

SOUL PLAY: "BEFORE YOU GO"

by

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&

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FADE IN:

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

A generic, sterile room. No flowers, no cards. Sunlight mixes with the harsh florescent lights. Labored, shallowed breathing. Lying in the medical bed up against a wall is BENEDICT "Ben" CALLAHAM, late forties, but looks older. He's more corpse than living.

After each exhale there is a long pause before the next breath as if he's just breathed his last. It seems endless before Ben takes another breath as the process repeats. Shifting about can be heard during the pause.

Seated in a comfy looking chair, watching with vigilance over Ben is NAOMI PORTER, late twenties, thin to the point of looking almost cadaverous. Attractive at one point in time that clearly has passed her by.

Her hair is long with butterfly berets fastened on both sides. The bags under her eyes are dark. Her eyes never leave Ben. It looks affecting. Each time Ben exhales, Naomi appears to hold hers. When he inhales, she blinks, sitting silent, in a stoic vigil. Ben exhales again.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

The sun shines brilliantly against a glorious blue sky. Lucy's face, eyebrow raised, appears skeptical. Gabe stands a few feet away, basketball tucked under his arm, smiling. Lucy's lip curls just a bit as he stares at Gabe.

LUCY

Seriously? Dead meat? You want to
play for dead meat?

Gabe's smile never falters as he stares back. Lucy shifts his weight, still seeming skeptical.

LUCY (CONT'D)

It's a trick. It has to be a
trick. He's as good as dead! He
probably won't last the game!

Gabe quickly does some fancy dribbling, looking at Lucy.

GABE

Then why the hesitation?

LUCY

Oh, I don't know.

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

Could be the whole I'm hanging'
with the angels in heaven and told
to see who's at the door and next
thing you know I'm stuck here on
earth thing.

Gabe stops dribbling.

GABE

That's not how it went down, Lucy.
You defied God. You're pure evil.

LUCY

Well, there is that.

Lucy smiles proudly. Gabe dribbles again.

GABE

Whatya say?

Lucy still hesitates a moment.

LUCY

Sure, why not. I have this thing I
have to do so not a lot of time. A
short victory will work.

GABE

New hot dog vendor?

LUCY

Sautéed onions and ghost peppers.
But no. That's not it.

Gabe shakes his head and bounces the ball to Lucy.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Naomi continues to stare at Ben as the door opens and a
nurse, ANGIE DUGGAN, late forties, a tad heavy, long hair
pinned up, wearing a medical looking uniform steps in and
Naomi looks over at her. Angie smiles at her.

ANGIE

Hello dear. How are we doing
today?

Naomi stands slowly and stretches.

NAOMI

Still here, Angie. Still here.

Angie nods and takes the chart from Ben's bed, looking at it
and making a notation.

She goes to the side of the bed and lifts up Ben's limp arm to take his pulse. It's all routine to Naomi, but she watches anyway. Angie gently sets Ben's arm down and makes a notation on the chart. She looks at Naomi and smiles.

ANGIE
Pulse seems stronger today.

NAOMI
What does that mean?

Angie shrugs, and a sad look comes to her.

ANGIE
It's so hard to tell with these types of cancer patients. Some go really quickly without warning. Others, like your dad, hang on.

She walks over to Naomi, taking her hands into hers.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
But don't get your hopes up dear. They rarely, if ever, wake up. I don't know how long it will take, but he will pass.

Naomi nods and Angie turns to head for the door. Naomi's eyes go back to Ben, whose labored breathing continues.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Lucy fancy dribbles in front of Gabe who is down in the defensive position, watching him.

LUCY
This won't take long, don't feel bad when...

Suddenly, Gabe slides forward and quickly picks Lucy who stands there, shocked, as Gabe dribbles the basketball.

LUCY
No. Way.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Naomi goes back to watching Ben as Angie is about to reach the door. Naomi gasps and Angie quickly turns around. Ben's head is turned toward Naomi and his eyes are open. Naomi stands and Ben's eyes follow her as he blinks.

NAOMI
No. Way.

ANGIE
I'll get the doctor.

Nurse Angie quickly rushes out the door and Naomi can only stand there stunned, looking at Ben.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Lucy stands, arms folded looking at Gabe who smiles as he dribbles outside of the three point line.

LUCY
I knew it was a set up. I'm out.

He turns and starts slinking off, shoulders drooping. The bouncing ball does nothing to draw him back.

GABE (O.S.)
How 'bout a twofer?

Lucy's shoulders perk back up and she stops, turning around slowly, a sly, interested smile on his face.

LUCY
Both? The daughter too? Oooh!
Me likey.

Gabe shakes his head and Lucy makes his way back.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Ben is a bit out of it and still somewhat struggles to breath as the DOCTOR checks him out. Finally, Ben is able to lock eyes with the Doctor as Angie waits by the door.

DOCTOR
Well hello there. Where have you
been?

Ben does his best to wet his mouth so he can speak. They all wait anxiously.

BEN
Heaven. Jesus...spoke to...me.

Ben's head grows heavy as the others look at each other with disbelief. His head falls towards the side facing Naomi. He sees her and she fights to hold back a gasp.

BEN (CONT'D)
Naomi?

Ben gets a bit worked up and Angie makes her way to the stunned Naomi who can't move or say a word. She takes Naomi by the arm and gently guides her toward the door.

ANGIE

Let's give the doctor a moment,
hun, k?

Naomi looks back at Ben as she's being guided out and finally nods her head. Ben tries to watch as they head out the door but the Doctor blocks his view leaning down, checking his eyes.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

A crisp sunny day. A pick up soccer game is underway with a variety of players of all ages and abilities. Standing out among the players is PASTOR "CAZ" DEL ALCAZAR, mid-forties, short black hair, very lean and handsome.

His mixed race has given him a dark five o'clock shadow and olive skin. He's very adept with a soccer ball and as he dribbles playfully and easily around some of the YOUNG PLAYERS, they giggle hysterically and eventually start to grab onto him.

He laughs good naturedly and then makes a perfect pass to a FEMALE TEAMMATE, who scores the goal. Pastor Caz playfully picks up the Young Players who are still giggling and turns to the sidelines.

Standing with a concerned look is ROSE, early sixties, a perm that has been died dark brown. She motions to him and he shrugs, kids hanging all over him. She makes a gesture it's a phone call and he nods, shedding the kid coat.

PASTOR CAZ

I'll be right back.

A collective groan and he smiles again and athletically trots towards Rose. As he closes in, her look grows more serious. She holds out a cell phone.

ROSE

It's Angie, at the hospital.

Pastor Caz pauses a moment before he takes the phone. He lets out a deep breath.

INT. HOSPICE ENTRY WAY - DAY

Pastor Caz, still in his dirty soccer clothes but with high tops on now, arrives and Angie quickly makes her way to him. He shakes hands and puts the other hand on top of hers.

ANGIE

Thank you for coming. We may not have a lot of time.

She turns to head out but Pastor Caz holds her up.

PASTOR CAZ

Slow down a little, I need to know what I'm walking into.

ANGIE

Terminal cancer patient who should have died days ago woke up and said Jesus spoke to him.

Pastor Caz whistles and raises his eyebrows.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

His adult daughter has sat with him the last four days but is overwhelmed that he woke up. All I know is he could go at anytime, could be gone by now, that's how bad he is. We should get...

She to go again and once again he impedes her.

PASTOR CAZ

Are you sure...are you sure I'm the right person for this?

Her confusion grows.

ANGIE

Yes. Aren't you?

He looks at her, unable to answer.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Lucy is on the ground holding his stomach laughing. Gabe holds the ball under his arm, looking down at him, shaking his head slightly.

LUCY

HIM? You picked...him?

Lucy laughs even harder.

GABE

Pastor Caz is a fine pastor...

LUCY
Who practically handed me one of
my best victories.

Gabe dribbles the ball behind his back while he waits for
Lucy to get under control. As he calms down, Lucy sits up.

GABE
I don't see how that was the good
Pastor's fault.

LUCY
Ha! You're too kind, Gabe, and
naïve. That's gonna cost you two
more.

GABE
I have full confidence in Pastor
Caz. Not that he needs it, but
redemption and forgiveness are
available to all...

Lucy opens his mouth.

GABE (CONT'D)
...except for you.

LUCY
Wasn't asking.

Lucy jumps up to his feet in an other worldly motion.

LUCY
Let's do this. I gotta make up a
couple more rooms.

Gabe shakes his head and bounce passes the ball to Lucy.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY- DAY

A tentative Pastor Caz makes his way down to Angie. She looks
at him compassionately. He's in a bit of a daze.

ANGIE
Wasn't you fault, Pastor Caz.

He looks over at her after a moment.

PASTOR CAZ
Hmm?

ANGIE
You did all you could.

PASTOR CAZ

Did I?

She pauses outside the room. She looks at him with a mix of surprise and compassion. She sighs.

ANGIE

I think so. But I guess that's
between you and God.

She motions towards the door. He takes a deep breath and puts his hand on the door handle.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I'll go try to find the daughter.

He nods and turns the handle as she leaves.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Pastor Caz steps in slowly and quietly. He spots Ben lying motionless in the center of the bed. He watches for a sign that Ben is still alive but can't detect any breathing. His face saddens and he closes his eyes and says a prayer.

BEN (O.S.)

Still here, whoever you are.

Pastor Caz is startled as he opens his eyes to see Ben looking at him. He quickly gathers himself.

PASTOR CAZ

I'm Pastor Del Alcazar, people
call me Pastor Caz.

BEN

I see why.

Pastor Caz smiles and relaxes as he slowly moves closer to Ben.

PASTOR CAZ

Well, I'm pleased to be able to
meet you...

He pauses, waiting. Ben wets his mouth some more.

BEN

Benedict, Ben, Callahan.

Pastor Caz nods at Ben and spies Ben glancing at the glass of ice water with a bendy straw.

PASTOR CAZ
Would you like me to...?

He motions to the glass and Ben nods. Pastor Caz picks up the glass and holds it for Ben. He takes some short, quick sips. He nods, finished, and Pastor Caz sets the glass down.

BEN
I talked to Jesus.

PASTOR CAZ
How glorious.

BEN
People won't believe me, I know.
But he did. He talked to me.

PASTOR CAZ
There are quite a few documented cases of believers who report being with Jesus and coming back.

BEN
Don't know 'bout that. What I do know is I don't believe in God or Jesus, well, I didn't.

Pastor Caz is caught off guard by this and takes a moment to process that.

BEN (CONT'D)
So why me? Why would he talk to me?

PASTOR CAZ
Excellent question, Ben. Shoulda asked Jesus while you had him.

Ben manages half a smile as he considers.

BEN
I did.

Pastor Caz waits as Ben tires, taking long breaths.

BEN (CONT'D)
Told me I'm not ready yet. It's not time.

Pastor Caz nods.

PASTOR CAZ
Wow. What a wonderful powerful message.

BEN
Wasted message.

Ben is having a hard time keeping his eyes open.

PASTOR CAZ
How so?

Ben's eyes finally close.

BEN
Never believed. ever. I've...done
some things.

Pastor Caz shifts uneasily. He waits, not sure if Ben is asleep or not.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm...not a good...person.

Pastor Caz waits but it looks as if Ben is asleep. Pastor Caz holds his breath while he waits to see if Ben takes one. He does and Pastor Caz exhales.

NAOMI O.S.)
Who are you?

Pastor Caz turns around to see Naomi standing at the open door. He smiles at her, starting towards her.

PASTOR CAZ
Oh, I'm Pastor---

NAOMI
Pastor? You're a Pastor?

Pastor Caz stops and chuckles.

PASTOR CAZ
I was at a youth soccer activity
when---

NAOMI
Oh.

She steps into the room and lets the door close.

NAOMI
Wasn't expecting a Pastor. It's
been just me these last few days.

Pastor Caz nods and watches as Naomi curiously looks at Ben.

PASTOR CAZ
He fell asleep. He's still with us.

NAOMI
That's...good.

Pastor Caz smiles and nods. Awkward silence.

NAOMI
Oh. I'm sorry. I'm Naomi Porter.
His daughter.

Pastor Caz takes her hand and shakes it.

PASTOR CAZ
I'm Pastor Del Alcazar but people
call me Pastor Caz.

NAOMI
I see why.

Pastor Caz pauses just a moment mid shake, then finishes shaking her hand. Naomi looks over at Ben, walking past Pastor Caz and standing near the bed.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
Do you believe him? Do you think
Jesus talked to him?

Pastor Caz takes a moment to gather his thoughts.

PASTOR CAZ
With God, all things are possible.

Naomi doesn't seem satisfied with his answer.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
He certainly believes he did.

NAOMI
But how? Why? I mean his whole life
he denies God, ridicules the idea
of Jesus and now, now when it's too
late, he sees Jesus?

Pastor Caz shrugs.

PASTOR CAZ
Hard to say sometimes why God
does the things he does. We either
accept it or we don't.

NAOMI
Like him waking up?

Pastor Caz nods and smiles.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
I was so sure he was going to die.
I was...

BEN (O.S.)
Naomi?

They both turn to look at Ben who looks like he's struggling to accept it's Naomi in front of him.

BEN
It's you...

NAOMI
Yes. you know I wouldn't miss
this.

Pastor Caz is a little confused but quickly smiles.

PASTOR CAZ
We certainly are witnesses right
here to God's glory.

He looks at Naomi and Ben who don't say anything but just look at each other.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
What a precious gift from God that
you get to see your father alive
and awake and you get to see your
daughter again.

Naomi and Ben continue looking at each other as Pastor Caz's words hang in the air. He's unsure what to say next. Suddenly, Naomi breaks the into laughter and Pastor Caz grows even more confused. Ben just looks at her.

NAOMI
You think...?

She laughs even louder.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
You think I was here, what?
Sitting vigil for him? Hoping for
him to wake up so I could see him
one last time?

PASTOR CAZ
I...ah...

She laughs again. Ben continues to just stare at her.

NAOMI

Pastor, I'm only here...to watch.
Him. DIE.

Her face turns bitter, a bit of a snarl, as she exits. Pastor Caz can only watch, unsure of what just happened. He looks back to Ben who can only look at him and shrug.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

With a huge smile, Lucy stands there, foot on the basketball, hands on his hips.

LUCY

I like this chick!

GABE

That's a very superficial
interpretation of her.

LUCY

Yes!

Lucy steps off the ball and holds out his hand and the ball immediately comes up to his hand and he starts dribbling.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Let's go! With her on my team I
can't lose!

Lucy cackles as he bounces the ball to Gabe who rolls his eyes and shakes his head as he catches the ball.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Pastor Caz is still looking at the door unsure what just happened. He turns to see Ben looking at him, his face showing no emotion.

BEN

Pretty sure I deserve that.

Pastor Caz walks over towards Ben's bed and gently sits down on the edge.

PASTOR CAZ

Raw emotion often leads us to say
things maybe we wouldn't
otherwise.

Ben nods. He looks away a moment, contemplating, then looks back to Pastor Caz.

BEN
Is it too late for me?

Pastor Caz appears a bit unsure and Ben catches this.

BEN (CONT'D)
To go to heaven. Is it too late
for me to go to heaven?

PASTOR CAZ
That's really a beautiful
question, Ben. May I call you Ben?

Ben nods. Pastor Caz smiles.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
Let me ask you a question. Do you
believe in Jesus Christ? That He
died for your sins and the sins of
others?

Ben reflects quickly.

BEN
Well, I saw him so kinda hard to
deny him. He told me my sins are
forgiven so what's not to believe?

Pastor Caz nods, still smiling.

BEN (CONT'D)
But, I mean, it's so late, you
know, to start to believe. I'm
pretty sure died, not believing.
Can I still go to heaven? I mean,
to be honest I only believe because
Jesus Himself told me I should.

PASTOR CAZ
Very extraordinary to say the
least. Are you aware of the Parable
of the Workers in the vineyard?

Ben laughs and lets out a little cough.

BEN
Sir, I assure you I haven't read a
single word in the Bible. Also why
I wonder why I should be allowed
into heaven?

PASTOR CAZ

Please, call me Pastor Caz. Reading the Bible isn't a requirement for admission into heaven. Belief in Jesus as your savior is the singular requirement. May I tell you the parable?

BEN

Knock yourself out?

Pastor Caz chuckles.

PASTOR CAZ

Matthew chapter twenty tells us about a landowner that went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a full days wages for their labor. Later, about nine he went out again, then again at noon and hired more workers for the same wages.

BEN

Pretty good deal for those guys.

PASTOR CAZ

(chucking)

It certainly was. But check this out. Two more times, about three and five, he does the same thing.

BEN

Same wages?

PASTOR CAZ

Yes. Same wages. When evening came, he has the workers line up last to first hired, and he paid them. When the workers that worked the whole day got to the front, they assumed they would get paid more because they worked the whole day.

BEN

Sounds reasonable.

PASTOR CAZ

It does, doesn't it? So when they received their days wages, same as all the others...

BEN
They were pissed!

Pastor Caz laughs.

PASTOR CAZ
Let's just say they were
grumbling. They wanted to know why
the ones who worked the last hour
were made equal to them, they felt
it was very unfair. But the
vineyard owner set them straight.
He reminded them they agreed to the
wages and since it was his money,
he could use it how he see saw fit.

BEN
Makes sense.

PASTOR CAZ
It does, doesn't it. Matthew
chapter twenty, verse sixteen
tells us the last will be first,
and the first will be last.

BEN
And I'm last.

Pastor Caz laughs again.

PASTOR CAZ
The Kingdom of Heaven is God's to
do with as he pleases. If he wants
to reward the ones who come at the
last hour, that's His right to do.

Ben takes a moment to reflect on this.

BEN
So I can go to heaven.

Pastor Caz nods and smiles. A quick knock pulls their
attention to the door and Angie steps in, leaving the door
open.

ANGIE
I just need to check his vitals
really quick.

Pastor Caz nods and Angie goes about her task. Pastor Caz
watches and Ben thinks a moment. Finally, he looks at Ben.

BEN
I've done a lot of bad things.

Angie pauses awkwardly only a moment then goes about her task. Pastor Caz gathers his thoughts and is about to answer.

NAOMI (O.S.)

I'll say.

All heads turn to her. The mood changes quickly but Ben has no reason. Angie quickly writes on the chart.

ANGIE

I think Mr. Callaway should get
a little rest.

Naomi glares at Ben a moment and he doesn't look away. Finally she turns to leave.

PASTOR CAZ

Ah, miss...

She pauses, then turns.

NAOMI

It's Naomi. Call me Naomi.

He smiles.

PASTOR CAZ

May I join you?

She considers.

NAOMI

Free country.

Pastor Caz smiles bigger.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Lucy pulls up at the arc and buries a three, all net. He's giddy as Gabe retrieves the ball.

LUCY

Too. Easy.

GABE

Oh, Lucy, do you ever learn? It's
early, plenty of time to swing the
game.

LUCY

Ha. Isn't that what ALL losers
say. And don't call me Lucy.

GABE

Okay, Lucy.

LUCY

Old Codger is about to die, no way
he has time to figure things out.
And all that HATE from his
daughter! I think I'm in love!

Gabe shakes his head and bounces the ball to Lucy.

GABE

Head in the game, Lucy. I don't
want any excuses from you when I
whoop you.

Lucy looks at Gabe, raising one eyebrow.

EXT. HOSPICE GROUNDS - DAY

Naomi and Pastor Caz walk silently around a small track at
the back of the building. The landscaping is impeccable and
the trees sway in the gentle breeze as the sun lights up the
beautiful day. Neither look at the other as they walk.

NAOMI

You don't know him the way I know
him.

They finally look at each other.

PASTOR CAZ

I can't argue that.

NAOMI

He named me Naomi for heavens
sake! Do you know what Naomi
means?

PASTOR CAZ

I believe it means pleasant.

She stops.

NAOMI

Huh. I thought it meant bitter.

They start walking again.

PASTOR CAZ

That's Mara, from the Book of
Ruth.

NAOMI

Huh.

She looks down as they continue walking.

NAOMI

I hate him. I really hate him.

Pastor Caz glances at her but she keeps looking down as they walk.

PASTOR CAZ

Sounds like a powerful burden to bear.

She stops and looks at him.

NAOMI

He was a...monster. He killed... my mother.

He lets the moment hang.

PASTOR CAZ

I'm sorry you had to go through that.

NAOMI

He hooked her on heroine. I watched her waste away while he ran off and did what he did.

They walk again.

PASTOR CAZ

Your wounds are deep and your pain very real.

She nods, sniffles and wipes a tear that has yet to materialize.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

But do you know what has incredible healing power?

Naomi shakes her head.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

Forgiveness.

NAOMI

I can't.

PASTOR CAZ
It will take time but...

NAOMI
Won't happen.

They continue walking.

PASTOR CAZ
I once had a really difficult time
in my life. I failed somebody...
badly. I... well lets just say I
needed forgiveness.

She turns to him on the verge of anger.

NAOMI
Look. I appreciate what you're
trying to do but understand this. I
will NEVER forgive him. Never.

She storms off and Pastor Caz sighs as he watches her go.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Lucy rises and drains another three. Cocky, he struts along
the arc.

LUCY
Too. Easy. I haven't been this hot
since...who am I kidding. I'm
always this hot.

GABE
You gonna play or boast?

LUCY
Pretty sure both. Duh.

Gabe checks the ball and Lucy hardly guards him at all.

LUCY (CONT'D)
This Pastor spaz...

GABE
Caz.

LUCY
You sure he should be Pastor? I
mean he's pretty much handing me
another one.

GABE
That wasn't his fault and you know
it.

LUCY
Still, one in my win column. In
fact, when I win...

Without warning, Gabe raises up and swishes a jumper. Lucy watches the ball go through the net, then looks at Gabe, raising one eyebrow.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Pastor Caz steps into the room just as Angie is leaving. She stops and leans in close to him, as he looks at Ben, awake in his bed.

ANGIE
(whispering)
He's very weak. He might not...
He's very weak, try not to upset
him.

Pastor Caz nods and Angie exits the room. He smiles at Ben.

PASTOR CAZ
Are you feeling rested now that---

BEN
How do I really know?

Pastor Caz makes his way over to Ben and sits in the same spot.

PASTOR CAZ
I'm guessing you mean how do you
know you really believe.

Ben nods weakly.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
That's a very difficult question
to answer, Ben. It's something
very private and powerful between
you and God.

Ben thinks on it, unsatisfied.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
God knows your heart, Ben. It's
not your actions, it's what's in
your heart.

Ben relents and nods.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
Would you like me to pray with
you, Ben?

Ben doesn't hesitate, looking at Pastor Caz.

BEN
I don't think that's me, son.

Pastor Caz nods, a slight disappointment showing

Lucy dribbles left and right between his legs, behind his
back, making no progress on Gabe.

LUCY
This guy is just desperate. No way
he believes.

GABE
So now you're God and can read his
heart.

LUCY
Hmm. God. Like the sound of that.

Lucy makes a move, raises for the jumper and shoots an air
ball. He stands there confused, bending his wrist, working on
his follow through.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Pastor Caz and Ben sit in awkward silence for a moment. Ben
finally looks at him.

BEN
She's not wrong to hate me. I
wasn't a good father in any way.

PASTOR CAZ
Hate is just Satan's chain trying
to pull a person into him.

BEN
But how do I get her to not hate
me? You've seen it.

Pastor Caz considers and stands up.

PASTOR CAZ
Have you asked her forgiveness?

Ben is caught off guard.

BEN
No, ever figured she would. So
why make her say no? Or worse?

Pastor Caz smiles gently.

PASTOR CAZ
I can understand how you would
feel that way, I really do.

Pastor Caz takes a seat again on Ben's bed, same spot.

PASTOR CAZ
By asking her for forgiveness, you
pass the burden weighing you down,
and give her a chance to release
hers.

He waits for Ben to think on it and looks at him.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
I think you should ask Naomi to
forgive you.

Ben stares at him, letting it sink in.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Lucy pushes a recliner to the top of the three point arc.
Just as the recliner stops, he hops into the chair and holds
out his hands and a giant tub of popcorn falls into them.

LUCY
This I gotta see!

He eats the popcorn, huge smile. Sneaking up behind the
chair, low to the ground, is Gabe. Only the back of the chair
and the backboard and rim can be seen. When Gabe gets to the
chair, he pauses just a moment, then jumps up.

GABE
Boo!

Popcorn and the tub fly into the air. Gabe laughs
hysterically.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Ben is still thinking as the door to the room opens and Naomi
pokes her head in. They look at her.

NAOMI
Not dead yet? Good.

She steps in and the door closes behind her. Pastor Caz frowns but Ben shows no emotion.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
Hate to think I waited all this
time and missed it.

Pastor Caz stands up, heading for the door.

PASTOR CAZ
I should leave you two---

BEN
Pastor Caz? Please stay.

He stops, looking at Naomi who shrugs, and he nods, staying. Ben looks at Naomi.

BEN (CONT'D)
Naomi, I'd like to ask you
something.

She smiles sarcastically.

NAOMI
Oh, really! This should be good.
Go ahead, ask. But be sure you
want the answer.

Pastor Caz shifts uncomfortably.

BEN
I understand why you hate me, and
frankly, I don't blame you.

NAOMI
Is a question coming?

BEN
Yes. Naomi, I want to ask you to
forgive me. I'm sorry I failed you
and your mom in so many ways. But
I'm asking you now, will you
forgive me?

Incredulously, Naomi looks at him. Her mouth actually drops open slightly.

NAOMI
You...want me...to FORGIVE you?

BEN
I know I---

NAOMI

I warned you if you asked to be sure you want the answer. So let me answer.

Ben waits and Pastor Caz swallows uncomfortably.

NAOMI (CONT'D)

Not even sure which of the thousands of horrible things you did that you want me to forgive you for so let me just give you one giant hell no. Not now, not ever.

PASTOR CAZ

Naomi---

She whirls on Pastor Caz.

NAOMI

No, he asked!

She walks all the way to Ben's bed.

NAOMI (CONT'D)

You killed my mother. She was all I had. You got her hooked on heroine and bailed so you didn't have to watch her slowly dematerialize. I had to watch her die!

For the first time, hurt registers on Ben.

NAOMI (CONT'D)

I watched her stick needles in her arm, inject that black tar into her veins and DIE!

BEN

I'm---

NAOMI

No! Don't you dare! I held my mother as she turned blue. So no, BEN. I should call you Benedict for the traitor you are. No, I don't forgive you. In fact, I want you to DIE knowing I never forgave you!

She rushes past Pastor Caz, just as Angie opens the door. She can barely get out of the way as Naomi blows past.

Pastor Caz hesitates a moment as Angie steps fully in. He rushes out the door past Nurse Angie.

EXT. FRONT OF HOSPICE - CONTINUOUS

A very angry Naomi blasts out the front door towards the parking lot. The front door closes and opens seconds later as Pastor Caz bursts out.

PASTOR CAZ
Naomi! Wait!

She stops, anger burning, and charges towards Pastor Caz.

NAOMI
That was your doing, wasn't it?

PASTOR CAZ
Yes, I suggested---

NAOMI
Shame on you. You don't have a clue what I...

The anger subsides a tad.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
Shame on you.

Pastor Caz appears embarrassed as Naomi veers off to the parking lot. He takes a couple steps towards her and grinds to a halt.

PASTOR CAZ
Naomi!

She stops, but doesn't turn around.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
You'll only have one chance. One chance to release this burden of hate you carry. When your dad dies, that chance dies with him.

Her shoulders drop a little.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
One chance, Naomi. If you don't you'll have to live with that hate the rest of your life.

She just stands there. Pastor Caz waits for a response.

NAOMI
I can live with that.

Sadness consumes Pastor Caz as he watches Naomi head out to the parking lot. Beaten, he heads back into the building.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - DAY

Pastor Caz arrives as Angie steps out. Her eyes ask the question and he shakes his head. She frowns.

ANGIE
He's sleeping.

Pastor Caz nods.

PASTOR CAZ
I think I'll go in and wait for
him to wake up.

Angie nods and pats Pastor Caz on the shoulder as she leaves. He puts his hand on the door handle and pauses.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
It's happening all over again.

Angie stops and turns around, looking sad.

ANGIE
You did the best you could.

PASTOR CAZ
My best wasn't good enough. I lost
a soul. And I think I'm losing
another one.

ANGIE
Isn't that on God, not you?

She walks away. Pastor Caz stands there a moment, then opens the door.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door closes behind Pastor Caz as he steps in. He observes Ben is breathing and suddenly stops in the middle of the room. He folds his hands and bows his head.

PASTOR CAZ
Heavenly father, I jut wonder, am
I meant to do this? I believe in
my heart that you called me. So
why do I keep failing? Why do I
keep losing souls?

He stands there, head bowed, waiting.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

I just don't see anything that indicates this is what I m supposed to do. It's not that I'm questioning you, Lord. I just don't see that I'm doing any good.

He pauses again. The door opens and interrupts his prayer. Tentatively, Naomi stands there. Pastor Caz smiles, looks heavenward and smiles even more considerable. He looks at Naomi.

NAOMI

Can I come in?

PASTOR CAZ

Yes, yes, please, come in. Your dad is sleeping.

NAOMI

Good. Kinda want to talk to you anyway.

He smiles and nods as she steps in, letting the door close behind her. A little reluctant she leans up against the door.

PASTOR CAZ

I know I don't look the part, but I am a Pastor, and you can safely confide in me.

She gives a encumbered smile.

NAOMI

Will he really go to heaven, Pastor? He's never in his life given thought to God.

PASTOR CAZ

Outwardly, I'm sure that's true. But who other than God can know his heart?

She's slightly rocked by this.

NAOMI

So, you're saying he might have... he might have believed all along?

PASTOR CAZ
I have now way of knowing. But
Jesus called him. Had to be for a
reason.

She looks at Ben with new eyes as she walks deeper towards
Ben's bed. She stops and just stares at him.

NAOMI
Can I still go to heaven even if I
don't forgive him?

Pastor Caz lets out a little whistle.

PASTOR CAZ
Excellent question and to be
honest, both an easy and difficult
answer.

She doesn't take her eyes off Ben.

NAOMI
How so?

PASTOR CAZ
Well, we are only required to
believe that Jesus died for our
sins and rose again from the dead.

NAOMI
And I do. Always have.

PASTOR CAZ
But as disciplines of Jesus, we are
asked to behave a certain way, in
the faith.

She lets out a deep breath.

NAOMI
So I have to forgive him.

PASTOR CAZ
I kinda hoped you'd want to.

Finally, she looks at Pastor Caz. He gives her an
understanding smile.

PASTOR CAZ
In Matthew chapter six verses
nine through fifteen, Jesus
teaches us how to pray.

NAOMI
The Lord's prayer?

PASTOR CAZ
Bingo! Give than woman a prize!

Naomi can't help but smile.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
But Jesus also teaches us the power
of forgiveness. He says if we
forgive other people when they sin
against us, hurt us, God will
forgive you. But he also warns us
that if we don't forgive them...

NAOMI
God won't forgive us.

He nods.

PASTOR CAZ
Forgiveness can also be quite
cleansing. A new beginning. Clean
slate.

NAOMI
But I don't know how.

BEN (O.S.)
Naomi?

They turn to see Ben awake. Naomi makes eye contact but
doesn't seem angry. Pastor Caz notices this right away.

PASTOR CAZ
Naomi, why don't you tell Ben your
fondest memory with him.

NAOMI
I don't know if...

She looks at Pastor Caz and his gaze tells her to please try.
She closes her eyes.

NAOMI
I don't know how old I was but I
couldn't have been very old. There
was this field, this amazing
field.

She drifts off.

EXT. FIELD - DAY FLASHBACK

A much YOUNGER BEN has LITTLE NAOMI on his shoulders amongst what looks like thousand of dandelions that have yet to mature. Her hair blows in the breeze as she smiles.

NAOMI (V.O.)
I was so high up, I remember
wondering if I could touch the
sky.

Suddenly Younger Ben takes off running and kicking at the dandelions causing the little tendrils to fly off into the breeze. Little Naomi giggles uncontrollably and is quickly covered in little spores as Younger Ben continues to run and kick them.

He suddenly stops and starts spinning Young Naomi who puts her arms out to the side and is showered with the spores. In slow motion she spins, laughing, her hair covered in spores. Younger Ben smiles as he spins her and watches the spores rain down.

END OF FLASHBACK

Naomi stands, eyes still closed as a single tear falls down her face. Ben's eyes are red but he has no tears to cry. Pastor Caz is emotional but holds himself together.

BEN
You were there.

Naomi opens her eyes, surprised.

NAOMI
You remember?

He nods. She looks a little skeptical as Ben gives a weak smile.

BEN
You had pink butterfly clips in
your hair.

Naomi gasps.

BEN (CONT'D)
That field's long gone now.
Condos or something.

She looks at Ben and nods, no longer skeptical.

PASTOR CAZ

Ben? Would you like to share with Naomi?

Ben thinks but only a moment.

BEN

Susie knew you were a girl from the moment she found out she was pregnant.

Naomi smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

SUSIE CALLAHAM, mid-twenties, white-Asian mix, sits on the floor, her pregnant belly sticking out. On her belly she has headphones, as if her belly is actually wearing them.

BEN (V.O.)

She wanted the best for you, her little butterfly. She would play all kinds of music for you, day and night.

Susie rubs her belly fondly and smiles.

INT. BABY ROOM - NIGHT

Susie sits in a bathrobe reading a book to a sleeping BABY NAOMI. She joyfully reads and looks at Baby Naomi sleeping.

BEN (V.O.)

She would read to you at night as soon as you would wake up. But her favorite thing to do...

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Susie leans up against Younger Ben as TODDLER NAOMI sits up on her own in front of her. Susie has a dandelion in her hand and blows it at Toddler Naomi who giggles and giggles until she tumbles over on her back.

Susie giggles along with her and Toddler Naomi grabs for the spores as she continues to giggle. Younger Ben kisses Susie on the side of her head and she blows another dandelion at Toddler Naomi who giggles even harder.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Ben stares off fondly as Naomi wipes tears from her eyes. Pastor Caz smiles but looks as if he could tear up himself.

BEN
She loved dandelions.

NAOMI
(in a whisper)
She did.

Naomi sniffles.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
But that doesn't change the fact
that she's gone.

BEN
No, no it doesn't.

Naomi takes a hard, long look at Ben, trying to really see him.

QUICK FLASHES - NAOMI'S MEMORIES

-- Younger Ben arguing with Susie as Toddler Naomi sits on the carpet crying.

-- Younger Ben slaps Susie so hard she stumbles.

-- Susie holding Toddler Naomi standing in the doorway to a motel room, the floor strewn with clothes and empty beer bottles.

-- Younger Ben is in bed with THE OTHER WOMAN, sheet pulled up over them.

-- Ben, no gray hair, is injecting a needle into Susie's arm as TEEN NAOMI watches secretly from around the corner. -- --

-- Susie's eyes roll back in her head and she falls back on the couch. Ben smiles.

END OF QUICK FLASHES

Naomi turns suddenly and heads for the door.

NAOMI
I'm sorry, I'm going to need a
minute.

She charges out. Ben and Pastor Caz can only watch her go.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Lucy is on his back in the key, holding a dandelion in his hand, looking at it. He breathes out a little fire and incinerates it into a little cloud of black smoke.

LUCY
This is soo boring!

Lucy rolls over and looks at Gabe who holds the basketball.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Can't we hang out at a natural
disaster, or better yet, create
one?

GABE
You ceding souls Lucy?

LUCY
Didn't say that but this is just
so...boo hoo!

Lucy jumps up and Gabe chest passes him the ball.

GABE
I'll make this quick then.

Lucy raises one eyebrow looking at Gabe.

INT. HOSPICE CHAPEL - DAY

Naomi randomly walks into the room as a LITTLE GIRL and YOUNG MOM are on their knees praying. She holds back, not wanting to interest them.

LITTLE GIRL
God, thank you for not letting my
daddy die. I would really miss my
daddy if he visited you in heaven.

Naomi gets emotional as she watches and listens.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)
I know my daddy loves me and I love
my daddy so thank you for not
letting him die.

Naomi closes her eyes.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Ben looks at the door as Pastor Caz takes a seat on the bed.

BEN
Why would God forgive me when my
own daughter won't?

PASTOR CAZ

That's a very good question. You see, God has unconditional love for us from before we were even born. That's why He sent Jesus. To God, we are saints. Sin free.

Ben nods.

PASTOR CAZ

But us humans, we have free will. It's up to us to forgive or not forgive.

BEN

So she'll never forgive me.

Pastor Caz gives a cautious smile.

PASTOR CAZ

God may have given us free will, but he still has a way of showing us what we need to see.

Ben looks sad as the door opens and Naomi steps in quietly. Pastor Caz stands up and Naomi makes her way straight to Ben. Pastor Caz gives them space.

NAOMI

Why didn't you ever love me?

Ben and Pastor Caz are both shocked.

BEN

Naomi, I...

NAOMI

Because I sure loved you. My God how I my whole world would light up when you would come home.

BEN

Naomi, I love you. Always loved loved you.

NAOMI

Yeah? So where were you when I was growing up?

BEN

I had to work.

NAOMI

Yeah? Was closing down the bars
part of the job?

PASTOR CAZ

Naomi...

BEN

No, it's okay. She needs to say
this.

Pastor Caz steps back a little more.

NAOMI

You missed every softball game. Me
breaking my arm falling out of a
tree. Winning a prize at the State
Fair. My first piano recital.

BEN

I'm sorry.

NAOMI

Really? Cause it seems to me the
booze and the drugs were your real
love.

BEN

I loved you, Naomi. I...

NAOMI

My first dance. First kiss. High
school graduation. Your grandson
being born. You missed it all. So
tell me how that's loving me.

Ben looks away and swallows.

BEN

I'm sure to you, it didn't seem
like I did.

NAOMI

I missed my whole childhood. I
had to take care of mom because
you...

BEN

I know. I'm sorry.

Naomi takes a seat in a chair and lets out a frustrated sigh.

BEN (CONT'D)
For what it's worth, I never meant
for any of this to happen.

Naomi looks away.

BEN (CONT'D)
I had a fall at work. Hurt my back
something fierce.

She looks at him, surprised.

BEN (CONT'D)
But I had to work. I had a wife
and butterfly to take care of. So
I got pain pills and went back to
work.

Naomi stands up, her facing portraying this is all news to
her.

BEN (CONT'D)
I didn't mean to get addicted.

She's speechless. Her mouth hangs open just a little.

BEN (CONT'D)
They cut me off and I don't know
if I even had pain anymore but I
needed a fix. It's all I could
think of. I was so...ashamed.

NAOMI
You LEFT me with an addict mom.

BEN
I know.

NAOMI
I couldn't handle it. I started
stealing from mom's stash. I only
stopped when I was pregnant with
Lewis.

Ben swallows. This is hard for him to hear.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
As soon as he was born, I went
right back to it. First it was
meth and I lost my job. We barely
survived.

Pastor Caz listens intently and Ben seems uncomfortable for
the first time.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
Then I turned tricks for heroine.

Ben looks away.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
Yes, dad. I had no job. So that's
what I did. CPS took Lewis from me
and you know what? I didn't care.

She laughs a very sad laugh.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
More money for drugs that way,
right? His dad got cleaned up and
instead of going to Court to get
partial custody, I got high with a
couple of johns. All I had to do
was show up. All I had to do...

She looks away, trying to gather her thoughts.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
Haven't seen him for two years,
dad.

Ben chokes up and Naomi softens a little. Tears finally in
his eyes, Ben waits for Naomi to look at him. She does.

BEN (CONT'D)
You can't forgive me. I accept
that. I don't have long, Naomi. I
should be dead already. But I have
one thing to ask you.

She looks at him and sniffles, daring him to ask.

BEN
Please. It's all I ask.

NAOMI
No.

PASTOR CAZ
Naomi...

NAOMI
Every time I visit my mother, I'll
be reminded of...

She chokes up. Ben sighs, defeated.

BEN
It's okay. I understand.

The tension in the room is thick. Ben and Naomi won't look at each other. Pastor Caz has a worried look. He appears as if he doesn't know what to do.

PASTOR CAZ

I'd like to bring us back a bit
here if I can.

It takes a moment, but Ben and Naomi finally look at him.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

Pain is a powerful tool of Satan.
It's hard to let go. We hold onto
our failures, trust me, I know. But
if we only count our failures, we
can't see the good that is right in
front of us. We miss the glory of
God, even if it's in the room with
us.

Ben and Naomi look at each other finally.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

I'd like for us to pray together,
if you will.

Ben is non-committal, but Naomi looks standoffish.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

If we open our hearts to God,
things can change. With God, all
things are possible.

Naomi is still a bit standoffish, but Ben slowly holds out a frail hand.

BEN

I'll pray.

Pastor Caz smiles, relieved, and goes to Ben and gently takes his hand. He holds out his other hand for Naomi.

PASTOR CAZ

Join us?

She looks at his hand a moment and barely perceptible, she nods. She slowly makes her way over and as she does, Ben holds out his other hand for her. She takes Pastor Caz's hand and just looks at Ben's hand.

It trembles a little but he won't pull it back. Finally, she takes it. Pastor Caz's smile grows more confident. Pastor Caz bows his head and Ben follows suit. But Naomi hesitates, suddenly unsure. Finally, she bows her head.

PASTOR CAZ

Heavenly father, we thank you for bringing us together here in your presence. Thank you Lord for showing us your glory in the extra time you have given Ben and Naomi. I pray Lord that you will give them both the courage to forgive and reconcile.

Naomi opens one eye, looking around, seeing that Ben and Pastor Caz both still have their eyes closed. She closes her eye.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

Lord, we thank you for the fond memories that were shared today, of better times, and loved ones who are no longer with us.

Naomi's lip starts to tremble a little.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

Please God, let us forgive and embrace the few moments we have together here on earth, before joining you and our loved ones in heaven. Let your love and spirit flow through us, and mend the wounds of times past. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Naomi tries to say Amen, but lets out a little sob instead.

NAOMI

Sorry.

She laughs and more tears fall. Ben looks weaker and sad at seeing her cry.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Lucy is at the top of the arc, dribbling the ball between his legs, angry. Gabe has a sheepish smile on his face.

LUCY

This is a waste.

GABE

Lucy, you should be used to losing by now.

LUCY

Problem is, we take too long.

He dribbles the ball between his legs to Gabe.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Next basket wins.

Gabe holds the ball and looks at him.

GABE
You serious?

LUCY
I'm the Prince of Darkness. Don't
get more serious than that.

GABE
Not surprised you'd pull this
when it's your ball. Okay, Lucy.
Next basket wins.

He checks the ball back to Lucy who smiles his impish smile.
Gabe steps up to guard Lucy who turns his back to Gabe and
slams into him as he dribbles, forcing Gabe back a step.

LUCY
Don't...

Slams Gabe again, backing him toward the basket.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Call...

He slams again.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Me...

Gabe digs in but Lucy slams him again, forcing him back to
the free throw line.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Lucy!

He slams Gabe again, almost knocking him down. Gabe does his
best to hold his ground as Lucy lets out a maniacal laugh.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

Naomi works to gather herself together as Ben, looking
frailer by the moment, watches helplessly.

BEN (CONT'D)
I know I don't deserve it and I
know I don't have much time left,
but Butterfly, will you forgive
me? Can you forgive me?

Naomi lets out a small sob and more tears fall. Her nose
starts to leak snot. She's a hot mess.

NAOMI
Sorry.

PASTOR CAZ
It's okay. Take your time, you
don't...

NAOMI
No, you don't understand. I'm
sorry I just can't.

She looks at Ben as the tears streak down her face.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
I just can't forgive you. I
just...

Naomi runs for the door. All Pastor Caz and Ben can do is
watch her leave, the door closing quickly behind her. Ben
closes his eyes and Pastor Caz again looks defeated.

INT. HOSPICE CHAPEL - DAY

A very upset Naomi rushes in, still a hot mess. She stops
abruptly when she hears the cries of a Little Girl. She is
startled to see the same Little Girl and Young Mom, both
crying. She stands there, watching them, her tears slowing.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - DAY

A dejected Pastor Caz steps into the hallway just as Angie
arrives at the door. He lets out a big breath and leans up
against the wall. She has a concerned look as she puts a
comforting hand on his shoulder. He frowns slightly.

PASTOR CAZ
Maybe this just isn't my calling.

ANGIE
You don't mean that.

PASTOR CAZ
I say what's in my heart but it
just doesn't seem like it's good
enough.

ANGIE

It's like you told me, Pastor,
plant the seed and leave the rest
to the Holy Spirit.

PASTOR CAZ

Maybe I got that wrong too. This
man is going to heaven, but
he'll die not having his
daughter's forgiveness. The one
before? I lost completely.

ANGIE

Suicide is a difficult mental
illness, you can't blame yourself
you couldn't change their mind.

PASTOR CAZ

I'm called by God so you'd think
I could.

He hangs his head and shakes it.

PASTOR CAZ

I'm just not cut out for this.

ANGIE

Stop! You're only making Satan
stronger.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Gabe has a full arm bar on Lucy who continues to back him
down towards the basket, laughing boisterously as he does.
Gabe can't stop him and it makes Lucy laugh even harder.

Lucy bowls into Gabe who just can't stop him. He's close
enough to the basket to take a short shot, but he keeps
backing Gabe down, laughing, in complete control.

INT. HOSPICE CHAPEL - DAY

An emotional Naomi watches the Little Girl, and the Young Mom
doing her best to comfort her.

LITTLE GIRL

Why, mommy? Why did God let him
wake up just to take him to
heaven?

YOUNG MOM

I don't know, honey, but God has a
purpose. Your daddy is safe and
happy waiting for you in heaven.
(MORE)

YOUNG MOM (CONT'D)

Just think how nice he'll make
things for you when you get there.

Tears falling, the Little Girl nods but is unable to stop crying. The moment moves Naomi to tears as well. She doesn't even attempt to hold back the tears.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - DAY

Pastor Caz shoves his hands into his pockets and looks up at the ceiling. Nurse Angie stands by him in support. He looks at her.

PASTOR CAZ

You know, it's not over, right? I
mean she could come back, she has
before.

ANGIE

Now that's the Pastor Caz I know.

PASTOR CAZ

Yes. There's still time. I can...

Warning beeps start to blare and Angie has instant recognition.

ANGIE

Oh no.

She rushes for the door, followed quickly by Pastor Caz.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Lucy is almost under the basket and Gabe looks small beside him, worn down. Lucy is aware he's right where he wants to be. He leans back and roars with laughter, making Gabe even smaller.

INT. HOSPICE CHAPEL - DAY

Naomi's eyes are closed, heart breaking for the Little Girl, who is continuing to sob.

LITTLE GIRL

But what if I don't go to heaven
mommy? I'll never see daddy again!

The last word is more wail than spoken word. The Young Mom pulls her in close and Naomi puts a finger to her mouth across her lips to keep from crying out loud.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angie and Pastor Caz race in to sirens going off and Ben not breathing. Pastor Caz's face sinks as Angie races beside to check for a pulse.

ANGIE

No pulse. I'm starting C.P.R.
Stay clear for the doctor.

Pastor Caz nods and steps back as Angie starts chest compressions on Ben. She is ultra focused but Ben doesn't respond. Pastor Caz closes his eyes and prays.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT

Lucy starts to turn towards the basket and Gabe has his hands up trying to guard him. In slow motion, Lucy starts to jump up towards the basket, twisting as he does and raising the ball' high over his head.

INT. HOSPICE CHAPEL

The Little Girl continues to cry and Naomi is frozen in place, unable to leave. The Young Mom bends down to be face to face with the Little Girl.

YOUNG MOM

Of course you're going to heaven,
sweetheart. You belong to Jesus and
that can't ever be taken away.

LITTLE GIRL

Are you sure, mommy?

Through her own tears, the Young Mom forces a smile.

YOUNG MOM

I'm positive.

LITTLE GIRL

Okay.

Naomi sort of smiles as she watches the Young Mom kiss the little girl on top of her head.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)

Do you think daddy knows I love
him, mommy?

Naomi is struck by this and straightens up.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT

As Lucy gets high in the air his face distorts into more of his true self. Below him, hands still up, is a defeated looking Gabe. Lucy cocks the ball all the way back, ready for a monster dunk.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM

The Doctor is now doing chest compressions as Angie checks for vital signs. He looks at her and she shakes her head. Pastor Caz is looking more defeated as the Doctor continues the chest compressions.

ANGIE

Paddles?

DOCTOR

No extraordinary measures. We probably shouldn't even be doing this.

INT. HOSPICE CHAPEL

Naomi watches intently as the Little Girl looks at the Young Mom.

LITTLE GIRL

But mommy, I didn't get to tell him I love him before Jesus took him. So how will he know?

Naomi suddenly goes rigid, then a determined look crosses her face and she turns and rushes out of the room.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT

Close up on the ball, a clawed hand, charred, holding it as it makes its way for the thunderous dunk in slow motion. It is almost to the rim, nothing in the way.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM

The Doctor continues to do chest compressions as Pastor Caz stands with his head hanging down and Angie checking for a pulse.

ANGIE

No pulse. Should we call it?

NAOMI (O.S.)

No!

All eyes turn to see a frantic Naomi rushing in. Pastor Caz catches her and she only slightly struggles to get away.

PASTOR CAZ
I'm sorry, Naomi.

The Doctor continues to do compressions and Naomi watches in horror.

NAOMI
No, he can't...I...

PASTOR CAZ
Naomi, I think he's gone.

The Doctor is sweating and very tired. Angie is standing, waiting. Naomi is distraught.

NAOMI
Please! Don't let him die. I need
to tell him...I forgive him.
I...
(barely audible)
love him.

PASTOR CAZ
He will know, Naomi.

NAOMI
No, I need to tell him!

The Doctor and Angie both look at each other and nod.

PASTOR CAZ
Let's pray together Naomi. To
ourselves. Tell God what's in your
heart.

She nods and quickly bows her head, closing her eyes. Pastor Caz joins her. The Doctor stops the compressions and Angie's shoulders drop.

DOCTOR
I'm calling it.

Naomi's lips move as she prays and a little sob escapes her. Pastor Caz takes her hands in his.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - SAME

The claws are even longer on the hand holding the basketball as it is about to be thrown through the rim. The maniacal laugh echoing loudly.

Just as the ball is about to be forced through the rim, an angelic hand appears and blocks the ball, sending it out of the clawed hand and away from the rim.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - SAME

As Naomi and Pastor Caz continue to pray, the Doctor looks at his watch. Angie is near tears as she reaches out one last time to check for a pulse she knows won't be there.

DOCTOR
Time of death...

Naomi lets out a sob.

ANGIE
Gotta pulse!

Naomi and Pastor Caz at Ben. The surprised Doc's eyes go wide as Ben's open. Naomi pushes over to Ben's bedside as Angie goes to Pastor Caz and gives him a big hug.

NAOMI
Dad. Dad...I...

BEN
Butterfly, I won't be here long.
Jesus told me you have something
to tell me, so I came back.

NAOMI
I forgive you, dad. I forgive you.
And I love you, okay?

He nods weakly. Angie wipes a tear and Pastor Caz stands with an emotional smile on his face.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Lucy lands on the court and is in his usual form. He looks over at Gabe who holds the ball wagging his finger at him.

GABE
Not in MY house!

Lucy's eyes go wide and Gabe takes one dribble and takes off.

INT. HOSPICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BEN
(weakly)
Okay. Thank you. I love you too,
Butter---

NAOMI

Wait! I need to tell you
something before you say that.

Ben looks concerned, but nods.

NAOMI (CONT'D)

It was my heroine. Mom found my
stash. I...relapsed. I...I just
bought it on the streets...

BEN

Naomi...

NAOMI

No, I have to tell you. It was
mine, dad. Had I not bought
that...

She breaks down a little.

NAOMI (CONT'D)

It was laced with fentanyl. If I
had used...I'm so sorry, dad. I
hated you all these years but
really, I hated myself.

BEN

Naomi. I forgive you. Now...you
need to forgive yourself, okay?

Crying she looks at Ben and nods.

NAOMI

I forgive me.

Angie and Pastor Caz both have smiles on their faces and
tears on their cheeks. Ben smiles and closes his eyes.

BEN

See you when it's time, butterfly.

She nods, crying, and Ben lets out his last breath.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT- DAY

Gabe rocks a thunderous dunk posturizing Lucy, swinging on
the rim a moment before letting go and dropping back to the
court.

GABE

Boo yay!

Lucy glances at him a moment and shrugs. He holds up a hand, closes it, opening it and jalapeno poppers appear.

LUCY

You can have them. Too much whining.

GABE

You or them?

Lucy pops a popper into his mouth and turns to stroll away.

LUCY

No worries. Got my eye on a wanna be dictator in South America. Much more reliable.

Gabe just smiles and shakes his head.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - DAY

Angie walks with Pastor Caz, holding his elbow.

ANGIE

Still wondering if this is your calling?

PASTOR CAZ

Pretty sure God just removed all doubt.

Angie smiles as they walk off together.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Pastor Caz is playing soccer with a varied group of people, mostly kids. It's clear he's the best player out there, but he tapers down his skill, keeping it fun for everybody.

Angie walks up to the sidelines, dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, a purse slung on her shoulder. She watches as a gang of kids grab onto Pastor Caz and pull him off the ball as he teases them, keeping the ball away from them with his skill.

Finally the gang of kids manage to pull him from the ball and scream and throw their hands up in victory causing Angie to laugh. Pastor Caz spots her and she waves and he waves back, smiling. A whistle sounds and Pastor Caz jogs over to Angie.

PASTOR CAZ

So nice to see you Angie! To what do I owe this surprise?

ANGIE

I dropped by the church because, you know, one would expect to find a Pastor there.

Pastor Caz laughs.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to make sure things were still good in the faith and calling department.

PASTOR CAZ

They are, indeed God is great. He most certainly has shown me that indeed, my calling is legit.

He points to a group of kids that are receiving orange slices, Rose trying to keep order. As they part, Angie sees Naomi is the one handing them out. Naomi has put on some weight, the bags under her eyes are gone and her hair is short. She looks beautiful. Angie smiles, putting her hands to her mouth out of pure joy.

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)

She volunteers at the church once a week. She's a real gift.

ANGIE

God truly is great.

As Naomi hands out the last orange slice, she spots Angie. She waves enthusiastically and gets up and hurries over, giving her a hug.

NAOMI

Angie! I can't believe you're here!

ANGIE

Well look who's talking. You look great!

NAOMI

Thank you. I've never felt better.

PASTOR CAZ

Well since we're having a love fest, how about you stick around
(MORE)

PASTOR CAZ (CONT'D)
and after the game ice cream is
on me.

Every child within hearing distance screams "ice cream." They
all laugh.

NAOMI
I'd love to, but I have something
I need to do that I should have
done a long time ago.

She gives Angie a hug and waves to Pastor Caz and they watch
her happily walk away with a huge smile.

EXT. GRAVESIDE - DAY

The sky is blue and the sun shines brightly on the perfectly
manicured lawn. Two placards in the grass stand out, one
looking brand new, the lawn still growing back in. Susie
Callaham and Benedict Callaway.

Footsteps in the grass. A shadow falls across the placards.
Naomi stands, looking down at the markers, a fond smile on
her face.

NAOMI
Hi mom, hi, dad. Sorry I didn't
come sooner. But hey, look what I
brought!

She pulls out from behind her back a huge group of
dandelions, all spores still attached.

NAOMI (CONT'D)
Thought you might appreciate these
even if the gardener doesn't
later.

She laughs, just a little, at her own joke.

NAOMI
I'm doing good. Almost forty days
sober. I'm gonna make it. Things
are good, I just...really miss
you both so much and...I miss...

A horn honk. She turns to see LEWIS, frantically waving at
her and smiling as NAOMI'S EX waves at her and smiles. Her
hands are full of dandelions and she can hardly wave back.
Lewis looks to Naomi's Ex who nods and he breaks into a
sprint towards her who's so happy that she is near tears.

Lewis arrives and jumps into her arms causing the dandelions
to fly up in the air.

She twirls him around, huge smile as spores from the dandelions rain down on their hair and on their clothes as they joyfully spin around together in the golden sunlight.

FADE OUT.

THE END