

Stations

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BLACK SCREEN

Moving train sounds.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

TERESE (65, shoulder-length grey hair, in casual clothes) sits on a crowded vintage train. She is surrounded by people of different races, ethnicities, and ages - some have a ticket in their hands and some don't. Standing next to her is a BIKER (dressed in leather jacket, and full of piercings and tattoos.) She looks around with a puzzled look on her face.

BLACK SCREEN

Moving train sounds.

INT. ART STUDIO/DETACHED GARAGE - DAY

Art Garage: Ten elementary-age kids in summer clothes take off their paint aprons and hang them up on a coat rack. Parents come in, make small talk with the kids, and then leave with their child carrying out an art project. Many kids and parents say thank you to Terese. One parent (ART MOM - age 30) addresses Terese:

ART MOM

Thank you so much, and I'm sorry about  
your loss.

INT. TERESE'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

A medium-sized suitcase is open, sitting on top of the bed. Terese opens dresser drawers and picks out items to be placed in the suitcase.

She walks to the closet, picks out a black dress, folds it, and places it in the suitcase.

While walking by the dresser, she looks at the photos on top. There is a photo of Terese's parents, a photo of MICHAEL (her oldest son) with a fancy camera, a picture of her daughter, RACHAEL, singing on a stage with her band, and a photo of her youngest son Francis with his wife, in their graduation gowns, with the caption: Congratulations, Dr. and Dr. Then there is a nice photo of her late husband FRANK. (mid-40s) Terese pauses and lightly touches this photo.

INT. TERESE'S LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Terese's suitcase, a large bag of cheese popcorn, and a water

bottle are on the floor next to the front door. TIM (65) lightly knocks and then walks in. Terese walks up to him and kisses him.

TIM

Hello sweetheart. Well...it looks like you are ready to go! I'm sad I can't go with you.

TERESE

Yeah... I think this is another time for me to wallow in my past... sorry to leave you out.

TIM

Hmmmmmm.

(looks at the luggage and other things on the floor)

So...are you going to hold off until tomorrow morning to get started?  
(raises eyebrows in a questioning manner?)

TERESE

(smiles)

Maybe. We'll see. If I can't sleep tonight, I might as well get on the road.

TIM

I figured...

So where would you like to eat tonight?

TERESE

Ummm. The Brewhouse?

TIM

Sure.

The two start walking to the door when Terese's cell phone rings. Terese reaches into her purse, answers it, and then walks back into the living room.

TERESE

(increasingly animated)

Hello. Yes, this is Terese. Oh, hello!  
Yes. Yes. Wow. Yes, of course!

Absolutely. Wow. Yes...Friday - 3:00.  
 Yes, for sure! Ummm. I need to rework  
 some things on my schedule, but... I  
 will make it work. Thank you. Wow.  
 Yes. Thank you. Yes... thank you!

Terese hangs up, smiles big as she walks towards Tim, who has a questioning look on his face. They walk out the door.

TERESE

Oh my god!!

INT. SUBURU - NIGHT

Terese drives on an empty highway in the dark. She eats out of her bag of cheese popcorn and tears up, as she listens to the song, "I Just Don't Think I'll Ever Get Over You," by Colin Hay.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Terese (dressed in a casual black dress) is at a graveside with 50 others.

A Catholic priest says a prayer as everyone keeps their head down in reverence.

Terese is standing next to her sister, MARGARET (62). Terese's three adult children and partners stand close to Terese. MICHAEL (38), RACHAEL (36, seven months pregnant), and FRANCIS (34), holding his fifteen-month-old child.

Three of Terese's brothers (66, 67, 68. All a bit disheveled) stand at the back of the crowd and talk and laugh.

Two other brothers (69,70) stand toward the front of the crowd.

Margaret walks back to the three brothers.

MARGARET

Shhhhhh! God damn it - Stop talking!

The guys stop talking, and Margaret walks back to her place.

Terese breaks into tears as her daughter puts her arm around Terese in support.

Teresa, Margaret, and all four adult kids and partners hug at the end of the service.

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Terese walks into the formal living room of her mother's house. Her adult children, and partners all are sitting on the furniture or lying on the floor. There are several braided rugs on the wood floor and a beautiful quilt on a rack.

RACHAEL  
Come sit down, Momma.

Rachael scoots over to allow room for Terese to sit.

RACHAEL  
How are you doing?

TERESE  
Sad.

RACHAEL  
Are you more sad about Grandma's  
passing? or Dad's?

TERESE  
Good question. It feels like it's all  
rolled into one big loss at the  
moment.

It seems like yesterday when we went  
through this with your dad.

MICHAEL  
Well... 18 years ago - but yeah...  
it's all sad.

Rachael puts her hand on Terese's knee.

RACHAEL  
I'm sorry Mom...

FRANCIS  
Lots of people talked to me today  
about dad... what a life-force he was.

RACHAEL  
I still miss him. I miss Grandma too.  
(Another long pause)

FRANCIS  
That was a sweet service today.

MICHAEL

There were definite themes in the stories.

TERESE

Like??

MICHAEL

...like Grandma popping out a baby each year.

... and how wild the boys were.

RACHAEL

(Rachael looks at Terese and smiles.)

And how happy Grandma was to finally have a girl.

MICHAEL

Did you notice that the only uncle to say anything was Uncle Jim? And he mostly talked about Grandpa.

TERESE

Interesting how many people talked to me about what a character Dad was... It made me sad.

FRANCIS

Why?

TERESE

It just made me a bit sad for Mom - that, at her funeral, people talked more about what a character her HUSBAND was than about her.

FRANCIS

Yeah - Grandpa was a trip! - Grandma was so reserved.

FRANCIS

I think she enjoyed her life with Grandpa and was okay with taking the back seat.

TERESE

Hmmm. I suppose the question is - what would her life have looked like had she taken the steering wheel?

RACHAEL

I don't know...I think Grandma led the life she was suited for...I think - besides being a mom - and grandma - she managed to sneak in her things - quilting, braiding rugs, reading...

Didn't she write a few children's stories about us grandkids?

TERESE

(smiles)

I forgot about that. I wonder where those stories are?

Speaking of stories - I heard back from my agent - who set me up with a director who wants to make my screenplay into a movie.

MICHAEL

What? Wait... Agent? Director? What? When did this happen? Are you serious?

TERESE

(laughs)

I'm serious. I'm going to fly to L.A. to talk to this director next week!

FRANCIS

That's wild Mamma!

RACHAEL

That's awesome!

MICHAEL

Yeah... but an agent? Director?

TERESE

It all happened so fast! I just got an agent last month.

And she found a director who wants to talk to me about this script.

MICHAEL

I thought you wrote poetry...and little reflection pieces?

TERESE

Well... I turned one of my poems into

a movie script.

It's called, "Can We Talk?" It's about me meeting up with your dad in the afterlife.

And Michael - I did send it to you to read. I sent it to all of you.

FRANCIS

With a dozen edits and re-writes!  
(everyone laughs)

RACHAEL

I read the first draft... It's good.... sad.

TERESE

I can send it again. Maybe you should all read it this time.

RACHAEL

Just curious...Has Tim read it? What does he think?

TERESE

To be honest, he didn't want to read it. I think that he thinks I need to move on from Frank...I suppose he gets frustrated with me - still holding onto Frank's hand...

Maybe I tend to live in the past, where he definitely does not want to look back. "Why watch reruns," is his motto.

He almost never mentions his late-wife or his childhood. Don't look back!

Terese's cell phone rings. Terese looks at her phone.

TERESE

Speak of the devil...

Terese stands up, answers the phone, and walks out of the room.

TERESE

Hi Tim.



I'm doing okay. Yeah...it was sad...

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Terese and her family sit around the dining room table at Terese's mother's house, finishing breakfast and drinking coffee. Terese is interacting with her 18 month-old grandchild Frankie in her high chair.

RACHAEL

Are we all leaving today?

MICHAEL

I think so. I need to be at the airport at noon. Mom, are you driving us all to the airport?

TERESE

Yeppers! I guess I'll be the shuttle driver today.

FRANCIS

So when are you leaving?

TERESE

I was planning on leaving tomorrow morning, but... maybe I'll start tonight. I need to get back and figure out my trip to L.A.

FRANCIS

You make me nervous, Mom. Tired driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving.

TERESE

Eh! I'll be fine! How many times have I done this? I can probably do it in my sleep.

So should we walk around the house and put names on the things you want?

Terese stands up and stops by a table filled with family photos in frames. She picks up an old family photo - with her mother and father and her siblings - five brothers and one sister.

The four adult kids stand up and start looking around the room.

FRANCIS

I would love one of her braided rugs.

TERESE

I'll note what everyone wants, but I need to check with the brothers and Margaret about prior bids.

Terese walks over and grabs a notepad and pen. Rachael walks by a large painting on the wall of a young girl in front of mountains, carrying a basket.

RACHAEL

I always loved your painting, Mom... so pensive...lonely.

TERESE

Definitely alone.

RACHAEL

Can I have it?

The group stands and looks at the painting.

TERESE

Sorry... I'm taking all my paintings back to Montana. But yes, you can have it after I die...(smiles and puts her arm around Rachael.)

EXT. DRIVEWAY OUTSIDE OF MOTHER'S HOME - DUSK.

Terese shuts the hatchback on the old Subaru. The back is stuffed with things, such as the yellow quilt, a braided rug, a large painting of the young girl with a basket, a few smaller paintings, and her luggage.

Before getting in her car, Terese stops and looks at the house. She is swept up in sadness.

INT. SUBURU - NIGHT

Terese is driving in the dark listening to sad music.

Terese takes her phone and makes a call.

INTERCUT INT. SUBURU/TIM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tim sits on his couch in his living room.

TIM

Hello, sweetheart. Where are you?

TERESE

Somewhere in South Dakota. Oh my god, this land is so flat. I swear I could lock the steering wheel, put a brick on the pedal, nap for a few hours, and still be on this road... still in South Dakota!

TIM

Probably not a great idea - to take a nap. Speaking of which, it's getting late. Are you planning on stopping soon?

TERESE

I'm doing good at the moment - on a roll. And when I start feeling tired, I've got my bag of cheese popcorn to keep me awake.

TIM

Well, just don't push it. It's not worth it.

And please call me when you get home. I worry about you.

TERESE

Okay... will do.

TIM

Maybe we can plan on going somewhere for dinner tomorrow night? I'll give you time to sleep...

Okay... I love you.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

Mountainscape - with a beautiful sunrise - with a Subaru alone on the highway.

SIGN - WELCOME TO MONTANA.

INT. SUBURU - DAWN

Terese is driving with an open bag of cheese popcorn at her side, with the music blaring. (The song Michigan by the Milk

Carton Kids - with the refrain, "What am I suppose to do now.... without you.... without you. Terese briefly closes her eyes and immediately opens them. Trying to keep from falling asleep, Terese shakes her head and reaches for a handful of popcorn.

Terese again closes her eyes.

BLACK SCREEN

INT. TRAIN - DAY

(repeat scene) Terese sits on a crowded vintage train. She is surrounded by people of different races, ethnicities, and ages - some have a ticket in their hands and some don't. The biker dude is standing close to Terese.

Terese looks out the train window and only sees big puffy clouds.

BLACK SCREEN

The train goes into some kind of tunnel for a few seconds. (black screen, the sound of the moving train.)

INT. TRAIN - DAY

When the lights come back, several new people are standing around Terese - (all without tickets), including a CHINESE GIRL (3) who is crying. There is commotion, with people talking (in many languages) or crying.

CHINESE GIRL  
(in Chinese - subtitled)

(crying) Mommy! Mommy!

Terese looks around to spot the girl's mother, then walks over and stoops to her level before talking.

TERESE  
Hello. Do you want me to help you find your mother?

The girl, through her tears, looks at Terese.

CHINESE GIRL  
(Chinese language, with subtitles)

I want my mommy!

The train lurches, and the girl falls and starts crying again.

Terese picks up the girl and walks over to sit in her original seat with the Chinese girl on her lap.

The girl puts her head on Terese's chest and whimpers.

Terese looks around before speaking.

TERESE

Do any of you speak English?

BIKER

I do.

TERESE

I have no idea where I am or where this train is going. What's going on here?

BIKER

Station ticket?

TERESE

What?

BIKER

Do you have a station ticket?

He holds up his station ticket to show Terese.

TERESE

No.

BIKER

Well then, keep your sights on getting off at Station One.

TERESE

What's at Station One?

BIKER

(smiles)

You'll see!

BLACK SCREEN

INT. TRAIN - DAY

The train is now even more crowded. Terese continues to sit with the Chinese girl on her lap.

Passengers sit or stand, shoulder to shoulder.

An announcement blares.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Next stop! First-time passengers and those wanting to get off at Station One! Please exit. (This is followed by this announcement in several languages).

An announcement on the speakers again blares.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Next stop! First-time passengers and those wanting to get off at Station One, please exit the train. Those without a ticket, please exit. (translated into several languages.)

The train slows and stops. Again the announcement:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

First-time passengers - please exit now. (translated into various languages.)

Most passengers shuffle around, trying to get off at this stop.

Terese stands, holding the girl, and looks around for someone who might be the girl's mother.

Terese looks up and notices a map of the train station stops above the train doorway.

MAP OF TRAIN STATIONS

The map shows a circular train track with exits for Station One, Station Two, and Station Three. There is a squiggly line with the initials AAL close to the Station Three exit.

INT. STATION ONE PLATFORM - DAY

This platform is inside a grand art deco train station.

A large overhead banner says, "Welcome to Station One!" (in many languages).

People exit the various train cars. Those with tickets seem focused and walk in one direction while looking at their tickets. Those without a train ticket look perplexed. Some mumble while others ask what is going on (in different languages). All eventually walk toward the wall-sized digital signboard.

Terese stands on the platform outside the train, looking for someone who might be the girl's mother.

A CHINESE CARETAKER (60) walks up to Terese.

CHINESE CARETAKER  
Thank you for helping. (in broken  
English)

The caretaker then looks at the Chinese girl.

CHINESE CARETAKER  
(in Chinese, with English subtitles)

Hello Li! My name is Fang. I once knew  
your grandmother, Ya. I'd like to take  
you to the next station.

Terese sets Fang down, and the Chinese caretaker picks her up and carries her off.

Terese follows the mob of people toward the digital signboard.

FAM, a young woman of German descent, yells:

FAM  
(in German, with English subtitles)

Does anyone here speak German?

Another young German woman, NORA, responds by putting her hand up. Nora turns and walks to Fam.

FAM  
I'm sorry to disturb you. I need to  
know what is happening here. Where are  
we? Do you understand what we are to  
do?

NORA

I'm not sure. I agree - all very strange! But I think we should look at the signboard, and then maybe it will become clear.

Both women walk towards the digital board.

Terese walks to the digital signboard. This board has thousands of names, followed by birthdates and room numbers. These names constantly shift as new names and numbers are added and subtracted.

Terese finds her name and number: Terese Cardiello, May 15, 1959, Room #3634.

Terese meanders around the mob of people.

INT. THE ELEVATOR HALLWAY - DAY

The forever-long vintage elevator hallway has an art deco vibe as well. Each elevator has a language sign above it. In front of the group of elevators with the Mandarin Language sign, there are 150 people of Chinese descent. In front of the elevators with the Spanish Language sign, there are 100 people.

Terese walks up to the set of elevators with the "English Language" sign and stands in a crowd of 100 people.

Several of the elevator doors open.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The inside of the elevator is ornately decorated.

The elevator operator JIM (male), greets the small group standing by his elevator. Terese is in this group. He is dressed in a 20's period uniform and has a British accent.

JIM

Good day. Welcome to Station One!  
Please step on one at a time, and state your name and destination room number. Your patience is appreciated.  
Thank you.

An older Australian woman, KAREN, walks into the elevator.

She looks at the operator and says in an Australian accent:



KAREN  
Good Day, Mate! I need to go to room  
number 2056.

JIM  
I'll get there straight away, Maam.

KAREN  
Onya, Mate!

Karen walks into the elevator.

JIM  
Next!

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Terese is standing in the middle of the crowded elevator.

TERESE  
Does anyone know where we're going?

A small HISPANIC MAN, dressed in a t-shirt and jeans,  
responds.

HISPANIC MAN  
No idea... Station One - whatever that  
means!

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

There are now only a handful of people in the elevator.

The elevator door opens.

JIM  
Terese - Room 3634. This is your stop.

Terese scoots around a few people. Before she leaves the  
elevator, she looks at the operator.

TERESE  
Thank you.

JIM  
You are very welcome, Terese

INT. STATION ONE ROOM - DAY

Terese walks off the elevator into a large room with soft  
Victorian furnishings, large impressionist paintings, a wall-

sized window and a floor-to-ceiling screen. A string quartet is standing in one corner, dressed in black and white. They are playing string quartet music in the background. We don't see the quartet for a while but hear sad quartet music.

Terese is greeted by Virginia. VIRGINIA is an older, overly sweet and ineffectual counselor.

VIRGINIA

Hello. Hello. You must be Terese. Come in! Please, come in.

Terese takes a few steps in.

VIRGINIA

Welcome to Station One. My name is Virginia. I'll be your counselor while you are here.

Terese stands motionless. Her eyes are drawn to the enormous window.

TERESE

Wait, where am I? Who are you?

VIRGINIA

My name is Virginia, and you are at Station Number One.

Terese walks to the window. Outside the window are puffy clouds, as if this room is suspended in the atmosphere.

Terese shakes her head in disbelief.

TERESE

Station One? What is Station One?

VIRGINIA

Station One is based on what is happening "on the ground," as they say. (chuckles) This first stop is where you process your death.

Both Terese and Virginia stand motionless. Terese is stunned.

TERESE

Death!.. What? Did you just say death?

Virginia nods. Terese looks confused.

TERESE

Did I die?

VIRGINIA

Yes.

TERESE

Wait, are you kidding me? Am I dreaming?

VIRGINIA

No, I'm afraid you are not dreaming. Apparently, you fell asleep at the wheel...

TERESE

(interrupts - incredulous)

Wait. I can't die now!

You don't understand. I have lots going on in my life! Seriously!

I'm telling you -I can't die now...  
I'm scheduled to meet with a film director next week...

Virginia has a sweet, compassionate gaze and nods in agreement after each statement.

TERESE

No, I'm serious. This might be my lucky break in getting my screenplay filmed! I'm telling you - I can't die now!

Virginia continues to nod and to be present to Terese.

TERESE

I have way too much on my plate...  
this is not a good time for me to die!

I have another grandchild on the way...

(increasingly frustrated)

Oh my god! Listen! I have twelve kids coming for the after-school art class on Tuesday. I at least need to give the families a call.

Seriously, I need a week. Maybe two...  
Actually, I want to meet my new  
grandchild - and to see this  
screenplay into fruition... how about  
a year.

Virginia continues to nod.

VIRGINIA

I do understand your predicament.

TERESE

(annoyed - shakes her head - talking  
to herself) )

I need to call Tim. He'll be worried.

Terese turns away from Virginia, reaches into her pocket for  
her phone, and tries to speed-dial Tim.

VIRGINIA

I'm sorry, but your cell phone won't  
work here.

Terese is visibly upset and impatient.

TERESE

God damn it! Stop being so obnoxiously  
kind and DO SOMETHING! I'm telling  
you, I can't die now! I seriously was  
not planning on this.

Virginia again nods in agreement.

TERESE

Shouldn't you have given me some  
warning? - you know, a doctor telling  
me to get my things in order!  
Something like that?

VIRGINIA

Not everyone gets a message ahead of  
time. I'm sorry.

TERESE

Oh my god! Are you serious? I just  
died?

Virginia continues to nod.

VIRGINIA

Yes, come, sit down.

TERESE

No, I don't want to sit! This is just unacceptable! Totally unacceptable! I'm out of here.

Terese walks to the door. She opens the door and now only sees clouds (no elevator).

VIRGINIA

I would not jump if I were you. There are already way too many lost souls out there.

Terese looks out and squints her eyes.

EXT. SKY WITH BILLOWY CLOUDS - DAY

Individuals are lying on billowy clouds spread over the blue sky.

INT. STATION ONE ROOM - DAY

Terese slowly steps back into the room and shuts the door.

Virginia walks over to the coffee table, picks up the remote control, and presses the start button.

The accident scene is playing on a wall-sized screen.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - DAWN

A police car and an ambulance are parked on the side of the highway with their flashers on. The Subaru is turned on its top - crumbled. The PARAMEDIC (male, middle age, no nonsense) drags Terese's bloody body out of the car. The POLICE OFFICER (20s, squeamish) and EMT (30s, in shock) stand watching. The paramedic kneels next to Teresa's body and lightly shakes her shoulders.

PARAMEDIC

Maam. Maam. Can you hear me? Maam, can you hear me?

INT. STATION ONE ROOM - DAY

Terese slowly walks to sit on the couch as she watches the screen, horrified.

TERESE  
(whispers)

Oh my god! Oh my god!

Terese burst into tears.

Virginia puts her hand on Terese's shoulder.

The string quartet's sad music increases in volume.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - DAWN

The paramedic visually checks out the bloody body, takes out the stethoscope, plugging the earbuds in while putting one end on Terese's chest.

PARAMEDIC  
(matter-of-fact)  
Nothing. She's lost too much blood.  
Let's get her in the ambo.

INT. STATION ONE ROOM - DAY

TERESE  
(yells)

It's not too late! Use CPR. Don't you have a defibrillator in that ambulance? Come on, guys! Do your job!

VIRGINIA  
(said softly)

It's too late, Terese. I'm sorry!

The sad music increases in volume.

TERESE  
God dam it! We're talking about my life! It's NOT too late. Tell them to resuscitate me! I have a full life to get back to. I don't have time for this.

VIRGINIA  
I'm sorry. It is too late.

Terese continues to watch the screen and then bursts into tears.

Terese stands and starts to pace. The music volume increases.  
While pacing, Terese sees the string players in the corner.

TERESE

What the...

The string players stop cold, are stiff, and appear very uncomfortable while looking at Virginia.

VIRGINIA

(uncomfortable)

This group has been hired to...  
to...to add ambiance.

Terese gives Virginia a look of contempt.

TERESE

Are you kidding me? Are you fucking serious? Do you really think I need help to conjure up sad feelings right now?

Virginia kindly looks at the string players and puts her hand up, indicating to stop. The string players bring their instruments into a resting position. All stare at Virginia.

The real-time footage continues on the screen.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - DAWN

Terese's body is now on the stretcher. The EMT and paramedic carry the stretcher into the back of the ambulance.

INT. STATION ONE ROOM - DAY

Terese walks up to Virginia with her hands in a prayer position.

TERESE

I'm begging you! Tell them to resuscitate me!

Okay... I'll admit it. I made a mistake! I should have stopped and gotten a motel room. I get it. Can't we just go back in time? - a half hour? Hour? (pause) Seriously!

VIRGINIA

I'm so sorry, Terese.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - DAWN

The ambulance drives away without its flashers on.

INT. STATION ONE ROOM - DAY

Terese walks over to the couch and sits. She again starts crying and puts her head on her lap as she wails.

Virginia motions to the string players to start up again.

The violin player starts to play alone - a somber tune.

Terese doesn't seem to notice as she cries and cries.

INT. STATION ONE ROOM - DAY

Virginia sits on the stuffed chair as Terese continues to cry. Terese raises her head and looks at Virginia. There is light string music in the background again.

TERESE

Okay... I get it. I died. Wow... I am actually dead. Crazy!

Virginia nods in agreement.

TERESE

So... now what? Heaven?

Virginia shakes her head no.

TERESE

(panic)

Hell?

Virginia again shakes her head.

TERESE

Oh..that's just great... I guess I'll have to reach back into my Catholic roots - what was the term? Umm...hmmm ...oh yeah...purgatory? Is that it? The place between heaven and hell?

VIRGINIA

I guess it's a purgatory of sorts.

They both pause for a minute. Terese looks at Virginia expectingly.



TERESE

Okay... so are you going to fill in  
the blanks?

Virginia looks very uncomfortable. Terese waits for a  
response before yelling.

TERESE

WHERE AM I?

The music stops abruptly. The string players all sit or stand  
with their instruments arrested and stare at Virginia.

VIRGINIA

(NERVOUS)

As I said, this is Station One.

TERESE

(interrupts - exasperated)

I got it! Station One!... What's the  
plan here?

VIRGINIA

(nervous, not used to being talked  
to in such a direct, bold way)

Yes, I do understand your question.  
I... I will try to explain.

Terese gets up and paces. The players start playing a sad  
song. Terese walks to the musicians.

TERESE

Let's change the tempo here a little.  
Do you know anything with a bit more  
pep? or a brighter tone? I can't  
listen to any more "sad!"

The string players look at each other and quietly discuss  
before starting a peppier song.

Terese sits on the couch.

TERESE

Before you launch into this, can I  
please have a glass of wine?

VIRGINIA

I'm sorry, but now that you are in the  
afterlife, you will not need to eat or  
drink, use a bathroom, or sleep.

TERESE

I may not HAVE to drink to stay alive  
- or dead in this case - but I still  
WANT a glass of wine!

VIRGINIA

(looks down, embarrassed)  
So sorry. Drinking is not allowed  
here.

Terese rolls her eyes.

TERESE

So far, I'm not enjoying this  
experience!

Okay, go on...

Virginia braces herself.

VIRGINIA

Yes, so as I was saying, this is  
Station One.

Terese points her finger at Virginia and makes a clicking  
sound.

TERESE

Got it!

VIRGINIA

(Takes a deep breath -braces  
herself again)  
This station is concerned with the  
present tense - what is happening  
right now.

Again, Terese points her finger at Virginia as in "got it."

TERESE

Like me dying in a horrible car  
accident.

VIRGINIA

(nods and smiles inappropriately)  
Yes, exactly.

Virginia's smile vanishes as she suddenly realizes how  
misplaced her affect was.

VIRGINIA

Let me back up a bit. There are three Stations: Station One - Present tense, Station Two - Past, and Station Three - Future. You can spend as much time in each station as you want. You are also welcome to return to each station as often as necessary.

TERESE

I REALLY doubt I will be returning here!

VIRGINIA

Yes, I understand.

TERESE

(pause - thinking)

Can I talk to my kids? To Tim?

VIRGINIA

No... but you can communicate in non-direct ways. Sometimes people like to send little signs - a bird, a rainbow...

TERESE

Interesting.

And then? What happens after I go through all of the stations?

The string quartet starts playing a song that Terese doesn't like.

VIRGINIA

Yes...Once you feel...

TERESE

Sorry... please excuse me!

Terese stands up, waves her hands, and walks to the quartet. The quartet members stop playing and look scared of Terese.

TERESE

I'm sorry, but I always hated that song. I think I liked the sad songs better.

The quartet discusses and plays a beautiful classical piece. Terese walks back to the couch and sits down.

TERESE

Sorry. I couldn't concentrate. You were saying?

VIRGINIA

Yes... once you have gone through all three stations, you will be allowed to go on.

TERESE

Onto what? To a fourth station?

VIRGINIA

Well... not exactly. You will move to your permanent home - never to return to the stations.

TERESE

Heaven or hell? What do you mean, my permanent home?

VIRGINIA

It truly is THE great mystery, isn't it? What is after the afterlife? Will we meet God? Is there a physical place like heaven or hell? Is there anything after the stations, or do our souls merely vanish? No one knows! No one has come back to the stations to tell us. Your guess is as good as mine.

TERESE

What do you mean you don't know? Don't you work here?

VIRGINIA

Well... yes... I work at this Station. After I died and went through the stations myself, I opted to stay and work for awhile... I don't know anything about what comes after the stations.

Terese shakes her head in irritation. She stands up and walks to the door.

She turns and looks back at Virginia.

TERESE

Okay... so I'm done with this station.

Terese looks at the string quartet.

TERESE

Thank you. You play beautifully.

VIRGINIA

Yes, I'll call for the elevator.

Virginia pushes a button on the wall by the door.

VIRGINIA

Before you go, do you have any further questions for me?

Terese ponders for a moment.

TERESE

Actually, yes, I do. Will I get to see my husband again? My mom?

VIRGINIA

Well, try to remember that thousands of people die each day, and millions die each year. It is improbable that you will run into someone you know at a station platform or on the train. It's certainly unlikely... maybe not impossible - just unlikely.

Terese contemplates this for a minute.

Virginia hands Terese a ticket for Station Two.

VIRGINIA

Here is your ticket. You will need to look for the Station Two platform. Your room number is on the ticket.

TERESE

Thank you very much. I'm sorry if I was curt with you.

VIRGINIA

It's okay. I know it is all such a shock. I wish you well.

Once the elevator arrives, Terese turns to Virginia.

TERESE

You mentioned that it might be possible to send a little sign for

those back on earth?

VIRGINIA

Yes, that is correct.

TERESE

Well... I have an idea...

INT. ELEVATOR HALLWAY - DAY

Terese steps off the elevator with 40 other people.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Terese waits on the platform for the train to arrive. She notices that everyone now has a ticket. Everyone is subdued, looking a bit dazed.

The train stops, and the crowded train empties, except for a few travelers staying on.

Along with hundreds of others, Terese walks onto the train.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Terese finds an empty seat. More and more people crowd in.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Please step away from the closing doors. (This is repeated in several languages.)

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Everyone on this crowded train looks serious, and no one says a word.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Next stop! Station Two! Next Stop, Station Two. (translated into other languages.)

INT. STATION TWO PLATFORM - DAY

This train station looks like the Station One platform, except there is no digital signboard. A Station Two banner (with translations) hangs on the wall. A large crowd is on the platform waiting for the next train. Everyone (inside the train and on the platform) has a ticket and seems more confident in where they are going. No one talks, and the whole crowd from the train walks straight to the elevator

hallway.

INT. ELEVATORS HALLWAY - DAY

Terese walks up to the set of elevator doors with the "English Language" sign and looks at her ticket.

As the elevator door opens, an older Irish elevator operator, COLLEEN, with a thick accent, greets the crowd.

COLLEEN

Top of the morning to you. (chuckles)  
Sorry, I get there is no such thing as  
the morning, afternoon, or evening  
here. Welcome to Station Two. Again,  
please walk on one at a time and tell  
me your name and room number.

A black teenage boy, TERRENCE, walks on.

TERRENCE

My name is Terrence Walker.

COLLEEN

And where will you be traveling to, mi  
lad?

Terrence looks at his ticket again.

TERRENCE

It looks like I need to go to room  
number 256.

COLLEEN

To be sure, to be sure...I'll get you  
there, mi lad.

Colleen waves him on. The teenager walks on the elevator.

COLLEEN

Next?

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The elevator is very crowded. Terese is at the back of the elevator.

COLLEEN

Room number 2163. Terese, this is your  
stop.

Terese tries to wiggle around the others in her effort to get out.

TERESE

Excuse me. Excuse me.

Before stepping out, she looks at Colleen.

TERESE

Thank you very much.

COLLEEN

You most certainly are welcome. Best to ya!

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

The Station Two room has white walls, a very tall ceiling, a wall-sized window, an oversized screen, modern white minimalist furniture, and huge bright abstract art pieces on the wall. In the corner is a band. KEYANNA (African American) is on the keys and sings, KATEE (southern accent) is on bass, ELLIA (New York accent) is on drums, and VERONICA (Australian accent) is on the guitar. There are other instruments on stands, including a violin.) They are playing a contemporary song.

FLAMINIO is an Italian film director. He looks "artsy," with longish curly salt and pepper hair. He speaks English but with a very heavy Italian accent.

Flaminio walks up to Terese.

FLAMINIO

Hello Terese! Welcome to Station Two. My name is Flaminio, and I will be your guide during this section of your afterlife journey.

Terese shakes his hand.

TERESE

Hello. My name is Terese Cardiello.

FLAMINIO

Ahhh! Cardiello...A good Italian name! Yes?

TERESE

My husband's name...my late husband's name.



FLAMINIO

Yes... I know your story. Still... a great Italian name. Yes? Yes? Please come in... (gestures with his hand). Please...

Terese nods to the band.

FLAMINIO

Ahhh, yes... let me introduce you to the Afterlife Band. (points and nods to each) Keyanna... Katee ...Ellia, and Veronica.

The band stops playing, and everyone smiles.

TERESE

Hello. Do you take requests?

ELLIA

If we know the song.

TERESE

hmmm. My daughter is the singer-songwriter for the band Zinnia. Do you know them?

KEYANNA

I do!

TERESE

Do you know the song, Lupins?

The band talk quietly amongst themselves.

KEYANNA

So I'm the only one that knows it. I can play the keys and sing if you'd like.

TERESE

Oh, I'd love that.

Keyanna launches into the song.

Terese walks to the window, looks out at the clouds, and listens to the song. Flaminio stands next to her, looking over the cloudscape.

FLAMINIO

This must feel very surreal to you.

Terese nods her head yes.

FLAMINIO

So strange, dreamlike. I'm sure you are still in shock. It is shocking. So shocking!

Terese continues to nod.

FLAMINIO

Please, come - sit. Let's have a chat. Come and sit. Please.

Terese and Flaminio sit, turning towards each other.

FLAMINIO

So you must already know that Station Two is about the past. Yes? Yes?

Terese nods half-heartedly.

TERESE

I guess... not exactly sure what that means.

FLAMINIO

Let me explain. So my job here is to help you to review your past - your emotional life... to try to make sense of your life as a whole. Yes? Yes?

TERESE

So... we will sit and talk about my life?

FLAMINIO

Well,...yes. Yes, we will talk some... and then I want to share with you a movie I made ... a set of short movie clips about your life.

TERESE

What? You made a movie about my life?

FLAMINIO.

(Animated)

Yes. Yes. I am very proud of this last film... I'm anxious for you to see it.

TERESE

Wait. YOUR movie.... about me?

You don't even know me.

FLAMINIO

(smiles and sits back before speaking)

I understand your misgivings. Yes, I get why you would be skeptical. I, too, might question someone wanting to tell my story.

But to tell you the truth, I feel like I know you well. I have spent so much time reviewing reels and reels of footage from your life. I think I have a sense of your life...

TERESE

Wait...Hold on... Since I died, you watched some kind of YouTube video of my whole life?

FLAMINIO

(Talks with hands)

Well, I watched much of your life, not on video, but 8 mm film. We are still behind the times with technology in the afterlife.

Terese shakes her head in disbelief.

FLAMINIO

You must be aware that time is different in the afterlife, so yes, I did have plenty of time to review your life.

I like to be thorough in my films, so I watched enough to get a sense of each scene. (smiles) Okay, okay... I admit... I skipped over large sections. I wish it were as easy as hitting a fast-forward button! Those old projectors! Eyayaya! What can you do? (raises hands)

TERESE

So you made a movie about my life - my whole life... without talking to

me?... Without getting my perspective?  
I happen to know enough about biopic  
screenplay writing to know - that is  
not how to do it. Seriously? Don't I  
have any rights up here?

FLAMINIO

I understand. I understand your  
upset... Yes, it seems insensitive and  
rushed. I'm sorry. I'll admit we are  
not always sensitive to the deceased's  
right to privacy, and yes, I probably  
should have met with you first to get  
your first-person viewpoint.

The band is playing a classic jazz song.

Irritated, Terese stands up to pace and then walks over to  
the band.

TERESE

I never really liked jazz. Do you know  
any Beatles songs?

VERONICA

Yeah... we know a few Beatles songs?  
How about an early one - In My Life.  
Would that be okay?

Terese nods.

The band starts playing, and Terese walks to the window and  
ponders for a minute, listening to the song and looking at  
the clouds.

EXT. SKY WITH BILLOWY CLOUDS - DAY

An Indian teenage boy is lying on a cloud - looking bored. He  
notices Terese looking at him and waves.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Terese is startled and looks away from the window. She slowly  
walks back to her chair.

TERESE

Okay... so what is the plan here?  
Watch these homemade movies, and then  
I go to the next station?

FLAMINIO

(a bit ruffled)

Slow down, Terese. These movies are not some dad's VHS film of his son's first baseball game. I am a film director, and I consider filmmaking an art form.

TERESE

(softer)

Sorry. So what is the plan?

FLAMINIO

So the plan is - the screenwriter will be arriving soon to meet you. The three of us will briefly chat about you and your life. Then we will get ready for the grand premiere.

TERESE

(Incredulous)

Grand Premiere?

FLAMINIO

Yes. If I am involved with a film, I like it to be done big!

TERESE

(Talking to self)

Incredible. Ridiculous.

And who else will be at this premiere? Any dead actors I might recognize? Afterward, will I be elevated to celebrity status? Should I buy sunglasses to shield my identity while traveling on the trains?

FLAMINIO

I get it... you are not happy... So no, it will only be three - maybe four people at this premiere. Well... We need to count the band in - seven, maybe eight people! We are on a very tight time frame and have significant budget constraints in the afterlife, so, sadly - no; this will not be anything akin to the Academy Awards ceremonies.

TERESE

(talking to herself)

Okay, okay...Just go along with it, Terese. This is how things are done here.

FLAMINIO

Precisely!

Again, the screenwriter will be showing up soon. Her name is Lori - a very talented screenwriter, I must say. I was lucky to land her to help with this project.

Terese shakes her head in disbelief.

FLAMINIO.

So she and I watched reels and reels of films on your life...

TERESE

Both of you?

FLAMINIO

Yes. Yes.

Please lay your mind to rest and suspend your judgment until after you've watched the films. Please.

Terese's stance softens a bit.

TERESE

So why watch movies about my life? Why not just talk about my life? or go back and watch the video - sorry -(rolls eyes) 8 mm. film?

FLAMINIO

Yes. An excellent question. Let me explain. This film is a series of "shorts" - short films representing different periods of your life.

TERESE

(annoyed)

Yes - I know what a "short" is.

FLAMINIO

Wonderful! So Lori and I used our

artistic vision to condense years of footage into short, emotionally resonating art pieces.

Terese ponders this for a moment.

TERESE

So why are you doing this?

FLAMINIO

Another good question! Very good question!

Because that is what I do. That is what I did on earth and how I can contribute to the afterlife.

Terese looks confused.

FLAMINIO

You are an artist. Yes? Yes?

Terese shrugs her shoulders.

FLAMINIO

Yes, I know you have an artistic sensibility, which means - you experience life through a particular lens. A lens of metaphor. Yes?

Terese nods slightly.

FLAMINIO

Of course, I'm right. I specifically picked this project because I saw your story - a beautiful tale with heart! Amore! Lovely.

Terese relaxes and smiles. They both sit and contemplate.

FLAMINIO

And how do you feel now about me making a film about your life? Do you have questions or concerns?

Terese ponders and then smiles a bit.

TERESE

I'm warming up to the idea - hoping you've made a film that honors my story.

FLAMINIO

Exactly! Yes. Well said! The purpose of this project is precisely that - to honor your life, **your** story! Bravo!

Lori, dressed in comfortable, loose-fitting clothes, walks into the room with a tux, a dozen fancy dresses, and fancy shoes hanging on a clothes rack on wheels. Flaminio and Terese stand up.

FLAMINIO

Lori! Ahhh - Lori! So lovely to see you again.

Flaminio walks over to Lori, and they kiss each other's cheeks.

FLAMINIO

It looks like you came prepared for the premiere! I only wish we were going to a film festival on earth - the Academy Awards, Cannes... (shrugs shoulders, palms up... like "What can you do?")... but... I will take what I'm offered - a private showing with the story's protagonist!

Flaminio gestures toward Terese. Lori and Flaminio walk towards Terese.

FLAMINIO

Lori, this is Terese. Terese, this is Lori.

Lori and Terese shake hands.

LORI

So nice to meet you... and to see you in person! Especially after just watching decades of film footage - my god!

TERESE

(scrunches shoulders)  
Sorry!

LORI

I'm just kidding.

Sorry for what? For living so long?



FLAMINIO  
(whispers to Lori)  
Kind of a sore subject here... Terese  
is not happy about having her life cut  
short, so hold the complaining.

Lori nods.

Flaminio gestures to the chairs.

FLAMINIO  
Shall we sit? Yes?

All three sit, but Lori immediately gets up and walks to the  
band.

LORI  
Lovely.

The band members nod and stop playing.

LORI  
Will you be playing during the film?

VERONICA  
Yes, we are.

LORI  
I've heard wonderful things about you  
- your versatility and talent! I can't  
wait to hear the song choices paired  
with each short!

The band members all smile and nod.

ELLIA  
Do you have a request for us to play  
now?

LORI  
Hmmm. Let me think. Yeah... do you  
know the song \_\_\_\_\_?

KEYANNA  
One of our standards!

LORI  
Awesome!

The band starts the song. Lori walks back and sits with  
Terese and Flaminio.

LORI

Well, this is just so wonderful to get a chance to meet you in person, Terese. I must say - I'm a bit nervous about this project. This is my first screenplay to be made into a film! I... I mean - my first screenplay to be developed in the afterlife.

Lori smiles and motions to Flaminio.

LORI

Of course, on earth, I worked on several films with Flaminio.

FLAMINIO

Those were the days! Ahh... how I miss those days!

LORI

Yes... making films in the afterlife is certainly not the same.

TERESE

In what way?

LORI

(shakes her head)

So much harder! Whew! No technology! No internet - no screenwriting apps! What the fuck! Nothing but a Bic pen and a spiral notebook!

FLAMINIO

Agreed. Yes, much harder for me as well. No editor, or sound engineer, such old equipment! But... I will take it.... better than the alternative.

TERESE

So why do you take it... why are you opting to do this?

LORI

I'm with Flaminio. I will take what I can get at this stage in my life - sorry, at this stage in my afterlife. (scrunched shoulders) I guess I enjoy writing. I don't know about you, Flaminio, but I'm not ready to jump to the end stage. Who knows what that

will be? Or if there is anything after the stations?

FLAMINIO

Agreed. I will get there eventually. Let me make a few of these films in the afterlife, and then I will revisit the topic.

TERESE

One question: I understand you can stay in the stations as long as you want... correct??

LORI

Yes. That is my understanding as well.

TERESE

So my question is: Do I have to go to all the stations? Or can I just jump to the end? I really don't want to be here in the first place - so why drag it out?

FLAMINIO.

Hmmm... interesting question. You ask very interesting questions, Terese. (He puts his finger in the air as he thinks - like "give a minute to think.") I can't say that I know the answer to that one. I suppose you can skip out early if you feel ready? Lori, do you know? Have you heard of anyone jumping over a station?

LORI

I'm not sure if it is possible. It certainly is not the usual path.

All three sit and contemplate this for a moment as the music swells.

FLAMINIO

Hmmm. So the first step in this process will be for Lori and me to listen to you talk about your life.

TERESE

I'm confused. I thought both of you had watched my life and that the shorts were already written and

filmed.

LORI

Yes... but we need to hear about your subjective recollection before we do a final edit.

FLAMINIO

So... please, please tell us about your thoughts and feelings related to your life...and death...

Flaminio and Lori are very present and wait patiently.

TERESE

I'm not sure what you mean. What do you want to know?

FLAMINIO

Whatever you feel comfortable sharing with us. Please...

TERESE

Well... I am still trying to get used to the idea of being dead. That's a tough one to swallow.

FLAMINIO

I understand. Yes... how can one wrap one's brain around that concept? Crazy! Crazy! Yes?

Terese nods in agreement.

LORI

I want to hear your voice - your personal perspective on your life.

Terese sinks into her chair and is deep in thought. The band stops their last song and looks at Flaminio. Ellia scrunches his shoulders and raises one palm with a "What should we play?" gesture. Flaminio looks at Terese.

FLAMINIO

So sorry to interrupt your process here. Do you have a request for the band?

TERESE

Hhhmmm? Something by Joni Mitchel?

FLAMINIO

Perfecto!

The band members all whisper to each other and start playing the song, Both Sides Now.

FLAMINIO

I'm sorry to have interrupted the mood here. You were about to tell me about the emotional tone of your life...

TERESE

Well... I am grateful for my life. I would say that I have had a wonderful life. I still feel like it was cut short. (an edge to her voice) Way too short! (shrugs off anger) Some years were sad, but overall, I am grateful.

Flaminio leans in and nods as if to say - keep it going.

LORI

Tell me more about the plot, Act I. How does your story start?

TERESE

Beat by beat? You want me to tell you about my whole life? Beginning to end?

LORI

We are looking for tone - did we capture the right tone for each segment? I am interested in your perspective - what is the emotional landscape of each period?

Terese sits back in her chair.

TERESE

Okay... so here is the synopsis of my life. I was born into a large, middle-class family in Iowa.

Flaminio nods and listens intently.

TERESE

I was the first girl - the fifth child in six years - with two siblings trailing behind me.

FLAMINIO

Yes. Yes.

TERESE

I grew up in a neighborhood with big families and went to Catholic schools.

FLAMINIO

A shy child. Yes?

TERESE

(a bit annoyed)

I suppose...

...at least in my younger years.

FLAMINIO

(rolling hands)

Go on...

TERESE

I took my sweet time coming out of my shell. The arts beckoned me to join in something outside of my fantasy world.

I went on to college, where I met my husband. Then I had my kids - three kids. I worked different jobs - I worked as a school counselor and was an art teacher.

In my retirement years, I tried my hand at being a screenwriter.

LORI

Seems like you skipped over some significant events.

Terese looks annoyed but continues.

TERESE

So, yes. I had two of my kids in Omaha; then we moved to Montana. Years later, my husband, Frank, went through a rough patch - bipolar - and our marriage ended. We reconciled three years later; six months later, he died.

LORI

Hmmm. You breezed by that section

quickly!

Can you flesh those scenes out a bit?

TERESE

(looks down and whispers)

No...

Flaminio and Lori look at each other.

FLAMINIO

Very well, go on... What happened next?

TERESE

Well... that's the end of the story, really.

FLAMINIO

But lots happened after your husband died. Your life story... there is more...Yes? Yes?

TERESE

I guess... I had to work hard to help finance my kids through college, and I met Tim.

LORI

And who is Tim to you?

TERESE

He's my partner - my companion.

Lori and Flaminio look at each other with questioning looks.

FLAMINIO

Well...maybe this is enough. I don't think Terese is in a space to explore her life in more depth. Hopefully, we successfully captured the essence of each short... And hopefully, Terese will resonate with our work.

TERESE

So... what is the plan?

LORI

I can see why you got so much done in your life - you are a planner!

TERESE

(smiles)

I think I've heard that before. So, seriously, what is the plan? Should we start watching the movie?

FLAMINIO

I suggest taking a little break. Yes? Yes?

How about a bite of dinner?

TERESE

Dinner?

FLAMINIO

Yes, dinner... I'm thinking about eggplant parmesan and a glass of vino. Yes? Yes???

TERESE

I thought there was no food or drink allowed in the afterlife.

FLAMINIO

(cups hands around mouth and whispers.)

I won't tell if you won't tell. (chuckles). Lori? Wine? Dinner? Yes?

LORI

I never turned down a glass of wine in my life. Why would I turn it down in the afterlife?

Flaminio walks to a small hidden kitchen area. DONNA, an Italian chef, cuts up some cheese and prosciutto and puts it on a serving dish. She cuts and puts the Italian bread slices on the plate. She pours four glasses of red wine, checks on the eggplant parmesan in the oven, and then carries the plate of cheese, meat, and wine to the coffee table.

Terese walks to the band.

TERESE

Can you repeat that last Joni Mitchel song? I just love that song...

Flaminio hears this, walks to the band, and waves both hands.



FLAMINIO

No, no, no, no. No repeat songs, no, no, no. How about an Italian piece? Would that be okay with you, Terese? To listen to some Italian music to pair with the Italian dinner?

The band starts playing, and Ellia belts out a song in Italian.

Donna, Flaminio, Lori, and Terese sit around the coffee table.

Flaminio sips his wine.

FLAMINIO

Hmmm. Deliziosa! This wine tastes like a wine I used to love... from Tuscany, close to the town of Siena; the name of the town is Montepulciano.

TERESE

I love Italy! I've been to Sienna - home of pan forte... An Italian dessert I make every Christmas. I think it's maybe my favorite food. The second might be eggplant parmesan.

Flaminio raises his glass. All four raise their glasses.

DONNA

Here's to living, dying, and reviewing life on the other side!

LORI

I'll drink to that!

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

The band continues to play Italian music in the background.

Terese, Flaminio, Lori, and Donna finish eating dinner.

TERESE

(addressing Donna)

Thank you so much. That was delicious! a little taste from a little place on planet Earth.

DONNA

You are welcome. I'm glad you liked

it.

FLAMINIO

Oh, I do miss Italy.

TERESE

I'm sure you do. I miss my home, too -  
my home in the Montana mountains.

DONNA

My home - in San Francisco.

LORI

L.A.

The band stops playing and joins the conversation.

KAYANNA

Also L.A.

KATEE

Memphis

ELLIA

New York

VERONICA

Sydney, Australia

ELLIA

Flaminio? Donna?...can we have a bite  
to eat? That eggplant parmesan looks  
incredible!

FLAMINIO

So sorry, of course! Help yourself,  
all of you. There's plenty for  
everyone.

The bandmates set their instruments down, walk to the  
kitchen, and start dishing up the eggplant parmesan.

Terese stands up and picks up her dirty dish and wine glass.

TERESE

Can I help with the clean-up?

DONNA

Let me tell you the best thing about  
the afterlife! You don't have to clean  
up! You just toss the dishes. I've

been told that they vanish and new ones are sent to replace the dirty ones. Fabulous! Love it!

Terese walks to the kitchen area and stuffs the wine glass, plate, and silverware through a round hole in the wall.

EXT. SKY WITH BILLOWY CLOUDS - DAY

Each item (plate, fork, knife, wine glass) floats in the cloud space for a few seconds and then vanishes.

INT. ZOOM SCREEN - DAY

All three adult kids are on a Zoom call. Rachael is crying. All look very sad.

MICHAEL

Hey there...

Did you all get the call from Tim?

FRANCIS

Yeah... how did he find out?

MICHAEL

I guess he was worried when she didn't call in the morning... so he called the highway police department...

RACHAEL

(crying)

Oh my god! I can't believe it!

FRANCIS

I know... unbelievable.

I should have demanded that she not start driving until morning.

MICHAEL

So what do we need to do now?

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Lori, Flaminio, and Terese are back in their chairs in the living room. Donna is back in the kitchen.

The band is back in place and is playing an instrumental piece.

TERESE

(smiles)

So what is the plan?

Lori, Flaminio and Terese smile.

FLAMINIO

So, Lori and I need to talk about the film - to see if we need to make any last-minute changes before the premiere.

While we meet, I would like you to spend time at the Station Two platform.

TERESE

And do what?

FLAMINIO

You can just hang out.

LORI

People watch. Seriously! The platform is a great people-watching spot! Just find a place to watch people - people of every walk of life - from every country in the world - people from every socio-economic tier - all walking around together. It's fascinating.

As a screenwriter, I love zeroing in on one person and then trying to imagine their life story. God! I SOOO wish I was back on earth, as I have SO many good story plots - just from people-watching on the Station platforms!

FLAMINIO

It shouldn't be too long. Time is fluid here. I'll call for you over the loudspeaker when we are ready for you.

TERESE

So should I go down now?

FLAMINIO

Yes... that would work for me. I will call for the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR HALLWAY - DAY

Terese walks off a crowded elevator.

INT. STATION TWO PLATFORM - DAY

Terese walks onto the Station Two platform and watches people of every walk of life step off multiple train cars. They all are very serious and walk straight to the elevator hallway. People are also walking from the elevators to the trains, so traffic is going in both directions.

INT. STATION TWO PLATFORM - DAY

Terese paces a bit. After the train departs, the station is mostly empty, with a few stragglers looking dazed.

Terese rests her back on the marble pillar and watches as people start filling the platform, waiting for the next train.

Terese stares at one old woman with a weathered face and traditional Peruvian clothes.

She studies a young Hasidic Jewish boy.

Terese sits with her back against the pillar.

One man with an amputated leg uses a walker and walks in front of Terese.

Terese hears the announcement.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Terese Cardiello, Terese Cardiello.  
Please report to your Station Two Room  
immediately. Terese Cardiello, please  
report to your room immediately.

INT. ART STUDIO/DETACHED GARAGE - DAY

A dozen kids walk into the art garage, along with a few parents. There is a lot of confusion - with everyone asking where Terese is. The Art Mom looks at the clock - 3:45.

ART MOM

Do you think she is in the house?  
Maybe I should go knock on the back  
door?

The Art Mom walks out of the garage. The kids and parents

continue to chatter.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Terese walks into the room.

FLAMINIO

Terese! Terese!

Lori and I made a few last-minute changes and can now prepare for the show.

Terese smiles and starts saying:

TERESE

So, what is...

LORI

(smiles and finishes the sentence)  
the plan? Well, before showtime - I need you to pick out a dress. This is a big deal, you know.

Lori wheels the portable clothes rack to Terese and Flaminio.

TERESE

Listen... I know you two are hoping to make this into a big fancy event, but I just want to ...

FLAMINIO

Terese... Terese. We are treating this as a big fancy event because...

FLAMINIO AND LORI

(said in unison)  
This is a big fancy event!

FLAMINIO

This should be a big deal to you as this is the grand premier of a film about your life. This is a big deal to Lori and me as we are the artists and want a grand showcasing of our work.

Terese shrugs in resignation. Flaminio walks over to Terese.

FLAMINIO

I ask you, I implore you... Please, please, just give this a try... open

up to the experience. The point of this station is not to get through it as fast as you can...

There is silence before Lori wheels the portable clothes rack to Terese.

LORI

Terese, I brought several dresses for you to try on. Watching films from your life, I tried to figure out your style. Hmmm...I must say... I'm unsure if I figured out a specific style - so all over the place! But...color... you definitely like color.

Terese shrugs.

TERESE

So you want me to pick a dress?

LORI

Pick whichever one suits your fancy. This is YOUR moment in the sun! Which dress will make you feel beautiful?

Terese walks over to the clothes rack and thumbs through the dresses.

LORI

Or... we can have a fashion show. Oh... that sounds fun. Let's do that!

TERESE

Really?

LORI

Oh, come on, don't be such a stick in the mud. The point is to have a little fun, feel glamorous, and take in the experience!

TERESE

Okay! Okay! Like it hasn't already been an experience!

Where can I change?

FLAMINIO

How about in the kitchen?

Lori wheels the portable clothes rack to the kitchen area, and Terese follows. Donna is in the kitchen.

DONNA

I'll help you with the dresses. And how about if I fix your make-up and hair before you get dressed?

MONTAGE - DRESSING UP

Short clips of Donna putting on Terese's make-up and curling her hair.

Terese walks out of the kitchen area wearing one fancy dress after another. The band plays a little mood music for each dress she tries on. Flaminio, Lori, and Donna clap, laugh, hoot, and cheer. At first, Terese looks like she is not into the experience, but towards the end, Terese seems to enjoy herself and hams it up.

montage ends

INT. HOLLYWOOD FILM DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The HOLLYWOOD FILM DIRECTOR (50ish, dressed causally) is pacing while looking at the large clock on the wall. (3:45) He walks to the office door and opens it.

HOLLYWOOD FILM DIRECTOR

Alice... where the hell is she?

ALICE (O.S.)

I've tried calling her. In fact - I've left 10 messages! Nothing!

The director slams the door shut, picks up his cell phone, looks at the sheet on his desk, and dials the phone number. The phone rings and rings. When it quits ringing, he leaves a message.

HOLLYWOOD FILM DIRECTOR

Terese - This is John Hollywood. Please call...NOW! and explain why you are not here!

He hangs up the phone, paces, and tries to call again. While the phone is ringing, he throws his phone against the wall.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Lori, Terese, and Donna are dressed in beautiful formal



gowns, and Flaminio is dressed in a tux.

FLAMINIO

It looks like we are ready. Wait! Just one moment... please, un minuto.

Flaminio grabs a rolled-up red carpet. He walks it to the band area, lays it down, and unrolls it.

FLAMINIO

Perfecto! Perfecto!

Flaminio motions to the band to start playing. They play a dramatic ceremonial piece.

FLAMINIO

Shall we?

All four walk down the red carpet individually and sit. Flaminio addresses Terese.

FLAMINIO

Terese. Before we start, I want to ensure you know what you will be watching.

My films have been described as dreamscapes.

TERESE

Explain.

FLAMINIO

In dreams, the images are not video clips of what happened. They are metaphors for the feelings the scene represents. Yes? Yes? For instance, if you are afraid of snakes and have a day working with slimy, slithering, toxic coworkers... you might have a dream of being in a room full of snakes.

TERESE

Funny you should mention being afraid of snakes because I have a serious snake phobia. Just checking...Are there snakes in the afterlife?

FLAMINIO

No... relax!

Hmmm...good question though! ... Maybe after the stations???

(hands raised, palms up.)

For you... your hell might be you being trapped in a pit of snakes! But... we won't go there. We will find out about the after-the-afterlife when we get there.

I transgress! Sorry.

FLAMINIO

Okay, one last thing. Would any of you like a bowl of popcorn?

LORI

Sure!

DONNA

I'll get it.

FLAMINIO

Thank you. And I'll have some as well.

DONNA

Terese?

TERESE

Sure. Why not?

DONNA

Butter anyone?

LORI

Of course!

TERESE

No thanks.

FLAMINIO

Yes, please.

Donna walks over to the kitchen area.

Flaminio walks over to the band, which stops playing.

FLAMINIO

Are you ready to play along with the film?

KATEE

I think we are set.

FLAMINIO

Wonderful! Wonderful!

Flaminio walks to the kitchen area, and he and Donna grab two bowls of popcorn each, setting them on the coffee table.

Flaminio walks to turn off the lights and then turns on the projector.

FLAMINIO.

Lights!

FLAMINIO

Camera! Action!

MOVIE SCREEN - TEXT

Terese Cardiello: An Abridged Biography

MOVIE SCREEN - TEXT

Prelude

INT. 1920S VINTAGE KITCHEN - DAY

JOANN (32) is a depression-era woman wearing an old house dress. She is nine months pregnant and is standing in an old depression-era kitchen. JoAnn is stirring a large pot of soup on the stove. A clothesline is strung across the kitchen with clean diapers and little boys' clothing.

Several young boys (under 5) run through the kitchen laughing. They are quite dirty, wearing worn and torn clothing. A one-year-old baby shakes a rattle as he sits on the floor next to Jo-Ann.

JoAnn warms a bottle on the stove and stirs the pot of soup.

The boys run through the kitchen again. This time, there are a dozen boys and they are throwing wood blocks at each other.

One small boy (3) throws a wood block which hits the baby, who starts crying.

JoAnn shakes her head and looks at the grandfather clock.

10:00 a.m.

JoAnn picks up the baby, takes the bottle, walks out of the kitchen

INT. 1920S KID'S BEDROOM - DAY

The bedroom is filled with small beds and cribs - like an orphanage.

JoAnn sets the baby in the crib and puts the bottle in his mouth.

She leaves the room and returns with dozens of young boys. Several boys walk of their own volition while others cry. JoAnn is carrying one child who is crying.

INT. 1920S LIVING ROOM - DAY

JoAnn sits in her formal living room with a cup of tea. She ignores the sound of crying children as she picks up a novel to read.

JoAnn holds her belly as she has a contraction. She breathes through her contraction and then goes back to her book. She sits up and holds her belly as she breathes through another contraction.

TEXT

The Early Years.

EXT. 1870 FRONTIER TOWN - DAY

A group of townspeople, standing together on Main Street, all sing in unison. "A Girl! A Girl! A Girl!"

EXT. 1870 PRAIRIE HOUSE - DAY

JoAnn is dressed in an 1870s-style prairie dress and sits in front of a log cabin with her newborn, swaddled in a pale pink blanket. The wind blows, and a pack of wolves howl. JoAnn looks at her daughter and smiles. The wolves walk by JoAnn. One growls as another sniffs the baby. JoAnn brings the baby swaddled in a pink blanket to her chest and shooshes the wolves away.

JOANN

Go on.. go play...

TEXT

Childhood

INT. 1950 CATHOLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

6-YEAR-OLD TERESITA (6) sits at a desk in a Catholic School classroom. The children are wearing uniforms. The teacher, a nun wearing a traditional habit, stands in front of a chalkboard with a pointer. The classroom holds a hundred elementary-age students at desks.

EXT. 1950 PLAYGROUND - DAY

40 white children are standing around a tetherball court. Two kids are in a fierce competition. Everyone else stands around the court, yelling or cheering. Teresita (6) stands at the edge of the crowd, alone in her thoughts, not watching the game.

INT. LARGE CONVENTION ROOM - DAY

Staff Christmas party - set in the 1950s. Everyone is milling around, eating appetizers and drinks. Teresita's four brothers (7 - 11) are running around the room. There is a Lawrence Welk-style band on a stage playing Christmas music. Teresita and her three year old sister stand by JoAnn

The ADMINISTRATOR walks up to the microphone.

ADMINISTRATOR

Hello all. Let's give a round of  
applause for this band!

Everyone claps. JOHN (38) walks up on the stage to the microphone.

JOHN

Before the band goes, I'd like to  
invite my daughter Terese to the stage  
to sing a Christmas carol.

John looks at Teresita with admiration and expectancy. Teresita, standing next to her mother and sister, is caught by surprise and ushered to the stage. Once onstage, standing next to her dad, the BAND LEADER asks:

BAND LEADER

What carol would you like to sing,  
Terese?

6-YEAR-OLD TERESE

(looks at her shoes - shy)  
Um... Away in a Manger?

BAND LEADER

Sure thing.

The band starts playing, and Teresita starts to sing into the microphone (in a sweet small voice). Her brother, 7-YEAR-OLD MATT, runs up on stage and starts singing with Teresita. He sings loudly, messes up the words, and then the tune. The band stops mid-song. Matt runs off, and Teresita slowly walks off. The crowd roars with laughter. Teresita returns to her mother's side, where she bursts into tears.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Terese sits in silence as Donna, Lori, and Flaminio all have tears in their eyes.

TERESE

(softly)

That scene actually happened...

FLAMINIO

Yes... I watched the clip from your childhood and was so moved. Eyayaya! Heartbreaking!

TEXT

Late Bloomer

INT. WAREHOUSE ART STUDIO - DAY

TESS (This represents Terese as a young adult) dressed like 1960s Twiggy - with short cropped hair, lots of makeup, false eyelashes, and a straight short mini dress.)

Tess is in a large art studio room in a large old warehouse. Stacks of large paintings are on the walls and stacked in piles on the sides of the room.

Tess is painting a large canvas on an easel.

Upon closer examination, this is the same painting shown at the beginning - with the girl with the basket.

TERESE (V.O.)

I took my sweet time coming out of my shell. The arts beckoned me to join in something outside of my fantasy world.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Terese gently slaps Flaminio's leg.

TERESE

You sneak! Did you audiotape me?

FLAMINIO

(talks with hands)

Of course! When I interview the real-life protagonist - of course I taped it!

INT. WAREHOUSE ART STUDIO - DAY

Tess takes this painting and hangs it on a hook on a wall.

Tess walks over, picks up a guitar on a stand, sits on her artist's stool, and strums the guitar.

INT. WAREHOUSE ART STUDIO - DAY

Tess puts down her guitar and walks over to the side of the warehouse room with a ballet bar and mirrors. She does some modern dance moves in this space.

INT. WAREHOUSE ART STUDIO - DAY

Tess walks over to the side of the room with an old stage. She walks up to the side of the stage and looks through a rack of costumes. She puts one on over her mini-dress, walks to the middle of the stage, and takes a dramatic bow.

INT. STATION TWO - DAY

Terese smiles as she watches this movie clip.

TEXT

Amour

EXT. RENAISSANCE STAGE - DAY

The empty stage has three wall panels as a backdrop, painted as Italian frescos. In the first panel, FRANK (20) is painted as a court musician (with a lute). The second panel depicts Frank as a court jester. The last one portrays Frank as a saint - with a halo.

There is a large audience present - in medieval peasant clothes.

The ANNOUNCER (in period-specific clothes) walks out on the stage.

ANNOUNCER.

Next, we have the one and only  
Fantastic Frank! Equal parts artist,  
magician, and visionary.

Frank walks onstage. Frank is dressed as a serious renaissance musician. The audience cheers. He sits on a stool and plays a Renaissance piece on his lute. He looks into the large audience and finds Tess in the front row. He smiles and winks.

Tess smiles back. She is mesmerized.

EXT. RENAISSANCE STAGE - DAY

Frank is now dressed as a court jester.

There is a small kiddie pool on one side of the stage.

He is doing a little goofy dance on the other side of the stage. He looks at Tess and winks.

Tess laughs and laughs.

Frank juggles three balls, then swords, and then torches.

He looks out and smiles at Tess, who has a look of adoration.

A beach ball - decorated as a world, inches downward from above the stage - above the kiddie pool. (obvious strings attached)

Frank walks over to the ball while juggling the torches. The world ball catches on fire.

The audience is alarmed! Yelling - "Fire! Help! Oh no!"

Frank puts the torches into the pool of water, grabs one of the swords, and cuts the strings. The ball falls into the water.

EXT - RENAISSANCE STAGE - DAY

Frank is dressed in a Franciscan robe on stage and has a yellow halo above his head. (not yet lit up)

Frank lifts the world beachball out of the water, and it is now completely fine - a new beachball.



Frank smiles at Tess, and the lights on his halo turn on.

The audience cheers.

Tess runs up on stage after the performance. Frank takes Tess's hand - (Close up of hands clasped). Tess and Frank smile as he leads her offstage.

INT. STATION TWO - DAY

TERESE

(whispers)

Ummmm. I was so in love. I never met anyone like him.

TEXT - KID YEARS

INT. YELLOW SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Frank (25) is wearing jeans and a tee shirt and is driving a school bus. Tess is sharing the driver's seat with him. (close-up of the two holding hands.) Tess is very pregnant. They laugh and turn on the radio.

The band starts playing an old Bruce Springsteen song.

INT. YELLOW SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Frank continues driving the bus, with Tess sitting next to him. (holding hands) Both are wearing 80s casual clothing. Terese has a new hairstyle and is very pregnant. A Joni Mitchel song is playing. The bus pulls up to the corner and opens the bus door.

A YOUNG MICHAEL (6) walks on.

TESS

Good morning, Michael!

YOUNG MICHAEL

Hi Mom. Hi Dad.

FRANK

Are you ready for your day?

YOUNG MICHAEL

(smiles)

I guess so.

Michael walks to the back of the bus.

INT. YELLOW SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Tess and Frank sit in the driver's seat while holding hands. Frank is now sporting a beard, Tess has a new hairstyle, and is very pregnant. Another Joni Mitchel song is playing.

The bus pulls up to the corner and opens the school bus door. YOUNG RACHAEL (6) walks up the steps and hugs her parents.

YOUNG RACHAEL  
Hi Mom! Hi Dad!

TESS  
Good morning Rach!

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The bus is now driving on a curvy mountainous road. A Bruce Springsteen song is on.

INT. YELLOW SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Tess and Frank still share the driver's side seat (holding hands), with Frank driving. Tess is not pregnant this time. (A Bruce Springsteen song is playing.) They pull up to the side of the road.

YOUNG FRANCIS (6) walks one.

FRANK  
Oh, hello, Francis. How are you doing  
this morning?

YOUNG FRANCIS  
Great!

INT. STATION TWO - DAY

TERESE  
Ahh... those were good years. I loved  
being a Mom.

TEXT

House Times Three

TEXT

House: Number One

EXT. FRONT YARD OF AN OLD HOUSE - DAY

Several picnic tables are set on the lawn in front of an old house. Lots of young children are running around the front yard. Neighbors start walking over with platters and bowls of food for a potluck. ANTONELLA (a thin blond woman with long dreads, is wearing brightly colored clothes. Tess is pregnant.

TESS

Hi Antonella! Let's put all the food  
on this table.

Antonella brings her large plate of pasta over to the table.

DANIELLA (65) carries a cake as she walks from the sidewalk to the house and sets the cake on the table.

Daniella and Antonella softly talk as Tess and Frank walk in and out of their house, getting water, silverware, etc. Their three young children run around the front yard.

DAVID (12) and CHRISTIE (14), Afro-Americans, MEL (50), and MARYANN (50), both white, walk over from next door with a large salad.

Ellia and Keyanna pull up in his old car and park in front of the house. Ellia starts hauling a bongo drum, shakers, and other percussion instruments, setting up on the side of the house.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Everyone cheers when they see Keyanna and Ellia in the movie.

DONNA

Keyanna! Ellia!

Both smile - laugh.

TERESE

Ha! I was starting to wonder where you got all the actors and musicians. I guess there is a lot of talent in this afterlife!

FLAMINIO.

Yes, Yes... no shortage of talent here!

The band walks over and hands percussion instruments to

Donna, Lori, Flaminio, and Terese. They all look confused but take the instruments.

EXT. OLD VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

Ellia is playing - using a wide variety of world-percussion instruments.

Tess brings out her keyboard, plugs it in, and plays as Keyanna sings.

INT. STATION TWO - DAY

Lori, Flaminio, Donna, and Terese are all watching the movie and keeping beat with the shakers.

TEXT

House; Number Two

EXT. MONTANA HIGHWAY - DAY

A U-Haul truck drives on the Montana highway, with the snow-capped mountains in the background.

EXT. HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS - EVENING.

The three kids (ages 3 - 10), Tess, Frank, and their dog stand around a bonfire outside a large log cabin.

All are roasting marshmallows. Frank and Tess hold hands as they talk, and Tess laughs.

A DEER walks over to the fire, then a MOOSE, WOLF, BEAR, and MOUNTAIN LION. (actors in costumes) All take part in roasting marshmallows.

TEXT

House: Number Three

EXT. TOWN VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

Tess plants annual flowers in several pots. She sets the pots on the steps of her Victorian house and walks into her house.

INT. TOWN VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

Tess walks into the kitchen. There are buckets of paint, a ladder, and drop cloths draped on the floor. On the refrigerator are the pictures of the kids. She looks at the

pictures and the calendar on the wall.

TEXT

Picture of a calendar month - July 2004. At the top, it says, Kid's Schedule. Every other week is highlighted in yellow with "Terese's house," and the alternate weeks are highlighted in blue with "Frank's house."

INT. TOWN VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

Terese stares at the calendar for a moment.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

TERESE

Not easy.

FLAMINIO

Yes. The sweet story turned into a somber tale. Very sad, very sad.

Flaminio turns off the projector. Everyone sits in silence for a minute.

FLAMINIO

Maybe this would be the time to take a little break. Donna, any more cannolis?

DONNA

Yes... I have enough filling for 8.  
Perfect!

Donna gets up and walks to the kitchen. Flaminio walks over to the band.

FLAMINIO

Sounds wonderful! Magnifico! Just enough - not too overpowering, exactly right for each setting. Wonderful! Let's stop and take a little break. Yes? Yes?

The band members put their instruments down and walk to the kitchen area. Donna squirts the cannoli filling into each shell and sets it on a platter.

Everyone walks to the kitchen area and takes a cannoli.

INT. STATION TWO - DAY

Everyone is back in their seat, and the band is set up to play again.

FLAMINIO

Terese - should we go forward or backward? Would you want to backtrack and see anything again?

TERESE

Please, no, not backward... Forward, please.

FLAMINIO

Band? Are you ready?

ELLIA

Yes, ready when you are.

Flaminio turns off the lights and turns on the projector.

TEXT.

UNHINGED

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - DAY

The family walks, talks, and laughs while walking together at an amusement park. (kids ages 8- 15)

They all start walking towards the roller coaster ride.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

Frank and Tess step into the first cart while the kids jump in behind. Frank's seat has a steering wheel. Frank clasps Tess's hand and both smile. The kids are excited.

FRANK

Ready or not, here we go! Blast off!

Frank holds the steering wheel with one hand, while holding Tess's hand with the other. The roller coaster lurches ahead.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

The roller coaster goes slowly up a steep incline and stops at the top. Tess and Frank continue to hold hands. Frank looks tired. Tess looks worried. She talks to Frank and looks back at the kids. The kids talk and laugh, sitting in pairs.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

The rollercoaster inches over the crest. Frank wakes up and looks wired - laughs. The rollercoaster races down. Tess looks terrified. Frank holds Tess's hand tightly.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

Again, the roller coaster inches upward. Frank looks sad, and Tess seems worried. Tess looks back at her children. The kids are talking together and don't seem to notice.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

Frank is laughing and talking to Tess, as Tess is silent and glum. The roller coaster zooms around the track.

The band is playing screechy, harsh, loud music.

MONTAGE - RAPID CYCLING

In quick succession - a snapshot of Frank's face looking sad or asleep, followed by a snapshot of Frank's face looking wired/crazed, followed by a shot of their clasped hands, followed by Frank laughing uncontrollably, followed by a shot of Tess looking at Frank, concerned.

A drone shot of the roller coaster racing around the track, with people screaming.

The music is very screechy, harsh, and loud.

End of Montage.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

Frank and Tess are holding hands as the roller coaster slowly climbs uphill. Tess tries to wake Frank up. She lets go of his hand and takes the steering wheel. Frank wakes up just as the roller coaster rests at the top. He angrily takes over the steering wheel. He has a crazed look on his face and is yelling at Tess. Tess looks scared and sad and is calmly responding to Frank.

The screechy music increases in volume.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

There are now no sides to the roller coaster. Frank continues to argue with Tess as the roller coaster zooms around.

The kids all look scared as the roller coaster races at a high speed around the track.

Tess holds Frank's hand while bracing the other hand on the front of the cart.

With the music hitting a crescendo, Frank, in slow motion, lets go of Tess's hand and pushes her bum off the seat. Tess falls off the rollercoaster.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

The music stops abruptly. Flaminio turns off the projector. Donna, Lori, Flaminio, and Terese look straight ahead, terrified. Terese is almost hyperventilating.

DONNA

Wow! That was intense!

LORI

Crazy!

FLAMINIO

Yes... yes, you lived through a lot, Terese. Yes? Yes? You lived through a lot.

Terese fights back tears and stares ahead.

LORI

It's true. That was craziness you lived through. I'm sorry.

Terese cries as the band plays a melancholic tune.

INT. STATION TWO PLATFORM - DAY

Terese stops crying and sits up.

TERESE

Still... I did love him.

FLAMINIO

I know... we all know. It is a beautiful love story. A love story turned into a tragedy. A heartbreaking love story. Yes? Yes.

Terese stands and walks to the window. She stares out the window for a moment.



FLAMINIO  
One last film with Frank? A  
reconnection? Yes?

Terese nods.

Flaminio turns off the lights and starts up the projector.

TEXT

Beginnings and Endings

INT. STAGE - DAY

The band plays a love song while Frank and Tess dance a beautifully choreographed ballet dance around a theme of young love.

The band moves into an edgier section of music while Frank and Tess dance with a theme of tension and fighting. The dancers slowly walk in opposite directions and turn back to look at each other in sadness before walking off the stage.

The music changes again to a slow, sad tune. Frank slowly walks around the stage. Tess watches from the sidelines and then joins Frank. They again dance a slow love dance.

Frank falters, stumbles, and slows to a stop - holding his heart. Tess dances to Frank. Frank holds her hand and walks a few steps before he collapses. Tess kneels and touches him. Frank lies down (dies). Tess kneels and puts her hands on Frank.

INT. STATION TWO ROOM - DAY

Everyone in the room is quiet and looks sad. Flaminio cries softly and turns off the projector.

FLAMINIO  
(through his tears)  
Oh my... such a sad ending. Such a  
tragic story. No? No? I am devastated  
for you. Devasted!

Terese stands up and walks to the window.

TERESE  
I want to see Frank again. I was told  
that it is nearly impossible up here.

LORI

I'm not so sure. I've heard of cases where one person dies and, while in the third station - checks out the death day of the partner. There's a slim chance of seeing Frank again... if Frank waited 18 years to see you.

DONNA

That's a long time to wait around in the stations. Don't get her hopes up.

LORI

That's right. I stand corrected.

Terese looks out the window again and sees a few "lost souls" lying on clouds.

TERESE

Might Frank be a lost soul?

LORI

If he is, there is fundamentally no chance of connecting with him. The best you could hope for would be to see him and wave.

Terese turns around and walks to the elevator.

TERESE

Well...I think I'm done here.

FLAMINIO

Terese, Terese... please come sit. Please come sit and watch the last movie clip... a little addendum to the story. Please.

TERESE

You don't understand... the story ended when Frank died.

LORI

No... no... you lived another 18 years.

FLAMINIO

You continued to blossom - to flower, and you continued to support the flowering of others.

(motions for Terese to come back )

(and sit.)  
Please!

Terese nods and walks back to her chair.

Flaminio turns to look at the band.

FLAMINIO  
Ready?

KATEE  
Ready!

Flaminio again turns out the lights and turns on the projector.

TEXT - ADDENDUM.

FLAMINIO (V.O.)

After Frank died, Terese had a long period of growth.

CLAYMATION - EXT. - FLOWER GARDEN

A clay figurine of Terese walks to the garden area with her watering can.

FLAMINIO (V.O.)  
She worked as a school counselor,

Clay Terese waters two plants that grow in a sitting position, facing each other. One is a larger plant, and one is a smaller plant.

FLAMINIO (V.O.)  
And an art teacher...

Clay Terese waters a small flower, and the flower opens up as a painting pallet.

FLAMINIO (V.O.)  
She nurtured a new relationship...

Clay Terese waters a plant whose pedals are hearts, with a picture of Tim's face in the center.

FLAMINIO (V.O.)  
And continued to watch her three kids flourish...

#1 Clay Terese waters a budding flower, and when the flower

blossoms, the flower's center has a video of Michael snapping pictures with a fancy camera.

#2 Clay Terese waters a budding flower, with the center of the blossom having a video of Rachael singing into a microphone.

#3 Clay Terese waters a flower, with the center having a video of Francis in a doctor's coat.

FLAMINIO (V.O.)

And in her retirement, Terese took a stab at creative writing...

Clay Terese sits on a clay ornamental chair next to a clay ornamental table in the garden with a quill pen and paper.

INT. STATION TWO - DAY

Flaminio shuts off the projector.

Everyone sits still for a moment.

TERESE

That was nice. That was sweet. Thank you, Lori and Flaminio. Thank you for putting so much thought and artistry into this project.

FLAMINIO

It was my pleasure.

LORI

And mine.

Terese looks at Donna.

TERESE

And thank you, Donna, for the delicious last supper! It was superb!

Terese walks over to the band.

TERESE

And thank you so much! You are all such talented musicians; the music added so much to my experience. Thank you.

Everyone nods and smiles. Terese walks to the door. Flaminio and Lori walk toward Terese.

TERESE

I think I'm ready. I think I'm prepared to go to Station Three.

LORI

Are you feeling more at peace with your past?

TERESE

Yes... It's a lot to take in... but I think I'm ready to move on.

Flaminio hands Terese a train ticket.

INT. ELEVATOR HALLWAY - DAY

Terese steps off the elevator into a crowd, all making their way to the train platform.

Terese stops and leans on a pole to contemplate.

INT. STATION THREE PLATFORM - DAY

There is a large sign on the wall: Station Three - The Future.

A crowd is at the platform, waiting for the next train.

After the train pulls up, Terese and hundreds of others walk off.

Standing back on the platform is Frank, who is looking for Terese.

On the way to the elevator hallway, Terese and Frank spot each other and stand dumbfounded for a minute.

They both try to push through the crowd to get to each other. (Terese is swimming against the current of the crowd.)

Terese and Frank stand across from each other.

TERESE

Oh my god, Frank. It's you! I can't believe it.

They hug and then stand back, checking each other out.

TERESE

(smiles)  
You look so young!

FRANK

Well...Apparently, we stay the same age throughout the afterlife!

Terese and Frank both laugh:

TERESE

I know... and I look so old!

Both smile and pause for a minute as the crowd moves around them.

FRANK

Let's move. Somewhere less congested.

Frank takes Terese's hand (slow motion), and they walk to a dark corner, away from the crowd. They stop and look at each other again.

FRANK

I can't believe that I found you! My wildest dream!

TERESE

So you've been waiting for me all of this time? 18 years?

FRANK

Well... on the first time through Station Three, I looked up your death date. I've been waiting here at the Station Three platform since your death.

TERESE

What did you do between 2006 and 2024?

FRANK

I mostly worked as a counselor in Station One. It was a good gig for me - very interesting... much like I did on earth. (pause)

I also spent a lot of time doing my own work - going back to Station Two - watching short films. Watching scenes from our early years. (pause) I was so in love!

Frank and Terese look affectionately at each other.

FRANK

I'm still madly in love with you!

Frank and Terese kiss. They stand apart, and then both lean against the wall next to each other.

FRANK

And I also spent long periods viewing shorts involving our young family.

Frank looks earnestly at Terese and chokes back tears.

TERESE

Oh, I want to watch some of those films together! Those were sweet times!

FRANK

And I watched... scenes of the divorce years.

Frank burst out crying.

FRANK

I'm so sorry, Terese!

Terese shakes her head and tears up.

TERESE

No... you...

FRANK

No... I did you wrong. I could justify it in my brain - it was the meds, I wasn't myself, or I didn't think you loved me anymore... but I... I want to tell you how sorry I am. I hurt you so deeply. I inflicted a wound that never seemed to heal. I'm so sorry! Please forgive me. (breaks down) I beg you, please forgive me!

Both cry. Terese now nods her head yes.

TERESE

Thank you. Thank you. I needed to hear that - that you at least saw my pain.

And... you did come back to me - and we did have some time together again, before....

Terese and Frank hug and hold each other. They release each other and then stand apart, holding both hands together.

TERESE

I need to apologize too.

I should have quit my job to spend that time with you once you got sick. Instead of being distracted with work. What was I thinking?

FRANK

You didn't know I was going to die... How were you to know?

TERESE

And shouldn't we have decided to put you on a ventilator? Instead, I just let you die! Oh my god... I shouldn't have listened to that doctor! I should have demanded that you get the best care - have them life-flight you to a major hospital! Anything to save your life! God damn it! I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry!

FRANK

I don't believe that would have saved my life. I think the doctor was probably right.

Frank and Terese cry as they hold each other. They stand back from each other, holding hands.

FRANK

So, let me tell you about the kids! I have spent a lot of time looking into the future - at this station - Station Three.

TERESE

Wait! I want to see for myself. Don't tell me. I want to see the kids in living color!

FRANK

I was hoping to tell you about everything... saving you the trip...



TERESE

(pause)

What?

FRANK

I was hoping you'd re-route.

TERESE

(Confused)

What? Why?

FRANK

(sputters)

Listen...I, I have been waiting for you for so long. I have spent so much time reviewing my past, present, and future. I know so much about the future - ask me anything. I can tell you how many grandkids, how many great-grandkids we end up having - when your sister dies. I can tell you about what happens with your screenplay...

TERESE

(puts hands to ears)

Stop! I want to experience watching all those things. Don't tell me.

Frank reaches out and retakes Terese's hand.

FRANK

I don't want to lose you again. If I let you go, we may never connect again!

(long pause)

And I also think I am ready to move on to the After-the-Afterlife station. I know they don't call it a station... but whatever it is.

Terese looks earnestly at Frank, pauses, and then stares at their clasped hands.

TERESE

So you are asking me to skip my time at Station Three to follow you to the next stage?

FRANK

I want us to go together. Whatever it

is, I want you by my side.

Terese stares again at their hands.

TERESE

But you are asking me to forgo my process to follow yours.

FRANK

I would not put it that way.

Please, I want us to be together on this journey. We should never have been separated on earth. The divorce was the worst mistake of my life.

Please, I beg you, please come with me! Take my hand, and be by my side. I need you. I love you.

Frank reaches his other hand out to Terese.

INT. RENAISSANCE STAGE - DAY

Terese (65) (in current clothing) watches Tess (her younger self) from the sidelines. Frank is dressed as a Franciscan monk on the stage, holding the world beach ball. Tess is in the audience, looking adoringly at Frank. The crowd claps! Frank does a dramatic bow. Tess claps and then runs up on stage. Frank takes Tess's hand as he leads her backstage.

INT. YELLOW SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Terese (65) sits behind the driver's seat on the bus and observes Tess and Frank. Frank is driving with one hand and holding hands with Tess with the other hand. Tess sits on the same chair - with only half a cheek on the seat.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - DAY

Terese (65) sits on the roller coaster behind Frank and Tess (holding hands), with the three kids sitting behind her. Frank has one hand on the steering wheel and tightly holds Tess's hand. Tess looks scared. Terese (65) looks on with compassion.

INT - HIGH SCHOOL ART CLASS (1970) - DAY

Terese (65) observes Tess painting the picture of the girl with a basket.

STILL PHOTOGRAPH OF PAINTING

(Close-up of the painting with the young girl with a basket)

INT. STATION THREE PLATFORM - DAY

Terese pauses and continues to hold Frank's hands.

TERESE

Frank... I so love you... always have,  
always will. But this is a journey we  
both must do alone. I can not follow  
you. I can't be there with you,  
holding your hand. You must go onto  
the unknown alone.

And I must go to Station Three...  
alone - to watch for myself what  
happens on earth.

I'm not yet ready to step into the  
afterlife...(smiles) - Sorry...the  
after-the-afterlife.

Terese kisses Frank and then lets go of his hands. She turns  
and walks towards the elevators.

Frank stands back and watches Terese walk away.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese steps out of the elevator into a chrome room. One wall  
is a floor-to-ceiling window looking out at the cloudscape,  
and one wall is a floor-to-ceiling screen.

TEXT - ON THE SCREEN

Welcome to Station Three - The Future!

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

No one else is in the room. A single chrome chair and a  
chrome desk with a large computer are in the middle of the  
room.

Terese sits on the chair and looks at the computer.

TEXT ON COMPUTER SCREEN.

Welcome to Station Three - The Future!

An arrow icon is on the side of the screen.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese sits back and stares at the computer before she presses the arrow button.

INT. STATIONS ONE ROOM - DAY

A videotape of Virginia sitting on the couch in the Stations One Room is playing on the wall-sized screen.

VIRGINIA

Hello again, Terese.

As you can see, you are on your own for this part of the journey.

Please know that you are welcome to stay as long as you like or to revisit as often as desired.

When you are ready to move on, please press the button near the elevator door. I will meet you in the elevator to discuss the next step.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese turns around to look for the button next to the door.

Terese looks at the screen again.

INT. VIDEO ON THE SCREEN - DAY

The video is of Virginia addressing Terese.

VIRGINIA

To navigate the images on the screen, use the search, map, calendar, clock, and music icons or swipe left or right to move forward or backward.

Best to you, Terese. I look forward to seeing you soon.

TEXT

Text - "The Future!"

At the top of the screen is a row of icons (search, map,

calendar, and clock icons. At the bottom is a music icon. Terese touches this icon, and electronic music starts playing.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese sits back in her chair and contemplates for a moment before she slowly touches the screen a few times.

INT. TOWN VICTORIAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michael, Rachael (7 months pregnant) and husband, and Francis and his wife and their one-and-a-half-year-old child. Michael is holding a spiral notebook and pen.

MICHAEL

I'll take this braided rug.

FRANCIS

Okay, by me. I got one after Grandma died. I love it...reminds me of Grandma.

Rachael stands in front of the painting of the girl with the basket.

FRANCIS

You get that painting, Rachael. I remember Mom promised it to you after Grandma's funeral.

Rachael burst into tears. Francis puts his arm around Rachael. Everyone joins in a group hug.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese sits back in her chair after pressing the stop tab. She then touches the screen on the computer.

SERIES OF TEXTS

2024

December

December 24

Digital Clock

2:00 p.m.

INT. FRANCIS AND CASSIE'S HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

The adult kids and partners are all busy cooking in the kitchen. Tim is sitting at the kitchen table chatting. Everyone is laughing. Rachael is holding a baby. Frankie (Francis and Jeanne's two-year-old child) is playing with a toy on the kitchen floor. A large dog is also in the mix.

FRANCIS

No one made pan-forte this year.

FRANCIS

Gosh. I completely forgot about it. I wish I had learned how to make it.

RACHAEL

I think the recipe is in the Cardiello cookbook... right? But yeah, I think it was a big process for Mom each year. - we definitely have to try to make it.

FRANCIS

How about the day after Christmas, we can have a Christmas Sweets Day: cannolis and pan forte - in memory of Mom and Dad.

Everyone stops for a moment to ponder.

FRANCIS

Yeah, I miss them - especially at Christmas.

MICHAEL

Yeah... Dad would be blasting Bruce Springsteen now.

RACHAEL

Or Mom would have a sad Joni Mitchel song on...

Tim laughs and shakes his head.

TIM

On repeat!

Everyone laughs.

FRANCIS

Rach... anything new with the movie?

RACHAEL

Yeah... Production will start soon, I think... I think it'll be awhile before the movie's out.

FRANCIS

That's just wild!

MICHAEL

That's awesome.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese touches the touch-screen computer screen.

The opening shot of the 2026 Academy Awards Ceremony comes up on both the computer and large screens.

Terese watches small tidbits of the show and swipes ahead after each one. She eventually settles into her chair as she watches.

INT. ACADEMY AWARD CEREMONIES - DAY

The FAMOUS ACTRESS and FAMOUS ACTOR (young adults - beautiful) stand at the podium.

FAMOUS ACTRESS

And the winner for the best original screenplay is...

The famous actor on stage opens the envelope.

FAMOUS ACTOR

Can We Talk Once More?! Terese Cardiello for the film - Can We Talk Once More?

As Terese's adult children make their way to the podium, the ACADEMY ANNOUNCER (voice only) says:

ACADEMY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Terese Cardiello's children will accept her award this evening. Terese was in a fatal car crash just before meeting with the director. Her children were instrumental in working with the director in making this film.

Rachael accepts the Oscar statue. They all stand together in front of the microphone.

FRANCIS

We accept this award for our mother, who dedicated the end of her life to tell her love story.

MICHAEL

This is primarily a healing story of meeting with my dad in the afterlife and not only saying what she had held close to her heart for so long...

RACHAEL

But fundamentally this is a story of my mom learning to own her voice.

(Rachael holds the statue up in the air and looks up)

So Mom! If you are up there watching this - This is for you! We miss you! We love you!

The audience cheers as the four make their way off the stage.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese sits back in her chair and has a big smile on her face.

After a minute, she changes the music and walks to the window.

After staring out the window, she walks back, sits, and touches the screen.

SERIES OF TEXTS

2030

December 24

7:00 p.m.

INT. RACHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rachael's living room has a large Christmas tree with lots of presents under it and a fireplace with a row of stuffed stockings. The large painting of the girl with the basket is hanging on the wall.

The adult kids and partners, and Tim sit on the living room



furniture and extra chairs.

There are four grandchildren present, ranging in age from two to nine years old, including THERESA MARIE (7) and FRANKIE (9).

Frankie is standing next to the Christmas tree.

FRANKIE

Did all of these ornaments come from Grandma?

RACHAEL

Most of them. While Grandma was alive, all of us kids got an ornament each Christmas.

Many of them came from places she visited that year... Now we take turns buying an ornament for each family.

Frankie selects an ornament.

FRANKIE

Where did she get this one?

RACHAEL

That one came from Italy - the year Mom went to a writer's residency in Tuscany.

THERESA MARIE

And this one?

RACHAEL

Oh, that one came from Hawaii! We all got to pick out a fancy ornament there.

That was a fun family trip.

Frankie picks out a train ornament.

STILL OF TRAIN ORNAMENT

There is a goofy photo of Terese in the front window of this train car ornament as the train conductor - waving.

INT. RACHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

FRANKIE

Dad, can you tell us the story about  
this ornament again?

Everyone gets quiet - Rachael bursts into tears.

FRANCIS

So, we met at your Uncle Francis and  
Aunt Jeanne's house the first  
Christmas after Grandma died. We had  
always celebrated Christmas at  
Grandma's house before that.

Francis put up our Christmas  
stockings, and everyone put one small  
present in each, just as we had always  
done.

When we emptied our stockings, we all  
found this train ornament.

TERESE MARIE

Who put it there? Was it Grandma T?

FRANCIS

We think so. We think she sent it as a  
sign.

Maybe it symbolized that she had  
traveled to another place - she was on  
a new adventure in the afterlife. And  
she held the steering wheel.

INT. STATION THREE ROOM - DAY

Terese turns the computer off and walks to the window again.

She stares out the window, walks to the elevator, and presses  
the button.

The elevator door opens. NAIMA (a beautiful young black woman  
wearing a formal gown, sits at a full-sized grand piano that  
barely fits in the small elevator) and Virginia are the only  
ones on the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Terese walks onto the elevator and maneuvers around the  
piano.

VIRGINIA  
Hello Terese.

TERESE  
Hello, Virginia.

TERESE  
Hello. (nods hello to the piano  
player.)

NAIMA  
Hello, My name is Naima. Do you have a  
music request?

TERESE  
Ummmm. How about something by Chopin?

The pianist plays a Chopin piece.

Virginia presses a button, the elevator door closes, and the  
elevator starts moving.

VIRGINIA  
And how are you?

TERESE  
Good. It's been a whirlwind of a tour  
- this afterlife thing!

VIRGINIA  
Yes... it is a lot to take in.

And tell me about your journey and how  
you feel about your life and death.

TERESE  
hmmm. (pauses)

I'm back to feeling grateful...  
grateful for my life... my childhood,  
my life with Frank, my life as a  
parent, my creative years...my years  
with Tim...

And I'm feeling more settled with the  
idea that I died... and yes, I feel  
okay with the future with my loved  
ones... and with my legacy.

VIRGINIA  
Beautiful. Yes... that is wonderful to

hear. I'm happy for you - not everyone gets to that point of acceptance. Nice.

So let me tell you about the options that lie before you. As you already know, you are welcome to return to any of the three stations.

The other option is to take a job - some ideas - you could take a job as a counselor, screenwriter, or child advocate.

And the final option, as I know you are aware, is that you can go to the AAL- The After-the-Afterlife.

TERESE

And how does that work? Where do I go?

VIRGINIA

Well... you will need to be aware that there is no going back. You need to be positive you want to go to this next step.

This is your afterlife. It is in your hands. I trust that you will make the right choice for you.

Terese nods in agreement, and they travel down in silence, listening to the piano music and watching the numbers travel down from number 2,000 - fast.

TERESE

I think I'm ready to go on.

Virginia nods in support.

VIRGINIA

Okay... I support your decision. I wish you well on this next journey... So... once you get off the elevator -walk in the opposite direction to the station platform. Follow the signs for AAL.

Oh yeah... there might be a line. I've heard it's a long wait. Sorry.

INT. ELEVATOR HALLWAY - DAY

Terese walks off the elevator and steps away from all the people walking towards the elevator.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Many people are walking in the same direction as Terese. Neon signs point the way to the AAL.

INT. AAL - DAY

There is an extremely long single-file line in front of the neon-edged tunnel with fog inside.

INT. AAL - DAY

Terese is now up next in line. A buzzer goes off, and the neon green sign "NEXT" flashes. (translated into lots of languages)

Terese takes a minute before slowly walking into the foggy tunnel.

The end.

