO SANDWICHES out of the bag.

NICHOLAS

Mmm, what have you got there?

NORA

Two sandwiches from the best deli in town. You're gonna love it.

Nora reaches inside the bag. She moves her hand around.

NORA (CONT'D)

Aw, man!

NICHOLAS

What's wrong.

NORA

Nothing. I got these little dessert things and I left them in the car. I'm gonna go grab them.

NICHOLAS

Okay.

NORA

I'll be right back.

Nora hurries off. Seconds later a KITE lands on the table.

YOUNG PENELOPE (V.O.)

Sorry.

Nicholas picks up the kite and turns around. A little girl is running towards the table. IT'S YOUNG PENELOPE!

Nicholas eyes widen. Young Penelope reaches the table. He stares at her blankly.

YOUNG PENELOPE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Nicholas doesn't respond. He looks down for a beat and then looks back up. *Is this a dream? Doesn't feel like one...*

Young Penelope reaches for her kite. Nicholas slowly hands it to her.

YOUNG PENELOPE (CONT'D)

(Smiles)

Thank you.

Young Penelope puts her kite on the ground and starts running. Nicholas watches her.

The Kite lifts into the air as Young Penelope runs.

Nicholas looks up at the kite. He smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END