

# THE LOSS OF HEAVEN

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"Inspired by Actual Events"

"The Loss of Heaven"

FADE IN:

EXT. THE ISLAND BRIDGE -- DAY (CIRCA 1961)

WE MOVE SLOWLY over the bridge that connects the small island community to Bronx County. A bus grinds onto the island. We FOLLOW it to its stop across from a church.

An Elderly Woman exits the bus, waits for traffic, trudges toward the church.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY

An old, drafty structure. A simple altar. From the giant wood cross above, Jesus' agonized eyes fix on heaven... help.

IN AN ALCOVE, prayer candle flames dance.

The main door CREAKS, as the Elderly Woman blesses herself, exits.

There, near the back of the church, fifteen children stand in line, heads tipped down, hands pressed together in prayer. The girls' heads are topped with white handkerchiefs or doilies fastened by bobby pins.

THE CONFESSIONAL

A gawky, tallish boy, JEROME VIATIS, 12, pushes out through a heavy, black drape, leaves the booth and marches quietly toward the altar, his eyes dancing playfully at the penance seekers.

A large, rosy-cheeked nun, SISTER MARY THERESE nudges another child, ANTHONY CARINO, 11, sweet-faced, dark-haired, into the confessional. Anthony pushes back the heavy draping...

INT. THE CONFESSIONAL -- DAY

FATHER NOVI LUMIN, 44, listens to the mumbling on the other side of the screen separating him from the confessors, his grey hair cropped close, his face weathered beyond his years.

ANTHONY (O.S.)  
Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

Father Lumin mumbles a response in Latin.

ANTHONY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
It's been one week since my last  
confession. I've lied three times,  
fought with my sister two times, been  
disrespectful two times and had one  
impure thought.

Father Lumin responds in his heavy Slavic accent...

FATHER LUMIN  
Is that it?

ANTHONY (O.S.)  
Well... uh... yes, Father, I guess it  
is. I mean, yes, it is.

FATHER LUMIN  
Anthony, is that you?

ANTHONY (O.S.)  
Uh-huh. Yes, Father Lumin.

FATHER LUMIN  
Is this all made up?

ANTHONY (O.S.)  
Uh... yes, Father, except for the  
sister part. I guess I don't have much  
new.

FATHER LUMIN  
Well, it would be fine to say not much  
new this week.

ANTHONY (O.S.)  
Oh... Yes, Father.

FATHER LUMIN  
Give us tree Hail Marys for making  
things up and a good act of  
contrition... and be nice to Angela.

ANTHONY (O.S.)  
Yes, father. Thank you, Father. Oh,  
my God, I am heartily sorry for having  
offended thee, and I detest all my sins  
because I fear the loss of heaven and  
the pains of hell...

Father Lumin makes the sign of the cross against the  
screen, as Anthony's voice wanes off into a mumble, and  
slides the tiny door closed between him and the voice.

FATHER LUMIN  
Such a good boy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VESTIARY -- DAY

A BOY'S HANDS lift a square of white linen onto FATHER LAWRENCE's shoulders. His huge hands adjust the amice properly, and he begins to tie it in front of him.

The boy's hands reach into a dark wooden closet and pull out a long, white linen garment.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM -- DAY

A WOMAN'S HAND combs a man's hair into place. Her hands pull an orange, woolen stocking cap over the combed head. The man's deep, full eyes stare ahead blankly.

INT. VESTIARY -- DAY

The hands now offer Father Lawrence the cincture to gird the white linen garment. The boy, Anthony, in altar boy attire, steps back into better light, looks about warily and peeks up at the clock behind Father Lawrence.

INSERT: CLOCK -- It reads 8:26.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- DAY

PAUL JORDAN, 11, bundled up, crew cut, dashes through the softly falling snow. He cuts between parked cars and dances out into the traffic, his books flopping at his side, as he races an oncoming car to cross the street.

He's not going to make it. He stops short, slides on the iced-over street... right up onto the hood of the car which SLAMS to a stop and fishtails sideways. The driver shakes a fist out the window, curses at the boy.

Paul waves. The car pulls away, tires spinning. Paul lifts a burnt half of English muffin out of his pocket, chomps down on it and resumes his run.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM -- DAY

EMMA WESLEY, 52, dressed in a simple, warm housecoat, struggles to push galoshes onto her son's feet.

JIMMY, 30, heavy-set and pale, with a protruding brow ridge, offers no help by pushing back. In one hand he holds a red transistor radio.

INT. VESTIARY -- DAY

Father Lawrence, glaring imperiously through rimless, round spectacles, kisses the stole Anthony hands him.

Lawrence CLEARS HIS THROAT, turns to his black and white boxer dog SPIRIT and whispers sweetness to his ever-faithful sidekick.

The dog HUMS back.

Anthony checks the clock again. It reads 8:28.

He eyes the door, as he reaches into the closet for the chasuble, the purple, cross-emblazoned outer vestment.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Emma buttons Jimmy's jacket, kisses him on the forehead.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- DAY

Slowed to a walk, Paul chews on his English muffin.

He stops to watch the bridge open just beyond the church, as a ferry crosses through, SOUNDING its horn.

EXT. WESLEY HOUSE -- DAY

A simple, two-story, brick house.

Emma hugs Jimmy, pats him on the back. Beyond them, a sign near the front door: "Emma's Alterations. Hems \$1.00"

Jimmy walks away toward the church, just down and across the street. He holds the transistor radio close to his left ear and smiles. Snow flies delicately around him.

INT. VESTIARY -- DAY

Father Lawrence genuflects, mutters a prayer.

Anthony looks toward the window by the door. Paul peeks in, brushes off the cold from the window with his glove.

Anthony shakes his head, "not yet." He blesses himself and rises, as Father Lawrence does the same. Spirit rises, too.

FATHER LAWRENCE

It's time.

ANTHONY

Yes, father.

Father Lawrence strides toward the door. Anthony looks back toward the frozen window.

Paul grins, squishes his face up against the glass.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY

Jimmy enters the church, pulls off his cap, clicks off his radio, shoves it into his coat, taps his finger into a well of holy water just inside the vestibule and shuffles quietly to the last pew.

Just as his knee touches the kneeler...

Anthony then Father Lawrence enter the altar area.

Jimmy, near giddy, glances around the church. An Elderly Lady rises near the front and a Hispanic Woman blesses herself with her rosary beads. The women's heads are covered by simple scarves. This is our congregation.

All statues and the crucifix are draped in purple.

Spirit watches patiently from his doorway perch.

INT. VESTIARY -- DAY

Paul hustles to get his altar boy regalia out of the closet. A pack of baseball cards, held together by a rubber band, falls out of his coat and onto the stone flooring, scattering in all directions.

Paul scrambles to his hands and knees after them.

One has slid under the closet. Paul's fingers scratch along the floor to reach it, but can't quite make it.

PAUL

Come on, baby. Come to poppa.

Paul looks around the room, spies a candle douser. He grabs it and gets back down on his hands and knees and uses the douser to hook the card, a "Whitey Ford".

PAUL (CONT'D)

Whitey. Safe at home!

He stuffs the cards carefully back into the coat pocket, selects a separate, special pocket for the Ford card, pulls his vestment off the hanger.

Spirit GROWLS.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS/ALTAR -- DAY

Anthony looks off toward the vestuary. He speaks softly.

ANTHONY

Et introibo ad altare Dei. Deum qui  
laetificat juventatem meam.

FATHER LAWRENCE

Speak out. God cannot hear you if you mumble.

(mumbling now)

Confitabor tibi in cithara, Deus.

MONTAGE:

Old, cracked, stained glass windows filled with a soft light. Prayer candles flickering and dancing. Jimmy's face enraptured. The stations of the cross hanging along the pitted wood columns that support this archaic structure. Father Lawrence's robe shuffles in the draft.

END MONTAGE:

The door to the altar CREAKS open a little. Father Lawrence and Anthony look over to Paul, who stands in the doorway.

FATHER LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

(to Paul)

Thank you for coming.

Paul screws his mouth up, trying not to smile.

FATHER LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domine...

Father Lawrence makes the sign of the cross, ascends the altar steps.

ANTHONY/PAUL

Qui fecit coelum et terram.

Father Lawrence looks back at Paul, shakes his head, bows to kiss the altar. Paul apes him.

INT. SISTER MARY'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Twenty-three students, all clad in blue/white uniforms, stand in a small classroom and recite their daily morning credo. Sister Mary Therese, the Dominican nun leads them.

STUDENTS

He descended into hell...

SISTER MARY

... the third day He rose again from the dead.

STUDENTS

He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.



Jerome glances up at the crucifix over Sister's head.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS/ALTAR -- DAY

A Eucharistic Host rises against the background of the purple-draped crucifix.

FATHER LAWRENCE (O.S.)  
Hoc est enim corpus meum.

Anthony RINGS the treble bells at his side three times.  
The sound of the bells resonates through the quiet church.

Spirit WAILS, three times.

Anthony stares up at the Host.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

A younger Anthony walks back from the same altar. Behind him Father Lawrence passes out First Holy Communion to small children, all dressed in white.

Father Lumin, smallish, frail looking, assists.

Father Lawrence, holding the ciborium, whispers, as he lays the small white circle of bread on a child's tiny tongue.

Anthony watches from his pew, through nearly closed eyes, his white-gloved hands in prayer mode, as children return to pews.

Paul, wild-eyed with excitement, scoots past Anthony's pew into the one behind him, taps Anthony on the shoulder, dances his eyebrows.

Anthony's face contorts, as he tries in vain to work the host off the roof of his mouth with his tongue. A tear drizzles down from his left eye.

Communion over, the mass continues... but Anthony struggles still. His tongue pushes around in his mouth.

A GIRL beside him looks at him and giggles.

SISTER MARIE D'FATIMA, 40, appears at the end of the pew and glowers at him. The Nun's long-jawed face speaks MOS.  
"Mr. Carino, are you all right?"

Anthony nods. But he's not, and he begins to choke and covers his mouth with his right hand.

Sister Marie rolls her eyes, returns to her pew.

Anthony finally just sticks his finger into his mouth and pries the stuck host.

The congregation rises.

Anthony, kneeling still, looks down at the white pulp of the host on his finger. A beat. He wipes it against the back of the pew in front of him...

FATHER LAWRENCE (O.S.)  
MISTER CARINO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS/ALTAR -- (BACK TO SCENE)

Anthony, startled out of his daydream, looks up.

Father Lawrence, gold chalice in hand, gestures at the bell clanger at the boy's right knee.

Anthony reaches quickly for the bells and knocks them off the step. They CLANG and RING as they tumble down.

Spirit WAILS! Paul hides a laugh behind his hand.

EXT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY

As Anthony, toting a book bag, and Paul exit the vestuary, they pass two men, SONNY TIBBITS and GERALD RIKER, both 20's, smoking, scruffy. The men lean against a leafless tree.

The boys stop to watch, as the men enter the church through the vestuary door which Father Lawrence holds open for them.

PAUL  
Little late, aren't they?

ANTHONY  
Yeah, you're one to talk. It is an eight thirty mass, ya know.

PAUL  
Big deal. Come get me next time an' we'll go together. I'll show up on time and give the ol' monsignor and his mutt matching heart attacks.

ANTHONY  
Okay. I will. I'll come get you.

They lock pinky fingers, then hook their curled fingers to seal the promise. Paul looks over Anthony's shoulder.

PAUL  
He's following you again.

Anthony looks back.

Jimmy stops dead in his tracks.

ANTHONY

(waves)

Me. He's not following me. He's goin' to the park.

They walk on.

PAUL

He could go the other way. I hate it when that weird retard follows us.

ANTHONY

He's cutting over. And he's not retarded. He's --

PAUL

A dimwit... a wickless candle... a bike without wheels. What's he got on that radio, anyway? The dip parade?

ANTHONY

Aw, leave him alone. He's all right.  
(Jimmy waves)  
Just a little messed up, maybe.

PAUL

Like somebody else I know? So, what, you had your little daydream again in there?

The boys stop to push open the gate between the church-yard and the schoolyard. The wind whips against them.

ANTHONY

It's not funny. My whole family's probably doomed. First these stupid dreams start, then my father falls off a ladder. Now my mom's sick or something. She just sits and cries all the time.

(beat)

You're not even supposed to touch it and I... I can't even say it.

PAUL

Ay. Again with this. Next confession please spill the beans. Bless me, Father... blah... blah... blah... wiped it on wood.

(snaps his finger)

300 Hail Marys. Un-doomed.

ANTHONY

Are you nuts? I can't tell anybody.

PAUL

You tell me... all the time.

ANTHONY

You don't count. You're my best friend.

Paul shakes his head, pats Anthony on the back.

PAUL

Guess the Carinos and all future generations ad infinitum ipso facto are doomed.

Paul trots ahead. Anthony struggles to catch up, his bookbag banging against his leg. They climb the steps leading up to Our Lady of Sorrows School, pull open the massive wood door against the wind, and disappear inside.

Jimmy stops in front of the school, walks on.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

As Jimmy enters the park. He watches a grey pigeon peck through the snow looking for food.

Jimmy digs into his pocket, finds a partially wrapped "Mary Jane" candy. He breaks it into two chunks and holds out the pieces in his black glove.

The pigeon flaps up and onto Jimmy's hand, takes one piece of candy and flies off.

Jimmy smiles and pops the other piece of the candy into his mouth. He walks to his favorite old bench where he can see the Catholic School and the bay.

Out in the bay, waters rush up and SMACK the jetty of rocks that point out from the seawall.

Jimmy wipes some snow away, sits down. He looks up to a second floor window of the brick school.

INT. VESTIARY -- DAY

Father Lawrence, in black slacks and shirt, sits in front of the two men in a corner.

The smaller man, Sonny Tibbits, looks around cautiously while Gerald, scarred and unshaven, takes the lead.

GERALD

So, Father, you sure you wanna do this here?

FATHER LAWRENCE

I don't have any idea what you mean.

GERALD

(laughs)  
Got it. Loud an' clear, Monsignor.

SONNY

(fidgets)  
I don' know about this, Gerry.

FATHER LAWRENCE

Well, then... if you don't know...

GERALD

He knows.  
(to Sonny)  
Asshole. Sorry, Father.

FATHER LAWRENCE

You boys must remember that this work  
release program goes both ways. As  
long as I have work for you, you are,  
in essence, released...

Gerald whacks Sonny across the arm. Spirit GROWLS.

FATHER LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

It's okay, Spirit, good doggie.  
(pets Spirit, to men)  
I say there's no more work and the  
warden welcomes you home. You'll be  
back scraping barnacles off ferry  
pilings before my next mass. Maybe I  
should call him? Whatta you think?

SONNY

No. No need, Father.

Father Lawrence leans back and smiles, as he fixes his  
white collar inside the neck of his black shirt.

FATHER LAWRENCE

Have we struck a deal, then?

Gerald eyes his cohort.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY

Anthony and Paul walk alone down the clean, bright and long  
corridor. They stop at their classroom door. Paul looks  
both ways down the long stretch of doors.

PAUL

C'mon, one match before we go in?

ANTHONY

Here?

PAUL

Sure, why not?

ANTHONY

I don't know.

PAUL

C'mon. Quit worrying so much, would ya? You've practically got a license to mess up. You're a kid. Besides, nobody's gonna catch us. You're not a chicken, are you?

Paul SQUAWKS like a chicken, too loud.

ANTHONY

Okay, okay. Just shut up.

Anthony digs deep into his coat pocket for his cards.

PAUL

Shuffle first. No lookees.

Anthony rolls his eyes, shuffles his small stack of baseball cards, looks around warily, picks a card, holds it down by his right thigh and flips it from his hand.

The card flips until it hits the floor and lands, face up.

INSERT: CARD

A sliding "WILLIE MAYS".

BACK TO SCENE:

Anthony, aghast, goes for the card. Paul dances a little jig, pulls Anthony away from it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Say, hey, I guess it does pay to go to church. Now, stand back.

Without looking down, Paul shuffles, takes the top card, holds it at his waist and, with a minimum of hand motion, flicks his wrist and

his card flips down, covers Anthony's card, heads up.

INSERT: CARD

An old "VIC WERTZ".

BACK TO SCENE:

Paul and Anthony exchange incredulous looks.

A beat.

Paul picks up both cards, adds them to his stack and feigns biting his fingernails.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Wow, this is very scary. Maybe you  
are doomed.

Anthony reaches for the door knob but Paul stops him. Paul pushes his hand deep into his pocket and pulls out a couple of licorice swords. He hands one to Anthony.

INT. SISTER MARY'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

As Paul and Anthony tiptoe in.

Paul nudges a couple of classmates on his way to his desk.

Anthony stops in front of two posters on a wall. He puts a cross on the date corresponding to "today" on one poster that reads "My Lenten Obligation."

He drops two coins in a coffee can under the other poster, which reads "Restore HIS House Fund."

Mary Therese puts the finishing touches on a sentence she diagrams on the board.

The other students busily copy the sentence into their black and white composition workbooks.

RONALD, a fresh-faced, buzz-haired, fat boy sits his workbook up so Paul can read what he's written with his typical artful penmanship. "HOW MANY TODAY?"

Paul holds up three fingers.

Ronald rolls his eyes.

The room is quiet, except for the sound of chalk as it SQUEAKS along the board at the front of the room.

JOHNNY BELDEN, 13, longish blonde hair and chiseled features, notices the interplay between Paul and Ronald.

Johnny sits directly in front of Anthony (all students sit alphabetically). He makes a "fatty" face at Ronald.

Paul responds with his bird finger.

Johnny, pissed, looks to the front to Sister Mary's back, quickly turns and flips his middle finger back at Paul, then flicks it hard against Anthony's left ear.

Anthony grabs his ear.

Paul points his index finger at Johnny, threateningly. Their eyes lock.

SISTER MARY (O.S.)  
Mister Jordan, I hope you're prepared  
to diagram the next sentence after the  
example in your workbook. Please come  
to the front of the room.

Paul gives up the eye tangling with Johnny, slides out of  
his desk and makes his way to the front of the class.

Anthony rubs his ear and looks around to survey the  
embarrassment damage. He catches the eye of SARAH McGEE,  
12, the cutest girl in the class. She smiles.

Anthony holds his ear and smiles back shyly.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE -- DAY

Paul, Anthony and PETER CARINO, 8, a diminutive boy, walk  
along the seawall. Paul stops, points to the prison island  
out in the water.

PAUL  
There they go.

ON ROCK ISLAND

Out on one end of the island six Nike missiles rise slowly  
until they point lock in at a 60 degree angle.

BACK TO SCENE

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Take that, you filthy commies.

ANTHONY  
That's the surprise... the Nikes?

PAUL  
That's not the surprise. Follow me,  
gents.

The boys walk up away from the seawall toward the side of  
the house. They stop at the gate.

Paul opens the gate, steps aside, revealing

a minor construction site in his side yard, rows of cinder  
blocks, about four feet high and six deep into the snow  
covered ground.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
This is the surprise.

Anthony and Peter look at each other confused.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Welcome... to the future inner sanctum.



PETER  
What is it?

PAUL  
A safe place. Take a guess.

ANTHONY  
A bomb shelter?

PETER  
What's that?

PAUL  
First on the island. The old man says  
it's supposed to be a secret... but if  
you can't tell your best friend and his  
nimrod brother, who can you tell?

Peter looks interested, Anthony frightful.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
It'll be finished soon. Whenever this  
stupid weather lets up.

Paul jumps down inside the construction.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
You may enter!

ANTHONY  
No, uh, we better get home. We're  
meeting my father at the ferry.

The brothers stand at the opening where a door will be.

Paul pulls a half-eaten apple from his pocket and digs in.

PAUL  
Carmine's off to prison again, eh?

PETER  
Night watchman.  
(sotto)  
Butt-head.

PAUL  
(to Anthony)  
Sure you're not just afraid?

ANTHONY  
I'm... not afraid. Why would I be  
afraid of a bunch of blocks in the  
ground?

PAUL  
I don't know, you seem to be afraid of  
everything. Oh, I know, you've got  
your own box. Huh?

ANTHONY  
It's just I gotta go.

PETER  
What box?

PAUL  
Uh-huh. You know, when it finally happens, you guys can come. We'll have room.

PETER  
When what happens?

ANTHONY  
Nothin'. He's kidding. Nothing's gonna happen.

Paul just grins.

EXT. A FERRY ON THE BAY -- DUSK

Anthony stands on the prow of the ship, his father's massive, scarred and dirt-stained hand on his shoulder. Spray flies back in his face.

CARMINE CARINO, 35, broad-faced, dark, wavy-haired, blue-eyed, red coffee thermos in the crook of his muscular, hairy left arm, whistles the theme from "The High and The Mighty."

Carmine lifts his jacket in the back, so Anthony can tighten the straps that hold his back brace rigid against his body.

Peter, on the other side of the ship, watches seagulls challenge the wake.

ANTHONY'S POV

The island is rocky and foreboding. Numerous block and brick buildings beyond the ferry house make up what appeared from shore to be one or two long buildings. A sign reads "Rock Island Prison".

On the West end of the island the six Nike missiles are pointed skyward at a sixty degree angle.

ANTHONY  
Dad, do you think there's gonna be a war?

CARMINE  
Of course not. I hope not.  
(to himself)  
I sure as hell hope not.

He eyes his sons.

LATER

Carmine, WHISTLING, stands on the island waving back at his sons, as the ferry pulls away from the shore.

The boys continue waving until Carmine turns and walks up the walkway from the ferry house to a small building where he disappears inside.

INT. SISTER MARY'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

The students sit quietly and work in their composition books.

At her desk, Sister Mary Therese reads "For Whom The Bell Tolls", occasionally lifting her glasses to check on her students.

SISTER MARY  
Remember, neatness counts. And answers  
should be in complete --

A SIREN BLARES OUT

Sister Mary closes her book, stands, and crosses her arms in front of her.

Anthony grabs a look out the window at the prison island and the missiles before crunching down under his desk.

Johnny Belden, turns under his own desk, so he faces Anthony. Johnny reaches out and, across his seat, tweaks Anthony's ear again hard and stares him down.

Sister Mary watches. A few beats, and the SIREN wanes into an "ALL CLEAR".

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
You may return to your seats, utilizing  
their intended purpose.

The students buzz with conversation and Sister Mary taps on the chalkboard with her pointer until order is restored.

Anthony looks over at Paul, who shrugs.

Johnny stands until Anthony sits, then takes his seat.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
All right. Very well done, everyone.  
Please continue your work.

Sister Mary stands right in front of Johnny's desk and stares down at him. Johnny smiles back innocently.

Sister Mary returns to her desk and her book.

A KNOCK on the classroom door, which pushes open slowly. A young, Bespectacled Girl stands in the opening.

Sister Mary beckons her in.

The Girl holds a note out for Sister Mary Therese. A WOLF WHISTLE from Johnny Belden's desk.

Sister Mary Therese leads the now red-faced girl out.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
 (reads the note)  
 Will Mister Carino and Mister Belden  
 please come forward.

Johnny and Anthony rise, as if awaiting an impending death sentence, and move slowly toward the front of the classroom.

RONALD  
 (sotto)  
 Dum-dee-dum-dum.

SISTER MARY  
 Mister Belden, since you whistle so  
 beautifully, we all would love for you  
 to grant us a one-half hour concert  
 today of our favorite hymns...

STUDENTS  
 Yeah...

SISTER MARY  
 ...after school.

STUDENTS  
 No...

SISTER MARY  
 (to Johnny)  
 And before you return to your seat I  
 would like you to allow Mister Carino  
 to do to your ear what you did to his.

ANTHONY  
 No. I mean, that's okay, really.

Johnny starts back to his seat.

SISTER MARY  
 Mister Belden. You will stop now and  
 allow Mister Carino to...

RONALD  
 ... tweak.

SISTER MARY  
 Thank you. Tweak your ear.

The seated Students' mouths hang open.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
(whispers, to Anthony)  
Go on. Here's your chance.

Anthony steps slowly toward Johnny, whose eyes are on fire.

JOHNNY  
(under his breath)  
Do it... and your brother's dead.

Anthony finds Paul's eyes. They plead with him to do it.

Sarah McGee peeks through her fingers.

Sister Mary anxiously waits.

Back to Johnny's eyes, still burning with excitement.

Anthony stands frozen in the moment, but his body quivers.  
Sister Mary Therese notices Anthony's trembling.

SISTER MARY  
Mister Belden. Return to your seat  
immediately. Anthony, Sister Marie  
Agricola would like to see you.

ANTHONY  
Yes, Sister.

Anthony looks back at Paul, who watches Johnny take his  
seat. Sarah McGee rests her head on her desk.

Johnny revels in this mini-victory.

Anthony exits quietly.

Sister Mary Therese sighs.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Emma sits beside Jimmy on the bench. Jimmy holds his  
transistor radio close to his ear.

They watch the seagulls swoop all around a ferry that  
cruises out to Rock Island.

INT. SISTER MARIE'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

SISTER MARIE AGRICOLA, towering, dark-eyed, ashen-faced,  
stands in front of her class, holding Peter by the ear.

A faint KNOCK.

SISTER MARIE

ENTER!

Anthony pushes the door open just enough to edge into the room. He turns quietly to close the door behind him, looks back to Sister Marie... and Peter on his knees beside her.

Peter whimpers. His eyes plead with Anthony, tears pouring down his reddened face.

SISTER MARIE (CONT'D)

Anthony Carino, come here.

Anthony steps cautiously toward the nun.

SISTER MARIE (CONT'D)

You are one of the brightest students in this school. Will you tell me why you cannot help your brother complete his homework assignments?

ANTHONY

I... I --

Sister Marie slaps him hard against his cheek, knocking him back two steps.

Anthony grabs his face.

Peter heaves and convulses. He CRIES OUT and tries to lift up, but Sister Marie's hand forces him down hard and the boy begins to vomit at her feet.

The class of fourth graders GROAN.

Sister Marie steps away just in time to avoid the vomit, but holds onto Peter's ear still, squeezes it harder.

SISTER MARIE

(to Peter)

Why did you do that? Are you sick again?

Peter does not answer.

SISTER MARIE (CONT'D)

Answer me!

PETER

No...

SISTER MARIE

No, what?

PETER

No... Sister.

Tears stream freely down Anthony's cheeks. His hand trembles as it wipes them away.

SISTER MARIE

(to Peter)

I think you are a sick and lazy little boy. So, get to work and clean up your mess!

She pushes his face down hard into the milky puddle. She holds it there, then lifts it out.

His fear-stricken face is coated with his own vomit.

The class GROANS again. Faces of the students reacting.

Anthony cowers, shakes, his eyes frozen on Peter.

INT. SISTER MARY'S CLASSROOM -- DAY/LATER

The bell CLANGS the end of the school day. No one moves.

SISTER MARY

Before we begin Mister Belden's concert, I want you all to be thinking of something for me. This will be another fun assignment in our "know your Nun" project. Many of you have pets, yes?

(students nod)

Okay, I want you to tell me who or what is my "pet."

SARAH

You mean your favorite of all of us?

RONALD

Does this pet have to be human? Can it be animal or mineral? Can it be God?

SISTER MARY

That's for all of you to decide.

JEROME

Like when we had to pick your favorite saint, right?

SARAH

Or when we had to name the turtles?

Turtles plod along in a glass dish on the window ledge.

SISTER MARY

Something like that. This won't be a written assignment. But you must think about it. Any more questions?

(looks around, nothing)

Then, if Mister Belden will come forward, I'd like everyone else to put your heads on your desk and close your eyes.

Anthony faces the window, his head on his desk, his eyes open. O.S. Johnny whistles poorly, "TANTUM ERGO..."

INT. PAUL'S ROOM -- DAY

Anthony and Paul sit on the floor, sorting through baseball cards spread out in front of them. Paul chews on a chicken leg.

Peter sits in a chair by the window, his elbows spread out on the sill, his head on his arms. He cries lowly as he stares out at the work in progress below, the fallout shelter.

PAUL  
You gonna tell your parents?

ANTHONY  
Are you kiddin? They'd kill him... and me. My parents think whatever the nuns and priests do is okay. They're always right, we're always wrong.

PAUL  
That's anti-American.

ANTHONY  
(scoops up his cards)  
We gotta go.

PAUL  
I'd tell my father.

ANTHONY  
Your parents are different.

PAUL  
I'll say.

Paul makes a guzzling gesture.

Anthony watches Peter, who sniffs back some tears.

ANTHONY  
Let's go, Petey.  
(to Paul)  
I'll see you tomorrow.

Peter mopes out of the room. Anthony follows.

PAUL  
See ya when I see ya!

INT. CARINO APARTMENT -- DAY

MRS. CARINO, 32, an attractive brunette, rocks baby ANNE, cries as she stares out the window.



ANTHONY (O.S.)  
(softly)  
Mom?

Mrs. Carino hides a tear with her blouse collar.

MRS. CARINO  
You're late, huh? How was school?

ANTHONY  
You know. Is anything wrong?

MRS. CARINO  
No, nothing's wrong. Nothing you need to worry about. Why don't you just go in your room and get your homework started before your father gets home. Where's Peter?

ANTHONY  
(strokes the baby's hair)  
In the room. He, um, got sick in school today.

MRS. CARINO  
What sick? He was fine this morning. What happened? That's all I need now. Get him.

ANTHONY  
He's fine now. Just something he ate.

She takes his hand.

MRS. CARINO  
You look so tired. Are you still having your bad dreams? Why are you shaking?

Anthony retracts his hand quickly.

ANTHONY  
Huh?

MRS. CARINO  
Look at you. Your hand is shaking like a leaf.

She checks him out carefully.

ANTHONY  
Mom, my hands always shake.

She feels his forehead with the back of her hand.

MRS. CARINO  
Your face is all red and puffy. Do you feel sick? Mumps maybe.

ANTHONY  
Mom, I just had the mumps. I'm fine.  
It's cold out, that's all.

MRS. CARINO  
Well, we'll have a nice hot meal when  
your father gets home. Go start your  
homework and tell Angela to peel  
potatoes.

Anthony hesitates.

MRS. CARINO (CONT'D)  
What? You don't have homework?

ANTHONY  
Yes... It's just... Do you think nuns  
and priest are always right?

MRS. CARINO  
What kind of question is that from you?  
An altar boy. You know better. You  
are sick.

ANTHONY  
I'm not sick, Mom. Never mind. I'll  
start my homework.

She holds him back.

MRS. CARINO  
You're my good boy, Anthony, my smart,  
good boy who worries too much. You  
worry about me. You worry about Petey.  
You worry about your father, the nuns  
and priests. Don't worry so much all  
the time. And stop shaking.

ANTHONY  
Okay, Mom.

He walks away and knocks on his sister's door.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
Angela, mom said to peel potatoes.

ANGELA (O.S.)  
WHAT AM I? THE MAID?

MRS. CARINO (O.S.)  
ANGELA, PEEL POTATOES!

INT. ANTHONY/PETER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Peter sleeps. Anthony wrestles with a dream.

THE DREAM

It is a repeat of the earlier "first communion" flashback. Except this time, standing at the end of Anthony's pew is Sister Marie Agricola with Peter hanging by his ear from her right hand.

Sister Marie reaches her open left hand palm to Anthony and he hands her the host from his mouth.

BACK TO SCENE:

Anthony, sweating profusely, wakes with a start. He hears the sounds of his parents' MUFFLED SHOUTING outside his room.

He hops out of bed and kneels beside it, his hands folded in prayer. He MUTTERS a prayer.

Peter sits up in bed, his pillow in front of him.

PETER  
Forget your prayers?

ANTHONY  
Shh. Go back to sleep.

PETER  
What are they yelling about now?  
Did you tell them?

ANTHONY  
No, I didn't say anything. Go to sleep.

Peter watches Anthony, who tiptoes to the door to listen.

Anthony presses his ear to the door. The SHOUTING continues.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD -- DAY

Paul and Anthony walk through this cement lot, surrounded by chain link fence.

Paul chomps on a "Charleston Chew".

PAUL  
I still think you should tell your father.

ANTHONY  
I told you I can't. Can we talk about something else, please?

PAUL  
Okay. I'm going with the old standard today -- the Pope.

ANTHONY

Huh? What are you talkin' about?

PAUL

What's gotten into you? Not prepared?  
I'm shocked. Remember... know your  
nun?

ANTHONY

Yeah... There's some stuff goin' on at  
home.

PAUL

What stuff? At your house?

Anthony leads Paul over to the fence that separates the  
schoolyard from the adjacent park.

ANTHONY

Shh. About my sister.

PAUL

Angela? Aw, she's always in hot water.

ANTHONY

No, this is different. I can tell.

PAUL

Wait a minute. Is this more of that  
"doomed" crap? C'mon, get thee to a  
confessionary and... Whatta ya mean  
"trouble"?

ANTHONY

I heard my parents talkin' about her  
goin' away to live with my Aunt Pearl.

Paul stops.

PAUL

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I'm  
putting two and two together here.  
Your sister Angela... who goes to  
Catholic High School? In goin' away  
trouble? Wow.

ANTHONY

Don't say anything, okay?

Paul raises two fingers by his forehead in a salute.

PAUL

Scout's honor.

ANTHONY

You quit scouts.

PAUL  
 I sucked at tying knots.  
 (beat)  
 We're serving' tomorrow, right?

ANTHONY  
 Yes. And I'm coming over to get you.  
 Early.

The lunch bell RINGS. They walk along the fence by the park.

THROUGH FENCE:

Jimmy sits on his bench, his radio to his ear.

JIMMY  
 Hi'ya, Rocky.

BACK TO SCENE:

ANTHONY  
 Hey, Jimmy.

PAUL  
 Rocky?

ANTHONY  
 That's what he calls me.

PAUL  
 You are full of surprises today.

The boys walk up to the school's side steps where Johnny Belden comes out of nowhere, bangs into Anthony.

Students gather quickly, form a circle around them.

JOHNNY  
 So, shithead. You wanna "tweak" my ear now?

PAUL  
 Leave 'im alone.

JOHNNY  
 I wasn't talkin' to you, garbage can.

Johnny pushes Anthony, hard.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
 I was talkin' to him.

Johnny nails Anthony with a jab and knocks him right down.

His nose oozing blood from the blow, Anthony struggles to get up. Johnny stomps him back down.

Paul throws his candy aside, pushes Johnny away and into the grasp of the school's rotund principal, SISTER ROSE DEI PAZZI who now stands inside the circle.

She grabs Johnny by the collar and carries him up the steps and into the school. He looks back down at Anthony, grins.

Anthony, still on his back, wipes his nose.

THROUGH FENCE:

Jimmy stands watching, his face pressed against the chain links.

INT. SISTER MARY'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Sister Mary's class is in the process of revealing their choices as class "pet". One by one they go, standing up and saying who or what and why.

STUDENT #1

We all are. Because in God's eyes,  
we're all perfect.

STUDENT #2

The lamb of God, because he takest away  
the sins of the world.

Sister Mary nods sweetly, wide-eyed.

SARAH

My mother said it's a trick question,  
because nuns don't have pets. They  
love everyone the same.

PAUL

The Pope!

JEROME

Simon and Cyrene, the turtles, cuz  
they're the only animals here.

A collective LAUGH. The laughing stops suddenly, as the door opens.

Johnny looks in, struts to his seat. He holds his left hand out to the students, showing them the cuts along his knuckles. His casual nature reveals the ritual in this event.

Johnny's smacked-red face allows a devious smile. He sits down hard in the seat, drops his pencil intentionally, kicks it behind him. He leans down to pick it up.

JOHNNY

(for Anthony)  
You're ass is grass.

A beat.

SISTER MARY

Anyone else like to suggest an answer?

She fires a look at Johnny.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)

All right, then, I will tell you.

She walks among the students as she speaks. They look up at her admiringly and with great anticipation.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)

Let me say that many of your answers to my little riddle were quite true and very appropriate. We are all good and equal in God's eyes, and you are all very special to me. However, since I am one of God's children, with the wonderful gift of free will which each of us possesses, I, too, am entitled to favorite things.

She has circled back to the front of the classroom and now leans against the edge of her desk.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)

I enjoy a good adventure novel, Mrs. Cochran's blueberry pies, my Montovani albums, Gary Cooper movies... and I do have a pet, one of you is my favorite student of all.

Student heads snap from side to side. Who could it be?

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)

Anthony Carino. Would you stand up, please?

Anthony's face suddenly flushes beet red. He rises stiffly.

ANTHONY'S POV

Johnny turns around to look up at him. Other faces stare at him. Paul smiles proudly as does Sarah McGee. Paul leans forward to the student in front of him.

PAUL

That's my best friend. I taught him everything he knows.

SISTER MARY

Anthony Carino is my pet. He is an excellent student, an altar boy. His family is not wealthy, but he always has change for the church fund. His homework is neat and turned in

(MORE)

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
punctually. He is never late, nor does  
he run in the halls or in the  
lunchroom...

Anthony stands alone in the face of this barrage, as  
vulnerable as a flag in a gale on the bay.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
If I had a son, I would like him to be  
just like Anthony. I'm sure God is  
very proud of Anthony Carino.

Anthony starts to sit down.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
There's just one thing more.

The boy stops somewhere between standing and sitting.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
I would like to see Anthony be a little  
more outspoken, stick up for himself.  
Then he'd be even closer to perfect.  
You may sit now, Anthony.

Anthony slumps into his chair. The class is hushed silent.

Sister Mary smiles sweetly at Anthony.

Johnny, in disbelief, taps his finger on his desk.

Paul grins proudly.

Ronald puts the finishing touches on a sketch of Anthony  
with the words "Sister's Pet" across his chest.

Sarah McGee peeks around her workbook.

Anthony stares ahead, tries not to cry.

SISTER MARY (O.S.)  
(CONT'D)  
Everyone remember that tomorrow is your  
last day of school before your Easter  
vacation. I'll expect to see you all  
at confession at three-thirty on  
Saturday.

The school bell CLANGS.

INT. CARINO APARTMENT LANDING -- DAY

Mrs. Carino, the baby over her shoulder, hands Peter and  
Anthony their lunch bags, kisses them on top of their rain-  
slickered heads. She closes the door behind them.

The boys tromp down the stairs. Once at the bottom, Peter  
watches Anthony plod quietly back up the stairs to the



landing. Anthony pulls his hood down, waves for Peter to go on. Peter shakes his head "no".

Anthony tiptoes back down the stairs.

ANTHONY  
(whispering)  
Please just go, Petey.

PETER  
You come, too.

ANTHONY  
I can't.

PETER  
I can't either.

ANTHONY  
Sure you can. We did your homework.

PETER  
I'm afraid of her.

ANTHONY  
Look, you can't always be afraid, okay?

PETER  
What about you?

Anthony ponders that a beat, starts up the stairs, turns back and gestures for Peter to go, which he does, grudgingly.

Anthony steps quietly back up to the landing. To one side, against a wall, is a big, wood, hinged storage box, shaped like a wide, deep coffin.

Anthony lifts the box's top, looks around and climbs in. The lid lowers silently, until it's almost closed. Only a book wedged along the side edge keeps it from closing all the way.

Heavy rain POUNDS on the rooftop. The Church bell CLANGS in the distance.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE -- DAY

THROUGH THE GLASS STORM DOOR

Paul, in his black rain slicker, chomps down on a waffle, waits. The rain beats down.

INT. INSIDE THE BOX -- DAY

Dark, except where light squeaks in around the lid's edge. A flashlight CLICKS on.

Its beam finds a book: "King Arthur and His Knights", by Sir James Knowles.

Anthony's hand reaches for the book and opens it to a page marked by a scapula. The light fills the pages of the book and Anthony's face as he balances the silver flashlight close to his chest and reads.

INT. VESTIARY -- DAY

Father Lawrence GRUMBLES as he dresses himself and glares at the clock. Spirit moans nearby.

INSERT: Clock -- It reads 8:29.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- DAY

Paul runs along the street, watches for a break in the traffic. His slicker hood covers his head. A driving rain. He runs past, then comes back to a newspaper box.

ON NEWSPAPER BOX

A small article on the front page reads: "Whitey Ford to Attend Church's Fund Raising Bazaar". Water drizzles down the glass case, blurring the story. Paul taps on the box.

PAUL

Whitey!

INT. THE BOX -- DAY

Anthony turns a page. A Knight in full armor, sits high on his armored steed.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS/ALTAR -- DAY

Father Lawrence steps out onto the altar, as the few in attendance, including Jimmy Wesley, rise. Lawrence stands at the foot of the altar alone. Spirit WHIMPERS.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- DAY

Paul darts between parked cars to cross the street.

His hood blocks his vision. He stops in the middle of the road and, while he waits for passing cars, reaches into his

raincoat pocket for the rest of his waffle. He takes a bite and steps off the middle line.

A bread delivery truck bears down on him.

A distant FOG HORN SOUNDS.

INT. TRUCK -- DAY

A TRUCK DRIVER wipes the condensation from inside his front window, as the blades beat frantically to clear the rain. He uses his right forearm to wipe a spot clear.

HIS POV

Paul stands in front of the oncoming truck, frozen.

A terrible SCREECH of the truck's brakes.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY

Father Lawrence holds the chalice up in his left hand. In his right hand he JINGLES the bells softly three times.

Spirit chimes in, three times.

INT. THE BOX -- DAY

The book has fallen away. The flashlight beam fills Anthony's face. He sleeps, his closed eyelids jittering.

EXT. CLEARING IN A WOOD -- DAY (A DREAM)

Anthony, dressed in his yellow slicker, stands in an open, foggy area wrapped on all sides by thick woods. A RUSTLING at the edge of the treeline. Anthony rubs his eyes.

A SNORT and a WHINNY.

Out into the clearing rushes the Knight on his steed. His armor is black and silver, his face covered. The horse gallops full bore toward Anthony. The Knight's head tilts down. He means business.

Anthony's face fills with fear.

The horse and rider gallop closer.

Anthony jumps out of the way and looks back as the rider passes. The horse stops on a dime, rears.

Anthony squints to clear the fog.

The Knight and steed turn. Behind the Knight, Paul hangs on. He peeks around the Knight.

PAUL  
Where were you?

The horse rises on its hind legs and dashes off.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

This cemetery also on the bay side, is linked by a gate to a park.

A GRAVE SITE AND GATHERERS

Father Lumin presides over a ceremony. A stiff wind blows in off the bay. Seagulls swarm and CHATTER overhead.

Anthony, Peter and Angela stand between their parents. Mr. Carino rests his hand on Anthony's shoulder. Tears roll down Anthony's cheeks.

MR. JORDAN, 48, and MRS. JORDAN, 42, are seated alongside the grave with Paul's older brother, STEVEN, 18, a soldier.

Paul's classmates, including Sarah McGee, Jerome and Ronald, and their families stand nearby. Sister Mary and Sister Marie Agricola flank Father Lumin.

FATHER LUMIN  
Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that  
whilst we lament the departure of this  
child, thy servant, out of this life,  
we may bear in mind that we are most  
certainly all to follow him.

Anthony's eyes stare down.

EXT. SEAWALL ON THE BAY -- DAY

Anthony sits alone on the seawall, gazes out across the bay to Rock Island. His open jacket whips in the wind.

ANTHONY  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't come for  
you. I'm sorry you had to be my  
friend.

He stands, bends down to pick up a stone and hurls it as far as he can into the wind and the water.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
I SAID I'M SORRY.

He reaches down and grabs another stone, hurls it, picks up another, and another. He sobs and throws stones out into the turbulent waters.

ON THE BAY POV

Anthony appears small and insignificant. From this far, only the flailing of his arms can be seen. The stones, invisible.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY

Father Lawrence leads the 8:30 mass. Anthony and Ronald serve, perfectly. Bells RING out right on cue. Spirit mimics.

The statues are no longer draped in purple. White flowers adorn the altar. Jimmy Wesley and the Hispanic Woman are in attendance.

The wind whips through the church. The prayer candles dance.

EXT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY

Ronald and Anthony walk down the steps leading out from the vestuary. They pause on the bottom step.

RONALD  
Goin' home?

ANTHONY  
I don't think so.

RONALD  
I am. Goin' back to bed, too, then  
I'll get up and have breakfast again.  
I'm takin' full advantage of this  
vacation.

Ronald throws his scarf around his neck and walks backwards away from Anthony.

RONALD (CONT'D)  
Servin' Thursday?

Anthony nods.

Ronald waves goodbye, runs off, past

Jimmy who ambles alongside the church, en route to the park.

Anthony zips up his jacket and walks toward the school. He pushes the churchyard gate open and walks out along the street, past the school and into the park.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Anthony, his hands shoved deep into his pockets, sits on a bench, stares back at the school.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

ANTHONY, 4 1/2, fights to retain Mrs. Carino's grip, as she tries to step away.

ANGELA, 9, in pigtails with blue ribbons on the ends, pulls on his other arm from landing of the side entrance steps.

Anthony screams a soundless "NO".

The door at the top of the steps opens. Sister Rose Dei Pazzi steps out. Anthony SCREAMS louder. Angela lets go of his hand, rolls her eyes and disappears behind the nun into the school.

Anthony lunges for his mother, but not fast enough, as Sister Rose scoops him up under her arm and carries him, kicking through the doorway.

Mrs. Carino starts up the stairs after them.

MRS. CARINO

Wait!

Sister Rose turns back and glowers. Mrs. Carino stops, turns and leaves, without looking back.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Anthony stares at the school. On the bench across from him Jimmy now sits, listening to his transistor radio.

JIMMY

Hi'ya, Rocky.

Anthony lifts his chin, as if to say hello, then looks back toward a commotion at the rear of the school.

ANTHONY'S POV

Several big gaming wheels with numbers and spokes on their faces are hoisted off a truck and lifted carefully up the school's back steps. Sonny Tibbits and Gerald Riker are two of the men working under Father Lawrence's direction.

EMMA (O.S.)

Are you going?

Anthony, startled, turns to the voice.

ANTHONY  
Huh?

EMMA  
The bazaar.

ANTHONY  
Oh, I don't think so.

EMMA  
May I?

She sits down next to him.

ANTHONY  
Oh, yes, ma'am.

EMMA  
I wanted to tell you how sorry I am  
about your friend.

ANTHONY  
You knew Paul?

EMMA  
I know who all you boys are... and I  
know you were his friend.

Jimmy stands beside them, rocks from side to side.

JIMMY  
Look, Mom, Rocky. Look!

He holds out a hard boiled purple egg. He hands it to  
Emma.

EMMA  
Oh, that's a beauty, Jimmy. I bet you  
might find more if you looked real  
good.

Jimmy skips away, excitedly, looking under every branch and  
inside every hole for more unclaimed Easter eggs.

ANTHONY  
He calls me Rocky.

EMMA  
Oh, I know he does. He likes you very  
much. Rocky was his best friend.

Anthony's eyes question.

ANTHONY  
What's wrong with him?

EMMA  
I know most of the kids just make fun  
of him and call him an idiot and the  
(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)  
like, but he's really just a sweet,  
little boy.

ANTHONY  
He's pretty big.

EMMA  
No, I don't mean his size. He's a full  
grown man in size... and age. But not  
in his mind. In his mind, he's even  
younger than you.  
(notes Anthony's confusion)  
Something happened to Jimmy a long time  
ago...

EXT. A BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY (A LONG TIME AGO)

A crowd of proud parents stand around as youngsters in  
uniforms play a crude version of today's little league  
baseball.

EMMA (V.O.)  
It was nineteen forty, before my  
husband, Jimmy's father, went off to  
war. Jimmy was just ten. Oh, he was a  
big boy even then. A pitcher, too.

JIMMY, 10, in his "Arnold Plumbing" uniform, reads the  
signals from his catcher. He shakes off the "two fingers"  
signal from between the catcher's legs and nods with a  
smile when he gets one finger, the fast ball.

EMMA (V.O.)  
It was the last game of the season and  
Jimmy was going for his third no  
hitter. He'd have been perfect, but one  
boy let a ball roll right between his  
legs.

Jimmy winds up and chucks.

The batter checks his swing, hits the ball. A fluke.

The ball skips across the infield to the shortstop's  
waiting glove and goes right under it.

EMMA (V.O.)  
That shortstop was Rocky.

ROCKY, 11, turns to the outfield and throws his glove down  
in disgust.

ANTHONY (V.O.)  
Oh...



EMMA (V.O.)  
 It didn't bother Jimmy. He was just  
 havin' fun. He loved his baseball.  
 He... loved it.

Jimmy runs off the field patting Rocky on the back.

EMMA (V.O.)  
 It was the next inning when it  
 happened.

Jimmy shakes off some more signals until he gets the fast  
 ball "one finger" straight down. The crowd's fervor  
 builds. Younger Emma bites down on her knuckle while HENRY  
 WESLEY, in a hat, white shirt and tie, urges his son on.

On the other team's bench, the Coach stands, arms akimbo,  
 his facial expression says, "There's no way my kid's gonna  
 hit this kid."

EMMA (V.O.)  
 There was already one out. Rocky had  
 just made up for his error.

ANTHONY (V.O.)  
 Really?

A hard line drive ropes its way toward second base and  
 looks like it will make its way out into center field, but  
 Rocky's glove stabs, out of nowhere.

The ball wedges in Rocky's webbing -- ice cream cone.  
 Rocky hits the ground hard, hangs on.

Jimmy runs over to Rocky, helps dust him off.

EMMA (V.O.)  
 It was a beautiful play. But the next  
 batter was Junior O'Dell...

Junior O'Dell, a brawny kid, steps to the plate and pounds  
 it hard with his head of his bat.

Two young boys hold scorecards. One has a "1" on it, the  
 other a "0".

Jimmy's teammates chant for him to burn one down the  
 middle.

Jimmy gets the fast ball signal. Junior digs in.

EMMA (V.O.)  
 Then it happened. One pitch.

SLO MO ON BALL

As it flies toward Junior, right down the pipe. Junior's  
 eyes bulge as the ball approaches... then close. He

swings, and the ball SMACKS off the bat and REAL TIME RESUMES with the CRACKING SOUND.

EMMA (V.O.)

I was looking for the ball, to see where it went. I never saw it hit him. Jimmy.

Jimmy picks up the ball that has bounced off his head squarely, but falls down flat as he attempts to throw to first base. He lay unconscious, the ball still in his hand. All the players converge on the mound.

FROM OVERHEAD

Jimmy lay flat and motionless, his arms stretched out perpendicular to his body on each side, across the mound, his cap on the clay next to him.

EXT. PARK -- BACK TO SCENE

As Emma and Anthony watch from the bench, Jimmy searches everywhere for more eggs.

EMMA

He was a normal, bright boy with a future until that day.

ANTHONY

He doesn't look... I mean...

EMMA

It's his brain. He was in a coma for nearly six weeks. Doctors said he was lucky to come back at all. Now, in his mind he's still ten years old. Doesn't ever say much. Only God knows what he's thinking. But I know he has a purpose... we all do.

ANTHONY

Yes, ma'am.

Jimmy sits back on his bench and puts the radio to his ear.

EMMA

He still loves his baseball. I bought him that radio Christmas before we moved here so he could listen to his games.

ANTHONY

But there's no baseball now.

EMMA

To everyone else there's no baseball, but to Jimmy... Oh, I don't know. I

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)  
like to think he can tune in a game  
whenever he wants to.

Radio to his ear, Jimmy imitates the roar of crowd.

ANTHONY  
He sure goes to church a lot.

EMMA  
Maybe it's the quiet or the candles  
that fascinate him so. I used to take  
him every morning... but... Well, now  
he goes on his own, every day,  
sometimes in the middle of the night.  
He says God talks to him. He likes  
that.

Emma pauses to watch her son, rises slowly, and turns to  
Anthony.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
I'm glad he has you as a friend.

ANTHONY  
I don't really...

Emma rises, meets Jimmy on the pathway. She takes his hand  
and walks him away.

JIMMY  
See ya, Rocky.

Emma hands the Easter egg to Jimmy, who holds it out  
admiringly. Anthony watches them.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- DAY

The workers hustle to set up the various booths and games  
for the Church's fund-raising bazaar.

Gerald Riker pulls a rag from his pocket, wipes his  
forehead, catches the eye of

Father Lawrence who stands nearby, Spirit up in his arms.

Lawrence lifts his chin to him. Riker nods, then continues  
setting up one of the game wheels.

EXT. BAY STREET -- DAY

Anthony pokes along, down Paul's street.

Paul's house, the last one on the block that dead-ends into  
the bay, is three stories of grey brick and windows.

Anthony stops in front of the house.

EXT. PAUL'S BEACH -- DAY

Anthony stops at the top of the steps that lead down onto the beach that is separated from Jordan property by a long dock. He looks out at the huge boulder supporting the dock. Cut into the stone's smooth face are the words "Paul's Beach".

Anthony sits on a rock near the shore. A horseshoe crab shell laps up at the water's edge. He skips a stone out onto the water. It takes one hop, disappears.

MRS. JORDAN (O.S.)  
Anthony, is that you?

Paul turns back to the house.

Mrs. Jordan, white bathrobe on, stands at her back door, waves.

Anthony waves back. Mrs. Jordan gestures for him to come up to the house.

INT. JORDAN HOUSE -- DAY

Mrs. Jordan mashes out a cigarette in an ashtray that sits in a tall stand in the foyer. On a table nearby is a half-empty bottle of gin and a glass with a few chunks of melting ice.

MRS. JORDAN  
(to herself)  
Funny, I thought I quit smoking.

She hugs Anthony hard.

MRS. JORDAN (CONT'D)  
Oh, it's so good to see you. Hungry?

Anthony shakes his head.

MRS. JORDAN (CONT'D)  
Just seeing you reminds me...  
(breaking up a bit)  
Can you stay right here a minute,  
honey?

Anthony nods. Mrs. Jordan hurries up the stairs.

Anthony looks around this house that for so many years had been like a second home to him. He walks to the piano laden with family pictures, all in frames, picks one up.

INSERT: FRAMED PHOTO

Paul mugs with his big white sheep dog.

MRS. JORDAN (O.S.)  
(CONT'D)

That's just the way I remember him.

BACK TO SCENE:

She stands at the foot of the stairs, pauses, then walks to Anthony and takes the picture.

MRS. JORDAN (CONT'D)  
That's the way I'll always remember  
him.

Anthony tries to say something, anything, but nothing comes. Mrs. Jordan puts the picture back, and hands Anthony a White Owl cigar box.

MRS. JORDAN (CONT'D)  
I thought you'd appreciate these. You  
were like a brother to him, you know.  
Especially after Steven went off.

Anthony opens the box. It's stuffed with baseball cards.

ANTHONY  
Wow... I can't keep these.

MRS. JORDAN  
Sure you can. They were Paul's.  
Now they're yours. A gift.

ANTHONY  
I promise, I'll take good care of them.

Mrs. Jordan fights off her tears.

MRS. JORDAN  
I know you will, honey.

She hugs him again, harder and longer.

MRS. JORDAN (CONT'D)  
I guess you better get going now, huh?

ANTHONY  
Yes, ma'am.

EXT. JORDAN HOUSE -- DAY

Mrs. Jordan stands at the glass storm door. Anthony walks away from the house, the cigar box under his arm.

MRS. JORDAN  
You can still stop by sometimes!

Anthony nods. He watches the glass storm door until the wood door closes behind it. He walks back to the other side of the house and steps up on a stump beside the fence.

He looks over the fence to the fallout shelter. Nothing has changed there.

EXT. PAUL'S BEACH -- DAY

Anthony steps out onto a rock at the water's edge. He uses the rock to climb out onto a jetty of rocks. The water laps at his feet.

With the cigar box balanced on his knees, he sits on a rock near the jetty's end and looks out into the calm water.

INT. THE BOX -- DAY

A weak flashlight beam moves over each card as Anthony's hand lifts through them in the cigar box. We hear him CRYING lowly.

INT. BELDEN APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A genuine dump. Johnny sits at a card table in front of the TV. An episode on "Gunsmoke" plays.

RANDY BELDEN, 20, craggy skin, tank shirt, drops a dish of chili or something in front of Johnny, chugs a beer..

JOHNNY

That's it?

RANDY

That's it. Whatta ya want, shitface?

JOHNNY

Where's ma?

RANDY

You lookin' for a handler, check the Bronx zoo. How the hell do I know?

Johnny jabs a fork into his goo, beholds the mess.

JOHNNY

It's just I ain't seen her in a couple 'a days.

RANDY

Don't worry, she's a big girl. She can take care of herself. You got any cigarettes?

Johnny stares at his brother, digs a pack out of his pants' pocket, tosses them at him.

INT. CARINO APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The family sits around the dinner table. Food everywhere. Carmine takes a bowl of potatoes, passes them down.

CARMINE

Of course the nuns are always right.  
You know who they get their orders  
from? God, that's who. What kind of  
question is that from you?

ANTHONY

(looks to Peter, back)  
Sorry.

Anne WAILS O.S.. ANGELA, 17, pretty and intense, stares  
across at Peter. Her eyes narrow.

ANGELA

What in the hell are you looking at?

MRS. CARINO

Angela!

ANTHONY

He wasn't looking at anything. He was  
just eating. It's not his fault.

CARMINE

(grabs Anthony's shirt)  
His fault? His fault? What, his  
fault? Do you think you know what's  
going on? Do you?

ANTHONY

No, sir.

MRS. CARINO

Carm, he didn't say anything.

PETER

I didn't say anything, either.

CARMINE

(lets go of Anthony)  
Both of you just eat. I don't want to  
hear any more about what the hell's  
going on around here.  
(to Angela)  
And you, watch that mouth!

Angela pokes hard at her food, then abruptly stands up  
straight.

ANGELA

I'm done. May I be excused?

Carmine gestures with his fork for her to scam.

PETER  
When is Angela going away?

Angela stops dead in her tracks.

ANGELA  
There! See! Maybe I should just wear  
a big red letter on my chest or  
something. I can't wait to move outta  
here.

CARMINE  
See what you've done to this family?

She runs off.

Carmine stares at Peter, who shrugs it off.

The door into Angela's room SLAMS shut. Carmine spits his  
food out, bites down hard on his bottom lip and jumps up,  
but Mrs. Carino grabs his forearm to hold him back.

MRS. CARINO  
(to the boys)  
Eat.

Anthony holds the forkful of mashed potatoes close to his  
mouth. His hand trembles.

INT. ANTHONY/PETER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Peter sleeps. Anthony tosses.

EXT. PAUL'S BEACH -- DUSK (DREAM)

Anthony fills his pockets with rocks. Heavily laden, he  
jumps awkwardly from rock to rock out on the jetty until he  
reaches the end.

He carries one large rock with a rope around it. The other  
end of the rope is fastened around his waist.

He looks back toward Paul's house, steps off the rock into  
the water.

UNDER THE WATER

Anthony slowly and peacefully sinks. But when he touches  
bottom, he panics, pulls rocks out of his pockets. But he  
cannot rise off the bottom. The big rock has pulled the  
knot closed tight and he cannot untie it. He fights to get  
free.

Anthony extends his hand toward the surface of the water  
just a foot out of his reach, and he's sinking, still.



Another hand, a strong, large hand, plunges down into the water, grabs Anthony's arm and pulls him up fast.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY (DREAM)

Anthony kneels at the pew during his first holy communion ceremony. This time when he looks over to the center aisle, Paul stands there smiling and takes a host from out of his own mouth and puts it into his baseball card box.

The church bells RING OUT. Anthony rises to follow Paul, who walks away down the center aisle, past a soaking wet Jimmy who presses the transistor radio to his ear.

INT. ANTHONY/PETER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Anthony walks into, then back, then into the closed door of his room, talking in GIBBERISH all the while.

Peter sits up in his bed.

PETER  
Stop it. Stop doing that. You're  
scaring me! Mom!

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Anthony, bleary eyed, meanders through the park, the cigar box under his arm.

Father Lumin, carrying a grocery bag, catches up.

FATHER LUMIN  
Such a nice day, Anthony. Maybe Spring  
is here, yes?

Anthony turns, awkwardly.

ANTHONY  
Oh. Uh-huh. Yes, father.

FATHER LUMIN  
Did you serve today?

ANTHONY  
No, Father, Tuesday and Thursday this  
week. And Sunday.

FATHER LUMIN  
Of course, Sunday.

They walk past the Maintenance Shack near the sea wall.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
So, what's in the box? Diamonds?

ANTHONY  
No, Father. Cards. Baseball cards.

FATHER LUMIN  
You like the baseball, eh?

ANTHONY  
Yes, Father. I do. These were --

FATHER LUMIN  
Then you must be excited about Mister  
Whitey Ford coming to the bazaar Friday  
night.

ANTHONY  
Whitey Ford? Here?

FATHER LUMIN  
Sure, why not? He's good friends with  
the Monsignor. You got a Mister Whitey  
Ford in your box?

ANTHONY  
Yes, Father. He was Paul's favorite.

FATHER LUMIN  
Yes. Little Paul.

Lumin pats Anthony on the shoulder, reaches into his  
pocket. The pocket JINGLES.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
Let me see here. Like a millionaire,  
I am today.

A bright handful of change sparkles in the sun.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
When I come from my country this is  
more than all the money I have.

ANTHONY  
Your country?

FATHER LUMIN  
Yugoslavia. My home.

ANTHONY  
You left home?

FATHER LUMIN  
In the city where I lived, it was very  
hard to be a Catholic... even before  
Mister Hitler. Always the fighting.  
All the people who died in His name.  
God must have a sad face now. Before  
my papa was killed he put mama and me  
and my baby brother on a ship.

He stares off into the bay.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
We come to America.

ANTHONY  
Were you afraid?

FATHER LUMIN  
I think... yes, I was a little.

ANTHONY  
I'm afraid of everything, Father.  
Sometimes I hide in a box so I don't  
have to...

Lumin eyes the boy, touches his forehead gently.

FATHER LUMIN  
"Fear is only as deep as your mind  
allows."

ANTHONY  
Is that from the Catechism or the  
Bible?

FATHER LUMIN  
No. It's from the Japanese. Very old  
proverb. Do you understand it,  
Anthony?

ANTHONY  
I think fear up?

FATHER LUMIN  
Yes. So maybe you can unthink it up,  
too, if you try. Will you try?

Anthony considers, nods slowly.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
(eyes his change)  
Why don't you take some for the bazaar  
games? Have a little fun for yourself.

ANTHONY  
Oh, no, thank you.

FATHER LUMIN  
C'mon. Okay, then, guess which hand...

Lumin maneuvers his hands behind his back.

ANTHONY  
Isn't that like... gambling?

FATHER LUMIN  
Gambling? Hmm. Ah, only if our game  
depends on chance.

Lumin raises an eyebrow. Anthony hesitates, points to the Priest's right side. Lumin switches hands, so the coins move to the right, brings both hands around, opens them, smiles. Lumin winks. Anthony takes the coins. They walk on.

ANTHONY

Thank you, Father.

FATHER LUMIN

(seriously)

Anthony, you a very quiet, serious boy, yes?

ANTHONY

I guess so, Father. Sister Mary Therese thinks I'm too quiet.

FATHER LUMIN

Hmmm. Maybe someday you be... what, when you grow up?

ANTHONY

Monsignor Lawrence wants me to be a priest.

FATHER LUMIN

Oh, no! Not a priest?

ANTHONY

Yes.

(catches Lumin's drift)

Oh, no, it's not that. I just don't know now. I used to wanna be a baseball player.

(...)

But that can be dangerous.

FATHER LUMIN

Oh, can it? You think so?

ANTHONY

My mother says I could be a writer. I wrote her a poem once. She really liked it. My father... I don't really know what he wants me to be.

FATHER LUMIN

Did you ever ask him?

ANTHONY

No, not really.

They come to the clearing near the bay where the benches are scattered among dogwood trees.

Jimmy sits on one of the benches facing the water. A nice breeze comes in off the water. Anthony spots Jimmy.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
Maybe a doctor would be good.

FATHER LUMIN  
Oh, that would be very good. We can always use smart doctors like you Anthony Carino. Well, I better get these groceries to Mrs. Cochran, so she can put the lunch out on time. I'm already late. If you ever need to talk to someone, Anthony, I would enjoy it very much if you would come and talk to me.

ANTHONY  
Yes, Father. Thank you.

Father Lumin smiles and walks off toward the church, humming. Anthony calls after him.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
Thank you for the money, too.

FATHER LUMIN  
You're welcome. I see you at the bazaar.

ANTHONY'S POV

Father Lumin walks over to Jimmy, reaches into his pocket for some change.

Father Lumin sits down with Jimmy. The priest gestures out to a boat in the bay. Jimmy reacts with great enthusiasm when Father Lumin listens to the red transistor radio.

With his fingers pressed together, the priest makes the sign of the cross on Jimmy's forehead and kisses him there. This minor ceremony completed, he walks off again toward the church, resuming his humming.

Anthony watches the priest with a new admiration.

When he turns back to Jimmy, he sees him begging Johnny for his radio. Jimmy reaches for the radio, and Johnny pushes his hand away.

Anthony steps toward them, slowly.

Johnny, his back to Anthony, walks away with the radio.

JIMMY  
NO. GIVE IT BACK! GIVE IT BACK!

JOHNNY  
Sorry. No can do. Gotta go now.  
See ya, goofy.

Anthony's stuck. His wobbly legs won't work under him.

Johnny turns to him.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
Hey, if it isn't the little piece of  
teacher's pet shit.

Anthony stands, stock still, looks around.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide.

INSERT: ALONG A PARK PATHWAY

Emma runs, her sweater around her shoulders, mouths  
"Jimmy."

BACK TO SCENE:

Johnny drops the radio and squares off with his fists held  
up high like "John L. Sullivan" and times a punch to catch  
Anthony flush in the face.

The cigar box goes flying, cards scattering everywhere.

Anthony falls straight down. Johnny jumps down on him and  
punches him hard in the gut until...

EMMA (O.S.)  
Stop that. Stop that now, or I'll  
call the police.

Johnny looks up. Emma Wesley runs at them, hard.

Johnny pops up quickly, resumes his "pro boxer" stance,  
dances, feints, kicks Anthony hard, twice, then dashes off.

Emma kneels down over Anthony, as he rubs his head, rises.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Oh, my dear, are you all right?

ANTHONY  
I think I'm gonna throw up.  
(leans over gags, loses it)

Jimmy retrieves his radio and presses it to his ear. His  
face lights up when its STATIC assures him that it still  
works. He sets off to pick up the strewn baseball cards  
and deposits them one by one back into the cigar box.

He walks over to Anthony with the box.

JIMMY  
Rocky, you're my best friend, huh?

EMMA  
Jimmy. This is Anthony... not Rocky.

ANTHONY  
It's okay. Yeah, I'm your best friend.

Jimmy smiles.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

A two-toned '53 Plymouth moves along the highway quickly.

INT. PLYMOUTH -- DAY

FRONT SEAT

Carmine, drives, and Mrs. Carino sits quietly. They stare straight ahead. Baby Anne sleeps peacefully between them, wrapped up in a knit comforter. Plastic "Mary" rides the dash.

BACK SEAT

Angela, eyes closed, sits between Anthony and Peter. Anthony watches the buildings fly by. Peter fingers a PEZ dispenser.

No one says a word. SILENCE.

EXT. PELHAM BUS STATION -- DAY, LATER

Carmine lifts a suitcase out of the trunk, carries it to the Plymouth's back door. Angela climbs out over Anthony.

Mrs. Carino opens the passenger door, looks up at the station.

Mrs. Carino, Angela and Carmine walk up and into the terminal.

Anthony watches through the window.

ANTHONY'S POV

An Old Woman wheels a cart up and over the step leading into the terminal. Carmine holds the door open for her, exits the terminal quickly.

He climbs in the car and SLAMS the door. A couple of beats.

Mrs. Carino walks briskly toward the car, looks back.

Angela waves at her through the glass door. Mrs. Carino waves back.

Mrs. Carino stands at the open car door, hesitates, then gets in. The Plymouth pulls away and disappears into traffic.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- DUSK

The room is filled with people and games of all kinds, including ring throws, spinning number wheels, dart throws, basketball toss, etc.

A FEEDBACK SQUEAL from the PA system.

ON STAGE

Father Lawrence motions for someone to adjust the microphone. A HELPER nods from offstage.

FATHER LAWRENCE  
Heavenly Father, each year we call upon  
you to bless our spring bazaar.  
(clears his throat)  
And this year is no exception. Our  
quest continues to restore your house  
to the splendor that is rightfully  
yours. Father, ours is a poor  
congregation.

Parishioners, including familiar faces, like Father Lumin, Jimmy, Emma, Ronald, Sarah McGee, Anthony with his cigar box, Peter and Mrs. Carino, listen, heads bowed.

FATHER LAWRENCE (CONT'D)  
We have little to offer but our  
devotion and reverence. We pray that  
you will deem us worthy and smile upon  
our little effort and make it a  
success... bringing us ever closer to  
our goal. In your name, Oh Lord, we  
pray.

The congregation adds a rousing "Amen", as Father Lawrence steps away from the microphone, then right back to it with something to add, Spirit quick at his heel.

FATHER LAWRENCE (CONT'D)  
And dear Father, since the great Whitey  
Ford was so kind to fly up from Florida  
just to spend his Friday evening with  
us, we ask you to bless the Yankees  
this coming season, as well.

He raises WHITEY FORD's arm, referee/boxer style, and the congregation LAUGHS and CHEERS.

Some BOOS upset Father Lawrence, and he glares out into the audience, before escorting Whitey Ford offstage.



Sister Mary Therese steps to the microphone. She taps at it.

SISTER MARY  
Hello. Hello. Can you hear me?

A collective LAUGH and a "Yes, Sister."

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
Well, then, let me echo Monsignor Lawrence, as I invite everyone to enjoy their little sojourn into the realm of...  
(gestures quote marks)  
... "gambling for God", shall we say. Remember, all the money you lose... spend here this evening will be put in our savings fund to renovate our church in the coming years.

People are already beginning to stray to some of the game tables. A spinning wheel CLICKS as the rubber tip moves between the numbers.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
No, no, no, don't leave yet. I have the honor of introducing our other esteemed guests, the men from American Legion Post One Fifty Six chorus and their featured singer... Mister Carmine Carino.

Anthony, stunned by this announcement, looks up at his mother, who picks Peter up so he can see.

People gather closer to the stage. A HUBBUB.

ON STAGE

Five men wearing American Legion caps walk out onto the stage, with Carmine stepping out of the group to the microphone. He smiles nervously. A smattering of APPLAUSE.

CARMINE  
Thank you. Thank you. We'd like to do a little song for you now...

A HECKLER leans up onto the stage.

HECKLER  
We was hopin' you'd do a little cha-cha-cha, Carino!

The crowd LAUGHS.

Anthony glares at the Heckler, then rivets his attention quickly back to the stage.

CARMINE

I guess we could do that, too. Whatta  
ya say, boys?

The back-up singers wave him off. LAUGHTER fills the hall.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

We hope the church raises a lot of  
money tonight. Okay, here's singin' at  
ya!

Carmine turns back to the boys, taps his foot into a beat.  
They harmonize behind him, as Carmine turns back to the  
audience.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

"I've got the world on a string, I'm  
sittin' on a rainbow, got that string  
around my finger..."

They are quite good. Carmine's voice is clear and high, as  
he sings on.

Anthony watches, his mouth agape. Mrs. Carino smiles  
proudly and sings along, swinging Peter gently in her arms.

MRS. CARINO

You didn't know your father was such a  
singer, did you?

Anthony shakes his head, wide-eyed.

MRS. CARINO (CONT'D)

He could have gone professional, you  
know. Like Frank Sinatra.

ANTHONY

Why didn't he?

MRS. CARINO

What?

ANTHONY

Go professional?

MRS. CARINO

Well, you kids came along. We needed  
money, so he went to work in the  
shipyard. Now, with all you kids and  
three jobs... this is as close to being  
Frank Sinatra your father will ever  
get.

The song finishes. Anthony stares up at his father.

Carmine relishes shyly in the APPLAUSE. His face looks  
younger, happier, full of life, free of all worry.

CARMINE  
Thank you very much. We'll be back a  
little later. But for now...

He looks offstage, and cloth bags are thrown out to the  
men. They reach into the bags and toss boxes of candy out  
into the crowd.

CARMINE (CONT'D)  
Come an' get it, kids!

Everyone, not just kids, swarm after the candy. Anthony  
stands at a distance, watches.

Mrs. Carino blows a kiss toward Carmine, who blows one  
back, then finds Anthony.

CARMINE (CONT'D)  
Hey, Anthony! Catch!

Carmine sails a box of Black Cows at Anthony, who catches  
it.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Hi, Anthony.

Anthony turns to the voice. Sarah McGee, even more  
beautiful out of class.

ANTHONY  
Uh... hi, Sarah.

SARAH  
I never knew your father was a singer.

ANTHONY  
You didn't? Huh. Well, I guess I  
better get going.

SARAH  
Oh. I was hoping we could talk.

ANTHONY  
Talk? About what? I mean, you  
wanna talk to me about something?

SARAH  
Yeah, I do. Wanna go outside?

Anthony glances around, nervously. No one watching.

ANTHONY  
(voice cracking)  
Sure.

EXT. AUDITORIUM STEPS -- NIGHT

Anthony and Sarah sit on the steps outside the auditorium.

Gerald and Sonny ride the fender of an old station wagon parked down in the schoolyard. The lights of their cigarettes dance around in the darkness.

SARAH  
So, how long has your father been singing?

ANTHONY  
Oh, uh... a real long time.

SARAH  
Well, you can tell. He sounds professional.

ANTHONY  
Yeah. He almost was once.

SARAH  
Anthony?

ANTHONY  
Yes?

SARAH  
Are you doin' okay?

ANTHONY  
Whatta ya mean?

SARAH  
I mean about Paul. It' so sad. And... about that "pet" thing. You know, after Paul, I bet no one even remembers about that.

Anthony opens the cigar box, takes out the Whitey Ford card.

ANTHONY  
I guess.

He puts the card back, closes the box.

SARAH  
Well, you know I like you, don't you?

ANTHONY  
Yeah, I guess. Not really. I don't know. You do?

Sarah looks up into the clear, dark sky. A million stars sparkle over the bay.

SARAH  
Do you think anything's really out there?

ANTHONY

Just those two guys sittin' on that --

SARAH

No. Up there.

She gently angles his head, so he's looking up, too.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Do you ever wonder about things like that? If there is a heaven? If somebody's up there watching you?

ANTHONY

All the time.

A beat.

SARAH

I wonder if that sheep ever ate that flower...

ANTHONY

Huh?

SARAH

I read this book last year called "The Little Prince" about this pilot who crashed in a desert and met this little prince who was from a tiny, faraway star. The Prince just wanted to get home to take care of his flower.

ANTHONY

One flower?

SARAH

Not just one. The only one. One precious flower... the only thing on his planet, except for three volcanoes.

ANTHONY

Volcanoes?

SARAH

Yes, the Prince left his planet just so he could prove that he had the prettiest flower there was. But you know what he found out.

(Anthony shakes his head)

He found out was that it didn't matter if it was the prettiest flower as long as it made him happy when he looked at it.

ANTHONY

Wow...

(beat)

I wonder if it was scarier to fly off  
(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
his planet or to live next to  
volcanoes.

SARAH  
(laughing)  
I don't think any of it scared this  
Prince. He never thought twice about  
it.

ANTHONY  
Did he ever get home?

Sarah looks out into the sky.

SARAH  
I don't know. What do you think?

ANTHONY  
Me? I didn't read it. But, I think  
I kind'a hope so.

SARAH  
You're funny.

ANTHONY  
Sorry, I didn't mean to be.

She reaches over takes his hand... slowly lifts it, points  
his index finger skyward.

SARAH  
Pick one star. Does it make you think  
about anything special, or is it just  
a star?

Anthony tries to focus on just one star.

ANTHONY  
I don't know, it's hard to --

Sarah leans over to him and kisses him softly on the cheek.

SARAH  
Maybe next time you see a star...  
you'll think of me.

Sarah stands up, dusts off her fanny, leaves him sitting  
there. Anthony rubs his face where she kissed him and  
looks out to that one star, smiles.

INT. AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

As Anthony passes by the games and booths, his box of cards  
under his arm. To one side, a spinning wheel, where  
players place dollars on numbers on the table in front of  
them.

The wheel spins, the poker slows, finally stopping on number "30". A Woman dances up and down as the BARKER, a fat, bald man, cigarette barely hanging from his lips, pays her off.

BARKER  
Okay, now, spend it all in one place,  
little lady. Right here.

The Barker collects money, laughs to himself.

BARKER (CONT'D)  
Okay, folks. Get your money down.  
This is for your church, now. Try your  
luck.

Anthony walks through the crowd.

A bingo game in progress on lunch room tables.

Jimmy and Emma sit at one table together. Jimmy, radio to ear, frantically reads their cards before the next number is called by the caller, a petite, older Nun.

Emma smiles at Anthony, nudges Jimmy. Jimmy waves gleefully, holds up one of his cards to show Anthony. All the chips slide off the card.

Anthony moves on to a ring-toss game where hoops bounce and PING along a sea of empty milk bottles.

A SHARP SQUEAL over the P.A..

FATHER LAWRENCE (O.S.)  
Ladies and gentlemen, we have an  
important announcement to make.

Monsignor's voice goes almost unnoticed in the din.

ON STAGE

Sister Marie Agricola steps up to the microphone. Father Lawrence yields the mic to her.

SISTER MARIE  
When our esteemed Monsignor addresses  
you, I expect your undivided attention.

Her voice booms through the room. All motion ceases.

She steps away from the microphone. Lawrence nods.

FATHER LAWRENCE  
Thank you, Sister.

Sister Marie nods back, imperiously.

FATHER LAWRENCE (CONT'D)  
 My good friend and top notch pitcher  
 for the New York Yankees, Mister Whitey  
 Ford will now be signing autographs at  
 the dart booth... donations will be  
 accepted. That's all. Now, go back to  
 having fun!

Kids scramble for...

WHITEY'S BOOTH

Boys lean all around the booth, their heads resting on  
 their hands, their elbows on the counter top, as they watch  
 in awe while

Whitey Ford signs his name to all varieties of items  
 brought before him -- baseballs, table napkins, old bingo  
 cards.

A SMALL BOY pushes his catechism across the table to the  
 amiable ball player.

SMALL BOY  
 Could you sign this?

Ford holds the catechism up.

WHITEY FORD  
 Gee, I don' know, son.

SMALL BOY  
 I'll read it every day if you do.

Whitey Ford laughs, glances over to Father Lumin, who nods  
 his approval.

WHITEY FORD  
 Okay, it's a deal, son.

The kids cheer. Anthony steps up to the edge of the table.  
 Whitey Ford looms before him. Anthony's hand trembles as  
 he deposits a few coins into a big can on the table top.

WHITEY FORD (CONT'D)  
 Thank you, son. What can I sign  
 for ya?

Anthony sets his box on the counter, lifts the lid and  
 pulls out Paul's Whitey Ford card. He hands it to Ford.

WHITEY FORD (CONT'D)  
 (off card)  
 Hey, I recognize this good-lookin' guy.

Ford begins signing his name, stops.

WHITEY FORD (CONT'D)  
 I can't sign this.



ANTHONY

You can't.

WHITEY FORD

Nope. Not until you tell me your name.

ANTHONY

Huh?

WHITEY FORD

You want your name on it, don't you?

The boys at the counter cajole, "Yeah".

Johnny Belden watches from the perimeter of the crowd of boys.

WHITEY FORD (CONT'D)

You do have a name, don't you?

Anthony hesitates, surveys the faces of the other kids. A beat.

ANTHONY

Paul. Could you put "Paul"?

A BOY'S VOICE

Hey, his name's not Paul. He can't call himself Paul.

Whitey Ford sizes up rigid Anthony.

WHITEY FORD

Heck, my real name's Edward. If I can call myself "Whitey", I guess he can call himself "Paul."

A smile eases across Anthony's face.

Whitey Ford signs the card and hands it back to him.

WHITEY FORD (CONT'D)

There ya go, son. Who's next?

ANTHONY

Thank you. Thanks a lot.

Anthony looks at the card.

INSERT: CARD

It reads "Paul, You can do it. Whitey Ford."

ANTHONY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Do what?

EXT. AUDITORIUM STEPS -- NIGHT

The card still in his hand, Anthony glances from side to side. He looks up, turns the card and its inscription skyward so it faces...

A STAR

Its light seems to flicker and dance.

INT. AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

MONTAGE:

The room is filled with all the activity of the bazaar. The games, the people, the color, the lights, money being placed on the tables, rings flying SLO MO toward the necks of milk bottles, Whitey Ford signing autographs, a wall of punctured balloons behind him, the American Legion singers on stage again, Carmine Carino, front and center.

The song "Me and My Shadow".

END MONTAGE:

Father Lawrence watches from a far corner near the stage, folds some bills (money) in his hand, and quietly ducks out the door behind him, holding it open for Spirit.

EXT. AUDITORIUM/SIDE DOOR

Sonny and Gerald fidget, smoke. When the door opens, they toss their cigarettes away. Father Lawrence steps outside, and the three huddle.

Father Lawrence backhands the money into Gerald's pocket.

FATHER LAWRENCE  
Dark night, isn't it?

GERALD  
Not so much as a moon, Father.

Father Lawrence bends down to lift Spirit into his arms.

FATHER LAWRENCE  
Then our business is finished. I  
won't see you around here anymore.

Rubbing Spirit's nose, Lawrence steps back inside the auditorium, leaving the men standing there.

ON ROCK ISLAND

A search light skips across the bay.

## EXT. AUDITORIUM STEPS

Anthony sits on the steps still focused on the sky. Over Anthony's shoulders, hands on knees slide into view. Anthony carefully places the Whitey card back in the cigar box.

JOHNNY (O.S.)  
No sense puttin' it away, pissant.  
It's goin' home with me.

Anthony doesn't turn around.

Johnny plops down right beside him, snatches the box out of Anthony's grasp, opens it.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
Let's see... I think I'll take this  
one right here.

He pulls the Whitey card from the box, tucks it in the inside pocket of his leather jacket.

Anthony grabs the box back and crams it under his arm.

ANTHONY  
I can't let you have that one. I'll  
give you a different one, okay?

Johnny grabs the box out of Anthony's grasp.

JOHNNY  
You know, I don't really think you have  
a choice. If you're gonna be so  
stingy...  
(snatches the box again)  
... I'll just take 'em all.

ANTHONY  
Gimme the cards back, Johnny.

JOHNNY  
If I don't, are you gonna cry, pet-boy?

ANTHONY  
Just give 'em back, okay?

JOHNNY  
Just give 'em back, okay?

FATHER LUMIN (O.S.)  
That's a very good idea. Give Anthony  
the cards back.

Johnny and Anthony turn to see Father Lumin, looming over them, two steps up.

Johnny, rises, offers the cigar box to Father Lumin.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)

No, not to me.

Johnny shoves the box into Anthony's stomach, hard.

JOHNNY

Here ya go!

(jumps down the steps)

See ya' later, Father. You too,  
Anthony. Thanks!

He pats his jacket where he put the card, as he jogs off  
toward a bicycle rack.

ON THE PARKING LOT

Johnny hops up on his bike, weaves around some parked cars,  
zooms toward the exit gate, standing up on the pedals, his  
hair and jacket blowing in the breeze. Playing cards  
clothespinned to his spokes, he CLICKS away quickly.

ON STEPS

FATHER LUMIN

My heart hurts for that boy.

Anthony's eyes follow Jimmy's exit.

ANTHONY

It does?

FATHER LUMIN

Sure it does. He's always alone, yes?  
No friends.

ANTHONY

Yes, father.

FATHER LUMIN

A bully boy.

Anthony looks puzzled.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)

As long as he stays a bully boy, my  
heart will hurt. Whoever makes him not  
a bully anymore will do him one big  
favor.

ANTHONY

How do you make him, uh, not a bully?

FATHER LUMIN

I don't know. Do you, Anthony?

Anthony eyes the Priest, who leads Anthony back into the  
auditorium.

INT. AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

Volunteers fold up tables, pick up scraps of paper, rubbish, etc. Father Lumin picks up trash around the stage.

Anthony, side by side with Carmine, sweeps up. Carmine leans his broom against the stage.

CARMINE  
We better get goin'. I wanna see how  
your Mom's makin' out with the baby.

ANTHONY  
Can I stay and help?

Father Lumin collects the microphone stand behind them.

CARMINE  
Okay. But, be careful comin' home.

FATHER LUMIN  
I make sure he gets home okay.

CARMINE  
Thank you, Father.

Lumin nods, walks offstage.

Carmine pulls a white handkerchief from his pocket, wipes off his forehead, slips his jacket on. He turns to go.

ANTHONY  
You're a real good singer, Dad.

Carmine stops, turns back.

CARMINE  
Yeah? You think so, huh?

ANTHONY  
Like on the radio. I bet you could'a  
been another Frank Sinatra.

CARMINE  
Well, I guess one Frank Sinatra's  
enough.

ANTHONY  
I guess.

Carmine tries to hug his son, but does so awkwardly and finishes it by patting him on the back.

CARMINE  
Don't stay too long.

He turns to go.

ANTHONY  
Dad?

CARMINE  
(turns back)  
Yes, son?

ANTHONY  
When will Angela be back?

CARMINE  
I don't know. Why? You two never  
seem to get along.

ANTHONY  
Well, it's just...  
(Carmine's eyes narrow)  
Feels kind'a funny her being gone.

Anthony goes back to sweeping.

Carmine watches him for a couple of beats, walks off.

Anthony stops sweeping to watch his father until he's gone.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Anthony and Father Lumin walk slowly, each finishing a  
slice of pizza.

FATHER LUMIN  
Okay, almost home now. I leave you and  
get back.

ANTHONY  
Thank you for walking me, Father.

FATHER LUMIN  
(off the pizza)  
I need more walks than this one.

ANTHONY  
The pizza was good.

FATHER LUMIN  
Now, if you see Mrs. Cochran, you will  
please forget to mention to her that I  
had the pizza, too. I don't think she  
put pizza pie on our diet. You just...  
forget, okay?

ANTHONY  
Sure, father. I already did.

FATHER LUMIN  
(winking)  
Good night, Anthony. You cross now and  
I go back.

Anthony starts to cross, stops.

                                ANTHONY  
 Father...

                                FATHER LUMIN  
 Yes, Anthony.

Anthony hesitates.

                                FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
 You want to tell me anything?

                                ANTHONY  
 No, Father. I guess not. Just thanks.

                                FATHER LUMIN  
 What do you think, being out so late  
 eating pizza? Shame on you, Anthony  
 Carino.

Anthony laughs, waves, dashes out into the street.

Lumin pulls his coat closed around him, turns to walk away.

Anthony, card box tucked under his arm, waits for a car to  
 pass, looks back toward the Priest.

Father Lumin turns the corner, and is gone.

Anthony crosses the street.

AT ANTHONY'S APARTMENT

Anthony starts up the steps. Johnny Belden's leg stretches  
 out across the top step. He pulls himself up.

                                JOHNNY  
 My, out so late...

Anthony stops cold, looks back.

                                JOHNNY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
 He's gone. It's just you an' me,  
 turd bucket.

                                ANTHONY  
 (voice shaking)  
 Whadda you want?

                                JOHNNY  
 I just want to talk to you, that's all.  
 You're not afraid to talk, too, are ya?

                                ANTHONY  
 No.

JOHNNY  
Sounds like you are. I think you're a  
little pet chicken.

ANTHONY  
I need that card back.

JOHNNY  
Oh, okay, sure. Come take it. It's  
right here.  
(pats his chest)  
Chick, chick, chickie.

ANTHONY  
Just give it to me.

Johnny steps toward him. Anthony takes equal steps  
backwards. His heart thumps furiously, his face stretched  
tight with fear.

JOHNNY  
Don't walk away from me, little girl.

Johnny lunges for Anthony, who ducks and sprints off back  
into the street.

Johnny jogs a few steps after him, runs back to the stoop,  
grabs his bike.

ANOTHER STREET

Anthony turns the corner Father Lumin had gone down.

Gone. Only cars and street lights visible, as a light  
fog moves. A FOG HORN sounds.

Johnny, races toward the corner, stands on his pedals, and  
peels out, his hair and jacket flying, wheels CLICKING.

Anthony looks around, then back, before breaking into a  
full-out run. He hops a fence and dashes across a yard. A  
DOG BARKS.

Anthony cuts through yards, huffing, nearly out of breath.  
He looks back. Johnny is not there. The CLICKING of  
spokes.

ANOTHER STREET

Anthony stops short at the cemetery entrance. A beat.  
Fear smacks him hard, and he takes off running along the  
sidewalk that leads into the park. The CLICKING sound,  
louder.

EXT. PARK -- NIGHT

Anthony hides behind a bush, watches



Sonny and Gerald exit the maintenance shack. Sonny carries a crate. Gerald stays back to lock the shack, but can't get the lock to close. He kicks it, stalks away, swearing.

Anthony ducks inside the shack, pulls the door closed.

INT. MAINTENANCE SHACK -- NIGHT

Anthony's ear presses against the door. The CLICKING sound... finally stops.

EXT. PARK

The shack door eases open. Anthony edges out.

He can see low out across the park on one side and out into the bay on the other. The searchlight sweeps slowly across the water.

ON JOHNNY

Johnny's bike leans on its kickstand, as he unclips the cards from its spokes, stuffs the clothespins and cards in his pocket. He climbs back on the bike, coasts along the trail of sidewalk that weaves between the benches and trees.

ON ANTHONY

Anthony, frozen, watches and listens.

The searchlight lights up the bay and the thickening fog.

Anthony creeps slowly through the benches. The searchlight skims the park and throws a shadow across a bench -- Johnny on his bicycle.

Anthony drops behind the bench. His heart THUMPING, he slips down under the bench.

Johnny glides along the walkway and stops in front of the same bench. He looks around,

along the seawall, down the pathways, through the chain fence along the schoolyard. He forms a megaphone with his hands over his mouth.

JOHNNY

Ollie, ollie in come free. Oh, pet-e-o, wherefore art thou?

(waits)

Let's play Johnny ride the pony? You be the pony and I'll be... guess who? Whatta ya say?

(waits)

Come out, come out wherever you are, ass-breath.

Anthony lies flat on his back, looking up through the bench. A bright star goes dim in the fog.

Johnny pedals his bike slowly around the benches near the seawall. He circles back to Anthony's bench.

ANTHONY'S POV

The wheels of Johnny's bike and his legs against the backdrop of the bay... so close he could touch them with a finger.

ON JOHNNY

Johnny looks out onto the bay. The searchlight beam skims the water under the fog, crosses Johnny. His body shivers.

He looks around. The trees hover above him ominously. A gust of wind rustles through them. An owl HOOTS.

Johnny pedals away from Anthony's bench.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Okay, chicken. I know where you live,  
don't I?

He stands on his pedals and weaves his way quickly out of the park, barking "CHICKEN" SOUNDS.

Anthony stays flat on his back until Johnny's voice is out of earshot. He slides out from under the bench, pulls himself up and looks through its slatted back.

The searchlight sweeps the park again.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- NIGHT

The lights in the empty church are soft and yellow. The statue faces, serene. The stained glass windows offer dark glimpses of the story of Christ on earth.

FRONT DOOR

pushes open and Anthony steps inside. He closes the door behind him and stands against it.

HIS POV

The church before him. All those holy things.

Anthony genuflects at the last row of pews, blesses himself slowly. He pads down onto the long center aisle and stops. He wheels, starts to leave, reconsiders, turns back, faces the altar.

He steps slowly toward it, looking up at the stations of the cross, one on each column he passes.

EXT. CARINO APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Johnny bikes past the apartment, SCREAMS OUT A WICKED LAUGH for all to hear, but does not slow down as he goes by.

Up in a window, Carmine, baby Anne over his shoulder, pushes a sheer curtain back, peeks out.

EXT. WESLEY HOME -- NIGHT

Dark, except for one window where Jimmy gazes out into the night, radio pressed to his ear.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- NIGHT

Anthony kneels at the main altar, his box of cards balanced on the altar rail, blesses himself, eyeballs the crucifix.

ON PRAYER CANDLES

One candle burns, of the fifty in votive glass.

Anthony holds a starter wick into the solitary flame. It catches, and he lights each candle right down the line, depositing a coin for each candle until his change runs out.

He stops, then continues lighting the candles until all fifty of the flames burn.

He steps back to admire the glowing rack, and, as he does, he backs against a small, padded bench. He sits, then reclines on his side. His eyes squint.

The flames... like a million stars.

Anthony's eyes slowly close.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- DAY (DREAM)

Anthony, present age, kneels at the same First Communion pew. The other children are younger, in their First Communion best. Paul walks by, winks, slides into the pew behind Anthony.

Anthony sticks his finger in his mouth, pulls the host out, holds it there on the end of his finger.

He turns. Johnny Belden, present age, holds the "station of the cross" that reads, "Jesus is condemned to death". He passes it down the row and children take it and pass it along to Anthony, who looks back at Johnny.

Anthony wipes the host on the station plaque. Johnny CACKLES, hops on his bike and wheelies around in front of the altar, before riding down the center aisle and out of

the church, barking the "CHICKEN" SOUND, now eerily distorted.

Anthony wipes his brow. All the Children wipe sweat away. Father Lawrence shakes holy water over them.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS

ON ANTHONY'S FACE.

He opens his eyes, rubs them with his knuckles. The hand, the same one from the rocks at Paul's beach...

HIS POV

Jimmy's face, frantic, worried.

Anthony looks around. The church is burning, flames everywhere. The altar ablaze, flames chasing up the crucifix.

Jimmy, radio under his arm, snatches Anthony up like a newborn, and totes him past the rack of Prayer Candles, gobbled up now by flames.

The church CREAKS and GROANS from the heat. The drapes on the confessional swing in the flames.

The fire swarms the perimeter of the old church, but its center core remains fire free.

A CROSSBEAM OVERHEAD CRACKS.

Jimmy hustles down the center aisle. Halfway to safety, the crossbeam comes tearing down at them.

Jimmy stops just in time. The beam CRASHES down in front of him, and he leaps over the flaming wood.

AT FRONT DOOR

The door burns wildly. Jimmy sets Anthony safely aside and SMASHES the holy water table through the window alongside the door.

He helps Anthony through the opening first, then climbs out... just as the front door falls away.

EXT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS

Jimmy and Anthony dash away from the church, now a cascade of flames and wood.

Anthony stops suddenly, turns back toward the inferno, sprints toward it.

JIMMY  
Rocky! No! No!

Jimmy takes off, tackles Anthony, holds him down.

ANTHONY  
(crying)  
Lemme go! Paul's cards! I left them  
inside. I gotta get 'em. I gotta.

They look up, their faces lit hot by the burning church.

JIMMY  
No, Rocky. Too hot!

ANTHONY  
Okay... okay.

Jimmy eases off Anthony.

Anthony scrambles to his feet, runs full out, toward the fire... the heat. Gradually, he slows down, until he finally stops, frozen again by fear.

Out of nowhere, Jimmy flashes by him and sprints toward the church, full bore.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
Jimmy. No! No!

Jimmy disappears through a wall of fire where the door once stood.

Anthony runs after him, but flames push him back.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- CONTINUOUS

Jimmy barrels down the center aisle of the church.

Flames swirl overhead. The perimeter still walled in flame. Fire shards drop down like falling stars onto the center aisle.

Jimmy, dodging falling timber, makes it to the altar rail and grabs the untouched box of cards. He picks up the box, turns to see

Anthony looking in, through the flaming door hole.

Jimmy smiles and holds the box up high over his head victoriously. The box in one hand, his radio in the other, he waves like he's bringing in a plane.

Anthony waves frantically.

ANTHONY  
C'MON!

Jimmy starts back down the center aisle. He takes five long strides, when another crossbeam plummets down, catches him, pins him to the floor.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

NO!

Anthony looks back behind him. Far off SIRENS, but no help.

He turns back to the church. Jimmy motionless. Flames burn along one end of the beam that has him pinned.

Anthony closes his eyes, pops them open. This is no dream.

EXT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- CONTINUOUS

He runs away from the church, stops, holds his stomach, leans forward, breathing hard. A beat.

He looks back, panting, straightens up, sprints full out toward the church... closer... closer... until he disappears through the circle of flames, his jacket over his head.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- CONTINUOUS

Anthony dodges flames, debris to get to Jimmy. He stands over him.

Jimmy MOANS, then goes silent.

Anthony covers his hands with his jacket and tries to lift the beam. He GRUNTS, SCREAMS. The beam gives way.

Anthony leans over Jimmy, lifts him, but the weight is too great. He grabs Jimmy by the belt and tugs at him, sliding him inch by inch toward the hole in the flames. Smoke billows around them.

The struggle continues, Anthony, tugging, CHOKING, COUGHING. SIRENS continue outside, louder... louder.

Tires SCREECHING. SHOUTING. Anthony pulls and pulls.

ANTHONY

C'mon... c'mon. You can't die.

Another crossbeam SMASHES a pew beside him.

Anthony pulls harder, but the belt snaps in his hands.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Damn!

He grabs Jimmy by the crook of the arm, tugs. In Jimmy's other arm, the box of baseball cards.

Around them the church continues to deteriorate, more and more rafters tumble down.

EXT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- CONTINUOUS

A crowd has gathered near the street. Emma Wesley breaks through the pack and races for the church.

Firemen run up from their trucks toward the front of the church in time to detain Emma.

FIREMAN #1  
Are you nuts? You can't go in there, lady.

EMMA  
I THINK MY SON'S IN THERE!

FIREMAN #1  
What!? Stay here.

Fireman #1 leaves her standing there and breaks for the church. He shields his eyes, peers in through the flames.

HIS POV

Anthony, fighting with his last ounce of strength, tugging something.

FIREMAN #1 (CONT'D)  
(yelling back)  
I SEE HIM. C'MON. I'M GOIN' IN.

More Firemen run up through the crowd. Fireman #1 pushes his way into the church. FIREMAN #2 keeps the people back. A squad car pulls up, and two Policemen hustle out.

FIREMAN #2  
(to a Policeman)  
We've got at least one inside. We're gonna need more help here.

The POLICEMAN nods, waves to another car pulling up.

POLICEMAN  
Okay, folks. You can help out by clearin' a spot so we can get some equipment through.

EMMA  
I think my son's in there. Can they please hurry?

POLICEMAN

Lady, they're gonna do whatever they  
can to get your little boy out.

Emma's eyes gaze helplessly toward the church.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- CONTINUOUS

The Fireman #1 kicks and hacks his way through the fallen  
debris to Anthony and Jimmy.

FIREMAN #1

Okay, son. Let's get you out'a here.

Anthony, nearly delirious from the smoke and fumes, nods,  
bleary eyed.

ANTHONY

What about Jimmy?

FIREMAN #1

First you.

He hoists Anthony over his shoulder and carries him past  
two more firefighters who rush to help Jimmy.

ANTHONY

(faintly)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

FIREMAN #1

You got nothin' to be sorry about.  
You're some brave kid. You know that?

ANTHONY'S POV

The Firemen kneel over Jimmy in a blurry fuzz through the  
smoke. They roll a cloth and wrap it around his neck for a  
brace. They lay the box of cards off to one side next to  
Jimmy's radio.

SIRENS WAIL.

Statues of the saints and of Our Lady of Sorrows are  
consumed in the ever-spreading flames... darker...  
darker...

BLACK

EXT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- CONTINUOUS

FROM OVERHEAD

As the church dissolves in flames, a larger crowd gathers.



Fireman shoot streams of water up toward the structure.  
Emma runs to the Firemen who carry out Jimmy.

Carmine, T-shirt and pants, pushes his way through the crowd toward the ambulance, where they load Anthony.

SIRENS. SHOUTS. The ghostly CREAKING, CRACKING of wood.

Father Lawrence, fully dressed, with Spirit clipping behind, and Lumin, in his bathrobe, run along the walk from the rectory to the church. Firebrands blow away from the church and fly up toward the sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WESTCHESTER SQUARE HOSPITAL -- DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Rains blows sideways against the old brick edifice.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Anthony lies asleep in this small private room, tosses.

INT. OUR LADY OF SORROWS -- NIGHT

Anthony kneels in the same pew, all around him the church burns. No other children are present. He looks slowly toward the center aisle. Jimmy stands there motioning for Anthony to come with him.

Anthony looks up through the flames to the altar.

ALTAR

Father Lawrence raises up the chalice.

Anthony looks back toward Jimmy, who appears normal, not slow or mentally-challenged.

JIMMY

C'mon, Anthony. Let's go. We gotta  
get outta here.

Anthony stands up and reaches for Jimmy's outstretched hand, but as he does, a burning rafter falls down on Jimmy.

ANTHONY

NO!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Anthony sits, SCREAMS.

An attractive NURSE, 23, rushes into the room. She comforts Anthony, and he settles back onto his pillow, his face sweating.

NURSE  
Now, you go back to sleep, hon. You  
had quite a night.

She pats his forehead dry with a damp cloth.

Anthony's tired eyes close.

The Nurse fixes the bed around him, watches over him for a few seconds, quietly exits the room.

LATER

Mrs. Carino sits alongside Anthony's bed. Carmine stands over her shoulder.

Anthony slowly opens his eyes and, as they begin to focus, sees his parents.

ANTHONY  
(raspy-throated)  
I'm sorry.

Mrs. Carino leans forward and kisses him on the forehead.

MRS. CARINO  
Anthony. Anthony. We were so worried  
about you.

CARMINE  
How do you feel, son?

ANTHONY  
Tired. And my throat hurts.

CARMINE  
You swallowed a lotta smoke. The  
doctor says you'll be okay. They just  
wanna keep an eye on you for a couple'a  
days.

He pats his son on the shoulder. Anthony grabs his hand.

ANTHONY  
What about Jimmy?

Mrs. Carino looks at Carmine. A beat.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
What? Where is he?

He tries to get up. His father holds him down.

MRS. CARINO  
 He's here... but he's... still  
 unconsciousness. He took a real bad  
 blow to his head. They just don't  
 know.

ANTHONY  
 Whatta ya mean, they don't know? He's  
 gonna be okay, right?

His eyes grope for an answer from his parents.

Carmine turns away.

Tears slide down from Anthony's eyes.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
 It's my fault. He was trying to save  
 me.

MRS. CARINO  
 No. You were saving him. The fireman  
 said --

ANTHONY  
 (sobbing now)  
 He carried me out first. He went back  
 in for... the cards, Paul's cards. I  
 left them...

Mrs. Carino looks to Carmine for help.

CARMINE  
 Hey, you wanna wave to Petey? He's  
 outside by the car with Annie.

Anthony sits up, holds his head. He leans over toward the  
 window, but has to sit back down.

Carmine looks out the window, waves, then rubs his son's  
 head.

CARMINE (CONT'D)  
 It's okay. It's okay. You just get  
 some rest.

ANTHONY  
 Is Pete okay?

MRS. CARINO  
 Sure, he's fine. Why wouldn't he be?

ANTHONY  
 In school. It's just...

MRS. CARINO  
 What?

ANTHONY  
He should tell you about what happened.

CARMINE  
Tell us what? What happened?

Anthony looks at them both.

INT. JIMMY'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Jimmy lies still, his eyes closed. The room is dimly lit. Emma sits by the bed, grips Jimmy's hand.

Behind her, two Doctors, one bearded, wearing a "NY" baseball cap, confer.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Anthony awakens. Fireman #1, 29, in street clothes, stands beside the bed.

FIREMAN #1  
Hey, buddy. How's it goin'?

ANTHONY  
Are you the doctor?

Fireman #1 laughs.

FIREMAN #1  
Heck, no. You don't remember me, huh?  
Maybe if I picked you up over my  
shoulder an' toted you outta here?

Anthony smiles.

ANTHONY  
You're the fireman.

FIREMAN #1  
Guilty as charged. You okay?

Anthony nods.

FIREMAN #1 (CONT'D)  
(CONT'D)  
Figured as much. You're some tough  
kid. Hey, I brought ya somethin'.

Anthony sits up. The Fireman reaches over to the tray table, grabs Paul's cigar box.

FIREMAN #1 (CONT'D)  
There ya go.

He lays them on Anthony's lap. Anthony lifts the lid.

INSERT: SCORCHED CARD BOX

Inside are the cards and Jimmy's radio.

BACK TO SCENE:

Anthony looks up at the fireman.

ANTHONY

Thanks.

FIREMAN #1

Sure. You get better quick, okay? I tol' my buddies down at the firehouse all about ya, an' they wanna meet ya.

ANTHONY

Me? Really?

The Nurse enters the room, carrying a clipboard and a thermometer case.

The Fireman takes notice of her. He's momentarily distracted, as she shakes a thermometer in her right hand.

FIREMAN #1

Huh? Oh, yeah, sure. Soon as you're outta here I'll bring ya down. Whatta ya say?

ANTHONY

I don't know. I don't think so.

FIREMAN #1

Then we got a problem. I won't take "no" for an answer.

The Nurse sits on the side of the bed and leans over Anthony. She smiles at the Fireman.

NURSE

Open up, hon.

The Nurse delicately places the thermometer under Anthony's tongue.

FIREMAN #1

Look. I better get going. I kind of sneaked in before visiting hours, anyway. You take care now. Okay?

ANTHONY

(around the thermometer)  
Yessir.

The Fireman starts to leave, turns back and points his finger at Anthony.

FIREMAN #1  
An' leave the hero stuff to me. Deal?

He winks at the Nurse, who smiles.

ANTHONY  
Deal. Thanks.

The Fireman waves, exits.

NURSE  
You doing okay?

Anthony nods. She looks at her watch.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Just a little longer.  
(Hums while waiting)  
Okay. Let's just see.

She lifts the thermometer from his mouth and up to the light.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Just about back to normal.  
(rising)  
Can I get you anything?

ANTHONY  
Do you know where Jimmy Wesley is?

NURSE  
Now if I told you that, you'd want to  
go visit him, wouldn't you?

Anthony nods.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Well, I have doctor's orders for you  
to stay right here in bed.

She fluffs his pillows behind him.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Anything else I can do for you?

Anthony shakes his head.

The Nurse looks back toward the door, peeks in the mirror over the small dresser against the wall, notices her hair on one side is falling out of the bobby pin, leans closer to the mirror, and fixes it.

Anthony eyeballs the clipboard left there on his bed.

INSERT: CLIPBOARD

A listing of patients on the floor by name and room number.

BACK TO SCENE:

Anthony edges the clipboard closer to him and reads. He pushes the clipboard back, and turns toward the window.

The Nurse smiles, picks up the clipboard and heads for the door.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Still okay?

Anthony nods.

The Nurse winks, exits.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

Anthony eases his head out of his room door, then his entire body, the card box bulging under his bathrobe. He glances quickly up at his door number. It reads "418". He looks down the hall to the nurses' station.

ANTHONY'S POV

The Fireman makes time with the Nurse.

Anthony waits a beat, watches them, then walks down the corridor, reading door numbers along the way until he gets to room number "406". He pushes the door open just enough to peek in, then ducks inside.

INT. JIMMY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

ANTHONY'S POV

Jimmy, serenely still. Bandages wrap his chest, arms, legs. A vacant chair is in place next to the bed.

Anthony walks quietly to Jimmy's bedside, sits in the chair. The room is so quiet. Anthony CLEARS his throat.

ANTHONY

(whispering)

I'm not Rocky. I'm sorry you wanted  
to be my friend.

Jimmy lies silent.

Anthony takes the box of cards out from under his bathrobe, opens it and lifts out the radio. He CLICKS it on. The volume is on high and a song BLARES out.

Jimmy does not budge.

Anthony quickly turns the volume down, holds the radio close to his ear, just the way he has seen Jimmy do.

His fingertip slides a flat knob. We hear SCRATCHY SOUNDS of the radio as it picks up stations... from talking to songs to advertisements to the ROAR of a crowd. Anthony's finger stops.

An ANNOUNCER's VOICE breaks in through the roar. Anthony's finger slides across the volume knob.

ANNOUNCER VOICE  
Fans, this is Mel Allen for White Owl  
Cigars, bringing you baseball from  
Yankee Stadium. Rain's gone, and it is  
an absolutely beautiful day for a game,  
ladies and gentlemen, as the New York  
Yankees take on the Boston Red Sox.

Anthony holds the radio up, closer to Jimmy, who has not budged.

ANNOUNCER VOICE (CONT'D)  
On the mound for the Yankees today will  
be the ace of the staff, the chairman  
of the board, southpaw Whitey Ford.  
He's matched up against the Bosox big  
right-hander, Mombo, Bill Monbouquette,  
who brings his wicked fast ball against  
the mighty bats of the Bronx Bombers.  
(a sudden crowd ROAR)  
An' the Yankees take the field!

Anthony, eyes cast downward, listens.

JIMMY (O.S.)  
(hoarsely)  
An' the Yankees take the field.

Anthony peeks up.

Jimmy has not moved, but his eyes are open.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
An' the Yankees take the field!

Anthony bolts up.

ANTHONY  
Hey! Hey! Jimmy.

Jimmy turns to Anthony, smiles. A long beat.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
Jimmy! Oh, my God. Stay there.  
Don't move.

Anthony fumbles to shut the radio off, lays it on Jimmy's lap, dashes for the door.

JIMMY  
Okay, Rocky.



## INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Anthony slides out into the hall and stops. He spots the Nurse talking to the BEARDED DOCTOR, 30, still wearing his baseball cap, gesturing with his stethoscope.

Anthony races over to them, nearly out of breath. The Nurse and doctor are involved in their conversation.

## BEARDED DOCTOR

So, I told the old buzzard he was too gonna get a shot right in the ass and if he didn't toe the line, it was gonna really --

The Bearded Doctor looks down. The Nurse's eyes follow his toward Anthony, who's wide-eyed.

## NURSE

Hey, you're not supposed to be out of your bed.

## ANTHONY

He's awake!

## BEARDED DOCTOR

Son, you need to get back into your bed right now.

## ANTHONY

Jimmy. James Wesley's awake. 406.

The Nurse glances at her clipboard.

## NURSE

406. Wesley.

## BEARDED DOCTOR

406?  
(to Anthony)  
He's awake?

Anthony smiles, nods.

The Bearded Doctor runs past him toward room 406, the Nurse at his heels.

Anthony chases after them and gets to the door just in time to watch the Bearded Doctor lean over Jimmy, press the stethoscope against his torso.

## INT. JIMMY'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Jimmy clutches his radio in one hand, and the box of cards lay open on his lap.

The Nurse closes the card box and takes it off his lap.

Anthony slides up between the Bearded Doctor and the Nurse.

ANTHONY  
Is he gonna be okay?

BEARDED DOCTOR  
I don't see why not. Sure looks okay  
to me.

A DOUBLE BONG is heard over the hospital intercom.

INTERCOM VOICE  
Visiting hours now begin.

The Nurse hands the card box to Anthony.

NURSE  
Here, hon. Now, take these and get  
back to your bed, okay?

Anthony turns to go. A beat. He turns back.

ANTHONY  
No.

NURSE  
No?

ANTHONY  
No, I mean the cards. They're for  
Jimmy, they're his.

Anthony turns to walk away.

BEARDED DOCTOR  
Hey, son. Tell me something. Was he  
awake when you came in here? Did he  
just come out of it, or what?

Anthony turns back.

ANTHONY  
I was listening to the baseball game on  
his radio and I just turned it up a  
little, so he could hear it, too. He  
used to be a baseball player, ya know?  
An' then he --

BEARDED DOCTOR  
Wait. Wait a minute. Slow down. You  
were listening to a baseball game on  
that radio?

ANTHONY  
Yeah. Yankees and Red Sox.

BEARDED DOCTOR  
Should do like the nurse said and get  
back to your bed, son.

(MORE)

BEARDED DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
 (feels Anthony's forehead)  
 Baseball season doesn't start for  
 another week or so. Yankees are still  
 down in Florida. When they do open up  
 it's against the Twins not the Bosox.  
 I should know, I paid three bucks  
 apiece for box seats.

ANTHONY  
 (confused)  
 But... sure there's baseball. It's on  
 the radio right now.

The Bearded Doctor politely takes the radio away from  
 Jimmy's ear, holds it out for all to hear, adjusts the  
 volume. A song BLARES out. "Que Sera, Sera." He turns  
 the song down and hands the radio back to Jimmy, shakes his  
 head.

BEARDED DOCTOR  
 Sound like baseball to you?

Anthony looks at Jimmy, who smiles a kind of secret smile.  
 Emma rushes up to the bed.

EMMA  
 Oh, Jimmy. Jimmy, you woke up.  
 She can't contain her tears, hugs her son.  
 Anthony stands in the doorway, bewildered.

Carmine and Mrs. Carino walk up behind him and stand there  
 looking in. Carmine puts his hands on Anthony's shoulders,  
 squeezes. Anthony looks up and reaches up to hug his  
 Mother.

Emma pats her son's brow, pushes his hair into place, the  
 radio still close to his ear, the smile still lighting his  
 face.

EXT. RECTORY -- DAY

Two Policemen and a MAN IN A GREY SUIT, 38, pass Anthony as  
 he starts up the steps to the rectory.

MAN IN GREY SUIT  
 Man, what's this world comin' to? A  
 priest. What's next? Sayin' the mass  
 in English?

Anthony watches them walk away, as he stands at the door  
 and reaches up for the doorbell. He pushes it and waits as  
 its soft CHIMES play out. He pushes the bell again.  
 CHIMES.

The door finally opens and MRS. COCHRAN, 54, a heavy, freckle-faced, auburn-haired woman, leans out. Her eyes are red from crying. She holds a handkerchief to her nose.

MRS. COCHRAN  
Oh, Anthony. How are you feeling?

ANTHONY  
I'm almost all better, thank you.

MRS. COCHRAN  
May I help you, dear?

ANTHONY  
I'd like to see Father Lumin.

MRS. COCHRAN  
Well, actually it's not a very good time. He's on the phone with the Bishop.

ANTHONY  
Yes, ma'am.

FATHER LUMIN (O.S.)  
Who is it, Mrs. Cochran?

MRS. COCHRAN  
Anthony Carino, Father.

FATHER LUMIN (O.S.)  
Oh, Anthony. Have him to come in, please.

Mrs. Cochran holds the door open for Anthony.

INT. RECTORY HALLWAY -- DAY

Father Lumin squats down in front of him.

Anthony trembles.

FATHER LUMIN  
Are you okay, Anthony? You shakin' all over.

Anthony shakes his head.

Father Lumin rises and leads the boy by the shoulder into his office.

Mrs. Cochran takes a fresh handkerchief out of her apron pocket, BLOWS HER NOSE loudly.

Father Lumin looks back to her, smiles consolingly. The door closes.

INT. LUMIN'S OFFICE -- DAY

They sit on a small sofa under a picture of the "Sacred Heart of Jesus". Anthony looks around nervously.

FATHER LUMIN  
So, back to school yet, Anthony?

ANTHONY  
Monday.

FATHER LUMIN  
How about you serve mass for me Sunday?

ANTHONY  
If you still want me to. Mrs.  
Cochran's pretty sad about the church,  
huh?

FATHER LUMIN  
Ah, the church. Yes, we lost our fine  
old church. But, thanks to the Bishop  
an' all our good people here, soon we  
get a nice, new church.

ANTHONY  
I'm sorry.

FATHER LUMIN  
Yes, we are all very sorry.

ANTHONY  
No, I'm sorry, 'cause... it's my fault.

FATHER LUMIN  
Your fault?

ANTHONY  
Uh-huh.

FATHER LUMIN  
How it is your fault, Anthony?

Anthony stands and walks to a window. He talks to Lumin without looking back.

ANTHONY  
I was hiding in the church that  
night...

FATHER LUMIN  
Hiding?

ANTHONY  
Uh-huh.

FATHER LUMIN  
From what was you hiding?

Anthony shrugs.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
From Johnny maybe?

Anthony turns back to him.

ANTHONY  
Yes... but that doesn't matter. I  
burned down the church 'cause I lit all  
the prayer candles... then I fell  
asleep.

FATHER LUMIN  
Prayer candles?

ANTHONY  
Yes, Father. I'm sorry.

FATHER LUMIN  
I'm sorry, too.  
(...)  
But this church wasn't burnt down by  
prayer candles.

ANTHONY  
It... it wasn't?

FATHER LUMIN  
No. I'm afraid it was much more than  
that.

Anthony comes quickly back to the sofa and sits down,  
relief written all over his face.

ANTHONY  
Really? What happened?

FATHER LUMIN  
Our good church was burnt down on  
purpose, set on fire from the  
outside... not the inside, and not by  
prayer candles.

The Priest walks to his desk, fingers some papers.

INSERT: PAPERS

"Providence Fire & Casualty" logo across the top.

BACK TO SCENE:

Lumin picks up the papers, drops them in the trash, sits on  
the edge of his desk.

ANTHONY  
I don't --

FATHER LUMIN

Let us say that those two men who was workin' here won't be workin' here no more.

Anthony's face lights up.

ANTHONY

Oh, my G-- I mean, holy cow. Monsignor Lawrence must'a really laid into them, huh?

FATHER LUMIN

Well, the Monsignor left this morning. For good. I'm the Monsignor now, acting.

ANTHONY

You? You are?

Father Lumin nods, rises, walks to another window, one that fronts the bay.

A ferry chugs slowly toward Rock Island.

Spirit enters, WHIMPERING soulfully. Anthony pets the dog.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Father, if... if you did something really terrible that you were sure would make you lose heaven, what would you do?

Father Lumin sits down, takes Anthony by the shoulders.

FATHER LUMIN

I tell you before, you didn't burn down the church. What do you mean "lose heaven"?

ANTHONY

In confession we say we fear the loss of heaven and the pain of hell. If you die with a bad sin on your soul, that means you could lose your chance to go to heaven. Right?

FATHER LUMIN

What sin could such a good boy do that would be so bad?

Anthony hesitates.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)

You tell me the sin. We do a confession right here, right now, so you don't have to worry about losing heaven no more.

Anthony looks around.

ANTHONY

You mean, here? Confession?

FATHER LUMIN

Sure. Why not? I don't like those little boxes, anyway. So dark and stuffy. God's forgiveness is a bright thing. You just tell me, Anthony, like a friend.

A beat

ANTHONY

I touched the host.

FATHER LUMIN

Yes. Okay.

ANTHONY

At my first holy communion... I couldn't get it off the top of my mouth with my tongue like we're supposed to. It was stuck, so I had to take it out... with my finger. The nuns said never, ever, to touch it 'cause it's God's body... and I did. I was choking, so I touched it.

Father Lumin leans back. His face wrangles to maintain a serious countenance.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I keep havin' these nightmares and I --

FATHER LUMIN

What, you were supposed to choke to death?!

(beat)

Anthony, once you took Christ into your body, he's in there. You don't lose him, ever... an' you can't lose heaven, never, so long as you sorry for your mistakes.

Anthony's face softens. The weight of the world, gone in an instant.

Spirit, on his hind legs, paws at the window.

ANTHONY

You mean it's okay? I mean, I'm sure it's not okay... but I'm okay an' my family's okay?



FATHER LUMIN  
What, you think God takes it out on  
everyone you know, if you mess up?  
Like some bully?

Anthony shrugs.

Father Lumin leans over, hugs Anthony, pats him softly on the back.

FATHER LUMIN (CONT'D)  
I touch it, too... when I was a boy.

Anthony separates from Lumin's grasp.

ANTHONY  
You did?

The Priest nods, feigning embarrassment.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
And you're a priest.

FATHER LUMIN  
Monsignor... acting.

Anthony laughs, sighs with deep relief.

Spirit WHIMPERS.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- DAY

As Father Lumin serves mass on a makeshift altar set up on the stage. Anthony and Ronald serve as altar boys.

Jimmy and Emma Wesley sit in the first pew. Carmine and Mrs. Carino, holding Anne, sit behind them, Peter between them.

Anthony pours water over Father Lumin's fingers into the gold chalice.

FATHER LUMIN  
(softly/to Anthony)  
Very nice. Nice n' steady.

Anthony looks up at him. Lumin winks.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- DAY

Ronald and Anthony hang their vestments in a portable closet. Spirit sits nearby.

RONALD  
Hey, champ, you up to playin' some  
stickball today?

ANTHONY

Can't.

RONALD

Why? Got a hot date?

ANTHONY

Goin' for a ride with my family.

RONALD

Oh, too bad. Where you guys goin'?

ANTHONY

I don't know, supposed to be a surprise.

RONALD

(to Spirit)

How 'bout you, boy?

He pulls a pink ball out of his pocket and bounces it off a wall. Spirit flies off after it.

Anthony combs his hair in a mirror, sticks his comb back in his pocket, and heads for the door.

ANTHONY

See ya later, Ronald.

RONALD

Hey, you think anyone would mind if I renamed this dog? I mean ... Spirit's kind of a goofy name for a dog, don't you think? I'd hate it if I was a dog and everyone called me "Spirit". It'd give me the willies.

Anthony shrugs, exits.

Ronald scrutinizes the dog, who pants, the ball wedged in his mouth. He pries the ball from the dog's mouth, starts to throw it, hesitates. A smile fills his face.

RONALD (CONT'D)

Okay, boy. Go get it, Pyro. Go get it.

The dog looks at him quizzically, then takes off after the ball, as it leaves Ronald's hand.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD -- DAY

Carmine waits with Mrs. Carino and Peter near the chain link fence. Baby Anne rides her mother's shoulder.

Sister Mary, Sister Marie and two other nuns walk down the auditorium steps.

CARMINE  
 (to Mrs. Carino and Peter)  
 Stay here.

Carmine takes a few steps, stops, looks back, then follows the nuns as they walk across the schoolyard toward the convent.

MRS. CARINO  
 Carmine, where are you going?

Carmine turns back and gestures for her to stay there. He trots away from them until he catches up to the nuns and cuts them off by standing in front of them. He's nervous.

CARMINE  
 Sisters.

NUNS  
 Mister Carino.

CARMINE  
 Some church, huh?

SISTER MARY  
 We'll soon have a wonderful new church.  
 How's my Anthony doing?

CARMINE  
 He's better, much better, Sister.  
 Thanks for askin'.

SISTER MARIE  
 Is there something we can do for you,  
 Mister Carino? We were on our way to  
 brunch.

CARMINE  
 Well, yes, Sister, there is something  
you can do for me. Can... may I talk  
 to you privately?

SISTER MARIE  
 If you'll be quick about it.

SISTER MARY  
 We'll run ahead, then.

Carmine smiles at them, as they walk away, WHISPERING among themselves. He casually leads Sister Marie around the corner of the auditorium, out of view, where he stops and turns to her.

A beat, as their eyes duel.

CARMINE  
 Sister, I just wanted to ask... tell  
 you... that no one has the right to  
 mistreat a child. I don't care what  
 (MORE)

CARMINE (CONT'D)  
you... you're wearing or who or what  
you think you represent. And if I ever  
hear about you doing to any other  
children what you did to my boy Peter,  
I will see that you are sent away from  
this parish.

Sister Marie eyes him indignantly.

SISTER MARIE  
And just how do you think you would do  
that, Mr. Carino?

CARMINE  
Any way I can.

Neither says anything for a long beat.

SISTER MARIE  
Is that it?

CARMINE  
Yes. That's it.

SISTER MARIE  
Good day, then.

She turns and walks briskly away.

Carmine adjusts his shoulders, straightens his tie and  
heads back to where Mrs. Carino and Peter wait.

Anthony runs out to meet them.

CARMINE  
Okay. Everybody ready now? Let's go.

Mrs. Carino shields her eyes to watch Sister Marie storm  
off.

MRS. CARINO  
What was that all about?

CARMINE  
Nothin'. Just a little chat about  
changing some bad habits.

MRS. CARINO  
Well, I hope you told her about  
your temper.

Carmine smiles. He pats Peter on the head. Mrs. Carino  
regards Carmine warily. Anne GURGLES against her shoulder.  
She bounces the baby a little.

Anthony looks up at his father and smiles. Carmine winks.

ANTHONY  
So, where are we goin'?

MRS. CARINO  
Yeah, where are we going?

Carmine looks at all of them, one by one.

CARMINE  
We're gonna drive up to Aunt Pearl's...  
and bring Angela home.

Mrs. Carino smiles with relief. She moves the baby to her other shoulder, opening her right side to Carmine.

MRS. CARINO  
(whispering to Carmine)  
What brought this on?

Anthony looks at them both.

CARMINE  
She's our daughter.  
(eyes Anthony)  
It just feels kind'a funny her  
being gone.

Mrs. Carino hugs Carmine tight.

The Carino family turn and walk away up the schoolyard.

Peter glances back to watch

Sister Marie striding toward the convent, as she hustles to catch up to the other nuns.

A slight smile cracks his face.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY

Students rush to their classes past Anthony and Sister Mary Therese who kneels down beside him, as they converse.

INT. SISTER MARY'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

The students hustle to their seats, as the bell RINGS.

Anthony enters, followed by Sister Mary. He takes his seat. Johnny Belden sits right in front of him, wearing his leather jacket over his uniform.

Sister Mary Therese stands before the classroom.

SISTER MARY  
Mister Belden, please remove your  
jacket.  
(beat)  
Students, before we begin with our  
Pledge of Allegiance and our Apostle's  
(MORE)

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
 Creed, I'd like to welcome Anthony Carino back to class. And I want to add that... if I made him feel awkward, calling him my pet, well, I am sorry and I hope he'll forgive me. Anthony, I heartily apologize.

Students exchange incredulous glances.

Anthony nods.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
 So, welcome back.

She applauds. Students follow suit, all clapping with the exception of

Johnny Belden, who, removing his jacket, takes the Whitey Ford card from his inside pocket, slides it up to the top of his desk, taps his fingers on the face of the card.

The applause wanes.

Anthony looks Sister Mary square in the eye, raises his hand.

SISTER MARY (CONT'D)  
 Yes, Mister Carino?

Anthony rises from his seat.

ANTHONY  
 Sister Mary, when I passed Sister Marie in the hall, she asked me if you would see her before classes started... and I forgot to tell you. I'm sorry.

Anthony winks at her. She nods back, conspiratorially.

SISTER MARY  
 Well, then, I should go down and see her right now, shouldn't I? Before we do anything else?

FACES OF PUZZLED STUDENTS

ANTHONY  
 Yes, sister.

SISTER MARY  
 Why don't you take a few extra minutes to catch up on things with your classmates, Mister Carino. How long do you think it will take ... to catch them up, that is?

ANTHONY  
 Just a few minutes, Sister.

SISTER MARY

Very well, then. All right, everyone  
on your own honor. I'll be gone... a  
few minutes... then I'll just come  
right back. Okay?

Anthony nods.

She ducks out quietly, eases the door closed behind her.

Anthony takes a deep breath, mumbles softly to himself...

ANTHONY

No, I'm unthinking you. Go now.

He climbs out of his desk, walks around in front of Johnny.  
He presses his palms against Johnny's desk.

STUDENTS MURMUR

Summoning all his inner strength, Anthony stares Johnny  
squarely in the eye.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I need that card back.

JOHNNY

I think what you need is a new face,  
you little pussy.

Anthony goes for the card.

Johnny slams his hand down on it and lifts his face right  
up to Anthony's, so they're almost touching noses.

Ronald stands up slowly. Others join him.

ANTHONY

No! Sit down.

Ronald shrugs and sits down. Others join him.

SLAM!

ON JOHNNY'S AGONIZED FACE

ON DESK

Anthony's elbow has crunched down on Johnny's hand.

JOHNNY

You shit-eatin' punk! You are dead!

ANTHONY

No. No, I'm not.

Anthony flicks Johnny's ear hard. Johnny guards his other  
ear.

JOHNNY  
Ow... that hurt!

ANTHONY  
Really?

INSERT: HALLWAY

Sister Mary Therese hops up and down, as she watches through the glass window in the classroom door. She makes a cute, little "flicking" move with her hand.

BACK TO SCENE:

Anthony has not given an inch. He leans there, pressing his weight even harder against Johnny's hand.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
I need that card!

Johnny looks around at his classmates, who are beginning to SNICKER. He's in some serious pain.

JOHNNY  
Yeah, well, so do I.

Anthony adds a little more pressure.

ON ANTHONY'S ELBOW SQUASHING JOHNNY'S HAND

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
Look, if you don't get off my hand I'm gonna knock that punk face of yours right off your head.

Anthony eases his elbow off Johnny's hand slowly, until the hand is free.

Johnny lifts his hand up and shakes it in front of his face.

ANTHONY'S POV

The Whitey Ford card is face up, inscription readable, "Paul, You can do it. Whitey Ford"

Anthony peers up at Johnny's face, blocked by his palm, as he scrutinizes the damage to the back of his hand.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
Man, you are in for it now.

ANTHONY  
I think you've got it turned around.

Anthony looks back at the card and in what takes place as one movement, he snatches the card with his left hand and swings a furious right hook against Johnny's palm, which sends his own hand smack into his own face.



A beat, as Johnny's hand drops and he looks in amazement at Anthony.

Anthony stares at his own right hand, rock steady. He glances back at Johnny just in time to see

Johnny's eyes roll back and his head fall flat down onto his desk top.

INSERT: HALLWAY

Sister Mary Therese counts out an invisible fighter on the floor at her feet.

BACK TO SCENE:

Anthony tucks the card into the breast pocket of his shirt and struts back to his seat. He looks over at Sarah,

who smiles proudly and holds up her little fist.

Anthony takes a long breath, allows himself a small smile.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

INSERT: HEADSTONE

Its inscription reads "Paul Jordan. Our Beloved Son Who Waits in Heaven. November 8, 1949 to March 31, 1961"

Anthony kneels next to Paul's grave marker. He blesses himself, reaches into his jacket pocket to pull out the Whitey Ford card. He reads its inscription one last time, then digs a slot in the dirt alongside the stone.

Anthony opens his lunch bag and pulls out a sandwich wrapped in wax paper. He unwraps the sandwich and puts it back inside the bag. He carefully wraps the card in wax paper and tucks it in the slot next to the stone.

Anthony rises, brushes off his knees. He kneels back down and takes the sandwich out of the bag and lays it on the grave. He stands again.

Sarah and Jimmy wait nearby. Jimmy holds his radio up to his ear in one hand. Under his left arm, the box of baseball cards.

Anthony walks up to Sarah and takes her by the hand. The three of them stand there for a few beats before walking off toward the gate that leads out of the small cemetery and into the park.

Across the cemetery, coming at them, full tilt, on his bicycle, Johnny Belden.

Anthony turns, spots Johnny... waves to him.

Johnny waves back, catches up, does a little wheelie, and rides along slowly behind them.

Together they cross through the gate... and into the park.

FROM OVERHEAD

Beyond the park is the school... just beyond that, a tractor tears down the remnants of the old church.

And... out in the bay a beautiful, eighty-foot schooner, its white sail puffing full with a tailwind, gains speed as it sails away toward the drawbridge and fuller seas beyond. Its sharp, clear BELL CLANGS out three times.

FADE OUT.