

JAMES DEAN AND THE HIGHWAY OF DEATH

by
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Registered with Writers Guild of America, East

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CHARACTERS:

JIMMY DEAN-the movie star, 24

LUCIA, THE DEVIL-appears to be a woman

ARCHANGEL GABRIEL-pure spirit/man or woman

6 TORMENTED SOULS: Ma, Dizzy, Pier, Jane,

2 PATRIARCHS: the Reverend, Papa

Voices of Stanislavski, Orson Welles, Marilyn Monroe

SCENE

An empty highway. 1955.

"The Highway of Death", Cholame. CA. Sundown. September 30, 1955. We are in the mind of James Dean during his last moments on earth.

At Rise: JAMES DEAN bursts onto the highway like in a stark dream. Thrum of passing cars.

JIMMY (Horrorified, to self): It's got to be here. One minute I'm hugging the wheel--. Next I'm-- . . . How can you lose a Porsche? (Angry, frustrated, screams): Who took my car?

(Headlights flash)

JIMMY (Rushing about) Stop!!!!!!(Panicky) Didn't that guy see me? (Shouting after cars) Wait!

(Shadows cross highway, clanking chains)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Whisper nastily): This way.

JIMMY (Defiant): What's that?

LUCIA: The Souls in Torment.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Follow us.

STAGE MANAGER: Marching Sounds

SOULS IN TORMENT (Whisper nastily): Leave this compound body of flesh and blood.

(Jimmy takes out a switchblade)

SOULS IN TORMENT: Let go grasping, yearning, attachment.

JIMMY: No closer.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Abandon all the unfinished business.

JIMMY (To Souls, agitated): If you're here to escort me out, it won't work. I know I'm not alone. I ride in on the shoulders of all you dead pilots.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Resolve relationships. Say good-bye.

JIMMY: (Breathing heavily, sad) This must be a dream. I'll do an acting exercise, an overall sensation-like being in the shower-

LUCIA (Entering, slyly): "Welcome to the life review."
(Extending her hand) Lucia. Princess of Darkness.

JIMMY: I thought the devil was a man.

GABRIEL (Rushing in): No that was the guy who ate the apple.

LUCIA: Quiet, Gabriel.

GABRIEL (Boldly): The Archangel.

LUCIA (To Gabriel): I want you out of here.

JIMMY (Fearful. Points overhead): Where did he go?

LUCIA: To get the Tibetan Scroll of Dying.

JIMMY: The what?

LUCIA (Quickly): Gurus keep a chart of dying souls to be purified. I don't like it, but I have to use it.

JIMMY: I'm not a Buddhist--I was briefly a Quaker.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Prepare for the crossover.

JIMMY (Scared): I can't DIE. I'm a-- superstar, a public commodity. People want to consume me. (Taking paper from his pocket) I have Marlon Brando's number.

LUCIA (Laughing, imitates Brando): "Stel-la. Stel-la. I know who Brando is? Julie Harris? Liz Taylor? Monty Clift?

(Bell tolls)

LUCIA (Calling heinous off stage): "A mindful bell will mark time till you're pronounced d-e-a-d."

SOULS IN TORMENT: D-e-a-d.

LUCIA: (Entering, viciously): It feels like an hour earth time but it's the blink of an eye.

GABRIEL (Entering, fearfully): Oh and you must apologize to the three.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Fearful): Apparitions. Beware!

GABRIEL (Whispers aghast): Take them in a tiny bit at a time so-

LUCIA: So your nervous system can stay in place.

STAGE MANAGER: Light zings by.

GABRIEL: Duck! (Cringing): It's trolls looking for corpses.

LUCIA: Boys' hearts are a favorite Raven delicacy.

GABRIEL: Don't believe her.

LUCIA (To Gabriel): OUT! Be prepared to lose everything.

GABRIEL: Soon as it starts to get warm it'll be your time.

LUCIA (To Gabriel): Evacuate.

JIMMY: Why did he go?

LUCIA: His field is too porous; I've grown accustomed to living in a heated environment. Now for the life review. We will just define what you did. You may not like it; it may upset you; feel free to disagree.

JIMMY: Wha . . .What's that? Luminous and see through.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Warning): Watch for your mother.

GABRIEL (Unnerved, rushing in): She was so desperate to meet you, she called the ghost assistance hotline to see when the most wind was available.

LUCIA: (To Gabriel) Out. (To Jimmy) If she can agitate you she can get attention. In my world we don't move for the extraneous ghost, the extraneous ghost moves for us. I will eavesdrop; eavesdroppers were originally courtiers who hung out on the eaves of the King's bedroom listening in. Send her off whenever you like.

(Lucia snaps her fingers, an ugly clicking sound.)

LUCIA: Ah there's their awful bungalow in Santa Monica.

MA (Gasping): Jimmy.

JIMMY (Flabbergasted) Mom, if it's you, what was . . .my age when you died and our secret book?

MA: When you were nine you used to sit by my sick bed and read The Little Prince.

JIMMY: (Breaks down crying) Oh Ma. (Thrilled) It's you.

LUCIA (Quoting with mockery) "I lived alone without anyone I could really talk to, until I had an accident with my plane in the Desert."

(Music, Saint-Saens, "The Swan.")

LUCIA (Laughing): "Something was broken in my engine. I set myself to attempt the difficult repairs alone."

(Ma's ghost drifts about.)

JIMMY (Desperate, scans area): Where did you go? It's like you're there and not there. (Calls) Help me. Like the pilot in The Little Prince, flying from Paris to Saigon faster than anyone- I'm marooned in a damaged vehicle. I set my course like radar and I need my car! Speak!

LUCIA: Ghosts can't say much.

MA (Whispers with difficulty): We just get a few whispers per visit.

LUCIA: Because they frighten people.

MA: But we make sounds... Thru the trees, water, wind.

LUCIA: They can move things-- Flick lights, time travel. Beware.

MA (With pained difficulty): Son, I'm doomed-- If you die (Gasping, searching) dishonored. You need to apologize.

JIMMY: If I repent for something, I don't know in the hell what, can they revive me? Administer a native rehydration treatment like they did in Little Prince?

LUCIA: (Odious laugh): But the outer body and elements are dissolving...

MA: (Speaking breathy with great difficulty) Never go beyond where you ought to go. I look in your eyes and I can see somebody in there. They're trying to see what's inside you. Don't say a lot to beings like that.

(Fluttering of wings, Ghost leaves.)

JIMMY: She's gone.

LUCIA (Sly): Good. I like her more when I see her less. Well you have to ride the river of death alone and let it carry you. We all have secret plan to create confidence on the inside by getting validation on the outside. But your mother can't help you now.

GABRIEL (Sneaks in weakly): Maybe she come back after a wee nap in the afternoon

LUCIA: This is my gig. Stand 12 feet back.

(Gabriel retreats. PSSH sound of rain.)

JIMMY: (Uneasy, checks his shirt) It's pouring but I'm not getting wet.

LUCIA: Are you sorry? For yelling at your mother.

JIMMY: Is Ma sorry she screwed Dad and birthed a bastard? Is she sorry she made me ride on the train with her casket, telling me, that while it looked like she died, she had not? Her body was too heavy to take with her to another planet.

GABRIEL: Even angry feelings can be untrue.

LUCIA: You're glad she's dead!

GABRIEL: He's unclear.

LUCIA (To Jimmy): Relieved.

JIMMY: (Trying not to cry, angrily) I begged her to see the doctor, not to banish me to my aunt's.

LUCIA: You defiled your mom's tomb . . . broke that jar with morning glories on it. Squashed the hyacinths, tulips, daffodils that rose up from death.

JIMMY: No, I acted there—

LUCIA: You should have worked in the cornfields.

JIMMY: I practiced elocution.

LUCIA: Fed the pigs. Repaid your relatives.

JIMMY: They knew I needed speed. To go to other stars, and conquer them. (Calloused) Men move ahead because women give up—I decided to be and was fogging great without any of them.

LUCIA: You put fame before family?

JIMMY: Wrong--!! I pursued the seed of glory they planted in me. I studied poetry while others slept; I used to hide in a closet with a book and a flashlight.

LUCIA: Quoting Shakespeare, no doubt.

JIMMY: No: anyone can do that. I learned how to sound like myself. And how to get the blood on the page. . .

LUCIA (Sardonic): I know. I know. You wanted to create a mythic world with roses that didn't die and volcanoes that weren't extinct.

JIMMY: Look, have you ever had the feeling it's not in your hands. I had this ambition wedged inside and I had no control. I thought it'd be easy. When they talk of success, they talk about reaching the top. Well, there's no top. You've got to go on and on, never stop at any point, till you are 9,19, 29. All I wanted was a gleam of immortality. Actors are either famous or forgotten.

LUCIA (Calls out): Punish him!

(Jimmy goes through several shocks.)

JIMMY: AhAh! My chest feels like it's stuck on something.

GABRIEL: Scream, "You're sorry."

LUCIA: Stand back. The eight-foot rule. (To Gabriel) Don't upstage me when it's not your show. Do you apologize? Yes or no?

JIMMY (Shouts): I'm not repenting till someone finds my Porsche! (Looks about): That car has my book of patrons, the scripts I'm supposed to consider—My photographer was following me. (Picks up glass shard from a windshield) God I look awful. My eyes are bloody. My skin, yellow. Where are my glasses?

(He bolts panicked, runs to where he hopes his car is. Cars whizz past.)

JIMMY: (Fiercely) I had a . . . accident somewhere. Help! H-e-l-p! (Doubles over suddenly): It's hard to inhale-- (Cries) Ma! Oh, sweet . . . Do something, somebody. Call someone. Get transportation.

(The Red Scroll looms up in Lucia's hand.)

LUCIA (Reads): "Names of Dying to be Purified: Jimmy Dean."

GABRIEL (Consoling): Only the body dies.

JIMMY (Obstinate): But I love the body and the earth. I love the road---the sky, my friends, music, my Porsche— (SOUND of racing wheels, which fade when he speaks

JIMMY:(Suddenly recalling, shocked): Oh no. . . I . . .I'm recalling. This huge Ford--was crossing my lane. I floored my car--But my foot got stuck--I slammed into this tank and I careened off-- (Terrified) into a telephone pole-- Something exploded.--Car filled with smoke and I was moving and coughing--

(Vision of squashed Porsche)

LUCIA (Triumphant): Come claim your spyder!

JIMMY: You knew! (Sickened) --Oh no--Is that me--Slung onto the passenger seat. (Obstinately)Get me to . . .some hospital. . . .

(Vision of the Red Scroll)

LUCIA: You are out of time.

(Bells toll)

LUCIA (Gleeful, reads the Red Scroll): You've failed the first visit.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Chanting, and dancing): "You better check. You better check. You better check Mr. Popeye. You better check Mr. Popeye. You better check dat spinach cuz someone's in the danger zone.

(A lush salon. Quiet wailing from other rooms.)

JIMMY: WHAT'S THAT?

LUCIA. Welcome to my Palace of Creativity. You don't have stomach more visitors.

(Wailing low throughout scene)

LUCIA: You can stay with me now.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Any artist who is anybody eventually comes here.

LUCIA: We have a team in perpetuity that reminds the public that your great performances weren't luck.

JIMMY (Breathing in): What's that s perfumed smell?

LUCIA: Poppy juice. Have a sip.

JIMMY (Squinting out): That's not...Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift?

LUCIA: They visit occasionally. Shakespeare. Let me--

SHAKESPEARE (V.O.): Lets discuss acting.

LUCIA: And Orson Welles!

ORSON (V.O.) (To Jimmy): You must meet Stanislavski.

JIMMY: The great Russian--?

STANISLAVSKI (V.O.) (To Jimmy): How does American get touted genius actor?

MARILYN (V.O.): He's the youngest member of The Actors Studio. Oh Jimmy.

JIMMY: Marilyn?

MARILYN (V.O.): I'm not dead yet but hold me a place. Below my robe I am seductively naked. DRINK.

LUCIA: Right. Actors who get opportunity are the ones-- who don't stop to see what stings but keep leaning into the front lines even post mortem.

GABRIEL (Racing in): Don't drink the poppy juice...

JIMMY: I'm falling asleep.

GABRIEL: Oh no. You're making the transition.

JIMMY (Sleepily): What can I do?

GABRIEL (Taking food from her cape) I would advise nutritional therapy. (Feeds him) And mentally choosing to rest. When we die we can either choose to rest for a while before we reincarnate or--

JIMMY: The universe looks holographic.

GABRIEL: You're reconnecting in the universal field where everything is happening simultaneously.

(Humming SOUND)

GABRIEL: Here, let me massage you back. When I do cranial work with the client, I feel how they are feeling and I feed them physical energy from being in their field. My angels and my guides give me clairvoyant info in my left ear. Sometimes its colors, clouds, lava coming out the body.

JIMMY (Quoting The Little Prince): "All the millions and millions of stars."

GABRIEL: There's still time if you can wake up.

JIMMY: Why is it so hot!

LUCIA (Sinister laughter): You're off track. Gabriel get back 8 feet or I'm banish you. Someone is here and he only has a few minutes.

GABRIEL: Oh no. I'd done what I could to save you and if it gets so awful that everything I do becomes explosive, I'll look at what else is possible.

(Gabriel runs off.)

LUCIA: Thank god, that annoying being has left! Your Dad accepts your apology!

JIMMY: But I didn't apologize.

LUCIA: He finds you totally interesting because when you die, he'll be totally loaded. Since you have no will, he'll get everything. ... Oh here's your favorite cartoon.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Sing/dance, triumphant, punching at the sky.): You're Popeye the sailor man. You live in a garbage can. You are here every day now matter what they say. You're Popeye the sailor man!

JIMMY: I'm confused. Wasn't I supposed to apologize?

LUCIA: You can if you want. But it's totally unnecessary now.

(SOUND of buzzing)

JIMMY: Why are these flies after me?

LUCIA: Flies have a great fondness for blood.

(SOUND of growling and breathing)

LUCIA: Your dad's listening. He just wants to know his rights legally.

DAD (V.O.): Sorry son I'm a little deaf.

LUCIA: In the future, be yourself but-bigger. As a double

Scorpio, allow yourself to be drawn to the brilliant dark.

(Distant sirens. We're at the accident scene.)

JIMMY: Oh No. The sky is black, popping with light!

(Gabriel hurries in lugging something.)

GABRIEL: There is always only light; it moves the stone.

(Squeaking of wheels. Gabriel sets up the massage table.)

GABRIEL: Please Lucia give me a chance to talk to him alone. He can learn to say he's sorry and mean it. So many parts of your review will be easier for you if he does.

LUCIA: But he is already crossing over.

GABRIEL (Guardedly): Instead of waiting for darkness he might begin to embrace it.

LUCIA: He is not prepared. Are you going to cleanse his lungs his liver his kidneys and intestines. The animal he is hasn't been purified at all. There's no time for special diets, detox protocols, and supplements.

GABRIEL. But I feel a deep knowing and energetic vibration.

LUCIA: You are not an expert.

GABRIEL: I know how to rid his body of negative energy. I'll use apple cider vinegar wash. I won't light sage and set off the smoke detectors.

LUCIA: You're not equipped to work with these deeper patterns. They need someone who isn't as much of an energy-sponge as you are. His cold frequencies haven't passed over and are replicating their unhappy end-stories.

(A shadowy girl appears.)

DIZZY (Wailing): Jim-my! Jim-my

LUCIA: The second apparition is here. No back ways allowed now; prepare for bad weather.

(Wind bays. Snow falls.)

DIZZY (Anguished): It's Dizzy. Don't you remember?

LUCIA: Her voice had a wonderful sound of yes. Nice to have a girl you can finish off and noodle with as long as you want.

JIMMY (Frightened): I haven't had many relationships.

LUCIA: Ha. You were having sex with every thing you could get your hands on.

JIMMY (Defiant): I wanted a female like a male. One hard enough to walk with me through challenges—

JIMMY: But soft enough to give me. . . .

LUCIA: Animalistic love.

JIMMY: (Justifying): Dizzy was someone with--

LUCIA: With a high sexual drive. You met her at a rehearsal club. She was

JIMMY: She did what she wanted. . . .She didn't epitomize good.

LUCIA: You were on the criminal side of things. Embrace your masculinity!

(MUSIC: Ravel, Daphnis et Chloé)

JIMMY: Dizzy and I shared this hotel room. She became my girl. I didn't get her pregnant.

LUCIA Careful—You were in NYC to escape. (Pause) Someone?

JIMMY: No one.

LUCIA: Something went wrong. It was Pavlovian. Dizzy said settle in and you were gone. You had to couple with the beautiful—

(Swish of cold wind baying. Snow.)

JIMMY (Looks up): Is it snowing? Wha--t?

LUCIA: We are moving back in time.

(Dizzy appears, her face wrinkled with grief.)

DIZZY (Sobbing): Jimmy. Don't go. I'm begging you to stay in your heart. I'm always interested in whatever you can come up with that helps us be in love. I know marriage is unaccepta...I don't expect you to be faithful. Or even responsible. I can manage for you to go back and forth and not know where you are. I know you have this. . .deep ... (Fiendish) You're unstable.

JIMMY: No, I'm wild. Unstable people shoot themselves and others. I'm an explorer.

LUCIA: There is something triumphant about you.

JIMMY: Look. All men think about different relationships.

DIZZY: Most drop them.

JIMMY: But I said, fugg it, I'll try this and that— See what I like! In ancient Greece you could do anything you wanted physically and sexually to people you owned—

DIZZY: But that wasn't good.

LUCIA: You were proclaiming it.

JIMMY (Anxiously to Dizzy): I can't get tied down by being a "boyfriend" or a husband. You got to be careful, watch me and have the courage to cut me.

DIZZY: Can't we at least get engaged? Exchange rings?

LUCIA: He's from California; can't live without excess.

JIMMY: We let the thing go on too long. You should go off with that dance troupe—

DIZZY: Can't we set a tentative date?

JIMMY (Wailing to Dizzy): I can't marry you.

DIZZY: Why not?

JIMMY: I'm old. I'm not 18. If you tell me what to do I'm going to resent it.

DIZZY: This can't be happening. The last thing I want to do is sit up in bed and think about how you won't commit.

JIMMY: You're shocked, and I'm sorry. But I gotta live hard. I gotta live true. And in the end, I gotta have (Pause) something (Pause) else.

DIZZY (Sobbing): OH NO NO NO.

JIMMY (Cries out, suddenly) I did not mean to make you bleed. I need to get behind the wheel of - - When I'm under this dysfunction. I need my car!!!!.

DIZZY: I want you to tell me how much you love me. Say you're not going. I don't want to hear that.

JIMMY: I'm sorry. What am I supposed to do?

DIZZY: Buy a lock for your thighs!

LUCIA: Seek out no darling tiger girl of love.

JIMMY: I talk to a counselor every week about how to decide.

DIZZY: Talking keeps you from acting. I fear I'm somebody for you to go to between weekends. It's a full time job waiting for your return. Please! I won't worry you about the affairs I don't know about, it's the ...

JIMMY (Shivering to Dizzy): What am I supposed to do? Leave soot marks on your wrists as a sign, that there is no way out thru me? I'm doing everything I can to--to break it to-you-I'm holding on to the cliff.

DIZZY: We could elope. It wouldn't cost anything.

JIMMY (Guiltily): Marriage is for the middle part of life thirty to fifty. . . I have to prioritize people who have the power to change my life now.

DIZZY: I'm not important?

JIMMY: One or two artists make the billionaire's list, move through water like a big target, throw gold on the earth, and see who scatters.

DIZZY: You said you loved me.

JIMMY: I did? And I do.

Okay. You wanna know! (Pause, awkward) There is someone--

LUCIA: Your rich patrons: Mr. Rich. Mr. Richer. Mr. Richest.

JIMMY (To Dizzy): It's nobody you know--

LUCIA: And Mr. Obscenely Rich.

JIMMY: Okay to be cast in most plays, I have to be (Pause) totally free. I mean 500 boys trying out for one role, what are the odds.

LUCIA: You are an auditioner not an actor.

JIMMY: Right. I'd read the play, memorize the sides, wait for hours to get an audition slot. Then I have to read with the stage manager peeping my cues. And in the midst of it, hear, "Next."

LUCIA: It's a full time job losing an audition.

JIMMY: I phoned every casting director ten times.

LUCIA: Less than 3% of American actors are employed.

JIMMY: I pretend I haven't called before.

LUCIA: You have to behave like a cabbage when you phone so much.

JIMMY: Hidden contracts rule casting.

JIMMY: Each time, I believed only this once would I do "the thing." I planned to stop and enter the priesthood of the great classic artists. Survive shipwreck by floating on a wooden coffin like Ishmael. Leave my body on earth to go home to my planet like the Little Prince. (Attacking)

I thought later I'd find my special flower. Later love could be a sacred experience.

DIZZY: (Bawling): I don't forgive you!!

JIMMY: (To Lucia) I did a lot with Dizzy, but she hated my . . .my male friends. . . Thought they were too chummy.

CONTINUED

DIZZY: (To Souls) Put him into the pit of darkness! Let him become a beast!

LUCIA (to Jimmy): Popeye has fallen to the underworld. You'll need something stronger than spinach to escape.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Slouch on hats and chant) So?

"Popeye started searching doing his famous steps.
Everybody's doing it now, man it's hep.
But there might be some, who ain't in the know.
So I'm here to tell you just how it go.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Screaming, softly crying): No connective tissue. Trying to find an exit. Looking to get out of hell.

LUCIA (Correcting, charismatic): Hades. The Abode of the Spirits of the Dead.

JIMMY (Terrified, looking about): Whoa! I've a weird feeling I know that person in that casket over there.

LUCIA: Come. Let me show you our kissing room.

JIMMY (Defiant): Back! I've come far from ...and I'm not going below.

LUCIA: But these are starlets and producers who adored your work.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Hostile, rebuking): You said you loved us.

JIMMY (Restlessly wipes brow): I . . .I was a very sensitive disturbed person.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Vicious, agonized): Take me. Choose.
Free me.

JIMMY (Confused) Exploring alternatives has its own pain.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Violent): Which of us do you want—which,
which!

JIMMY: I don't know what I did to each of you but you
artists got to love the love.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Agonized, in pain): Help! Don't leave.

JIMMY: So? You get a little bit of everything but you
don't get enough of what you want. That's life with an
actor. (Grabbing at pain in his chest) You gotta see. I'm
a heart beat with nothing else. Boys like me always
promising things. You need a sense of humor to be my fan,
otherwise you just can't take it. I can't smile you back
to life. (Scrunching over, coughing) My chest is
exploding.

(Bell tolls 3 times)

LUCIA (Gleeful): We're on the half hour.

JIMMY (hallucinating): Where is that guardian angel?

(Archangel Gabriel rushes in, takes out wet towels, bowl
of hot water.)

GABRIEL (Urgent/aggressive): Think about your purest
experience.

LUCIA: He has no god self.

GABRIEL (To Jimmy): I work with spirit guides.

LUCIA: Who are unavailable!

GABRIEL (To Jimmy): Let me towel wrap you.

LUCIA (Mocking): All healing doesn't come from god—

GABRIEL (To Jimmy) Do you connect with any loved ones who

have passed over?

JIMMY: My mother, my...

LUCIA: Living in the city—that dense level of people, he is compromised, bombarded!

GABRIEL: I've furthered a lot of transitions. Contacted angelic beings and loved ones to help souls ascend.

JIMMY (Terrified): Oh god. My arm just popped up. I can't pull it down.

LUCIA: He's lost his real self. He's decomposing!

JIMMY: Oh no! I'm outside my body.

(50s song from broken radio): "Be Bob A Luba, She's My baby, Be Bop A Luba..."

JIMMY (Appalled): Whoa! I'm a hundred feet up and south of the accident. They are unwrapping me from aluminum and lifting me onto the gurney. (Relieved): Air is coming from my nostrils. But my forehead and chest . . .uh. . . are caved in!

(Clicking of cameras)

LUCIA (Chuckling): Lest we go through all of this madness, divine as it is, without a proper record, someone has hired a fabulous photographer.

JIMMY (Panicked): I'm struggling to breathe. And someone is--doing a photo shoot! (Cries out): Hey, I'm in trouble. I've got blood . . .everywhere, splattered on my hands . . . my legs----and a bright pool flowing from my chest.

GABRIEL: Let go.

JIMMY: Oh. Help! I'm leaving the planet, going beyond the stars, the galaxy, beyond anything physical. This world gone and grass and hills. Everyone I loved is gone!

GABRIEL (Powerful): Enter the clear awareness.

JIMMY (Frustrated screams): I can't leave earth. Lose my job, my house, all my relationships, and my mind.

LUCIA: To come back, you'll need Pier's forgiveness.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Romantic): Anna Maria Pierangeli.

LUCIA: Part goddess. Part cat. She was useful because she was so beautiful.

JIMMY: Pier. Yes. (Blots forehead, ashamed)--The studio fixed us up for--.

LUCIA: A fake love affair--because--you hadn't dated girls . . . since Dizzy.

(Angelic music, "Salve Regina.")

JIMMY (Pointing her out): Oh no. There she is, doe like green eyes, light brown hair, my Italian icon.

LUCIA: Add water and stir. With her things came so easily.

JIMMY: I think of her and she appears, the way I left her.

LUCIA: But you couldn't get Pier on the set without talking to her father.

PIER: Papa has a very strong, "What will people think."

PAPA: What will people think? Che cosa penserà la gente?

JIMMY: Her father warped her. . . .Planning the wedding.

PIER: Papa wants a Catholic wedding.

PAPA: I want a Catholic wedding. Che voglio un matrimonio cattolico.

PIER: Papa spends his time working to sanctify us.

PAPA: You need to be connected to God. Devi essere collegato a Dio.

JIMMY: There's this thing about Italians. You think you're completely normal.

PIER: He wants us to talk to a priest.

PAPA: Talk to a priest. Parla con un prete.

JIMMY (Laughs, nervous to Pier): The only way I can say no to you is to not be around. For blocks of time you don't know me.

PAPA: I hired a wedding planner, secured the Church, and had marriage counseling with the priest.

PIER: I'm pregnant. (Waits for response)

PAPA (Yelling): A baby no. ~~Un bambino no.~~

SOULS IN TORMENT: You do it once and you live with it!

PAPA (Raging): You are pregnant? Un bambino è incinta?

LUCIA: She should have used protection. I still do. There is no menopause for reptiles.

JIMMY (To Pier): The most beautiful Italian actress can't be pregnant. If it's a question ...of...a special arrang--

PIER (Heartbroken): I want to keep it.

JIMMY (Mad): What?. . . I can't have babies—I've got. . . 4 days between pictures . . . I live on highways. Two-way roads with lots of obstruction. Pullouts where it's hard to see. (Compassionately) Come here. We can still have intercourse.

PIER: You're not even worried!

JIMMY: For me it's a complete disconnect.

PIER: Pregnancy is always hard; it's always impossible.

JIMMY: It's a total traffic jam. (Suddenly, high strung) And to be an actor in America is not to allow for affection. (Hot, breathes quickly) We can't have children. We're too close to suicide.

SOULS IN TORMENT: An actor can't feel like other humans. He can't give himself completely. Or he'll suffer completely.

JIMMY: I love you, Pier . . .can't that be enough?

PIER (Seductively): Have you forgotten The Little Prince?
"You are responsible for those you made love you."

JIMMY: I was nice to you! Made each "date" be as much as
it could be for as long as it could be.

PIER: You led me to believe you wanted a family.

JIMMY: No you were the one testing for the more ecstatic
experience?

PIER: I wanted you--entirely!

JIMMY (Accusing): Look. I cried and cried. I was feeling
things I'd never felt before. (Throat dry) Trying to
partake of emotion to the fullest, I allowed myself-- to
love complete-- (Wets his lips)--and then when I lost, I
suffered completely. First it was a dull pain. Then it got
teeth. Alone at night when the phone rang, it scorched my
mind when it wasn't you.

(We hear Bach's Toccata in F major)

JIMMY: The only way I could face the emptiness was to play
Bach on the HiFi. . .Hang a noose from my ceiling with a
sign that read, "We also remove bodies," and fall asleep,
looking at that noose.

PIER: I called you from St. Timothy's Catholic Church in
Westwood.

JIMMY: When I heard you were getting married to Victor
Damone, an Italian singer, you barely knew, I--

PAPA (to Jimmy): You can't ride your motorbike up here.
This is a wedding rehearsal. Non si può andare in moto
qui. Si tratta di una prova di nozze.

JIMMY (Racing the engine): I'll gun it till Pier comes
out.

(SOUNDS of racing exhaust)

PIER: Caro mio Jimmy.

JIMMY: Pier, "They'll bury me in a racing helmet, a steering wheel beside me, if you don't come with me.

PAPA (Blaring): You can't run off. Non si può scappare.

LUCIA: So legally you wedded.

JIMMY: I asked her to live with me, not marry me—

PIER (Crazed): The me of me doesn't think you're asking this.

JIMMY (Calls out): If you say no, I'll--

PIER: I don't care if you play Bach, sleep, staring at a noose.

(Drum roll SOUNDS)

PIER: You have no idea what I did for our wedding: picked out the hors d'oeuvres, cake, gifts, engraved announcements, napkins, programs, engagement photos, dresses, shoes, groomsmen suits, press notices. Reserved hotel, hall, church, musicians, organist, limousines, honeymoon spa, bridal bouquets, and airplane tickets. All we have to be cancelled.

JIMMY: Oh Pier--I'm in limbo. Permanently parked. (Falsely happy) They'll bury me in a racing helmet, a steering wheel beside me, if you don't pardon me.

PIER: I've no time for that. I've got to find a husband.

PAPA: She gave you her youth, her beauty years. Lei ti ha dato la sua giovinezza, i suoi anni di bellezza.

JIMMY (Cries out): Pier! I tried to satisfy you but the only time you were happy was. . . I know some day soon—I'll be able to merge with you, connect so completely that our lives become inseparable. I want that. I do.

PIER: I don't forgive you. I don't. I'd rather die of an overdose than do that. Men gut women and when our beauty is gone, our figure is shattered, your personality cracked, they discard us. You're a cheat. I want to be by myself, enter a nunnery, hooded in black.

(From this point on snippets of MUSIC and SOUND building cacophony effect. Gabriel runs in)

JIMMY: Oh My! I'm spinning through this tunnel.

(A crow caws twice)

LUCIA: Twenty minutes to shut down.

JIMMY (Pointing) At the end--The light burns like sun.

GABRIEL: Close your eyes.

JIMMY: And there's a sign, "The future."

GABRIEL: Hold your breath.

JIMMY: (Wheezes and coughs) But--There's an awful smell.

GABRIEL: (Puts on gloves. Searches about) It's some kind of roach or rat poison. This place has got the largest rat population because of kudzu. I found the culprit. (Pulls rat out a can) I'll throw it out.

(Gabriel exits. Pier bolts in wailing, yelping)

PIER (In agony): Help ... Ah!

JIMMY: Are you hurt?

LUCIA: She's bleeding.

JIMMY: God. No!

PIER: It's awful. Oh Lord!

JIMMY: You're turning blue.

LUCIA: She's hemorrhaging, fool.

PIER: I'm giving birth to a pure brute. Like you.

LUCIA: Help! Lift her to the inner chamber.

(Gabriel hurries in with crucifix.)

GABRIEL (to Jimmy): Stop.

JIMMY: I thought crosses were for vampires.

GABRIEL: She's having a...

LUCIA: Your baby!

SOULS IN TORMENT AND PIER: Oh god, oh goodness, oh no

PIER: I need a shot for the pain. (Yells) Jim-my.

JIMMY: I'm coming.

GABRIEL: You can't go in there. Lucia's giving Pier a-

LUCIA: We're cutting off the appendage, as she calls it. Pier acts sad but inside she is saying, "Yes."

GABRIEL: They're killing it, it's not your fault.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Wailing): Come over here.

GABRIEL: You got to leave! You didn't see Pier the way she was. Insecure. Fragile.

JIMMY: I never had a girlfriend because deep inside I knew the pain involved.

PIER (Wailing): Jimmy! I need you. Oh no.

JIMMY: I had so much in my life, passion for my work, my friends, my colleagues.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Hissing): Zzzsh Sever the ties.

LUCIA: (Loud) Pier will die of an overdose—if you... don't have mercy. Some feelings for the...

SOULS IN TORMENT (Softly): KA PLUNK.

JIMMY: A bird has fallen from the sky.

GABRIEL: Your two girlfriends, have connected on some astral plane.

DIZZY (On drugs) screaming: There's a dead bird in my

hand.

PIER (Also doped): Call her back to life.

DIZZY: Her skin is too spongy.

PIER: One should never touch birds. One should simply look at them and hope they fly.

DIZZY: Hold that umbrella up.

PIER (Looks up): Is it snowing?

DIZZY: I'm trying to see what's inside the bird.

PIER: To determine her state when she died?

DIZZY: Oh leave me alone. You hold the umbrella.

PIER: Was the creature on the edge of a disturbing collapse?

DIZZY: Did she suffer several nervous falls?

PIER: Her wings carry a weight so heavy she could barely stand.

(SOUND of cold wind. Snow stops.)

DIZZY: But the present moment is perfect. Perfect for her flight.

PIER: I think she is starting to chirp.

DIZZY: Lets make her a little nest, put her in the sun, and let it breathe on her.

PIER: Give her a chance for a wee nap.

DIZZY: All she's looking for might be found in . . .

PIER (Confused) a single raindrop, smooth grass, or a little breeze...

JIMMY: Girls have dashed off with the bird.

GABRIEL (Kindly): You can't expect women to be different

than they are.

LUCIA: Yes you can! You're large, muscular manish, a pipe-tooting hero!

SOULS IN TORMENT:

(Chanting/scary/harsh)

You're Popeye the sailor man
You live in a frying pan
You turn up the heat
And burn up their feet
You're Popeye the sailor man

You're Popeye the sailor man
You've never stepped foot on the land
You like to go swimmin'
With them mermaid women
And float on your back to get tan.

(Rush of water. Flapping SOUNDS)

JIMMY: I'm soaring again. Over?

LUCIA: War Memorial Hospital, the operating room. Answer one question.

JIMMY (Angry): But I'm on some table! I think they are saving me!

LUCIA: What were you looking for?

JIMMY (Hallucinating, quotes Little Prince): I wanted to create a mythic world with...

LUCIA (Mocking): "With roses that didn't die--"

JIMMY (Gasping for air): "And volcanoes that weren't extinct." Oh no.

LUCIA: Your vital signs are plummeting.

JIMMY (Flying up): God. I can't stop bobbing on the ceiling. I'm like a balloon. (Squinting): I don't

recognize that body below. (Light): Hey, you guys. I'm up here. (Panicked) I can't --see through to . . .get back.

GABRIEL: Here I got your feet. I'll flap you down.

JIMMY (Checks his shirt): I'm so dehydrated. Blood drying.

GABRIEL: A foot rub should calm you. Put your feet here.

LUCIA: Roll him to the morgue.

JIMMY: Oh god no. There are no signs, no people. It's all stark metal-

LUCIA: Bag the body.

JIMMY: Oh god. My wrist and toe are tagged. Let me get out and- (Squinting) "Yet through the silence something throbs, and gleams--"

GABRIEL: It's me but, (Irritated) I can't lift you.

JIMMY (Delirious, fighting off sleep): What's that burning light.

GABRIEL: Call on the angels for protection, Michael, Raphael.

JIMMY: I want to open my eyes but I'm stuck to a tray of ice. (Hallucinating) "Where are the people?" resumed the little prince. "It's a little lonely in the desert..."

LUCIA (Wheezing:) "It is lonely when you're among people, too," said the snake.

(Gabriel zooms about for heavenly food.)

GABRIEL: Quick. Devour a crème fraiche and a caramelized banana split.

JIMMY: You are a dear, sweet angel.

GABRIEL: Have some triple chocolate, and café au lait pralines.

JIMMY: I can't get my mouth to work.

GABRIEL: You must eat and pursue the light.

JIMMY (Reviving): Do you realize how much your generosity means to me?

GABRIEL: It's amazing your search for purpose, and it's with the deepest gratitude that I feed you. Be grateful and you can continue to get stronger!

JIMMY: (Smiling) Thank you, thank you, thank you.

GABRIEL (Enters with oils, to Jimmy): Let me oil your hands. You have to develop something in you, which allows you to—to say you are sorry and mean it. You should feel good about yourself with others.

JIMMY: People rarely give me enough. Fans take me from the box, unwrap the tissue, let me out, wrap me up, put me back in the box. (Pause) Even with this respiratory thing, I'm happier here with you than I've been anywhere.

GABRIEL (Romantic): I like it when we're alone. This is my prayer, so you can take as long as you want to answer. Come to my cloud in heaven, if you get in.

(Gabriel embraces him. SOUND of airplane landing. Soaring heat. Jane hurries in.)

JANE (Furious): Well, you've finally done it.

JIMMY (to Gabriel): What?

LUCIA: Fifteen minutes to entombment.

JANE: Made me come follow you like god to this desolate hotel.

JIMMY (to Gabriel): My agent Jane.

JANE: Every embarrassing phone call is about you. I won't be part of your posse of sycophants badmouthing Pier. (Chuckles) I know psychoanalysis is out but you are setting a whole new standard. Representing you is like carrying around an egg on a spoon and trying not to trip.

GABRIEL (Desperate, whispers): Don't speak to her unless you say something sweet.

JANE: (Straight to Jimmy) Have you made amends with Pier? We're not even gonna talk about all the press I got for your wedding. That poor girl keeps calling me wailing over the phone, globally humiliated. Can you hear me?

JIMMY (Gnashing his teeth, bursting out): When I lost Pier, I lost myself. She was the artist who told me what was right, wrong, real, unreal. . . I thought I'd found my true guide in you, Jane, so when you didn't side with me . . . when you arrived on the set like a typhoon. Sometimes with me but most times not . . . I attacked you! You never understood that artists create things that should last forever and they're lost. (With difficulty) I'm sorry.

JANE: Oh we have an apologizer here? (Unswerving) I could forgive you if you held to your contract, didn't rewrite lines, punch the director. We're talking Edna Ferber and George Stevens.

JIMMY: George is not used to an actor being smart.

JANE: The gentlemanly way is to allow for compromise.

JIMMY (To self): I won't let a director take the guts out of me.

(High-pitched death wind)

JANE: I can't hear you. There's some heat storm..

GABRIEL (To Jimmy): Don't speak. Remember you are working with air with nothing you can actually see; the slightest nuance can offend. Talking at all could be a mistake.

JANE: Can't you push yourself to be decent? (Pause) So don't speak, fine. I know. I know. You're not a chatty person.

JIMMY (Breathing with difficulty) Jane...There's only a finite number of things an actor can do.

JANE (Cupping her ear): What'd you say?

JIMMY: You trick yourself into thinking you can do a lot. But there is more pain in not doing the harder thing than

in doing it. I have to force a quality scene from completely myself.

JANE (Loud): I CAN'T HEAR YOU.

JIMMY (Biting to Jane): You should come to my dressing room and take your turn on the gallows. Sleep sitting up, six pillows behind your back, a gun in your pocket. Ready for the next bushwhack.

JANE: It's unacceptable. Totally unacceptable. Your career can't be dependent on your ongoing "sense of black." If everything lacks you'll explode. You should stop making movies when you get depressed.

JIMMY: Help others make movies so they can get depressed?

(Jane vanishes)

JIMMY: Jane! She's gone! Ha! (Quotes Little Prince, delirious): "You never know where to find them. The wind blows them away. They have no roots."

(Lights blink. Gabriel darts in and out with cleanser, spraying.)

GABRIEL: Wash your hands. Beg for decontamination!

SOULS IN TORMENT: Follow the Red Book.

JIMMY: What freaking book?

LUCIA: Bright lights. Your limousine at Fairmount Park Cemetery.

JIMMY (To self): We can't go forward that quick. (Agonized, spotting Jane) Why is Jane over climbing out that limo--

JANE (cursing, crying): Oh this is god-awful. What the fugg... oh no I can't take it.

JIMMY: Jane talk clearer--I can't make -

JANE: (Odious laughter. Jane's mouth moves but Lucia speaks.) Ha He Ha.

LUCIA Geez, your agent's holding a telegram and I can read the words. (Reads) "Services for James Dean, at Hunt's Funeral Home--." YOU DEGRADED YOUR AGENT...

JIMMY: Her lover was having an affair with a student in Paris, and she thought she was "dating" me. ...

LUCIA: She loved you enough to call you every night and get sick over you like a child.

JIMMY: I wanted an agent who has the strength to be a real fighter not a dictator dressing up for dinner parties...

LUCIA: Maybe she has more experience than you gave her credit for.

JIMMY (Furious): She was a clerk . . . who sells. I.. .had to do it. Dive into myself and gouge the feelings. These parasites sit in their offices--getting fat working actors harder, for less. I don't want to work harder for a poor product. Do you know what it's like to (Restlessly) drive a film when men do that (Anxiously) it is like--being on a bus headed for a stonewall.

SOULS IN TORMENT:

(Chant) "Well now that agent started yelling loud as can be.

Popeye. Popeye done stomped on me.
Now I'm repeating the words Jane said,
"If that little runt show up
I'm going to bust his head."

You better check Mr. Popeye. You better check
Mr. Popeye. You better check dat spinach cause
You is in the danger zone."

LUCIA: Your agent doesn't forgive you. She plans to expose your true identity and destroy your career if you don't bow down to her!

(SOULS cackle viciously through lines below:)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Ecstatic rhythmically) Hee. Ho. Ho.

JIMMY: Look... I ----I was working for--people, who'd slit my throat ...

SOULS IN TORMENT (Gleeful) *HEE HEE! WHOA!*

LUCIA (Coldly): You did movies for EGO?

SOULS IN TORMENT: *HO, HO, WHOO!*

LUCIA: Breaking 3 fingers in Rebel--Climbing the oilrigs in Giant.

GABRIEL: *No he was using time well. He just got prompted to--*

(CACKLING STOPS)

JIMMY: I felt compelled...

GABRIEL:--*to do something--*

LUCIA: Overreaching. Doing movies back to back.

GABRIEL: *He absolutely had to do.*

JIMMY: But it wasn't for the glory. I was using my body as a vessel to change the world.

SOULS IN TORMENT (gleeful quotes Little Prince): "When he lit the street lamp, it was as if he brought one more star to life, or one flower. When he put out the lamp, he sent the flower, or the star, to sleep."

LUCIA: So you felt...special.

SOULS IN TORMENT (cackling): Hee, hee.

JIMMY: It wasn't the fame.

SOULS IN TORMENT (cackling): Hee, hO)

JIMMY: It was war. I tied into a primeval source of power--and the public liked it so the heck with the directors.

SOULS IN TORMENT (cackling): Hee, whOO

JIMMY::I'm going to continue taking risks, practice instinct in the moment, --Assume no one knows what to do. If I stop to think and debate I'll lose the forward motion of a scene. I have to keep reinventing for the time I'm in-

which is a very frightening naked place. (Defiant) Is that what you want to hear and yes I'm haunted by--nightmares and daymares--when I do movies because . . . because I'm on this treadmill of mediocrity and (Quoting randomly) "It seems to me that I'm carrying a very fragile treasure."

LUCIA: Come with me.

GABRIEL: No. You need to stay on earth as long as you can.

LUCIA: Crap!

GABRIEL: Because you need to find out who you really are. Find as much joy and celebration as YOU can. The joy that god loves PARTICULARLY you. What do you do to create joy for yourself?

(Symphony No 2 in C minor plays.)

LUCIA: Tchaikovsky. His obsessions put him on the edge of an emotional collapse?

GABRIEL: But you can choose god here as much as you want.

LUCIA: Tchaikovsky suffered several nervous breakdowns because of his self-focus.

GABRIEL: Grab on to every godlike thing that's pure and--

LUCIA (Harsh) You are following in the footsteps of the narcissists.

GABRIEL: Everything evil and dark just ignore--

LUCIA (Rapidly): Mendelssohn began composing when he was 12.

GABRIEL: The Holy Ghost is always with YOU.

LUCIA: Georges Bizet could read words and music by the time he was 4. Amadeus Mozart played before the empress of Austria at 6. He wrote his first opera at 11, had his

first premiere at 17...

JIMMY: Oh no, I'm falling! Falling!

GABRIEL: Call out to God for help

LUCIA: You have failed to apologize for pursuing fame. You are going to fall straight into the blackness because *that's where you belong.*

GABRIEL (To Lucia) God isn't going to ban him from heaven. That's not even remotely it. (To Jimmy) But you can only be in heaven if you are pure white and clean. If you come in with a sniff of anything in your soul it would cease to be heaven. Your spirit hasn't left earth. You can still make yourself pure and clean find your innocence, your basic infantile joy, make it totally yourself.

LUCIA: He hasn't learned what he was supposed to learn. (Pause) Indianapolis airport.

JIMMY: (Rubs his neck, looks up) I've an odd feeling I'm in that coffin coming off a plane.

GABRIEL: You're in timelessness.

JIMMY: It all has a quality like there was one thing and there was another thing and it was so fast.

GABRIEL: Whenever god decides to take over everything changes immediately. It all changes to the pure, so pure, so good, so the opposite of that evil

SOULS IN TORMENT enter with roses.

JIMMY: Who are those people?

(The Great Pretender plays.)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Sniveling): Ye. Ye. Ye

JIMMY Their limbs move but I can't-

SOULS IN TORMENT (Cackling): Se. Yee. See.

LUCIA: You befriended men who believed in excess.

SOULS IN TORMENT NOO. Nea. Ye.

LUCIA: Men who wanted one of everything?

SOULS IN TORMENT Naaa. Neee. NOO.

LUCIA: You didn't wait for the big house—

SOULS IN TORMENT (Sniveling): Ye. Shhee. Shoaе.

LUCIA: To live the life big.

JIMMY: I thought it'd be easy. It's so easy when it turns magical to dismiss the magician. It's all about connections and doing things with people you distaste. The theatre's hard truth is that actors are creatures of gravity. Weighted down at auditions, we are fated to fall down repeatedly from our first walk on until we lead the cast. This truth extends to the rise and fall of productions -- and to Lucifer, who fell to hell. Every actor is part of the falling down life. (Laughs) Break a leg!

GABRIEL: But If you act as a magnetic field, if you pray a great deal, and you concentrate very deeply on the directions you wish to go in, and what you would like to have happen, they all happen.

(A bell TOLLS.)

SOULS IN TORMENT: We're at Hunt's Funeral Home.

LUCIA: A reverend is blessing your casket.

(Car radio: *An Unchained Melody* plays.)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Snorting): Snee, shhee

LUCIA: He's the preacher who buried your mother.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Snorting): Snoos, uk, shhee

LUCIA: You cursed with him by her grave.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Snorting): Snee, shhee, ook

GABRIEL (to Lucia): No. He and Jimmy recited poetry. (To Jimmy) This going around and being afraid of death is a joke cuz you never die. You never die. Jimmy, Be a circle. Let everything reflect back on—

JIMMY and REVEREND: "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day—"

GABRIEL: Pray.

JIMMY and REVEREND: And leaves the world to darkness and to me."

GABRIEL: God handles the rest.

JIMMY: "My soul waits for the Lord."

GABRIEL: Right.

JIMMY: "More than watchmen for the morning—"

REVEREND: Oh Jimmy. If you can recite one brilliant passage,

GABRIEL: Keep evolving.

REVEREND: You can recite two or three. (Breathes heavily.) Let me adjust your posture.

JIMMY: I'm not sure I believe in God.

REVEREND: Relax your jaw.

JIMMY (Stops short, swallows hard): I grind my teeth.

REVEREND: Anything to do with your mouth

JIMMY: is not being able to speak your truth.

REVEREND: The church can pay for a dentist from our relief fund.

JIMMY: I do my vocal warm-ups but—

REVEREND: Our secret. You've got to see what god wants for you. Be the manifester. The actor who goes between and brings heaven to earth. Don't procrastinate. Every one has

something we're supposed to be doing we aren't. Your voice is golden.

JIMMY: I'll practice. Take on harder and harder challenges.

REVEREND: No. Get out of here. Don't stop to think or you'll lose force. Run; run, as fast as you can. They can't catch you if you're the gingerbread man.

(Car radio: *Love is a many-splendored thing.*)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Cackling): *He. He. HO.*

LUCIA: Did you stray?

SOULS IN TORMENT: HO. HA. HEE.

JIMMY: I've a trifurcate life! My identity is based on what I do. (Laughs) It's hard to say who I am. --I'm insulting one of my other selves.

(Bell gongs triumphantly.)

LUCIA: The reverend accepts your apology.

JIMMY: But I never apologized.

LUCIA: He is thrilled for the national coverage and the glory in burying you.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Beware reality. It's all interpretation.

JIMMY: Does that mean I go to heaven?

GABRIEL: Can I prepare the body? If he can be anointed, it'll create a sense of joy even if he's in pain ...that's why I like to use oils on the head, forehead, wrists, the arms and the hands because it has a soothing effect so he can go into that peaceful state.

LUCIA: Don't be silly. A piece is missing!

SOULS IN TORMENT: Karma at time of death.

LUCIA (To Jimmy): You must prove you didn't commit suicide.

JIMMY: Why would I kill myself?

LUCIA: For glory.

GABRIEL: You were in the second act. But there is no act 3.

JIMMY: (Mutinous) So I'm definitely dead!!

GABRIEL: Can you see yourself in that large mirror?

JIMMY: It just reflects light.

LUCIA: So you performed the ultimate act of self-rejection.

SOULS IN TORMENT: The agony got crystallized.

JIMMY: No. (Losing temper) As I got more powerful I wanted more time and more intelligence.

GABRIEL: More chances to change.

JIMMY: Right. I was under camouflage as all stars are. Enjoying my vacation and floating into reverie.

GABRIEL: You were afraid of losing the race?

JIMMY: Salinas was my lucky town. Where I'd shot East of Eden.

GABRIEL: You were tired.

JIMMY: I'd had a physical to make sure all my reflexes were normal.

GABRIEL: Anxiety-ridden.

JIMMY: No. Happy. I had a community who supported my peculiarities as an artist and a father with the profound ability to leave things unanswered. I showed Father the "Little Bastard—"

SOULS IN TORMENT: Your Porsche with the racing number on the side.

JIMMY: Yes. The car had no top, no bumpers, toy windshield.

GABRIEL: Your Dad said you were a wreck, could barely get in the car what with the violent shaking.

JIMMY: I was traveling with the best German mechanic! He'd built the car.

GABRIEL: You two were close?

JIMMY (Troubled): We were outlaws like Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment.

(Buzz of car radio: *The Autumn Leaves*.)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Droning): OH, OHH,

JIMMY (Seized with guilt): Maybe I did kill myself.

LUCIA: Your personal life was a mess.

JIMMY: True. When people moved in close, I got the jitters, lost direction. Oh god will I ever see my friends again.

LUCIA: Oh there's the racetrack at Salinas.

JIMMY: Okay! (Violently) I drove fast to clear my head.

LUCIA: Racing releases a higher level of drug than sex.

(Haunting Car radio: *Mr. Sandman* plays.)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Droning): Oh, ne,eeee

JIMMY (Cries out, morbidly): I knew the roads in LA were terrible. -But I was going to grab that wheel-race, till something released me.

GABRIEL: You were at a crossroads.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Absorbed in anguish one moment. Immobilized the next.

JIMMY: Right. Watching the sunset while doing 120—I touched god. I slipped out my body, flew into the breathing! Like that outlaw in *Crime and Punishment*—

LUCIA: Raskolnikov.

SOULS IN TORMENT: "Destroying the present for the sake of the better."

JIMMY: I loved the desert.

(SOUNDS OF revving engines.)

GABRIEL: The continuity of the road—

LUCIA: So you sped into the twilight.

JIMMY: Yes.

(Car radio: *Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White*.)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Anguished): Eeee,yeeee

LUCIA: Awful truth is-- (Looks out, desperately) you didn't turn on the headlights.

GABRIEL: Or take an inventory of the road.

JIMMY: I was used to doing 120!

LUCIA: You were impossible to stop-- A Bengal tiger.

JIMMY Racing requires fierce solitude. You jump the line between aloneness and contact. Slip outside your body, fly into the breathing.

LUCIA: Just west of Choland, you almost hit this Pontiac—

GABRIEL: A family of 4 was in that car.

LUCIA: You almost killed them!

SOULS IN TORMENT: Do you know how many kids have died on highways?

LUCIA: I have a pocket full of pictures if you need them.

JIMMY (Remorseful): I didn't know--who was in the cars.
They weren't people . . .they were--

SOULS IN TORMENT: Five minutes and you're stuck with YOU
forever

JIMMY: I . . . I felt lightheaded as we sped out of
Polonia Pass--where 466 would turn into 41-- It was
warmer.

LUCIA: You could see further.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Suspicious): Hear better.

LUCIA: Feel connected.

JIMMY: I relaxed. The proof of the power of the road is
how you feel when you ride it. You don't oscillate, you're
focus in the present, letting feeling come through your
fingers. When you hug something long and involved like the
road, you feel like it is you. When you change lanes there
is immediacy. Time loses its shape, to center you.

LUCIA: Then there was this speck!

SOULS IN TORMENT (Hissing): Swoosh! Swoosh!

LUCIA: This car came right up to you.

JIMMY: I remember screaming, "He's got to see us."

LUCIA: You didn't slam on the brake.

JIMMY: I pushed that pedal.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Ah haa *HAA Hee*.

JIMMY: I'd crowd that car. Jam in front.

(Sound of crash)

JIMMY: Oh I can't see. Blackness, a cocoon of blackness.
360 degree sounds screaming about me.

JIMMY (Remembering): God! Oh god . . .no what . . .what
happened to the others?

LUCIA: Your mechanic came down like a Greek myth.

GABRIEL: He was thrown out the car.

SOULS IN TORMENT: 12 feet-- Has massive injuries.

GABRIEL: Oh No. You have to be in a state of joy when you die otherwise whatever state you are in is how you get crystallized permanently into the universe.

LUCIA: Three minutes to shut down.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Embrace your anger. Prepare to leave this compound body of-

GABRIEL: Find peace!

JIMMY: I did torture people on my way to . . .to! Pardon me!

(A bell gongs loudly.)

LUCIA: Last mindful bell!

SOULS IN TORMENT: You are partially forgiven.

LUCIA: But you are totally dead.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Donald Gene Turnupseed, 23, a Cal poly student killed you.

(By the black hole in the white light, Gabriel shows up with wings. Jimmy is now paralyzed and can barely move his lips. Gabriel reaches out to Jimmy's fading consciousness.)

GABRIEL: You can't tell anybody what is happening because you can't speak or move or do anything because of the death sleep and yet it is exactly as if some fiend of a butcher some horrible fiendish butcher has thrown you on a highway and taken a horrible meat cleaver and just slashed your entire body. Call out to God!

JIMMY: The sound keeps getting loud, harsh, and terrible.

LUCIA: No one can live through this kind of pain.

JIMMY: It's like a deafening noise through my entire body.

LUCIA: The decibels of clanging rotten horrible insupportable sound.

GABRIEL: Cry for god in your soul.

(SOULS IN TORMENT/LUCIA hiss and cackle through following speech.)

JIMMY: "God no. God no." I feel myself falling, falling through the abyss,

SOULS IN TORMENT (*Joyous whisper*): *Ho. He. Ho.*

JIMMY: And the darkness and then the sound turns to this jeering, this gee-r-ing, this delight in the loss of my soul.

SOULS IN TORMENT (*slyly*): *He. Hee. HEE.*

JIMMY: These demons are just cackling and chuckling and laughing and screaming and jeering,

SOULS IN TORMENT: *AHAHA. HA. HA.*

JIMMY: Just ridiculing me. And then it just stops suddenly.

(DEADLY SILENCE)

SOULS IN TORMENT: *We got him!!*

JIMMY (Horrificed): *Oh my God, oh my god, I blew it. I died young. I died young. Holy God. I want to end differently.*

GABRIEL: You haven't grown like you were supposed to. You're not ready.

JIMMY: I'll position myself so I have to help others. It's the harder choice to force yourself to give with broken legs, broken hip, broken neck, broken car.

SOULS IN TORMENT: Sounds of sobbing. BOO.HOO. HOO.

LUCIA: You're being admitted to weigh station.

(Celestial music, with a quiet éclat)

JIMMY (Stunned): What's that growing ball of light-
Suddenly I'm shot into this brightness.

GABRIEL: The cherubim and seraphim.

JIMMY: It's the most exquisite sound. Sound and color are
all mixed. This brightness, brightness, so bright and
looking down on planet earth I see this beautiful blue
ball so gorgeous and then

GABRIEL: You realize everything. The moment you are dead
the veil of forgetfulness just falls away

JIMMY: Oh I remember everything before I was born,
everything, who I am, why I... I remember being with god
before I was born. I remember perfectly. It is all very
clear, like something that happened yesterday.

LUCIA: That's when we pull you DOWN.

GABRIEL: You haven't gotten developed enough.

(CRESCENDO OF LUCIA AND SOULS CACKLING AND SCREAMING)

JIMMY: I want another chance.

LUCIA: Good job gang!

SOULS IN TORMENT: Whoo!! WHOOP. WHOA! *(To Jimmy)*
Congratulations!!

(Dead bird falls)

LUCIA: You're to be confined to a cemetery near an Indiana
cornfield.

JIMMY: Why am I here?

LUCIA: To get sanitized.

MA: It's kind of a mystery because you don't remember a
thing and that's you expected.

JIMMY: Is Gabriel somewhere? (Calls) Gabriel.

(Hollow echo)

SOULS IN TORMENT: A lot of wailing goes on in the beginning.

(Quiet. Pigeons flap off.)

JIMMY: When I think about never going back to Hollywood, I could bawl. It was one of those places where if you had been transported and you woke up, within ten minutes, without asking a soul, you'd know where you were.

(Ghost of Ma approaches)

MA: Son, you like to see yourself surrounded by power. You should feel good about yourself even in an empty yard.

(Beethoven's 2nd Symphony plays)

MA: We can only listen to Beethoven once a week. So many composers have honored the unseen sublime.

JIMMY: How long will I be here?

MA: A verdict should come shortly.

JIMMY (Forced smile): Paths are pretty, nice tombs, hyacinths.

MA (Fluttery, laughs): All those collections of leaves look like mysterious creatures. You'd buried by me, son, and country relatives. For those of us who live by God's grace, death is a special time of year. We were blessed last week to hear Handel's *Messiah*, as "A Sing-In" -- dozens of singers mixed throughout the cemetery to create a quadraphonic presence. Buried behind me are baritones and sopranos, who sang with great passion.

SOULS IN TORMENT (Straining to speak): Two minutes.

JIMMY: (Overlapping) Stop the countdown.

(Ponderous music: like Vivaldi, *Nisi Dominus*)

MA: There's your funeral procession. And there's fresh dirt and the hole they'll put you in.

LUCIA: Accept your dismissal.

(Car Radio: *Moments to Remember*. "The New Years Eve we did the...")

MA: Look your classmates are carrying your casket.

("The day we tore the goal...")

JIMMY: They look so young. Have so much life ahead.

(Mourners wail and file by.)

JIMMY (Repulsed): There's Uncle and Aunt, crying . . .my agent, Pier, Dizzy. . . (Bawls uncontrollably) I had love all along but I threw it away.

(A broad palette of ambient electronic SOUNDS. Gabriel arrives glowing in white.)

JIMMY: Oh Gabriel. I never learned to ask forgiveness and mean it.

GABRIEL: So many parts of your life would have improved if you had.

JIMMY: Can you stay with me? What's it like after--

GABRIEL: What I have experienced is that if you go up into a higher vibrational frequency—into the 16th dimension, you experience time as it really is—with everything happening at once. There's no past, present or future. It's all simultaneous.

LUCIA AND SOULS IN TORMENT: HUGE CACKLING

GABRIEL: The demons will connect with everyone if asked to. It would be better for you and I to have a conversation at some point about this, because ugly things lower consciousness and bring us down.

JIMMY: Stay with me.

GABRIEL: Just till your judgment is read. The biggest thing you need to know is who you are. You are not part of some great oceanic thing. Once you die you are distilled

into this state. Joy is the only one you can be in to get into heaven.

(Jimmy's corpse is cranked into the grave.)

SOULS IN TORMENT (Gasping quietly): Say good-bye! Forty-five seconds to burial.

JIMMY: The quarter hour? (Anguished) I was brought up thinking love should be first. . . But I decided to love people sometimes but most times not. . . Now I see I didn't come from grace.

(Bold organ music like *Albinoni Adagio*)

JIMMY: (Desperately, falling on his knees) Only love exists.

(Climbing on a stepstool, Gabriel unrolls the Red Scroll.)

LUCIA: What are you doing with my red scroll?

GABRIEL: Let me read it. It'll be easier on Jimmy.

LUCIA: Sure. I'm not adverse to compromise. The very most important thing is to be lucky. And he was for a time.

(Lucia exits)

(Exotic world music with new age grandeur)

GABRIEL (Reads Red Scroll to Jimmy): You are condemned to limbo in this rural cemetery.

JIMMY: Is that good?

GABRIEL: You have to get yourself seasoned for heaven by learning to develop joy.

LUCIA (Contemptuous laugh): In limbo, you get a little bit of everything but you don't get enough of what you want to be happy.

MA (Whispers): It's a place where sins are cleansed. You learn to love yourself as god loves you.

GABRIEL: Your assignment is to hover at your grave:

warning the reckless, helping young people learn, to grow more peaceful.

JIMMY: That could take centuries.

GABRIEL: The process involves a deep softening of your personality.

(Millions of tiny golden bells ringing, tinkling humming.)

SOULS IN TORMENT: A release into eternal connecting. 15 seconds to closing.

MA: There is nothing to be sad about.

GABRIEL: You become more you than you have ever been. Because you die young, you'll die great.

LUCIA (Sniveling): And be immortalized like you wanted.

GABRIEL: And I can visit you. Every year on All Souls Day.

JIMMY: (To self, delighted) That's something at least.

GABRIEL: Here are your glasses.

(Sad celestial music like Dvorak, *Symphony no 9, 'From the New World, 'Largo'*)

JIMMY: (Takes them, peers out) I don't need them! The whole garden is singing. The flowers, grass, trees, and other plants. (Shocked) Behind those tombstones, so many people are watching me!

GABRIEL: You're already attracting big crowds. We asked people to hold back initially.

JIMMY: If I can read and use my priority time for acting then I'm happy to be with them because it's curious to get to know fans.

(Octaves of bagpipes, uplifting drones)

MA: I hope people aren't too friendly.

GABRIEL: Here's your hat.

JIMMY (Bows, waves): What the heck, bring on the tourists, the signs, the shrine. (Triumphant): We actors are warriors. We're used to going to strange places, meeting strange people, wearing strange clothes, speaking strange languages, (Raising hands in air, fiercely brave) And we are used to surrendering into the hands of god!

(Music: Something loud and funky like REO Speedwagon *Riding the Storm Out*, Mug shot of Jimmy doffing his cowboy hat.)

Music fading: "Ridin' the storm out, waitin' for the thaw out. On a full moon night in the Rocky Mountain winter...Ridin' the storm out."

(Black out)

CURTAIN