

Done That
Fred Bonner
v14

Fred Bonner 2010

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ACT I

Scene 1 - Checking In

As the lights go down, when the theater is dark, we hear the sounds of speeding cars going by. First one, then another, then another. Zoom. Zoom. They are passing by. Then the sounds of squealing tires and the bam, bam, bam, bam of a multi-car crash. Sirens. The rush of noise in an ER. And finally heart monitors. Slowing. Slowing. Slowing. And then the flat line. And the flat line fades out.

LIGHTS UP ON APRON

ENTER VIRGIL, solid and slightly truculent (but endearingly so) with a clipboard. He is dressed in something akin to a toga. He is checking his notes. ENTER BEATRICE, tall and willowy. She approaches Virgil. She has a bag of something.

VIRGIL

[Officiously] All right, so how's this next group lookin'?

BEATRICE

Very well, sir. Most are in holding. Resting comfortably. We'll probably have a few stragglers. You know, some are hanging on in the ER. The usual.

Cruller, sir?

VIRGIL

Cruller? You think you can win my favor with a twisted French pastry.

BEATRICE

Yes, sir. Yes sir I do. [Hands him a pastry.]

VIRGIL

[He takes a bite.] Ahh, pure heaven !!!

BEATRICE

Pure heaven.

VIRGIL

[He exhales and relaxes a little.] Have you looked at the roster? Tough crowd.

BEATRICE

[She looks at his clipboard.] Some of them. Nothing we haven't handled before.

VIRGIL

Kind of a milestone, this group? Isn't it?

BEATRICE

I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about.

VIRGIL

You think I don't pay attention. But I pay attention. This group, they're the big One-Oh-Oh-Oh. Right?

BEATRICE

A thousand.

VIRGIL

A thousand over how long? About a hundred years now, isn't it?

BEATRICE

One hundred and eight years. [She exhales] And to think . . .

VIRGIL

. . . think?

BEATRICE

To think that I was one of them once.

VIRGIL

It's OK. You made a good call -- at the time.

BEATRICE

A hundred and eight years!

VIRGIL

Yea. Time flies. Time goes like a shot, doesn't it? It seems like yesterday you were just, you know . . . [he looks up at her. She is quite a bit taller than he is.] . . . tiny.

BEATRICE

[She stares down at him.] I've grown a lot in this job.

VIRGIL

[He gives her a long neck-craning look.] All right, let's get the show on the road. Let's roust 'em up and see what's what. [He looks at the bag she's holding.]

BEATRICE

Chocolate?

VIRGIL

[Thinking about it.] Hmm. OK, just one. You know I gained all that weight during the Harding administration. Couldn't fit in my holiday frock.

BEATRICE

Nobody needs a tight frock, sir.

VIRGIL

[He hesitates and thinks about this through eyes that are now slits.] I can think of a lot of things I don't need. Cut 'em loose, Bea. The clock is tickin'.

BEATRICE

Yes sir!

BLACKOUT

CURTAIN OPENS

Scene 2 -- Here They Come

Curtain opens to an empty stage. Upstage center there is an entrance that is somewhat majestic, but dark. Stage left and stage right, each have a grouping of chairs.

Enter Frank. He looks around. He is a little confused. Enter Doris. She is stalking after him.

DORIS

Well?

FRANK

Well what?

DORIS

Well? *[Pause]* What do you think?

FRANK

I think . . .

DORIS

Yes?

FRANK

I'm pretty sure . . .

DORIS

[Pause] You're sure?

FRANK

[Pause] Yes, I think I'm sure.

DORIS

If I felt any more certainty, I might kill myself.

FRANK

[Looks her over carefully] You see, that's the point. You don't have to.

DORIS

I don't have to what?

FRANK

You don't have to kill yourself.

DORIS

I know. *[Pause]* It's just a figure of speech.

FRANK

No.

DORIS

[Pause] No WHAT !!

FRANK

No, you don't have to kill yourself. [Pause] Because you're already dead.

DORIS

What's new? I've been telling you that since we got married.

FRANK

[Pause] No.

DORIS

NO WHAT !!!

FRANK

[Pause] You're dead. I'm dead. We're dead, don't you get it? This is it. The last roundup. The long goodbye. The big sleep. The eternal nap. The post-life slumber.

DORIS

Hey, hey Shakespeare. Stop torturing poor unsuspecting metaphors. Listen to me. I don't know about you. But I'm not dead.

FRANK

As evidenced by ? ? ? ?

DORIS

[Pause] As evidenced . . .

FRANK

Yes?

DORIS

As . . . [Pause]

FRANK

Yes?

DORIS

As evidenced by your still being a pain in my ass. Cause if I was dead, I am sure that this pain in my ass would give way to some post-life ass relief.

She begins stalking around.

FRANK

We've walked all around. This isn't Long Island, or Cleveland, or Geneva, or any other damn place. It's like no place we've ever been to. Remember? We were in the car. We were talking. You said something . . . I can't remember what. And then flying glass, and lights, and blood. Can't you remember? And, and look down there, just look.

The both move downstage Left and peer over the edge. There is a pause. They look at each other. He is fascinated. She is far more skeptical.

DORIS

That's my father. He's crying.

FRANK

He's always crying. It's dinner time. He's trying to eat your mother's cooking.

DORIS

I don't . . . He . . . It's way too . . . [*Suddenly realizing.*] He doesn't know yet.

FRANK

I think you're right. Look, the phone is ringing. [*Pause.*] He's figured . . . He's looking at your . . . Now she's crying.

DORIS

And it's not the food.

FRANK

He just dropped the phone on the floor. They're hugging, and crying.

They freeze. Simultaneously the lights dim on them and VIRGIL enters stage Right. He is dressed all in white but quite young.

VIRGIL

There they are. [*He looks over at Frank and Doris in the dim light.*] Proud members of the class of whatever-the-hell year this is. You know where this is going? Don't you.

The lights come back up on Frank and Doris

VIRGIL (cont'd)

He's gonna tell her that this is it.

FRANK
Honey. Honey, this is IT !!

They freeze.

VIRGIL
See, I told you. Now she's not going to buy it.

DORIS
I don't buy it.

They freeze again.

VIRGIL
[Shrugs] It's not hard, trust me.

VIRGIL exits.

FRANK
No, honey, look. We've made it. Look at them down there. They're grieving for us. We're dead. We're in . . . We're in . . . I think it's It must be

DORIS
We're dreaming.

FRANK
Dreaming?

DORIS
Yes

FRANK
No, how could . . . I just [Pause]

DORIS
We're dreaming. We're asleep. We had too much to drink. We're exhausted. And we're dreaming.

FRANK
We're both

DORIS
Both dreaming.

FRANK
Because ..

DORIS
Because . . .

FRANK

We're not . . .

DORIS

No.

FRANK

We're . . .

DORIS

We're dreaming. It's just a big [Pause] big [Pause] dream.

He takes this in. Looks at her. Looks over the edge. Looks at her. Looks over the edge.

FRANK

Look at them. They're . . .

DORIS

We're dreaming.

FRANK

But, this place . . .

DORIS

Dream . .

FRANK

Not Cleveland. Not . . .

DORIS

DREAMING, Frank. It's not real. Get it through you're thick head. It's a figment of your imagination.

FRANK

[Pause] I don't buy it.

He looks down. He looks at her. He looks down again and tries to get a different angle.

FRANK (cont'd)

Surely this is . . . [Pause]

He moves back from the edge, and sits in contemplation.

FRANK (cont'd)

It must be . . . [Pause]. Or something like it. .
 . It must. . .

He sits with his head in his hands. DORIS looks back at him. Then she looks down at her family. Then back at Frank. She sighs, walks over to a chair, and groans as she sits.

FRANK (cont'd)
What is it now?

DORIS
[Long Pause] Ass pain.

BLACKOUT

Scene 3 -- Here In The Hereafter

FRANK and DORIS freeze where they are and a small circle of light comes up. VIRGIL enters. He is dressed all in white.

VIRGIL

Denial can be your best friend. And in the first few days, we see plenty of it here. Some of them have been looking forward to this for a long time. [Pause] But whatever they believe, whatever they want or don't want, I can't change what IS. They all wind up here. In the Hereafter.

Music comes up. As VIRGIL sings, the stage fills one by one (or two by two) with lost looking figures who vaguely acknowledge one another. The don't come in and sit, but rather enter, leave, enter, leave. They are looking. They are waiting. You can see in their eyes that they are getting the picture. Virgil is more or less invisible to them.

Here in the Hereafter

LET ME BE FRANK (Though my name is Virgil) / FOR MOST IT HITS THEM POINT BLANK / WITHOUT WARNING / FROM A CLEAR AND SUNNY MORNING / WITH A SKID OR A SPIN / OR A BANG OR A BLAST / ALL OF YOUR LIFE / ALL THAT YOU HAD / ALL OF YOUR PRESENT / IS NOW IN THE PAST

AND YOU FLOAT AND YOU DRIFT / THERE'S A SHIMMER / A SHIFT / AS THE LIFE THAT YOU HAD / THE LOVE, THE SADNESS / THE JOY OR THE LAUGHTER / LEAVES YOU HERE, NOT THERE, BUT HERE / IN THE HEREAFTER

SORRY THAT YOUR LIFE IS THROUGH / NOT MUCH I CAN DO FOR YOU / EXCEPT MAKE YOU COMFY / HERE IN THE HEREAFTER

ALL THAT MONEY THAT YOU HAD / CAN'T SPEND IT HERE, THAT'S TOO BAD / WELCOME TO LIFE / IN THE HEREAFTER

SAY GOOD BYE TO COUNTRY CLUB DUES / AND YOUR CLOSET WITH ALL THOSE SHOES / YOU WON'T NEED THEM, HERE IN THE HEREAFTER

OVERLY PRETTY, OVERLY WITTY / HAVE YOUR TOWNHOUSE IN THE CITY / WE DON'T GIVE A SH .. INGLE / HERE IN THE HEREAFTER

HOT SHOT, BIG SHOT, MUG SHOT, NOT-SO-HOT / YOU'RE
ALL HAVE-NOTS, HERE IN THE HEREAFTER

LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY/ YOUR WORLDLY THINGS ARE
GONE / AUFEDERSEIN, TA-TA, KAPUT, BYE-BYE / THE
THINGS YOU HAD YOU HAVEN'T / THE WORLD IS MOVING
ON / IT'S PAST, THAT'S IT, IT'S GONE, ADJOURNED
SINE DIE.

YOU'VE HEARD YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU / AND YES
THAT MUCH IS TRUE / YET STILL SOME THINGS
REMAIN / NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO / SOME THINGS MAKE
IT THROUGH

THE THINGS YOU DID OR SAID / THE TEARS YOU CAUSED
OUR SHED / THE LOVE YOU TOOK / THE LOVE YOU SPREAD
/ THE HEARTS YOU LIFTED / OR SHOT DOWN DEAD / YOUR
GOOD INTENTIONS / YOUR INSURRECTIONS / HONEST
THANKS / OR HARSH REJECTIONS

THE ONLY THINGS YOU CARRY / AND ALL THAT'S GETTING
THROUGH / IS UNENCUMBERED, LONELY, METAPHORICALLY
NAKED, SIMPLE, STRAIGHT UP, NOT ABLE TO FAKE IT,
WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT . . . YOU

WELCOME TO HERE . . . IN THE HEREAFTER

END OF SONG

Final tableau. VIRGIL on stage with all those who
have arrived. They are sitting, somewhat stunned.

BLACKOUT

Scene 4 -- Eugene 1

EUGENE enters, looks around, and sighs.

EUGENE

It's a funny place. I don't even know what to call it. Have you met Virgil? He calls it the HereAfter. Some of the others call it Level 2. What kind of name is that? All I know is that I want to get out of here.

[Pause] Life wasn't so easy for me, as far as I can remember. I'm having a hard time remembering things. I don't know why that is. I always had a good memory. [Pause] At least I think I did.

Anyway, what can I tell you? I always believed that, in life, everybody gets something. But life isn't about what you get, but what you do with it.

What can I tell you? -- as much as I might have wanted to, I wasn't going to, you know, play center for the Lakers. Big, fast, strong? Not in my DNA. And I can't sing. So rock star? Not happening. But I didn't care.

I'm no different than anyone else. I never let it stop me. I set my goals. I worked. I made things happen. I was a good person, I hope. I AM a good person, I hope.

[Looking down] I'm just getting used to the fact that I can see everybody. There's my Uncle Fred. And my brother. And my other brother. I can sit for hours and just watch them. I miss them. I really do. But I can't seem to help them.

[Yelling down.] Barney !! Hey Barney!! See, he can't hear me. Barney !!! Nothing. I don't know. If I yell really, really loud, I think maybe he can hear me. Barney !! Zip up your fly, for God's sake. Oy !!

[He waits.] He's always doing that. Wait. All right, Barney !! Whew. That was close. He was walking into church.

Anyway, I miss everybody. But I'm not really much good up here. I guess I didn't have the easiest time. So you know what? I want to move on. If there's, you know, another place to get to? That's what I want.

DIM OUT

Scene 5 -- Beatrice and Eugene

ENTER BEATRICE. She, like Virgil, is dressed all in white. Clearly Virgil and Beatrice are different than all the others. She sees Eugene and approaches him.

BEATRICE

Hey there.

EUGENE

[Turning] Oh, hi.

BEATRICE

I didn't want to disturb you.

EUGENE

I'm a dead guy, right? What else do I have to do?
Anyway, I was . . . [Pause]

BEATRICE

I know . . . You were just looking.

EUGENE

Yes

BEATRICE

I know, it's hard to pass up, seeing all of your loved ones.

EUGENE

Loved ones, sure. And all the others. [Pause] With a little effort I can find everybody who . . .
[Pause]. I mean, all the ones who [Pause], who . . .

BEATRICE

Who hurt you. The people who hurt you.

EUGENE

Yes.

BEATRICE

And you don't miss THEM.

EUGENE

No.

BEATRICE

And you don't love THEM.

EUGENE

[Pause] I was taught . . . [Pause] I learned that even though, you know, that people were [Pause] bad.

BEATRICE

You were talk taught to forgive.

EUGENE

Yes.

BEATRICE

And to love them?

EUGENE

I suppose so. [Pause] But I don't miss them. [Pause]
At all. I don't miss them at all.

BEATRICE

So you wouldn't go back?

EUGENE

Go back?

BEATRICE

Yes. You wouldn't go back even if you could?

EUGENE

Go back? Can we . . .

BEATRICE

I'm just asking. Because you're new here, and you
don't know how it works yet.

EUGENE

No. I just know what I see. And I can see
everything. And it just makes me . . .

BEATRICE

Makes you . . . ?

EUGENE

Makes me [Pause] sad. And I just want to get out of
here. If I can. But I don't really know how it works.

BEATRICE

Let me help you with that. You're here now. We call
it Level 2. Right now you're on Level 2. And you're
safe. And you can see.

EUGENE

I can see everything.

BEATRICE

Yes. And everyone, if you want to. And as you just
found out -- if you try hard enough you can remind your
brother to zip up his fly.

EUGENE

I thought that was fun.

BEATRICE

Yes. And that was a nice thing for you to do.

EUGENE

So I . . .

BEATRICE

Yes, you can do that. [Pause] But you don't have to. You don't have to stay on Level 2.

EUGENE

I don't?

BEATRICE

No, you can go back . . . if you want to.

EUGENE

You can make me . . . un-dead?

BEATRICE

Not exactly. . . We can send you back again. To a new life. With a fresh start.

EUGENE

But . . .

BEATRICE

I know. You think you'll miss everyone.

EUGENE

Yes I do.

BEATRICE

Have you noticed that it's a little harder to remember things? Well, that's normal. And when you go back, all of your past lives will fade away.

EUGENE

Lives? I've had lives?

BEATRICE

I really can't tell you that.

EUGENE

Well, it doesn't matter. Because I don't want to go back. I never want to go back. [Looking down] Look at them. I miss them. I really do. But I can't go back. I won't go back.

BEATRICE

Well, it's your choice. At least for now.

EUGENE

For now?

BEATRICE

For now. You get 49 days to decide. And if you don't go back then, well, you're not going back.

EUGENE

So I can go back. That's one option. And I can stay here on Level 2. So, is there a third option?

BEATRICE

Sort of.

EUGENE

Sort of?

BEATRICE

Sort of.

EUGENE

[Pause] Let me have it.

BEATRICE

Well, it's called Level 3.

EUGENE

Like Door Number Three.

BEATRICE

Kind of like that. Except you can't pick it.

EUGENE

I can't?

BEATRICE

No. [Pause] It picks you. Very few get to go through. Only a few that I've seen. If it's your time, and if you've, well, made the cut.

EUGENE

Made the cut?

BEATRICE

Yea. It's the next level.

EUGENE

Is it . . . Heaven?

BEATRICE

Heaven? I can't really say.

EUGENE

Because you don't really know?

BEATRICE

No, because I can't really say. [Pause] I have my orders.

EUGENE

Well, I want to stay here. And I'll wait for Level 3.

BEATRICE

Trust me. You might have to wait a long time.

EUGENE

I don't care. [Looking down] Look at it down there. It's too hard. I'm not going back. Ever. I'm staying here. And I'll do what I can. Barney !!! Barney, tuck in your shirt, for God's sake. Barney !!!

BLACKOUT

Scene 6 -- Mary

MARY is sitting in a chair with her eyes closed. She is concentrating. A bell rings and she smiles.

MARY

Ha!! I knew it.

She opens her eyes, stands, walks to the edge of the stage and looks down.

MARY (cont'd)

There you are !! It's my nieces grand-daughter. She was going through a box of photos. And there I was at the bottom. A young girl.

Did you hear the bell? You have to listen carefully. [Pause] I love that sound. It's the sound you hear when someone, when they think of you, or remember you fondly. It's like they have your number. Your, [Pause] your frequency.

Or when they pray to you. I know, that sounds funny. Really, who would pray to me? But they do. Or they did. And the bells go off.

It's best at your funeral. [Pause] I'm sorry, but it's true. It's like the Bells of St. Mary's -- for awhile.

Whenever they walk by your picture, or tell a story at Thanksgiving, or think of you on a soft afternoon. Then the bells ring for you.

But then [Pause] well, after awhile you hear them less and less. My brother passed on, and then my husband. They came through here for awhile. They both went back. I told them to.

I stayed behind to help as best I could. But everyone I knew? They're all gone. My niece's grand-daughter. She's in her 40's.

And the memory of me? Well, I don't get many bells anymore. Believe it or not, eventually everyone runs out of bells.

BLACKOUT

Scene 7 -- This is My Heaven ForNow

BEATRICE enters. Music comes up. She is sedate and a little serious. Which will end soon. This song starts out slow, and then rocks.

BEATRICE

Song: This is My Heaven Now

(Intro)

When you're alone
 And you don't know what your part is
 And you think you're on your own
 And you don't know where your heart is
 You're a leaf in the wind, a plan of last resort
 A dog without a bone, A man without a home
 A ship without a port

Don't give up, look around
 Don't let the world bring you down
 Open up your arms and say
 Open up your arms and say
 This is my heaven for now

You must try, to be strong
 You must sing your own special song
 Be loud, be proud and say
 Be loud be proud and say
 This is my heaven for now

(Bridge)

Make the world your oyster
 Wherever you may roam
 Unpack, relax, un-cloister
 Make each house your home

If you think you don't fit
 In the place where you sit
 Give yourself a slap, cut the crap, and say
 Give yourself a slap, cut the crap, and say
 This is my heaven for now

If you hide, on the side
 Play it big, play it wide
 Make a stand, play it grand and say
 Make a stand, play it grand and say
 This is my heaven for now

(Outro)

If you're struggling out there
Heavy in your boots
If you ain't goin' nowhere
Then sink yourself some roots

This is my heaven for now
This is my heaven for now
This is my heaven for now

Scene 8 -- Joanne And Patty

JOANNE and PATTY are sisters -- and love / hate. But mostly love / in their own strange way. They are looking down at the world.

JOANNE

I shouldn't have let you drive. I know you were drinking.

PATTY

Drinking? You drank twice as much as I did. You lush. You were practically swimming in the punch bowl. What were you thinking? I was the sober one.

JOANNE

[Sarcastically] You've always been the sober one.

PATTY

Don't start with me. Don't start.

JOANNE

What are you gonna do? [Pause] Kill me? [Pause]

They stare at each other for a brief second, and then break out laughing.

JOANNE (cont'd)

[Looking down] Oh look, the guy from Macy's is stealing another tie. I hate that guy. [Yelling] You crook! Look at him.

PATTY

Ooh. Ooh. Can we get him this time. Look, there's that thing on the floor.

JOANNE

[Yelling at the guy] GO LEFT! GO LEFT!

PATTY

[Yelling] Move! You idiot.

JOANNE

A little more the left. A little more. Ha. Got you.

They are pointing down and laughing. This is the funnies thing they have ever seen.

PATTY

Right on his face !!! Oh . . . My . . . God that was good.

They continue laughing and then sit and compose themselves.

JOANNE

Oh, that's so funny. I love that.

PATTY

Me too. But [Pause].

JOANNE

Yea, I mean, how long . . .

PATTY

I know, it's. Well, at some point.

JOANNE

Absolutely. I mean, we have to . . .

PATTY

Yea. We have to get serious. We have some decisions to make.

Long Pause. They are thinking.

JOANNE

So. [Pause] Oh soberest of ones. What are you thinking? We get 49 days to decide -- of which we have burned several.

PATTY

Well. I'm thinking that Door Number Three looks pretty good. [Pause.]

JOANNE

You think we have a shot? [Pause.]

PATTY

Realistically? How bad were we?

JOANNE

Bad.

PATTY

I know. I know. But not . . .

JOANNE

Not really bad, right?

PATTY

Exactly. I mean, we didn't . . . [Pause]

JOANNE

Didn't what?

PATTY

I was going to say that we didn't [Pause] kill anybody.

JOANNE

Well, not anybody that didn't deserve it. And there's a difference.

There is a long pause and they sit and ponder this for a minute.

PATTY

The guy in Chicago. [Pause.] He was creepy.

JOANNE

And his girlfriend. [Shudders]

PATTY

They were not [Pause] you know . . .

JOANNE

Not nice people. I agree. It was unfortunate.

PATTY

Exactly. [Pause] And, to be fair . . .

JOANNE

Humane, right? It was quick.

PATTY

Two in the back of the head.

JOANNE

[Poking two fingers] Two quick ones. [Pause] Not like Dallas.

PATTY

Very different story.

JOANNE

Very different. [Pause.]

PATTY

Cowboy fans.

JOANNE

[Shudders] Exactly.

PATTY

Had it coming.

JOANNE

They did. [Pause] But that took awhile, I'm sorry to say.

PATTY

It did. [Pause]

JOANNE

[Pokes two fingers again] No two for those two.
[Pause]

PATTY

Nope. That took awhile. [Pause] But the two guys in
St. Paul.

JOANNE

God it was cold that day.

PATTY

Froze my ass off.

JOANNE

Not like Phoenix.

PATTY

Hot in Phoenix. Hot as hell. A hundred and ten.

JOANNE

[Counting] Sacramento. Cleveland. Kansas City. Omaha.
[Pause] Buffalo. Scranton. Nashville. [Pause] I
think that's it, right?

PATTY

Jersey City?

JOANNE

Journal Square. In front of that hat shop. Those two
bastards. [Pause] Good times. Good times.

PATTY

The Lord's work, don't you think?

JOANNE

I do. I do [Pause] But it's fun here.

PATTY

Yea, it's fun so far.

JOANNE

[Pause] It could be fun. But . . .

PATTY

So . . . [Pause] Door Number Three? [Pause]

JOANNE

[Thinking out loud] Door Number
. Three. [Pause]

PATTY

Think we have a shot?

JOANNE

Maybe. [Pause] Maybe.

BLACKOUT

Scene 9 -- Allison

ALLISON

I'm finding it's a lot of pressure being dead. There are so many expectations from everyone you left behind. First, there is only so much a dead person can do. I mean, all of a sudden it's like everybody you ever knew is asking you all these questions. What should I do about this? What should I do about that? How should I know? I had enough trouble living my own life. What? Overnight I'm Dear Abbey? I don't know what to say.

And then, it's not like I can DO anything. Really, I don't have magical powers. I can't make, you know, money magically appear. I can't cure cancer. I can't give my ex-boss a bad rash in an uncomfortable place -- as much as I might want to.

And I can't read minds!! Really. I don't know what you're thinking !! [Pause] You want to tell me something? Do it out loud! For God's sake. [Pause]

I can do a few cool things, I suppose. If I really, really try, I can get a word or two in -- like a whisper in your ear. And every once in awhile, if I'm highly motivated, I can nudge a thing or two. A nudge, that's it. I can shake the leaves. Blow some wind -- in a nice way. Rattle some china. Creak a floorboard.

OK. Not exciting -- and a little creepy, no? I was hoping for thunderclaps, turning night into day, creating a beautiful sunset. Maybe somebody can handle that stuff, but not me. Not yet.

Of course, I've only been here a little while. Maybe you get better at it.

I'm on that 49 day clock. Why 49 days? Why not 48? Or even 50? I don't know -- 49. Seven weeks. Seven times seven days. Seven -- a mystical number. A prime number! Forty-nine. Four PLUS nine. Thirteen! ANOTHER prime number! [Pause] It makes me crazy!

You wake up here and you think, wow, I made it. Some of your old difficulties? Gone. For example, and I'm serious now. No gas. Really -- it was a chronic issue. For some people, just that would be heaven.

And earthly problems. My ex-husband and I. Not a good story. One of my screw-ups. He fooled around. I fooled around. He got mad. I got even. I didn't mean to hurt him. My bad. [Pause] His testicle.

C'est la vie.

So leaving that behind -- another perc. And I have to say, I'm having a hard time remembering why I hated him so much. That's a good thing, too. Somehow that past is losing it's edge.

But on the other hand, I'm not, you know, I'm not God. I can't be everywhere at once. I can't see everything. I can't know everything. And I can't . . . I can't really . . . I can't really HELP anybody.

I want to. I love my kids and I want to be near them. I have two brothers and a younger sister. They needed me when I was alive. And I so want to help them.

But I did my time. I have no regrets -- except maybe the testicle thing. I just want to move on.
[Pause] Wouldn't you?

Scene 10 -- Peter

PETER

The more time I spend here, the more I learn. I mean, Level 2 is pretty cool. [Looking down] There's my friend, Andy. We were out that night of the crash. I drank, he drove. Passenger side -- bam! Go figure.

[Yelling] Andy. Yo, Andy !! He can't hear me. So there's Andy, and across the country . . . Now there's my friend Abbey. She's with her boyfriend. Man, I screwed that up, didn't I. If only. [Pause]

And . . . over to Europe. Look, that's Siobhan -- Irish. Screwed that up, too. And Norway. That's Kaisa. The foreign exchange student. My God. What a beauty. Another disaster. [Pause]

Yes, things become more clear. I'm a relationship wrecking ball -- that's clear enough. We get close -- and I freak out. I don't trust anybody. But there they are. [Pause] I died, as they say, alone. Much as I began.

My mother -- never really met her. She was some crack addict or something. Left me on the steps of a church. I guess I learned my relationship skills from her. Pending commitment? Run away.[Pause]

What's amazing, I have to tell you, is that I can kind of see through time. It's the fourth dimension. I think only dead people can do this -- and maybe people who actually win at the track.

So [Looking down] there I am with my mother when I was born -- I can't really make out her features. I had no memory of her, but there she is. Pretty, I think, but troubled. And there I am playing ball with the first family that took me in . . . [Pause]

Well, there we are. A few years later, there's that knock down drag-out fight we had over [Pause] I can't remember, really. A car, or something stupid.

But there I am. I said things. [Pause] Bad move. I learned not to share -- it only brings heartache.

[Pause] When you can lay it all out in front of you, when you can see each moment so clearly, you see that your life turns on small moments. Your whole existence can pivot in an instant . . . Do I leave him on the steps, or not? Do I say "I love you" . . . or not.

(MORE)

PETER (cont'd)

I have no positive instincts about that. Trust me, I'm the master of interpersonal disaster. I ALWAYS say the wrong thing.

There's Kaisa as a teenager before I met her. Beautiful, huh? [Pause] [He looks down and gets a thought] [Yelling] Kaisa !!! Kaisa !! One day your gonna meet this kid named Peter - you're gonna think, "why would he say that?" He's a wrecking ball. But give him a chance, OK? He's not such a schmuck !!!

This is not working. How do you say "schmuck" in Norwegian?

BLACKOUT

Scene 11 -- Annie

ANNIE

I think I caused the crash. It was a 12 car pile-up. I was speeding, maybe a hundred and ten. I don't care. I never cared.

I don't get these people, really. They're waiting here for something. They want out. They want to move on. [Pause] Not me. I like it here just fine.

[Looking down] That's the house where I grew up. Five brothers and me. [Pause] Have you heard stories about all the older brothers taking care of their little sister? Not in my house. My father was long gone, my mother was away all the time, and the boys ran wild. They would lock me in closets. Beat me. Starve me. They . . . [Pause] I hated them. Every one of them.

And when I got the chance to leave, I did. I ran when I was 15. New York. Kids on the street? That was me. Doing what I had to do? That was me. I stole. I cheated people.

Got into some drugs. Had a kid when I was 16 and just gave him away. [Pause]

My scam was that I looked good. When you look good, God, you can get away with almost anything.

And then this guy I was with took me to LA -- that was it's own jungle -- and looking good worked even better there.

[Pause] But you grow up. [Looking down] There's Benny. He was my first partner. I was the hook. Not like that . . . I found the mark. I sunk the hook in, and Benny skinned 'em. It's amazing what people will tell you when they think they're gonna get some. God I was good.

[Pause] Benny got greedy. Or I did, I can't remember. There. He's buried on that hill. In the woods. Not that it matters now.

So I took the money and went to Chicago. I tried to go straight. Got clean. Met a guy. I thought that would work out.

One day he grabbed me and tried to lock me in a closet. Brought up some bad memories. He told the police that he tripped and fell through the door. I

(MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)

told him if he came after me he'd wind up buried on a hill somewhere, in the woods, next to Benny. [Pause]

So, I can get into it up here. [Looking down] There's my older brother, Kirk, the scumbag. His third wife just left him. Good for her. He's trying to get a job. We'll see about that. [Yelling down] Don't hire him, idiot! He will make your life a LIVING HELL. That a boy. Tell him "thanks" and let the bastard walk.

[Pause] I'm just getting started with you, Kirk, you son-of-a-bitch.

I don't know how I got here. I heard about this 49 day rule. But I don't care. I'm not going anywhere. I've got a lifetime of payback to serve up. Who could pass that up?

BLACKOUT

Scene 12 -- Jamie and Caitlin

ENTER JAIMIE and CAITLIN from different directions. They see each other.

JAMIE

Hey, Hey, what are you doing here?

CAITLIN

Well, well. Of all the Astral Planes in all the Universe, you had to walk into mine.

JAMIE

Yea, I've been wanting to talk to you for a long time. I haven't seen you since, since . . .

CAITLIN

Yea, since Michael and I ran off.

JAMIE

Ran off. Yea, that's exactly how I phrase it. My husband was out in the back yard, and someone must have busted the fence or something, and he just RAN OFF. JUST LIKE THAT !!

CAITLIN

I'm sensing hostility.

JAMIE

Just a little, you little bitch. I wanted to kill you !!!

CAITLIN

OK. OK. OK. But, somebody already took care of that.

JAMIE

Fine, I'll cross it off my to-do list. But now that I have you. . . [She is chasing her around] maybe you can answer a few questions for me.

CAITLIN

You're gonna have to calm down. You can't . . . kill me again, OK

JAMIE

OK

CAITLIN

All right.

JAMIE

All right.

CAITLIN
OK

JAMIE
Well, [a little calmer now] let's start with "Why?"

CAITLIN
Why what?

JAMIE
Why did you do it? Why did you go after my husband? It's not like it was a bad marriage. It was good. We were good. We were in love. We cared for each other.

CAITLIN
All that was true.

JAMIE
So, what happened? Why would you do that.

There is a long pause. Caitlin walks around, thinks, and is very measured about what she wants to say.

CAITLIN
It wasn't anything either one of us planned.

JAMIE
Very original. Very original.

CAITLIN
Look, I'm not going to lie to you, OK. There was just something that happened when we met.

JAMIE
I may be dead, too. But you're still KILLIN' me. What, I died and went to cliché hell?

CAITLIN
Stop it, will you? I'm telling you the truth. Just sit and think about it. I mean, Michael and I had just met. It was a party you had, right? We talked for maybe two minutes.

JAMIE
Yea?

CAITLIN
And a bell went off, I can't explain it.

A bell, but not a loud one. It was like something woke me up.

JAMIE

I really need to hear this, don't I?

CAITLIN

Yea, maybe you do. Because that was it at first. And then I went to the hardware store the next day. I NEVER go to the hardware store.

JAMIE

I sent Mike. I remember, I sent him in the afternoon.

CAITLIN

See, I had no idea. And we saw each other and talked. Three minutes, tops.

JAMIE

Talked?

CAITLIN

Talked. I'm telling you. And then the very next day, when my car broke down on Route 22.

JAMIE

I was with him. I was driving. We were, I don't know, going to the paint store. And we saw you, and I stopped the car.

CAITLIN

Yea, you stopped the car. I'm telling you, something just took over. I just don't know what it was, but . . .

There is a very loud ethereal noise. Jamie and Caitlin freeze. ENTER VIRGIL.

VIRGIL

I love this part. I really do. You see, we have to ease people into things up here. Let's face it -- it's a shock. They're dead. They can see everything that's going on down there. They can move through space -- and even time. But what they don't know, is that, well, right about now . . .

More ethereal noise.

. . . we start to pour on the heat. In a good way. What happens is that what people remember from their last go 'round. That continues to get a little more fuzzy. And some of 'em, well, they start to remember things from way, way back. And, it changes things. Ladies, you may continue.

EXIT VIRGIL

JAMIE

[Sits now] I remember thinking that I saw it all coming. Like it was happening in a movie, or something, and I couldn't stop it.

CAITLIN

Michael felt the same way. I know it hurt you. I know it did. But we didn't mean to hurt you.

JAMIE

I was waiting for it . . . maybe my whole life. It was something that . . .

CAITLIN

That what?

JAMIE

This is crazy.

CAITLIN

I know.

JAMIE

Something that I . . . owed to somebody. Somebody long ago. A man I took. I life I turned upside down. Somebody who I . . .

Jaimie looks very carefully at Caitlin.
Are you feeling this too.

CAITLIN

A man you took. From me. Very, very long ago.

JAMIE

Holy mother of God. It was . . . was . . .

CAITLIN

Karma. You had a karmic debt. To me !!!

JAMIE

I know. I know.

CAITLIN

You seduced him, you. . . you were the bitch!! . . .
. That dress. He couldn't resist the dress.

JAMIE

Michael. I know. He can't resist a red dress.

CAITLIN

You took him from me. Right from under my nose.

JAMIE

I know. But, wait. I mean. There we were, the three of us. You, me and Michael. But, hey, that means . . .

CAITLIN

What?

JAMIE

It just means we're even, that's all. An eye for an eye.

CAITLIN

A man for a man.

JAMIE

A broken heart . . .

CAITLIN

For a broken heart. . . [Pause] Wow.

JAMIE

Wow.

One more ethereal gong!

CAITLIN

Wow

JAMIE

Wow.

BLACKOUT

Scene 13 -- Carlotta

CARLOTTA

I don't know how I wound up with these people. In one way or another, they seem connected. I'm trying to understand where I fit.

I was at the hospital for weeks. They told me I got sick because I worry too much. My family was there, but they wouldn't tell me anything. How sick am I? I asked them.

Usted va a estar bien. You'll be fine.

No se preocupe. Don't worry. Don't worry? I'm dead! If ever I should have been worried, that was it, no?

I had no idea. I would have liked a little warning. Really! I'm telling you. Don't keep it from people. You want to be ready. You want to say goodbye.

I looked down and I saw them all at church. I saw them all say good bye to me. They say, *está en el cielo.* She's in heaven.

Ella está en un lugar mejor. She's in a better place. What better place? Have I mentioned, I'm dead.

When you die, you still get hungry. And the food? It's like we're at a Country Club in Westchester, New York. Lobster, Champagne, and those little wrapped hot dogs. You like them? Sorry, not comfort food for me.

I want some Spanish rice, some salsa and frijoles. Sangria. [Wistfully] Maybe a Pepsi. [Pause]

And, although I think maybe I don't belong here -- on the other hand, when I look carefully, I think maybe I know these people. Something is familiar. Something in their eyes. Maybe, once, we knew each other. It feels ... OK.

And I think to myself, for maybe the first time ever ... *No se preocupe.* Don't worry. And bad food or not ... that's heaven to me.

BLACKOUT

Scene 14 -- Mary II

MARY ENTERS. It's as if she is listening for something. She wanders onstage, and BEATRICE appears.

MARY

No bells. No bells for the longest time. Look, it's a little depressing. But for most people, that's the way it is.

I mean, you have a guy like Lincoln. He's got that big monument. That guy's got bells forever. Washington, Jefferson. All those memorial guys.

And Bach, Beethoven, Mozart. Bells in every key.

Monet. Renoir. Bells in every color.

Picasso -- well, he says they're bells, but who knows?
[Pause] Pablo, you minx.

Anyway, I'm not any of those people. Most of us, we kind of fade away.

BEATRICE

Mary?

MARY

Beatrice? What are you doing here. I hardly ever see you.

BEATRICE

I know.

Door Number Three has been visible throughout the first act, but it has been dark. Now it begins to be illuminated. It is clear now that there is a place beyond the door. It's blue. Soft music begins.

MARY

Is that . . .

BEATRICE

Well. we have a little surprise for you.

MARY

But . . . I can?

BEATRICE

Here's the way it works. You're gonna get a look.

MARY

Nobody gets a look.

BEATRICE

You're gonna get a look. And then, you get to decide.

MARY

Decide what.

BEATRICE

After you get a look at Level III, you get to stay there. Or, if you really want, If you decide not to stay, you can go back, [pointing down] down there, and you can take another spin through Earth. It will be your choice.

MARY

My choice?

BEATRICE

Your choice.

MARY

OK. OK. So, when do I get a look?

BEATRICE

How about now? Is now good.

MARY

What else have I got to do? Can you come, too?

BEATRICE

No. You'll meet someone like me on the other side.

She walks towards the Level III portal.

MARY

There's nobody like you!! [Pause] I think I might miss everything.

BEATRICE

Don't worry about that. It's not going anyplace.

BEATRICE takes MARY's hand and leads her to Door Number Three as music swells. Mary goes through. There is a pause and we hear Mary say, offstage, "Oh My !!" Then the music dies down as Door Number Three goes dark again.

Curtain closes

Scene 15 -- Method To The Madness

On Apron. Enter VIRGIL and CAITLIN

VIRGIL

You've been remembering.

CAITLIN

Yes. But I don't know what it all means. Pieces. A life here. A life there. Guess what? I'm an old soul.

VIRGIL

So you are.

CAITLIN

I am. I've been around a good number of times.

VIRGIL

Yes you have. We're actually old friends. Welcome back.

CAITLIN

Good to be back. I guess.

VIRGIL

So?

CAITLIN

So, I still don't know what it all means. All these lives. Debts, payments. Level II. Level III. I'm an old soul . . . but I don't know what it all means.

Song -- Method To The Madness

ALL THE TWISTS, AND ALL THE TURNS / ONE HEART RETREATS,
ANOTHER YEARS, SOME EYES LAUGH, OTHERS CRY / WE WAIT,
WE WATCH, WE HOPE / WE LIVE . . . /WE DIE / LEFT AT
LAST / AT LAST TO WONDER WHY

I WONDER WHY /

I CAN'T SEE A METHOD TO THE MADNESS / I'M WONDERING
WHYTHE WORLD IS FILLED WITH JOY, AND ALL THAT SADNESS /
I'M WONDERING WHY / ONE LIFE IS FILLED WITH PEACE AND
ONE WITH WAR / I'M WONDERING WHY/ WHAT ALL THIS LIFE IS
FOR

I'M WONDERING WHY / ONE DAY THE WORLD IS FINE / AND
THEN IT ALL GOES MAD /I'M WONDERING WHYA SINGLE MOMENT
TURNS A LIFE FROM GOOD TO BAD /I'M ASKING WHY /WE LIVE
A LIFE SO BRAVE AND BOLD / AND THEN RETURN TO TURN OUR
HEARTS /FROM LOVE, TO COLD

(MORE)

CAITLIN (cont'd)

I'M WONDERING WHY / I CAN'T SEE A METHOD TO THE MADNESS
 / I'M WONDERING WHY / THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH JOY / THEN
 ALL THAT SADNESS / I'M WONDERING WHY / AT TIMES THE GODS
 WILL SEE OUR PAIN AS TRAGIC SPORT / GRANTING ONE A LIFE
 OF MANY YEARS / WHILE CUTTING OTHERS SHORT /

IT'S A SECRET / KEPT BEYOND OUR KEN / A DOOR WE BEG WILL
 OPEN / THAT NEVER LETS US IN /

I'M WONDERING WHY / IT SEEMS SO TRUE THAT ALL THE GOOD
 DIE YOUNG / AND ALL LOVE FADES, THE END IS NEAR / THE
 BATTLE CAN'T BE WON / AND THEN I SEE / THAT LOVE IS
 REAL, THE TRUTH WINS OUT / THE WORLD IS NEW / THE SUN
 WILL RISE WITHOUT A DOUBT /

MY HEART JUST REELS / AND I CAN'T SEE A METHOD TO THE
 MADNESS / IT MAKES ME CRY / TO KNOW THE WORLD IS FILLED
 WITH ALL THAT JOY / AND ALL THAT SADNESS /

THAT IT'S A MYSTERY BEHIND A COSMIC DOOR / AND WE ARE
 LEFT TO WONDER / JUST WHAT LIFE IS FOR I'M PRAYING
 THERE'S A METHOD / THERE'S A WAY, THERE'S A PLAN / I'M
 PRAYING THAT IT'S ALL / NOT MERELY MADNESS

End of Song

Exit CAITLIN.

Scene 16 -- Bea and Virg

ENTER BEATRICE with clipboard and a bag. She approached Virgil.

BEATRICE

Cruller?

VIRGIL

What, are you trying to kill me? Ha ha ha. [He takes the cruller] So, how are we doing?

BEATRICE

Making progress. This is always the hardest part. I mean, it's hard down there.

VIRGIL

You can say that again.

BEATRICE

It's hard down there.

VIRGIL

[He glares at her for a bit.] It's no picnic up here, either. [Pause] And, yea, down there it's getting harder. But they're ALL stuck there. Every one of them.

BEATRICE

What about Level III.

VIRGIL

Level III is nice. But here's the thing. Nobody, NOBODY gets to the Big Show unless they all go together.

BEATRICE

The Big Show?

VIRGIL

Sorry, I'm always looking for new metaphors. Yea, the Big Show. The Great Beyond. The Real "What's Next." You know? Life on the other side of this rock.

BEATRICE

They all think they ARE on the other side.

VIRGIL

Well, one man's heaven. Have you looked up lately. See those stars? There are trillions of them. And just in our little galaxy. In the universe? Trillions of trillions. I saw a report last week.

BEATRICE

That's a lot.

VIRGIL

A lot -- Yes, I think that's the technical term. Anyway, we're here. On our little blue dot spinning around one of those trillions of trillions. You think we're the only ones out here.

BEATRICE

I suppose not.

VIRGIL

Trust me -- not. So, nobody gets out of here, anyway, unless we ALL go together.

BEATRICE

Nobody.

VIRGIL

Nobody

BEATRICE

And tell me again why we can't tell them that?

VIRGIL

It's just one of those things they have to work out on their own. We can't tell them. So they all sink or swim together.

BEATRICE

[Takes a moment to think about this.] Chocolate?

VIRGIL

No, I'm cuttin' back.

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT I

ACT IIScene 1 -- Virg and Bea

Lights up on apron. ENTER VIRGIL, followed by BEATRICE. She is chasing after him.

BEATRICE

I'm still not clear about why? Why can't we tell them? Wouldn't that be easier?

VIRGIL

I don't make up the rules. I just follow them.

BEATRICE

But it's not fair.

VIRGIL

What's not fair?

BEATRICE

That they don't know. They don't know that they can't just look out for themselves. They don't know that they can only be as successful as . . . as the least among them? They don't get off that rock until they all go together.

VIRGIL

Yea, that's it. [Turning back to her] It's the old, fellow man, he ain't heavy, golden rule thing. They know it, all of them, believe me. The Christians and the Jews, the Buddhists and the Shintos, Black Elk, the Sikhs, the Sufis, the Hindus, Isalmists, the Wiccans, AND the Unitarians.

BEATRICE

[She takes a deep breath as they stare at each other.] I knew that.

VIRGIL

After 108 years I should hope so.

BEATRICE

All righty then.

VIRGIL

Off we go.

They EXIT.

BLACKOUT

Scene 2 -- Frank

FRANK

She's makin' me crazy with her wild ideas. Cause I'm here. Look at me. You can see me. I can see me. I'm here, right? And all those people down there. [Looking down] It's a little confusing. I mean there is sooooo much to watch. How do you decide.

[Looking] See? Those two guys? We used go drinkin' together. They introduced me to Doris. [Pause] I never liked those guys.

So, Doris says it's a dream. But honestly, she's always said that. Inside that hard outer shell there's a very thoughtful, yet abrasive, inside.

Her theory is that we're all just wandering thoughts and that we made the whole thing up. Everything. Heaven, earth, our friends and family. You know why she says we made it up? Cause it doesn't make sense, that's why. It's too crazy.

And it's hard to argue. She says this: Only in a dream would we have a God that makes good children, and bad children. Lucky, and unlucky.

Some people who live in luxury, well fed, not a care in the world. [Looking down] There they are. Houses, cars . . . girlfriends that don't bitch -- you know, a little peace and quiet on a Saturday afternoon. Heaven.

And others, through no fault of their own. Poverty, sickness, catastrophe. From the same God? Who would make up a world like that. Where could it come from but a dream. A bad dream. A crazy dream.

So that's Doris. And who am I to argue? You saw her. She can be persuasive, am I right? Or am I right. [Pause]

I'm right. [Pause]

But then, as twisted as that is, as we established, I don't buy it. On the one hand, whatever person said it, about the guy who dreamed he was a butterfly. And then he woke up. And made himself crazy thinking he might be a butterfly dreaming he was a man.

[Pause] That guy and Doris should hook up.

[Pause] But here's the thing. It doesn't matter. Dream or not, butterfly or not, abrasive

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)
girlfriend or not . . . here I am. We died -- but
we're not dead. I'm in this place . . . somewhere
between [Looking down] that place and [Looking up] some
other place.

So do I stay . . . or do I go?

You ever play craps? I have. I went with Doris
once. I lost a thousand bucks. She said "don't
worry, it's all a dream." I said, it's not a dream,
honey. It's a thousand bucks. And it's a crapshoot.

Here, at least I know what I'm gettin'. I know what I
have.

Am I ready for another crapshoot?

BLACKOUT

Scene 3 -- Mary Lou -- Fades Away

Enter Mary Lou.

MARY LOU

Everything fades, everything fades
Colors turn to shades of gray
All the heartache fades
Cool fades away

You leave the world behind, You leave your world behind
You put to rest your troubled mind
Gray turns into azure blue
And cool fades away

What the world has to show you
You move beyond your tears
what the world has to show you, you let the years
Cool fade away

Close your eyes
Lift your heart
Breathe in
A brave new start

Everything fades, everything fades
And then you rise to see the dawn
The tears are gone the love remains
And cool fades away

And you know, and you know
That giving way to evening's chill
The light that glows beyond the hill
And won't fade away
Love won't fade away

End of song. Exit Mary Lou.

Secne 4 -- Eugene II

ENTER EUGENE followed by BEATRICE. Eugene is looking down on Earth.

BEATRICE

[Calling after Eugene] Hey, how's it going?

EUGENE

Nothing changed. Barney is still a mess.

BEATRICE

[Looking with him.] He just can't seem to keep that shirt tucked in, can he.

EUGENE

Tell me about it.

They continue to look down, assessing the situation.

And . . . I know why you're here. And I haven't changed my mind. I'm not going back.

BEATRICE

Just checking.

ENTER VIRGIL.

VIRGIL

There you are. I've been looking all over for you.

EUGENE

[Reaches into a bag he's been carrying] [To Virgil] Cruller.

Virgil looks carefully into the bag, up to EUGENE, and back in the bag. He gingerly takes out a cruller.

VIRGIL

Word get's around, huh?

BEATRICE

[Butting in] Yes sir. What can we help you with sir.

Virgil reaches into his toga and pulls out a piece of paper.

VIRGIL

Well, I've got some good news for Eugene.

[Reading] Whereas, etc. etc. etc. has fulfilled all obligations etc. etc. etc., All karmic debts have been deemed paid in full etc. etc. [He reads quietly to himself for a brief time]

Oh, here, life of compassion and understanding, etc.
etc. bla bla bla. So, here, you're in, kid. We're
gonna miss you.

EUGENE

What do you mean?

VIRGIL

It's a pass for Level III. Here, you can read it. but
you're in.

EUGENE

I'm in?

VIRGIL

You're in.

EUGENE

I'm in.

VIRGIL

You're in.

BEATRICE

You're in.

EUGENE

[Ecstatic and hugging everybody] I'm in !!!! I'm
in!!!! I'm IN !!!! [Pause] When?

VIRGIL

Now if you like. It's not like you have to pack.

*Level III now lights up the way it did for
Mary. Lights and sounds of Level III.*

He gives everybody one last hug.

EUGENE

I'm ready. Let me tell you. I'm ready.

*He looks back once, and walks through the portal
into Level III. After he does, the lights go down
on the portal and the sounds fade.*

VIRGIL

Well,

BEATRICE

Well, that's that.

They pause and think about this.

VIRGIL
Got any chocolate on you?

BLACKOUT

Scene 5 -- Carlotta and Marylou

Lights up on Carlotta and Marylou. They are having a heated exchange.

CARLOTTA

How? How can you be my mother, and my sister, and my brother, and my husband.

MARY LOU

I did not make up the rules. I don't know how I got here, but apparently you and I have a long history.

CARLOTTA

And what happened to your accent.

MARY LOU

I don't know!!

CARLOTTA

It's not fair. I'm stuck here with bunch of New Yorkers.

MARY LOU

Who speak English.

CARLOTTA

They think they do.

MARY LOU

Well, everybody thinks someone else has the accent.

CARLOTTA

I'm just trying to understand why we're all here together. I thought we all wanted to get up to Level III. We're, like, in a big waiting room.

MARY LOU

I don't think it's that simple.

CARLOTTA

Dime. Tell me.

MARY LOU

Well, everybody comes here and gets some time to calm down from whatever life they had.

CARLOTTA

OK.

MARY LOU

And then we have these lives, this karma, and we get to go back. And make things right. Or I suppose screw it up again.

CARLOTTA

Or screw it up again. Yes. This much I understand.

MARY LOU

But, some people don't HAVE to come back. But they come back anyway.

CARLOTTA

Why would they do that?

MARY LOU

To help the rest of us.

CARLOTTA

Help us what?

MARY LOU

To help us. Was your life that easy? Did you always know what to do? What was right and what was wrong?

CARLOTTA

[She thinks about this] No.

MARY LOU

And were there people who helped you? People who just, I don't know, KNEW things. People who could just see right through you?

CARLOTTA

Yes, and you think?

MARY LOU

That's what I'm hearing. Some people get a chance to move on, but instead they come back. . . for us.

CARLOTTA

Why would somebody do that? [Looking down] Look at it. It's so much WORK.

MARY LOU

I know. [Looking down] But look at them. [Shaking her head] They really need the help.

BLACKOUT

Scene 6 -- Agatha and Beatrice

Lights up on AGATHA. She is young and a little lost. ANNETTE is there, too.

ALLISON

Nothing? You can't remember anything?

AGATHA

I'm sorry. That was it for me. One life. That's all I had. And not a very long one at that.

ALLISON

Keep trying. Maybe it will hit you. Everyone else has something. Some people have been through dozens of times.

AGATHA

I'm [Pause] I'm a new soul. I don't know how it all works. But, I guess I just got here. I mean, I suppose it makes sense.

ALLISON

How do you figure that?

AGATHA

Well, there are just more and more people. Billions and billions now -- and all at once. I mean, there have to be lots of people like me. There just, I don't know . . .

ALLISON

. . . there just aren't enough old souls to go around, I guess. It makes my head spin.

AGATHA

I know, right? So, what can you remember.

ALLISON

My past lives?

AGATHA

Yea. Were you, like, ever a queen?

ALLISON

No, always straight as far I can remember.

AGATHA

Not like that. I mean, you know, were you a princess or something? Royalty?

ALLISON

Kids !! Are you kidding me? I don't know where people get those ideas.

AGATHA

Well, they're so romantic.

ALLISON

Yea, well, wait till you get a few more lives in you. I have had the most boring lives. I was a maid in Lithuania THREE TIMES.

AGATHA

Maybe you had to do it till you got it right.

ALLISON

Thanks, that's probably it.

AGATHA

And? What else.

ALLISON

Sheep herder in Spain. Milk maid in France.

AGATHA

Sounds peaceful.

ALLISON

And a slave merchant somewhere in the Sahara.

AGATHA

Good heavens !!

ALLISON

Yea, I paid for that one for centuries. Karma. What a bitch.

AGATHA

What happened?

ALLISON

Lots. I was a slave myself twice. Then I pulled hard labor on a rice farm in Cambodia. Oh, and early last century they made me a Red Sox fan.

AGATHA

What's wrong with that?

ALLISON

. . . living in New York City. Hell on earth. I'm telling you, Karma's a bitch.

AGATHA

Well, it wasn't all bad, right? Didn't anything wonderful happen? Love? Kids? Beautiful days and amazing nights? Wasn't that part of it?

ALLISON

I, [Pause] I suppose so. Yea, some of it was pretty good. Even when I spent most of every day milking cows. Hmmm [Pause] Go figure. Well, hang in there kid.

EXIT ALLISON. ENTER BEATRICE, with a bag of candy.

BEATRICE

Hey there. How is it going. You look sad.

AGATHA

I'm not sad, I'm just . . . feeling a little left out.

BEATRICE

Why is that?

AGATHA

Well, everybody is having all of these flashes about lives they've led. And I've only had one. So, I guess I have a long way to go.

BEATRICE

[Offering her candy.] Chocolate? You'll always feel better with some chocolate.

AGATHA

[Taking a chocolate.] Thanks. Mmmmmm. That's good.

BEATRICE

Well, was it a good life?

AGATHA

Not that I recall. It started great. Then fell apart. It was nice till I was twelve. There there was a war. My father was killed. I lost my friends and my home. I died in a bomb blast.

BEATRICE

I'm so sorry. Well, you're here now. You'll figure out where you belong.

AGATHA

[Pause] So, what's your story. I mean, you're kind of like us well, way taller . . . but, I mean . . .

BEATRICE

Yea, I'm like you. I came here and stayed for awhile.

AGATHA

How many lives did you have?

BEATRICE

[Pause] Just one.

AGATHA

One?

BEATRICE

Yea, one.

AGATHA

Well, why didn't you go back?

BEATRICE

I will someday. You know the rules, if you stay, well . . . you have to stay.

AGATHA

But you only had one life.

BEATRICE

I know, which was the problem. When I met everybody up here, I know I had a long, long way to go. And I just thought that maybe if I stayed, I could learn so much, and meet so many people. Maybe when I finally went back, it would be easier. Maybe I wouldn't make so many mistakes.

AGATHA

Maybe it could be wonderful, sooner?

BEATRICE

Wonderful sooner? Yes, I guess that's what I wanted.

AGATHA

[Pause] Can I have another chocolate??

Music up on All The Way To Wonderful

ROCKY BEGINNING, LOSING AND WINNING, STILL EVERY DAY THE WORLD KEEPS ON SPINNING / STILL SOMEDAY I HOPE TO MAKE IT / ALL THE WAY TO WONDERFUL

NOTHING SEEMS EASY, IT'S ALL SO CONFUSING, THE RANDOM OCCURRENCE OF WINNING AND LOSING / YET I STILL BELIEVE I'LL MAKE IT, ALL THE WAY TO WONDERFUL

I'M SEEING THE WORLD HOW IT MIGHT BE / I KNOW I
CAN FIND IT, THE PEACE AND THE LOVE / I WON'T LET
A PAST LIFE DEFINE ME / I'LL GET THERE I KNOW
THOUGH I MIGHT NEED SOME HELP FROM ABOVE

DOING MY BEST BUT IT'S ALL NEW TO ME / AND NOW
WITH A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE I SEE / BUT I KNOW
SOMEDAY I'LL MAKE IT / ALL THE WAY TO WONDERFUL

END OF SONG

BEATRICE GIVES HER A BIG HUG

BLACKOUT

Scene 7 -- Joanne

JOANNE

I'm here on account of my sister.

First, she was driving. It was always a joke. Hey, you drink and I'll drive. We were each of us never very good at math. We figured she was half drunk. I was half drunk. Two halves make a whole. And there you go.

And. So, here we are.

But, see, why are we HERE. I think that's Patty's fault. Because I only did what I did to make her happy. I know, she's the thin one with the swagger -- but it wasn't always like that.

Do I love her? Yea. Do I hate her? Well, not all the way to hate. You know, on some days, I just want to stuff her in a refridgerator, lock the door, and roll it onto the highway. [Pause] But who hasn't felt that, right?

You see, the old man? He liked her. He liked her WAY too much. And when she got old enough? She pushed back hard. She hated him.

I did too, don't get me wrong. But he kept his hands off of me. Only not her.

Of course I have daddy issues, but not the way Patty does. I mean, the first time we ever, you know, really whacked anybody. It was a long time ago, I don't want to get into it. But when it was all over, for maybe the first time ever, she was really HAPPY.

Blood everywhere, and she had this big look of relief on her face.

It was like this big cloud lifted for her.

And one thing led to another. It was like a mission. We kept running into people who were just ASKING for it -- so we obliged.

And we had our own code -- Omerta? The law of silence? That was us, at least until now.

But honestly, I did it for Patty.

It's just, now what? I have to go talk to my sister about it.

BLACKOUT

Scene 8 -- Doris

DORIS

Frank's havin' a hard time. He's making himself crazy. I suppose I'm the one that got him thinking. Let me tell you, when you're dead, thinking is not the best strategy for coping. Me, I don't think. I just react. I'm much happier that way.

So here's how I'm reacting today. In a few days we have to figure out if want to go back down, or stick around here. My initial reaction? Why would I put myself through that again.

Here's another reaction, my life was screwed up enough that last time. So why do I think' I'd do it any better if I tried again.

And karma. Give me break. I have so much karmic debt I wouldn't know where to begin. I mean, just Frank. The things I put that man through. I never missed a chance to confuse him. He doesn't know which end is up.

So how is that gonna come back and bite me? I'm gonna marry some overbearing philosophy Nazi who'll make me think deep thoughts til my brain melts out of my ears? Wait, I think I already married a guy like that once. [She ponders] Damn. I think it was Frank -- that SOB.

You see. It's not easy. I have that last life, which was fun but maybe a little pathetic. And then all those other little trips that are coming back in bits and pieces. People I helped. People I hurt.

I just don't know what I'm gonna get. Or where they might put me. One thing about Level II. At least it's the devil you know. [She thinks about that] It's a figure of speech.

[Looking down] And then there's all those people still there. Maybe in another life I can finally teach my mother how to cook. The old man would love that.

[Looking down] Look at the poor guy. He's wasting away. No, it's too late for them. And me, too, I think. Really, why would I put myself through that?

BLACKOUT

Scene 9 -- Patty

PATTY

What the hell?

I'm serious. I don't know what the hell is going on. I was happy down there. I know I wasn't a model citizen. But I did what I did for my sister.

My sister. See, here's the thing. I love her, and I hate her. All the tough stuff -- I don't know, that was her idea. I just went along for the ride. Have you ever had somebody that you love so much? And at the same time you just want to take a NINE MILLIMETER and . . . [Pause] Never mind. You get the picture.

It's not Love-Hate, it's more like Love-Annoy, or Love-And-Drive-Me-Nuts.

Mom liked her best. I'm sure about that.

Anyway, you see, it was a long time ago. High School. There were these two boys. They wouldn't leave her alone. And then there was an "incident." It was ugly. It wasn't rape. But it was a split second from rape, only because I got there in time, thank God. I [Looking up] And I mean that.

So, there was a baseball bat, and I grabbed it. And then I pretended that their heads belonged to my father -- who is another story altogether. He hurt my mother so bad. Women. Drinkin'. I just put his head on their bodies, and, and bam! bam! it was done.

So, yea. They had it comin'. And me and Joanne. It was it's own little special bonding. And I just wanted to take care of her after that.

We didn't look for it, but creeps just found us. And we delivered the karma.

So, so now what? This place confuses me. I mean, really. Like I said before. What the hell.

BLACKOUT

Scene 10 -- Annie and Peter

ANNIE

What are you following me around for?

PETER

I don't know. I can't help it. You look familiar.

ANNIE

I'm not familiar, kid. I'm not anything.

PETER

Yes you are. I've seen you.

ANNIE

Never. You've never seen me, and you don't know me. Really, I'm busy.

PETER

What can you possibly be busy with.

ANNIE

I have [Pause] I have to

PETER

What?

ANNIE

I have some things to do. [Looking down] See that guy down there? I hated his guts, OK? He treated me like crap. And . . . [pause]

PETER

And what?

ANNIE

And I thought I'd return the favor.

He is a little incredulous.

PETER

You're kidding, right. You're kidding. You're
You're up here. Above it all. Staring at . . . the
HereAfter, and

ANNIE

You know, you do-gooders should go find a campfire and start a sing-along, OK.

PETER

I haven't seen any wood. . . .

ANNIE

Yea, well . . .

PETER

Or fire of any kind, for that matter.

ANNIE

OK . . .

PETER

. . . or marshmallows. Or anything.

ANNIE

OK, look, I just want to . .

PETER

I can see what you're doing.

ANNIE

What do you think I'm doing.

PETER

Your taking advantage of your situation to mete out some type of sick revenge. You think others haven't thought of that? Of course we have.

ANNIE

Yea, that's it. And you know why? Cause I have a right. I don't know what kind of life you had to put up with, but mine wasn't so rosy, OK. It was full of . . .

PETER

Full of people who took advantage. Pushed you around. Hurt you. Beat you. Bla bla bla! Hey. [yelling] I understand, but look around, OK. Look where you are? All that's over. And . . .

ANNIE

. . . and what?

PETER

And you think you're the only person who had it rough? Everybody has it rough, OK. Everybody suffers. . . But here, here you can forgive. What does it matter anymore? Don't you feel that? It's . . . I mean, everybody had . . .

ANNIE

What?

PETER

Loss. Heartache. Misery. Trouble.

ANNIE

Not like I had. Not like me, kid. My family . . . My own god-damned FAMILY practically killed me, OK . . . until I got away.

PETER

Well, at least you had a family. My mother dumped me on the stoop of a church.

She stops in her tracks in a sudden moment of . . . pain and realization.

ANNIE

[Pause] Where.

PETER

Where what?

ANNIE

Where did you get left. Where were you found.

PETER

New York City. Trinity Church -- downtown.

Another long pause. She has to sit down.

ANNIE

And there was a short note.

PETER

Yea.

ANNIE

That said . . .

PETER

That said "his name is Peter, and "

ANNIE

. . . and "tell him I love him."

They take a long, long look.

PETER

Of course "Tell him I love him." Every note on every left behind kid says "Tell him I love him."

ANNIE

The blanket was blue.

PETER

I'm a boy. You wrap little boys in blue blankets.

ANNIE

And it was raining that day.

Long pause. He is getting it, but he's not happy.

PETER

It was? [Pause]

ANNIE

Yea. It was raining. Sometime in August. I got pregnant when I was 15, just for spite. I was going to have a . . . to have . . . [Trailing away] . . . but I didn't. I just couldn't.

PETER

You couldn't?

ANNIE

No. Because I think making a baby was the only thing I had ever done that, maybe, could have turned out all right. But . . . But I was so young. I was so bitter.

PETER

[He takes it all in] Wow.

ANNIE

I stuck it out. I had the baby at a friend's house. And then I brought you to the church myself.

PETER

Wow. Wow, thanks for that. You brought me to the church yourself! What a sport. What a STAND UP girl you were. Abandoning your little bastard on the steps of the church. You are the god damned mother of the frickin' century, you are. You are the champion of all maternal. . . .

ANNIE

Stop. Just stop, will you. Stop it.

PETER

Stop what? Being just a little upset when I meet my mother for the first time after I'm DEAD? What the hell is there to be upset about? I mean, you made it all the way to dead. You must of thought, well, that's over. I dodged that bullet -- not having to face my own KID !!!

Long, long pause. They can hardly look at each other.

PETER (cont'd)
So . . .

ANNIE
So . . .

He has moved away from her and sits silently. She moves towards him. He moves a bit further away. She makes a move to walk away, and then finally gingerly sits next to him.

PETER
You know, I spent my whole life dreaming of you. You were like, like a song I heard once, ONCE!! and loved, but could never remember.

ANNIE
I know. I know. I swear. I swear I thought about you every day. Every day.

PETER
Yea, well . . .

ANNIE
Peter. Peter, I'm sorry. [She still can't quite touch him] I'm so sorry. [Pause] If only . . .

PETER
If only what . . .

ANNIE
If only I had it to do over. If only . . .

PETER
I don't think that matters now. I don't think any of that matters.

ANNIE
I . . . I love you. [Pause]

Peter takes a long, long look, and shakes his head, He begins to walk away. He looks back, and again moves almost off stage. He then stops abruptly.

PETER
Damn it !!! God Damn it !!!

He turns and looks back at her. This is very, very hard. He breathes out a long breath and shakes his head just once. He looks at her. He is incredulous at what he is about to say.

I love you, too.

67.

BLACKOUT

Scene 11 -- Jamie

As JAIMIE enters, there is another loud, ethereal gong. She looks up.

JAMIE

[Looking up] You have GOT to stop with that. I can't take it. All these memories. No wonder they break it to you slowly. It's a lot to process.

If you've been around a few times -- and not everybody has. Well, you get a different perspective.

I keep getting these flashes. And then I look at the people here. And we're all, kind of related.

Yea, me and Caitlin and Michael, we've been involved before.

But that guy Frank, and Doris? I think we lived all together in a hut somewhere.

A quiet celestial gong. And look of recognition on her face.

And me and that kid Eugene? He was my brother. Wow.

It's like we're all traveling in time together.

I always wondered about that. Were you ever at a party, or in the park, or nowhere special, and all of a sudden you see someone and, boom, you're drawn to them. And it's not the usual. It's not sexual, or anything. You just think, hey, I KNOW this person.

And you play twenty questions and you can't figure it out. But you know, somewhere, you two go way back.

It's a . . . Soul Family. That's how we got here. Sooner or later it hit all of us; we've been doing this for a long time.

And it's not just people you like. You know, in the last life I wanted to kill Caitlin. I hated her. But here we are. All evened up.

It's just that none of us really know where it goes from here. We can stay, and wait. Or we can go, and, you know, try to get it right.

Another celestial Gong. Very loud.

[Looking up] Enough, already. Will you CUT THAT OUT,

BLACKOUT

Scene 14 -- Don't I Know You

CAITLIN enters. Followed by Mary Lou, Beatrice, Agatha, and Virgil. In the last stanza, the full cast can enter and join.

CAITLIN

(Intro)

First it kind of hits you slow
Like a whisper in the night
And then it starts to grow
Like someone switching on a light

And for the first time you can see
With all the color shining through
You look around at perfect strangers and you say
Hey, Don't I Know You?

ALL

Don't I know you?
You were my brother
Don't I know you?
You were my friend
Don't I know you?
We've been this way before
And it looks like you and me
We're gonna be here to the end

I always wondered at the way
Just on a random kind of day
You see that face
Your eyes meet
You're heart skips a beat
You get shaky on your feet
And you know when you say it, it's true
Hey, Don't I Know You?

Don't I know you?
You were my sister
Don't I know you?
You wee my friend
Don't I know you?
We've been this way before
And it looks like you and me
We're gonna be here till the end

(Outro)

You know me
I know you

Around and through

I had you
You had me
Whole soulful family

Don't I know you?
Don't I know you?

End of Song / Exit All

Scene 13 - The Reckoning

Virgil and Beatrice are waiting both with clip boards.

VIRGIL

So, have we taken a straw pole.

BEATRICE

Best as we can. A lot of leaners.

VIRGIL

Leaning which way?

BEATRICE

Leaning towards staying. They think it's hard down there. Nobody wants to go back.

VIRGIL

It's not my problem. They don't like it? They should go back and fix it. What about the past life downloads? Is all of that complete.

BEATRICE

Well, we've just finished it up. They kind of figured it out now. They're all more or less related.

VIRGIL

Yup, that's the way we do it. One great big dysfunctional soul family at a time. [Hearing a ruckus] Here they come.

One by one, or two by two or more, the whole crew walks in. There are just a few chairs, and they fill up first.

CARLOTTA is the last to walk in, and there's nowhere to sit.

CARLOTTA

[Reprimanding] Hey !!! At one point or another, every one of you was one of my kids!! Can somebody bring me a chair.

Frank pulls a chair from the other section and lets her sit.

FRANK

Here you go, Momma.

CARLOTTA

Thanks, son.

For the next few seconds, everybody begins talking to each other. Virgil calls them to order.

VIRGIL

Hey, everybody. What do you think this is? Woodstock?? Settle down. OK, OK. Look, today is the day. It's day 49, and you get to decide about whether you're gonna go back, or stick around.

JOANNE

[Standing] It's my understanding that miss Beatrice over here was once one of us, right? So [to Beatrice] how long have you been here?

BEATRICE

[Calculating] A hundred and seven, no, a hundred and eight years, and a hundred and eight days and [looking at here watch] and how about that, a hundred and eight minutes.

JOANNE

All right. I'm gonna call that a long time. So you never made it to Level III.

BEATRICE

Still waiting.

VIRGIL

She's still waiting. So, anyone? Anyone want to make the leap back down. New lives await. A fresh start. Diapers, bottles. Breast milk !!! Loving arms.

Everybody remains in the Staying section. Virgil looks them over.

Nobody? Nobody wants to go back?

PATTY

It's too damn hard, Virgil. Really. We've been there. We've done that.

FRANK

Yea, why put ourselves through it?

Everyone chimes in "It's too hard. We can't do it. We just want to stay and relax. I'm not going anywhere."

Then, the Portal to Level III begins to light up, and there is a very loud noise. Everyone is quiet and all eyes are on the door. The noise stops.

ENTER MARY and EUGENE through the Portal. They are dressed rather stylishly. She has a dress on. He is in a jacket and tie. Everyone is more or less stunned. Mary walks halfway down stage.

MARY

Well, isn't anyone going to say hello.

Everyone rises and says hello. There's a commotion, and then everyone takes their seat.

VIRGIL

Welcome back. And may I ask. What the hell are you doing here? Pardon my French.

EUGENE

We decided to come back.

General amazement. Come back? Really? Come back. Virgil quiets them down.

MARY

It was beautiful there. It really was. Peaceful. Big. Full of great people. Amazing people. And food !! Crullers and chocolate . . .

VIRGIL

Chocolate?

MARY

Everywhere.

Oohs and aaahs from the crowd.

EUGENE

It's like nothing you're ever seen -- or eaten! Beyond your wildest imagination.

MARY

It's, it's almost heaven. [Pause.]

PETER

So why didn't you stay.

General mumbling. Yea, why didn't you stay.

EUGENE

It was too nice.

MARY

Too wonderful.

PETER

Too nice?

MARY

It was so nice that, well, we didn't want to be there alone. We wanted to go back, [looking down] down there, to help everyone come back there with us. Are you ready, Eugene. Can we go now?

VIRGIL

Now . . . is the time.

EXIT stage left MARY and EUGENE waving as they go. There is silence.

PETER

[To Annie] Mom. Mom, let's go, too. Let's go back. Let's go and try to make it all right again.

Annie looks at him.

ANNIE

I

PETER

[Holding out his hand] It'll be all right. Let's go. Let's go.

EXIT PETER and ANNIE exit stage left. Patty and Joanne stand up.

PATTY

[To Joanne] Come on, killer. Let's face it. We ain't getting out of here any other way.

They head for the exit Patty looks back.

[To Everyone] Well, what are you waiting for. [To Carlotta] Momma. Come on. Come on, who are we kidding. Let's get on with it.

CARLOTTA

[To Mary Lou] Come on, Fades Away. Maybe you'll get lucky and you can finally learn some Spanish.

Patty, Joanne, Carlotta, and Mary Lou EXIT

DORIS

[Rising] But it's all a dream.

FRANK

[Taking her hand] Let's dream our way back down to earth, OK. Wherever you wind up? I'll find you. I want to keep being a pain in your ass.

Frank and Doris exit. Jamie and Caitlin rise.

CAITLIN

Look. I haven't figured this out yet. But it looks like we're even.

JAMIE

Are you sure? Do we really know what we're getting into?

CAITLIN

What? We can possibly be more confused? Let's go.

Jaimie and Caitlin exit. Allison rises.

ALLISON

[To Agatha] Come on, kid. What are we gonna wait around here for?

AGATHA

But

ALLISON

But nothin'. Hey, maybe we'll BOTH be Red Sox fans. In Boston !!

Agatha and Allison exit, but Agatha gives a very long look back at the two who are left, Virgil and Beatrice. Virgil and Beatrice take a long look at the crowd that just left. They are on the apron, the curtain closing slowly behind them.

VIRGIL

[To Beatrice] Well, that's that.

BEATRICE

Yup. That's that.

VIRGIL

Well, not quite. I have one more bit of business to attend to.

He pulls a yellow scroll out of his toga. Much like the one that he took out for Eugene.

VIRGIL (cont'd)

[Haltingly -- he's a little choked up.] Whereas, etc. etc. etc. has fulfilled all obligations etc. etc. etc., [He reads quietly to himself for a brief time- and takes a deep breath.] Served with compassion and understanding, etc. etc. bla bla bla. So, here, you're in, kid. We're gonna miss you.

BEATRICE
Level III

VIRGIL
No.

BEATRICE
Level IV?

VIRGIL
Be serious.

BEATRICE
I don't understand.

VIRGIL
You get to go back down. You've only had one life, remember. But you've learned a lot. Now you get to put it to good use.

BEATRICE
But . . .

VIRGIL
You've been released from your duties. What else can I say? I'm gonna miss you. I really am. It won't be the same without you.

BEATRICE
I don't know what to say.

VIRGIL
First time in a hundred and eight years.

They give each other a long hug. Beatrice pulls away and starts to leave.

BEATRICE
But what will you do? I mean, it's a lot to run on your own.

VIRGIL
Don't worry about me. Things will work out. They always do. Have a great trip. We'll, we'll see you on the rebound.

She gives one last look and exits. Virgil is alone and sits, taking a long breath. Enter AGATHA very cautiously.

AGATHA
[Startling him just a little.] Virgil.

VIRGIL

Agatha! [He stands] What are you doing here? I
thought . . .

AGATHA

I've been thinking.

VIRGIL

. . . Never a good sign.

AGATHA

No, well. I was talking to Beatrice. And I know she's
on her way down.

VIRGIL

[Slowly] Yeeeeees.

AGATHA

And, well. I know she only had one life just like
me. And I know that she thought that maybe for her,
staying was a good idea.

VIRGIL

Yeeeeees.

AGATHA

And, well. It seems maybe there's a job
opening.[Pause] . . . and . . . well. [Pause]

He looks her over.

VIRGIL

The pay is terrible.

AGATHA

I know.

VIRGIL

The hours long.

AGATHA

I know.

VIRGIL

You'll begin getting taller immediately, and you may
never stop.

AGATHA

[Excited now] I know! I know!! So ? ? ?

VIRGIL

Welcome to the Level II staff, kid. It's you me.

AGATHA

[Reaching into her pocket] Chocolate sir?

Music comes up on All The Way To Wonderful

AGATHA (cont'd)

[Singing] Rocky beginning.

VIRGIL

[Singing] Losing, and winning.

TOGETHER

Still every day, the world keeps on spinning.

AGATHA

Still someday I hope to make it all, all the way to wonderful.

VIRGIL

Wonderful

AGATHA

Wonderful

Curtain opens. The CAST enters and sings.

ALL

*I'M SEEING THE WORLD HOW IT MIGHT BE / I KNOW I
CAN FIND IT, THE PEACE AND THE LOVE / I WON'T LET
A PAST LIFE DEFINE ME / I'LL GET THERE I KNOW
THOUGH I MIGHT NEED SOME HELP FROM ABOVE*

*DOING MY BEST BUT IT'S ALL NEW TO ME / AND NOW
WITH A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE I SEE / BUT STILL I KNOW
SOMEDAY I'LL MAKE IT ALL/ ALL THE WAY TO WONDERFUL
/ WONDERFUL / WONDERFUL.*

CURTAIN