

"STOLEN SUMMER"

by

Pete Jones

FADE IN:

EXT. O'MALLEY FRONT YARD - MORNING

MARGARET O'MALLEY, an auburn haired, sunburned 38-year old mother of eight, stands outside next to the running station wagon. Two children sit in the front seat while three are crammed into the back seat.

Margaret is waiting on her two youngest boys to fill the two way back seats that face backwards. KATIE, 4 years old, with strawberry blond hair, rosy cheeks, and a pot belly, sticks her head out the window.

KATIE

Mom, I told them to be ready by nine  
twenty. They just don't listen.

Margaret ignores Katie. Katie pops back into the car.

CUT TO:

INT. PETE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

PETE, 7 years old, who looks like a poster boy for Ireland, lays on his stomach in front of the board game "All Star Baseball". He spins the dial. The dial lands on nine, which is the number that coincides with a strikeout. SEAMUS, nine years old, blondish brown hair, white skin, crystal blue eyes, angelic smile, jumps to the air in celebration.

SEAMUS

Another comeback stopped.

PETE

Reggie Jackson stinks!

SEAMUS

We gotta get going. Mom's gonna freak.

Seamus heads for the door.

PETE

What should we tell her?

Seamus looks back at Pete. Pete's hand me down plaid pants barely fit him and fall as he stands up.

SEAMUS

You couldn't find your belt.

Seamus takes off down the stairs. Pete, with one hand holding up his pants, follows him down the stairs. Seamus runs out the front door and past his mom.

MARGARET

Why are you late?

Seamus, never breaking stride, climbs into the station wagon through the back window.

SEAMUS

Pete couldn't find his belt.

Pete runs past his mother.

MARGARET

Why are you late?

PETE

Seamus lost my belt.

Pete never breaks stride. He jumps into the back of the station wagon. Margaret turns and walks to the car with the kind of steam that only eight kids in 18 years can produce. She opens the car door, sits down, calmly puts the car in reverse, and turns her head for the reverse shoulder check. And then all hell breaks loose. Margaret screams at the top of her lungs.

MARGARET

God gives you 168 hours in a week.  
Can you not give him one full hour  
back? Is that too much to ask?

Katie at four years doesn't understand rhetorical questions.

KATIE

I've been ready for three hours.

EDDIE, 14, brown curly hair, brown eyes, athletic, is at the point in his life when he realizes he has more answers than his mom.

EDDIE

(to Katie)

Shut up you kiss ass.

Margaret, with no hesitation, stops the car and smacks Eddie across the face. Eddie winces while TOMMY, 17, also dark haired and dark eyed, laughs. Margaret puts the car in drive and cruises down the street like one big, happy family. WE FOLLOW the camera through the front of the car to the back.

PATRICK, 18, blondish brown curly hair and green eyes, holds MOLLY, six months old, in the front seat. Car seats have yet to be invented.

MARY, 17, auburn haired like her mother and Tommy's twin, sits behind the driver seat because she has learned the long hand of Margaret's wrath cannot reach her in that seat. Tommy reads Eddie the Bazooka Joe joke from his gum wrapper and the two laugh. In the back seat facing out, Pete and Seamus sit. Seamus holds electronic football in his hand and the electronic sound of electronic football players running reverberates throughout the car. WE GO TIGHT on PETE.

PETE (V.O.)

My dad is a fireman.

WE PULL BACK and see all of the kids hang out the window and wave at JOE, 40, who is Dark Irish, handsomely weathered, and happy to be at work when his wife takes the kids to church. WE GO TIGHT on JOE as he waves back to the kids.

JOE

(sarcastic to fellow  
firemen)

I wish I could be with them more.

PETE (V.O.)

And my mom?

WE GO TIGHT on MARGARET.

PETE (V.O.)

And my mom? She's a part time cook,  
maid, and nurse. But her full time  
job? She's a front line sergeant in  
God's army.

Pete screams as Seamus scores another touchdown on electronic football.

EDDIE

Goddammit, would you two shut up  
with that game!

Katie puts her hand over her mouth with the sound of the swearword.

Tommy prepares for battle by holding back his laughter.  
Margaret erupts.

MARGARET

The lord's name in vain? Son of a  
bitch.

At forty miles an hour in front of the firehouse Margaret lunges her open fist into the backseat and starts swinging like a tornado.

Kids scurry, hoping to avoid the path of the tornado. The wagon swerves into the other lane. Joe and his buddies watch from their lounge chairs outside the firehouse. He takes a swig from a plastic cup.

JOE

Dying in a fire sometimes doesn't  
sound so bad.

The station wagon pulls up to church and the children jump out like clowns from a small car. Margaret drives off as the children exit the station wagon. Patrick lifts Katie up to the basin of holy water.

Katie splashes water on her forehead and makes a sign of the cross.

Patrick, annoyed, puts her down and points his finger at

her. He gently touches the water with his index and middle finger and slowly makes the sign of the cross. Katie shakes her head in agreement.

Seamus dips his hand in the water and fake sneezes on Pete. Pete punches him in the shoulder. Margaret walks in and proceeds to lead her ducklings down the aisle as the heads in church turn to watch.

Each kid genuflects, some better than others, and sit. Pete sits between Seamus and Patrick. He looks at Margaret. She smiles and winks at him. Pete looks up to the life-size Jesus hanging high behind the altar. WE SLOWLY go TIGHT on JESUS hanging on the cross.

PETE (V.O.)

My cousins' families are similar to mine. Except some of the dads are cops. In my world, there's Irish Catholics, and then there's everybody else. The only part of this picture that doesn't fit for me is Jesus. From what I've learned, and according to my brother Seamus I've learned shit, that's why I'm in second grade, but from what I've learned, Jesus is not Irish Catholic. My dad says that's only a technicality, like Knute Rockne, but, still, Jesus is not Irish Catholic. He is Jewish. I don't know any Jewish people, they don't go to Holy Cross, but if I ever meet a Jewish person, my mom says my job would be to convert them to Catholicism. So they could go to heaven. I have decided this summer, the summer of 1976, I will help a Jewish person get to heaven. It will be my holy quest.

CUT TO:

INT. KEENEY/JONES FUNERAL HOME - A FEW DAYS LATER

REVERSE CAM - Looking out through Jesus's eyes. A WAKE. An Irish wake. Two little boys approach the casket. They kneel in front of the casket. Seamus looks at Pete. Pete's eyes are wide in anticipation. Seamus nudges Pete. Pete nudges Seamus back. Seamus makes the sign of the cross and Pete copies him. The two stand and walk away. WE FOLLOW them through the crowd. The boys continue to walk through the crowd but WE STOP at a circle of men holding drinks.

JOE, holding a Rum and Coke, is talking out the side of his mouth.

JOE

So? What do I do? Go up to Aunt Maggie. Hey Aunt Maggie, did I mention Uncle Jim owed me a nickel?

The other men laugh. Joe's fat brother, ROGER, answers as if he's Jim's wife. He pulls out a coin

ROGER

I know things are tight, Joe, but  
this is cheap. Even for you.

Roger hands Joe the nickel.

JOE

Well, we'll call it even. That idiot.  
You know if he was up a nickel with  
the book, he would have lived to  
collect.

The men laugh heartily.

JOE

A new way to fend off death. Be up  
money with your bookie.

ROGER

May old Uncle Jim be in heaven thirty  
minutes before the devil knows he's  
dead.

JOE

He might need more time. What if the  
devil has extradition rights?

All of the men laugh. A man hands Joe a drink. He finishes  
the drink in his right hand as he accepts the fresh drink in  
his left hand.

Seamus and Pete come running back through the crowd. Margaret,  
standing with four women and smoking, calls them over.

MARGARET

Did you pray for your great uncle's  
soul?

Pete looks at Seamus. Seamus looks down at Pete. Pete looks  
up at his mom.

PETE

We didn't know his soul.

The women laugh.

WOMAN

Cause he didn't have one.

MARGARET

Go back up there and pray to Jesus  
for the soul of your Uncle Jim. He  
needs your prayers.

PETE

So I've heard. But Mom, how do we  
know our prayers will help Old Uncle  
Jim get to heaven?

MARGARET

Faith. Now go ahead.

SEAMUS

Mom, we can't go back up there. We  
already prayed to Jesus for his soul.

Mom looks at Pete for affirmation. Pete looks up to Seamus.  
He looks back up to Mom.

MARGARET

Did you pray to Jesus?

Pete looks at Seamus. Seamus gives him that scared look of  
having to look at that dead body up close again. Pete looks  
at the dead body.

He looks back at his mom. He nods his head in the affirmative.

MARGARET

Well, nobody can have too many  
prayers. Go again.

Pete and Seamus head toward the casket.

PETE

How did she know I was lying?

SEAMUS

You weren't convincing. And she's  
got some kinda built in lie detector.

PETE

How many lies do we get till we go  
to hell?

SEAMUS

Forty-seven.

PETE

I don't think I have many left. And  
I got my whole life ahead of me.

SEAMUS

That one doesn't count. You just  
nodded. Nodding up and down in China  
is like saying no.

PETE

Things are upside down in China.

Seamus begins to nod yes but changes it to a shake. Margaret  
watches the boys as they approach the casket. The boys  
approach the dead body.

PETE

What's faith?

Seamus's eyes are bugging out.

SEAMUS

A word grown ups use when they don't  
have the answer.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

WE GO TIGHT on an ELECTRONIC FOOTBALL GAME. WE HEAR the noises of the game. WE PULL BACK to see Pete playing the game in the back of the room. A nun stands at the front of the class and is talking to the class.

NUN

This summer, take time to reflect on your past year in the second grade. And how you can make third grade better.

The electronic defense tackles Pete and makes a double click noise.

PETE

No!

JIMMY

Yes!

NUN

Mr. O'Malley? Do you disagree with me?

PETE

No, Sister Leonora Mary. I agree.

The bell rings. The kids scream with happiness. School's out for the summer.

NUN

See you at church. And next year in third grade.

The boys run for the door.

NUN

Mr. O'Malley, may I speak to you for a moment?

The boys stop. Pete looks at them. The guys don't hesitate. They run out of the room. Sister Leonora Mary and Pete are alone.

PETE

Yes, Sister Leonora Mary.

NUN

How many times did I have to pull you by your ears to the front of the class and give you the ruler?

Pete looks around for the answer.

PETE

A lot!

NUN

Probably too many times, don't you think?

Pete nods.

NUN

I don't enjoy having to do that, you know.

Pete looks at the ground and scratches the back of his neck.

NUN

I think this is an important summer for you. This is the summer that you can choose to keep following the devil's way, or create a new path toward Jesus. Which path do you want to take?

PETE

The Jesus path.

NUN

Good. I expect to see a difference in you next year.

PETE

You will, Sister Leonora Mary. I've got a plan. A quest!

NUN

Good! You may go. Enjoy your summer, I know you will.

PETE

You too Sister Leonora Mary.

Pete heads toward the door. He turns around.

PETE

Do you know where I can find a synagogue?

CUT TO:

INT. SYNAGOGUE - LATE AFTERNOON

Pete stops his bike outside the synagogue. He looks to the top to see if there is a cross. No cross. A small family walks out of the synagogue. The men wear yarmukles. Pete stares at the yarmukles. He walks his bike to the door. He tries to open the door and maneuver the bike through the door. He is unsuccessful. A bearded, tiny gray man with glasses opens the door. Rabbi Kenny Jacobsen smiles at the young leprechaun.

RABBI

May I help you, son of Saint Patrick?

Pete looks at him weird but shrugs off the name calling. He notices the rabbi wears a yarmukle also.

PETE

Whadaya got on the top of your head?

RABBI



It's a yarmukle.

PETE

Doesn't really block the sun.

RABBI

No but it covers bald spots.

The rabbi leans over, takes off the yarmukle, and shows Pete his bald spot.

PETE

It does cover the bald spot. My old Uncle Jim could have used that.

RABBI

So what can I do you for?

Pete looks around.

PETE

Jewish people go here?

The rabbi nods.

PETE

I'm looking to see if I can help Jewish people get to heaven.

RABBI

A noble endeavor.

PETE

A quest!

RABBI

A noble quest! What can I do to assist your quest?

PETE

Well, I just wanted to check out the synagogue. But there's no bike rack. Don't kids go here?

RABBI

Yes. But not for school. How 'bout I hold onto your bike in the back of the Temple as you look around?

PETE

Thanks.

Pete enters the temple with Rabbi Jacobsen following him with the bike. The place is round and expansive. Pete looks around. After looking, Pete heads to the back of the temple where the rabbi waits for him with his bike.

PETE

No cross?

RABBI

No cross.

PETE

I find the cross fun to look at. Sometimes I think about climbing the wall at Holy Cross and unscrewing the nails, and letting him go. Makes mass go faster. You should think about putting in a cross.

RABBI

I'll look into that. So what are you thinking?

PETE

That this is where the quest starts.

RABBI

Well, if I can be of service, you let me know. My office is just over there. I've got to get home to my family. I have a boy around your age. How old are you?

PETE

Seven. Almost eight.

RABBI

He's six. Almost seven.

PETE

You can have a family?

RABBI

Yes.

PETE

Then what do they call you?

RABBI

Well, my boys call me father. But my congregation calls me Rabbi. Rabbi Jacobsen.

Rabbi Jacobsen puts his hand out. Pete shakes it.

PETE

I'm Pete. Pete O'Malley. Nice to meet you Rabbi Jacobsen.

RABBI

Nice to meet you.

The rabbi and Pete head out of the temple.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The O'Malley's sit at the dinner table. Three things are a constant at the dinner table. Meat, potatoes, and chaos. Katie starts to yelp.

KATIE

Can I have your attention? Please. I

got something to say. Please!

Everyone at the table slowly quiets down.

JOE

Better make this good Katie.

KATIE

I will.

The room is quiet. Katie looks at everyone.

KATIE

Today. I was on my bike. And I pedaled my bike to the O'Connors. And I pedaled back. And it was sunny.

Everyone stares at her.

KATIE

That's it.

Eddie shakes his head in amazement and grins.

EDDIE

Katie, you need to come up with a more exciting story.

KATIE

I will.

EDDIE

You know, like maybe crash your bike, and get really bloody and do the wounded soldier back to the house.

MARGARET

Eddie!

The older kids laugh.

PETE

Anyone know what a yarmukle is?

JOE

A beanie?

Patrick looks at Pete.

PATRICK

Jewish people wear them. It's traditional headwear.

SEAMUS

Like feathers for an Indian?

PETE

What's it for?

JOE

To hide their horns.

The older kids laugh. Margaret winces.

PETE

They got horns?

MARGARET

No. They do not have horns. Joe, please. The young ones don't need this. Let's change the subject.

JOE

Patrick, your Uncle Charlie says he could get you an interview over at the city planners office.

PATRICK

No thanks.

MARY

What about the fire department?

JOE

That's always there. Well, kid, what the hell are you going to do?

The kids react to the word hell.

PATRICK

I've applied for some scholarships. I should hear about them soon. Until then, I can keep life guarding. Saving money.

JOE

Life guarding? I've raised a professional lifeguarder. In Chicago. Work three months a year.

EDDIE

And he doesn't even look like Sheila Moran in his suit.

Tommy blushes.

EDDIE

Sheila! Oh Sheila. Save me!

Joe laughs.

JOE

Don't let her old man catch her saving you.

TOMMY

Eddie doesn't know what he's talking about. I don't like her.

Mary speaks matter of factly.

MARY

Francis Demos told me Sheila likes you so all you need to do is ask her out.

Patrick gets up from the table as Tommy, Mary, and Eddie continue to talk about Sheila Moran. Seamus is bent over showing Pete where the horns protrude from the head. Katie feeds the cocker spaniel her mashed potatoes under the table while Molly drinks from the bottle in Nancy's arms. Joe watches Patrick walk out of the room. He looks at Margaret for some answer. Margaret shrugs her shoulders.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NEXT DAY

Pete and Seamus walk down the tree lined city block in their neighborhood. The two sip milkshakes.

PETE

There's nothing better than a bubble gum milk shake. How come that girl looks at us so funny when we order it?

Seamus shrugs.

PETE

I mean, it's a two for one. Ice cream shake, and then the bubble gum sinks to the bottom, and when the shake's done, you got a whole pack of bubble gum to chew. All for the price of one shake.

Seamus takes the lid off the cup and tries to finish the shake in one big gulp. He succeeds. Seamus now chews on a wad of gum. Pete and Seamus pass a lemonade stand.

Ten cents a cup. Pete motions to the lemonade entrepreneurs that his shake has bankrupt him for the day.

PETE

You ever feel that there's more out there? Like there's more for you to do than just play ball and eat ice cream?

Seamus shakes his head. He blows a bubble. Pete blows a bubble.

SEAMUS

You gonna play baseball at 11?

Pete shakes his head.

SEAMUS

You heading over to the synagogue?

Pete nods. Seamus blows a bubble.

SEAMUS

You know, this whole thing's kinda weird. You going there, the quest.

Pete nods.

SEAMUS

Well, at least you know it's weird.

Pete and Seamus walk down the street in silence. Enjoying another day without responsibility.

CUT TO:

INT. SYNAGOGUE - LATER THAT MORNING

Pete knocks on the door of Rabbi Jacobsen's office.

RABBI

Come in.

PETE

Hey Rabbi Jacobsen, Pete O'Malley.  
We met the other day.

The rabbi stands up from his desk. He puts his hand out.  
Pete shakes it.

RABBI

Mr. O'Malley. How are you today?

PETE

I'm good thanks. Ready to start my quest. But I thought I might ask you for your permission first.

RABBI

What are your plans?

PETE

Sort of a "lemonade-free trip to heaven" stand.

The rabbi chuckles. He stops.

RABBI

Enterprising.

Pete shrugs off that word.

PETE

Yep. Jewish people gotta like lemonade?

RABBI

Very much so. I believe Moses set one up at Mount Sinai.

Again Pete shrugs off that statement.

PETE

I figured I might set up the stand right at the door. And I'm not going to charge.

RABBI

A future car salesman.

PETE

Right. OK then. Thanks. I'll let you know how it goes.

RABBI

You know, Jewish people believe in heaven. It's just that we believe it's not open yet.

PETE

Well, maybe I can get the people that don't want to wait.

The rabbi laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - MINUTES LATER

The rabbi walks back to the door. He turns back to look at Pete taping the poster to the wall. FREE LEMONADE. FREE TRIP TO HEAVEN.

The rabbi laughs. He opens the door and heads into the synagogue.

Pete takes a seat at his stand.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - HOURS LATER

The rabbi watches Pete through a window in the synagogue. Pete looks around. No business. He looks around again. He pours himself a cup of lemonade and gulps it. He puts the lemonade back in its place.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - END OF THE DAY

The rabbi walks out to the stand. Pete looks dejected.

RABBI

Rome wasn't built in a day, Pete.

Pete doesn't understand.

PETE

How do you make any money here? I'm free, and still nobody.

The rabbi pats Pete on the top of the head.

RABBI

I envy your youth. Come back tomorrow.

Pete looks at all of his stuff.

RABBI

I'll store your office right here inside the front door. For free.

Pete smiles.

PETE

You and I seem to be the only two on  
this block that care about free stuff.

RABBI

Because we're the only two that  
realize that you can't buy what we  
have to offer. It's free.

Pete and the rabbi place the desk, chair, and poster inside  
the synagogue. Pete shakes the rabbi's hand and rides his  
bike home.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - NEXT DAY

Pete sits at his stand. The rabbi parks his car on the street  
100 feet from Pete's stand. The rabbi doesn't want to block  
Pete's storefront billboard. The rabbi steps out of his car.  
His secretary, Julie, a pretty, voluptuous, middle aged woman  
who obviously was waiting for the rabbi, walks out the door  
and greets the rabbi. Pete watches her.

JULIE

Rabbi Jacobsen, you've received six  
messages.

RABBI

Door to door service. Julie, I don't  
pay you enough.

Julie hands the rabbi his telephone messages. The rabbi reads  
them and laughs.

JULIE

Members of the congregation don't  
seem to think this stand is a laughing  
matter. It's against Judaism.

RABBI

Most of the members don't seem to  
notice this temple, except during  
the high holidays or when they need  
something. Pete's giving us free  
advertising.

JULIE

But he's advertising Christianity.

RABBI

No, he's advertising thought. He's  
asking people to have a cup of free  
lemonade with him and maybe get some  
insight into how to get to heaven.  
Doesn't seem like this neighborhood  
cares about that. I wish a thousand  
Pete's opened up stands on this  
street.

Seamus rides his bike up to the stand.

SEAMUS

Hey.



PETE

Hey.

Seamus gets off his bike and pours himself a cup of lemonade.

PETE

Don't pour it all.

Seamus looks around. As if there was a public stampede for Pete's lemonade. Seamus waves to Rabbi Jacobsen. The rabbi walks toward the stand.

PETE

Rabbi Jacobsen, this is my older brother Seamus. He's nine.

The rabbi shakes Seamus's hand.

RABBI

I'm Rabbi Jacobsen. I'm forty-four. How many are there?

SEAMUS

Eight. But my oldest brother might go to college, so then there will be seven. And maybe we'll get his room.

RABBI

Quite a flock.

PETE

Got a dog too. Wanna cup of lemonade Rabbi?

RABBI

No thanks.

PETE

Mam?

JULIE

No thank you.

RABBI

Well, you keep up the...

YOUNG BOY

Rabbi! Rabbi!

A young boy comes running full speed around the corner.

YOUNG BOY

Rabbi! Rabbi!

The rabbi's face turns white.

RABBI

What is it Steven?

The sounds of fire engines roaring fill the air. A huge fire engine turns the corner and races past.

STEVEN

Rabbi, your house is on fire. Big  
fire!

The Rabbi doesn't hear the last line. He takes off in a full sprint back the way Steven came. Another fire engine races past. WE FOLLOW the fire engine. WE PASS OVER THE TOP of the FIRE ENGINE to the other side where JOE O'MALLEY hangs on. WE FOLLOW THE FIRE ENGINE up the block where people stand outside watching a house burn. The rabbi reaches the house at the same time the fire engine does.

RABBI

My boys! Where are my boys? David?  
Danny?

The rabbi furiously searches the crowd. Joe O'Malley reaches the rabbi. A quick exchange between the two. The rabbi takes off toward the stairs of his house. Two other firemen catch him and hold him back. Joe motions to the firemen to pull him back and the rest of the crowd to the other side of the street. He grabs a couple of other firemen who aim the hoses at the front door. Joe runs into the house and disappears into the smoke.

A CLOSE SHOT on Pete and Seamus, who have been watching from the corner. Mrs. Jacobsen arrives. The rabbi grabs her. Mrs. Jacobsen starts to cry. Everyone watches for Joe to reappear with two boys in hands. The firemen hose the flames. The rabbi makes another run for the house, but this time policemen hold him back. The rabbi goes limp as the two policemen hold him up. The rabbi's eyes are fixated on the front door. Where there is just smoke, the outline of Joe O'Malley appears. He has a child, Danny, wrapped in a blanket in his arms. He runs down the stairs and across the street. He hands the boy off to the paramedics. Danny is suffering from smoke inhalation but is OK. His parents surround him.

The rabbi screams at Joe. Joe can only read his lips. David!  
David! My other boy! David!

Joe looks back at the house. The flames rage uncontrollably and the other houses are now in danger of catching fire. The rabbi grabs Joe by the shoulders and screams. This time Joe's eyes are only on the fire. Joe takes off toward the house. A fireman tries to stop him but Joe bounces off him like a running back. As he reaches the front steps, an explosion knocks him back ten feet and flames roar out the front door. Firemen trample Joe as his coat catches on fire. They stamp out the fire while they hold him down. Joe rolls over and stares at the Jacobsens. Mrs. Jacobsen is hysterically crying as the rabbi stares aimlessly. The rabbi turns slowly and buries his wife's head in his chest. Danny, his youngest son, stares over his oxygen mask and up at his parents. Joe stands up and is escorted toward the ambulance as other firemen storm the house with more hoses. A CLOSE SHOT of PETE. His face is void of any emotion other than a look that says he thought his dad was dead. A CLOSE SHOT of SEAMUS. Tears stream down his face. As his dad clears the crowd and reaches the ambulance on his own two feet, Seamus takes off in a full sprint and covers the fifty yards in seconds. Pete stands still.

SEAMUS

Dad! Dad! Dad!

Joe looks up and before he knows it Seamus is jumping into his arms.

Joe puts Seamus down instantly and starts to scream.

JOE

What the hell are you doing here?  
Jesus Christ Seamus! Jesus Christ!

Seamus's face turns white. Joe looks up and sees Pete standing on the corner frozen.

JOE

And you brought your brother?

Joe slaps Seamus across the face.

JOE

How many times have I told you not  
to chase fire engines! It's dangerous.  
You could have killed yourself and  
your brother. Go home! And wait for  
me in your room!

Seamus turns around and walks toward Pete. Seamus reaches Pete, who is still frozen. Seamus never looks up from the pavement.

SEAMUS

Come on.

Pete looks at his dad, who now sits on the back of the ambulance as paramedics care for him. Pete looks further at Rabbi Jacobsen. Danny Jacobsen, six years old and bald, catches Pete's eye. They look at each other. Pete turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The O'Malley family sits around the TV and watches the news, which is reporting live from the fire, which still simmers in the background.

WE GO UP THE STAIRS AND DOWN THE HALLWAY to Pete and Seamus's room.

They both sit on their beds staring quietly at the ceiling. Seamus throws a tennis ball to himself. The front door opens and screams of DAD fill the house. Pete turns and looks at Seamus. Seamus fixates on the rotation of the ball as it leaves his hand. He repeats this over and over. Joe enters the bedroom and closes the door behind him.

Pete and Seamus sit up. Joe grabs a chair and flips it around so he's leaning forward on the back of the chair.

JOE

How many times have I told you boys?

Seamus begins to speak. Joe cuts him off.

JOE

People die in fires. You don't chase fires, you run away from them. That family lost a ten year old boy in that fire today.

PETE

Rabbi Jacobsen's son died?

Joe nods.

JOE

What were you two doing in that neighborhood?

Pete and Seamus stay silent.

JOE

You're both grounded. You can't leave this block. If I find either one of you outside this block or hear that either one of you left this block, you will get a whooping that you will still feel on your sixteenth birthday.

SEAMUS

But the baseball field...

JOE

That's it.

Joe stands up and exits the room. Seamus gets off his bed and grabs his glove. He starts to pound the ball into his glove.

PETE

I'm sorry. It's my fault.

Seamus stares out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - HOUR LATER

Joe sits in the backyard alone on a lounge chair drinking an Old Style beer. A floodlight illuminates the backyard. The backdoor opens and shuts. Joe continues to stare out. Pete grabs a chair, spins it around like his dad, and leans forward on the back of the chair.

Nothing is said for a few seconds as Pete stares out. Joe doesn't look at Pete.

JOE

What are you doing up?

PETE

Couldn't sleep.  
(Pause)

Dad, Seamus was only in the area  
because he was checking up on me.

Joe takes a big sip from his beer.

PETE

I'm on a quest. To meet a Jewish  
person and help them get to heaven.

Joe takes another sip from his beer.

JOE

Jewish people can't go to heaven.

PETE

Mom says they can be converted.  
Through Jesus. I asked Father Kelly  
and he said that is the role of a  
good Christian.

Joe takes another sip.

PETE

So I've been going over to the temple  
on Oakley. Looking for Jewish people.  
I met Rabbi Jacobsen. He's like a  
priest over at the synagogue. He's  
been real nice. And I feel really  
bad for him now that his son has  
died.

Silence.

JOE

How old are you?

PETE

Seven. And a half. You know.

JOE

You should be playing baseball and  
going to the pool. And asleep by  
nine.

PETE

Seamus was just seeing how things  
were going.

JOE

Don't go to that synagogue anymore.  
You go to church. Let the Jewish  
people take care of themselves.

PETE

But I'm on a quest.

JOE

Not anymore. The Jews will be Jews.  
And Christians will be Christians.  
Don't try to change things at seven  
and a half.

Pete stares out at the backyard.

JOE  
Get to bed.

CUT TO:

INT. JOE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Margaret lays in bed watching "The Tonight Show" when Joe walks out of the bathroom. He jumps into bed and watches TV with her.

MARGARET  
How bad was it?

Joe shakes his head.

MARGARET  
Joe, I can't raise these kids alone and I've gained too much weight to find a new husband.

Joe laughs and squeezes her stomach.

JOE  
Too much weight? You're skinnier and more beautiful than the first day I met you.

Margaret laughs.

MARGARET  
Your charm worked on me when I was a teenager. I see what I see. Tell me about the fire.

JOE  
It was a fire. They're never good.

Margaret knocks on the wall that the bed lays against. She turns her head and faces the wall.

MARGARET  
(sarcastic to the wall)  
Tell me about your day.  
(As wall)  
Well, it was a day like any other day. I stood firm, attached to the floor.

JOE  
Whaddaya want from me?

MARGARET  
Not the tough guy I'm being interviewed I did my job routine.

Joe touches Margaret's stomach and rubs it.

JOE  
If you were skinnier when we met, I don't remember. And there's no way I

liked it.

Margaret pushes his hand away and rolls over. Joe twists the pillow in half and stares at the ceiling.

JOE

Did you know Pete was going to a synagogue to convert Jewish people?

Margaret laughs.

JOE

I'm not finding that as funny.

Margaret rolls over and faces Joe.

MARGARET

Pete is searching for meaning in his life.

JOE

He's seven. Baseball is the only meaning in a seven year old's life.

MARGARET

Some kids are destined for greater things than baseball.

JOE

I don't know honey. Sounds like Pete's looking for a recipe to get beat up. I told him to leave those people alone. Don't let him go over there.

MARGARET

I can't watch these kid's every move. Molly needs my constant attention. All I know is he walks out of the house in the morning, and when he comes back, he's clean and nobody's calling to say he was trouble.

JOE

Now that's parenting 101. My kid's clean and nobody says he's trouble. Am I going to have to work and raise the kids?

MARGARET

Don 't start with me Joe.

Margaret rolls over. Joe spoons up against her.

JOE

Maybe we should bring another kid into the world who's clean and doesn't cause any trouble?

MARGARET

Well, if you're looking for my womb, I think it fell out over there when I was dusting. Have at it.

Joe rolls back over and watches "The Tonight Show".

CUT TO:

EXT. FIREHOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Joe sits on a lounge chair outside of the firehouse with a few other firemen playing cards. Roger, his brother and fellow fireman, is studying the sports page.

ROGER

The Sox hit lefties hard. Zisk loves lefties.

No comments.

ROGER

I think you gotta take the Sox tonight plus one fifty. They're a good bet. A buck to win a buck fifty.

JOE

Why you try to convince us? You never bet against the Sox. Ever.

ROGER

I like their lineup. It's explosive.

JOE

You ever think about betting the other team. When you're betting, don't let your heart get in the way of a good decision.

ROGER

Yeah, but when your heart and mind are in together, it's a sure bet.

JOE

Funny how your heart and mind always say Sox.

JACK

Gin!

Joe throws his cards down.

JOE

Shut the hell up Roger. Jack's crushing me cause of you.

(To Jack)

You should be a garbage man the way you pick up every card I throw. You do that to piss me off, Jack?

Jack adds the score.

JACK

I do it to win. Five hundred to two twenty. At a nickel a point. Fourteen bucks you owe me.

Joe goes into his pocket and fishes out fourteen dollars.



Rabbi Jacobsen walks up the driveway with his son Danny. The rabbi has two tinfoiled trays and Danny carries two bottles of red wine.

RABBI

Gentlemen.

The men get quiet. Joe walks over to help the rabbi with the trays.

Roger takes the wine from Danny.

RABBI

My wife, my son, and I wanted to thank you for your bravery and kindness.

The rabbi looks down at Danny. Danny's White Sox hat covers his bald head.

DANNY

Thank you.

The men, still quiet, nod. Jack takes a tray from Joe and the other tray from the rabbi. Joe puts out his hand.

JOE

Rabbi, Joe O'Malley. I'm sorry for your loss.

The men nod in agreement.

RABBI

Thank you. My son David was a good boy.

The rabbi looks at the shiny red fire trucks.

RABBI

He loved you firemen. Never understood why I couldn't be a fireman on the side and park the firetruck outside the house.

The men laugh. Danny smiles. Joe nudges Roger and points to his head. Roger nods knowingly and walks into the firehouse.

RABBI

My wife figures the best way to thank a man is through his stomach. She baked some lasagna for all of you in appreciation.

DANNY

It's real good.

Joe looks at Danny.

JOE

I bet it is.

(To Rabbi)

My guys love a good meal, but I wish your wife wouldn't have. We were

just doing our job.

RABBI

A heroic job you do. My wife wanted to thank you personally. My synagogue will want to thank you formally.

Joe looks down. Not heroic enough to save your other son, Joe thinks.

RABBI

I don't know if you're allowed to drink red wine on the job, but lasagna just isn't as good without a fine wine.

JACK

Nothing is as good without a fine wine.

Roger comes back with a plastic firehat and button.

ROGER

This is for you. A deputy fire chief.

Danny takes off his White Sox hat and hands it to his dad. He puts on the firehat.

DANNY

Thanks.

ROGER

You're welcome. You a big Sox fan?

DANNY

Huge. Zisk crushes the ball.

ROGER

Especially against lefties. You wanna check out the firetruck?

Danny looks at his dad excitedly, His dad nods. Roger takes Danny by the hand and walks back into the firehouse. The other men follow.

Joe stays out with Rabbi Jacobsen. The rabbi breaks the silence.

RABBI

It is Jewish custom to sit chiva at the house of the deceased. It is a sign of support to the family of the deceased.

JOE

Like a wake.

RABBI

Yes, like a wake. I know you are a busy man, but if you have time, I would be honored if you could stop by and sit for a few minutes with my family and friends.

JOE

You bet.

RABBI

Obviously, it is not at my home. But  
at my brothers on 2243 Damen.

JOE

2243?

RABBI

Anytime after seven PM all week.

Danny is on the back of the truck.

DANNY

Dad! Check me out!

RABBI

Children realize life is about living.  
And death is about life. Do you have  
any children of your own?

Joe laughs.

JOE

Yep. I've got children all right.  
Eight.

RABBI

Eight? A blessed man.

Joe rolls his eyes as if the blessing isn't always so.

RABBI

The O'Malley clan? By any chance, is  
a beautiful young redhead named Pete  
yours?

Joe nods in embarrassment.

RABBI

Your bravery has been passed on.  
He's the most earnest, delightful  
young man I have ever met.

JOE

I found out he's been a nuisance at  
your temple and I've reprimanded  
him. He won't be bothering you  
anymore.

RABBI

Your son is a welcome sight at the  
temple.

Danny screams as he sits in the rear driving seat. Joe and  
the rabbi look at Danny.

JOE

Do you mind if I ask?

Joe points to his head.

RABBI  
Luekemia. Chemotherapy.

JOE  
I'm sorry. So sorry.

RABBI  
God has a plan. A mysterious plan  
for my family.

Joe and the rabbi watch Danny.

RABBI  
If you can find time, we would love  
to have you at my brother's house.  
Bring Pete. It would be good for  
everyone spirits to see a child so  
full of life like your son.

Joe smiles.

JOE  
He's full of something.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY FAMILY ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Pete and Seamus lay on the floor playing "All Star Baseball".  
Katie dances around to music from the record player. Baby  
Molly sleeps in the crib. Patrick walks in the door with the  
day's mail. Katie runs over and grabs the mail from him.

KATIE  
Getting the mail is my job.

She punches him, hands over the mail to Katie, who takes it  
over to the table. She rifles through the mail. Katie can't  
read.

KATIE  
Bill! Bill! Bill! Looks like all  
bills.

Katie gets up and starts to dance. Patrick sits down and  
looks at the mail. A few pieces of official mail are addressed  
to him. Patrick opens them up and reads them. Patrick crumples  
the paper and leaves it on the table. He walks away from the  
table.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY KITCHEN - EARLY NIGHT

The family sits at the dinner table. Tommy and Eddie are  
missing from the table. The kids eat pot roast and roasted  
potatoes.

JOE  
The boys game started at six?

SEAMUS

Doubleheader. Uncle Roger, Billy,  
and Roger junior are going.

Joe looks at Margaret. She nods.

JOE

You finish your chores?

SEAMUS

Yep.

Joe nods. Pete looks at his dad.

JOE

Rabbi Jacobsen invited you and me to  
a... a... chivas at his house.

PETE

Rabbi Jacobsen? Chivas?

JOE

Yep. Like a wake. I told him we would  
be there.

Joe looks at Margaret. She smiles.

PETE

How's he doing?

JOE

It's gotta be tough.

PETE

Yeah.

JOE

We'll go and then catch the second  
game.

PETE

Yeah. We'll do that.

SEAMUS

Tell Rabbi Jacobsen I'm sorry for  
him.

PETE

I will.

JOE

You know he's got a boy your age. I  
met him today. He'll be there.

Pete nods.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY KITCHEN - AFTER DINNER

Joe and Margaret still sit at the table. Joe drinks a beer  
while Margaret drinks coffee. Mary rocks Molly. Seamus stands  
at the sink scraping food and washing dishes. He hands them

to Pete, who stands on a stool and rinses the dishes. Pete hands the dishes to Katie, who places the dishes in the dishwasher.

JOE

The rabbi's other kid has leukemia.

MARGARET

We've been blessed. I don't know how we've been so lucky, but I'm not to question it.

JOE

Stupid electrical wiring. Those damn old houses weren't built for modern wiring.

Patrick walks by.

JOE

Hey, lifesaver, why don't you sit down?

Patrick takes a seat.

JOE

So, your mother thinks you got some news?

Patrick plays with his fork.

PATRICK

Maybe I'll take a look at the job over at the city planners office.

Joe pauses.

JOE

It's a good job with nice benefits. I'll talk to Alderman McManus about it.

Patrick stays silent.

JOE

Well, don't go there with that attitude. The alderman's doing us a favor. So don't go acting like a punk.

From the kitchen, Katie mimics her dad.

KATIE

Yeah, don't go acting like a punk.

Patrick stays silent.

JOE

A lot of kids your age don't have a chance like this.

PATRICK

A lot of kids my age go to college.

Not to work.

JOE

Yeah, and when they graduate, they're four years behind you in the working world. All they've learned from college is how to smoke pot and sleep.

PATRICK

The good jobs nowadays require a college degree.

JOE

A city job is a good job, and all it requires is hard work and a good attitude.

PATRICK

The Irish way. Get a city job, work hard, have forty kids, retire on a crap pension in the same house you lived in all your life.

JOE

You wanna be some hotshot bigshot, have one point two kids, live in the suburbs in a big house with no love to fill a closet, and retire to Florida to die like a raisin?

PATRICK

Yeah, what if do?

JOE

Then go ahead. Be like the Jews. Have no more than two kids because it's not economical to have more. Make every decision based on money. Raise your kids to base their life on the size of their wallet. Raise them to worship the almighty dollar, not God.

PATRICK

No, Dad, I shouldn't raise my kids to base their worth on the size of their wallet when I can teach them to base it on how much booze they can handle without puking.

Joe gets up and cracks Patrick. The kids run to their mom.

JOE

You ungrateful, smartass prick. You got all the answers at eighteen, don't you?

PATRICK

No, but maybe if I work a city fucking job, I'll have all the answers at forty.

Joe cracks Patrick upside the head and knocks him over. The

kids scream. Patrick gets up. He thinks about charging his dad, but decides to walk out of the kitchen and out of the house. The kids cry. Margaret shakes her head. Joe finishes his beer.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY STATION WAGON - AN HOUR LATER

Pete and Joe drive in the wagon. The White Sox broadcast blares from the radio. They drive in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. RABBI JACOBSEN'S BROTHER'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Pete and Joe enter the house. A lot of people sit quietly. The rabbi's brother greets them.

JEFFREY

I'm Jeffrey Jacobsen, Kenny's brother.  
We're glad you could make it.

Pete hands Jeffrey some flowers. The room is void of any flowers.

Jeffrey looks around for a place to put the flowers.

JEFFREY

I'll bring this in the kitchen.

Thanks. Can I get you anything to drink?

JOE

Scotch.

JEFFREY

I'll check to see if I have any  
scotch. If not?

JOE

A beer.

JEFFREY

I'll check to see if I have any beer.  
If not?

JOE

You know what, I'm fine.

JEFFREY

You sure?

JOE

Yeah, I'm sure. Thanks.

Jeffrey looks at Pete.

PETE

No thanks.

People sit on the couch. A picture of David sits prominently on the table. A handsome young boy. Joe works his way over



to Mrs. Jacobsen, who sits on the couch. Mrs. Jacobsen, a pretty but plain dark haired woman, shakes Joe's hand.

JOE

I am sorry for your loss, Mrs. Jacobsen.

MRS. JACOBSEN

Thank you.

Pete stands quietly next to his dad. A gentlemen gets up from the couch facing Mrs. Jacobsen and motions for Pete and Joe to sit. They sit. Small, quiet conversations take place around them. Pete and Joe sit quietly. Rabbi Jacobsen enters the room with Danny. He walks over to Joe, who has stood up to greet the rabbi. Joe puts out his hand. The rabbi shakes his hand, but also moves in to hug Joe. Joe moves in unexpectedly for the hug. The rabbi picks up Pete and hugs him. Pete laughs.

RABBI

My family is grateful to you.

Joe nods. Danny waves to Joe. Joe waves to him. Danny looks at Pete.

DANNY

You wanna check out my room that I'm sharing with my cousin?

Pete looks at his dad. Joe gives him the OK. Pete and Danny take off.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Danny shows Pete his autographed glove. Sandy Koufax!

DANNY

My dad says it's rare cause Mr. Koufax rarely signed things.

PETE

Yeah. Was he good?

DANNY

I think so.

Danny hands Pete another glove.

DANNY

This was my brothers. You wanna play catch?

PETE

In the house?

Danny grabs a tennis ball.

DANNY

Yeah. It's just a tennis ball.

PETE

Sure.

Danny fires a strike.

PETE

How'd you lose your hair?

DANNY

Leukemia. It's cancer. I take this medicine that makes me lose my hair.

PETE

Does it hurt?

DANNY

No. The hair just fell out. I used to have black hair.

PETE

I've got red hair.

DANNY

My friend Charlie's got red hair.

They throw the ball back and forth.

PETE

I'm sorry about your brother.

DANNY

Thanks. You know, since my cancer, he didn't beat me up as much. We had fun together. Do you have any brothers?

PETE

Four older brothers.

DANNY

Wow. You must get your butt kicked?

Pete nods.

PETE

My older sister's worse. My brothers just punch me in the gut. She pulls my hair. That hurts. I wish I were bald then.

Danny smiles.

PETE

Was the fire scary?

DANNY

I don't know what happened. David was watching cartoons in the TV room. I was upstairs playing baseball. And then I noticed a lot of smoke. I opened my door but there was a lot of fire. I tried to open my window, but I couldn't. I couldn't see the

fire anymore because the smoke got so thick. And then your dad came in. He saved my life, I think. It was nothing like the fire drills you do in school.

PETE

Where do you go to school?

DANNY

Briarwood. How 'bout you?

PETE

Holy Cross. Going into third grade.

DANNY

I'm going into second. I missed a lot of first grade with all of the chemotherapy. That's what they call the cancer medicine.

The boys throw the ball back and forth.

PETE

What's it like to be Jewish?

DANNY

I don't know. Good.

PETE

I'm Catholic.

DANNY

What's that like?

PETE

Noisier.

DANNY

Things are usually noisier around here. But everyone's really sad.

PETE

My Uncle Jim died a few weeks ago. He was old. He was really my grandfather's brother, but we still called him Uncle Jim.

DANNY

I got an uncle like that. Harvey.

PETE

You would have thought my uncle's funeral was a birthday party.

DANNY

Sounds like fun.

PETE

Yeah it is. My mom says that people are sad because they love the person, but are happy cause they get to go to heaven. Jewish people can't go to

heaven.

DANNY

Why not?

PETE

Cause they're Jewish. God doesn't  
let Jewish people in heaven.

Danny's quiet.

PETE

If you're interested, I think I can  
show you how to get to heaven.

DANNY

Yeah?

PETE

Yep. I would just have to convert  
you.

DANNY

How do you do that?

PETE

I don't know. I haven't converted  
anyone before.

DANNY

What can I do in heaven?

PETE

Anything you want. They call it  
paradise.

DANNY

Sounds good. When can we start?

PETE

Tomorrow.

DANNY

I got my last chemotherapy treatment  
on Friday. So that gives us all week.

PETE

Fine. Let's meet at your dad's  
synagogue.

DANNY

OK.

The boys toss the ball back and forth.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY STATION WAGON - LATER

Pete and Joe sit in the wagon.

JOE

Danny's a good kid, huh?

PETE

Yeah. His medicine makes him bald.  
But it doesn't hurt. I'm gonna convert  
him.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE

Leave him alone.

PETE

He wants to.

JOE

But his parents don't. Look, he's  
Jewish. His family's Jewish. If they  
wanted to be Christian, his parents  
would change.

PETE

But it's a quest.

JOE

The quest has been called off.

PETE

I promised Danny. We're meeting at  
the synagogue.

JOE

Well, I'm breaking that promise. You  
can't go converting Jewish kids the  
same way they don't go converting  
you.

PETE

But he wants to.

JOE

I said no. No more lip from you. Do  
not go to that synagogue and do not  
bother Danny or his family anymore.  
Do you understand me?

Pete doesn't answer.

JOE

Do you understand me? If I find out  
you've been going over there, you  
will get the spanking of a lifetime  
and be grounded until you're sixteen.  
Do you understand?

PETE

Yes.

The lights of the local baseball field illuminate the night.  
Joe turns into the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - NEXT DAY

Danny, with his White Sox hat covering his bald head, stands outside the synagogue. DIFFERENT SHOTS of Danny waiting. Danny finally decides Pete is not showing up. He gets on his bike and turns the corner back toward his uncle's house. As he passes an alley, Pete pops out and almost scares Danny off his bike. Pete sneaks back into the alley.

DANNY

What are you doing?

PETE

Our quest has to be done in secret.  
Our mission is now undercover.

DANNY

Why?

PETE

Cause.

DANNY

What's our mission?

PETE

To get you to heaven.

DANNY

Right. How we gonna know I got to heaven?

PETE

We'll just know.

DANNY

So what are we gonna do?

PETE

We got to set up some tests.

DANNY

Like school.

PETE

Yeah. But those tests aren't fun.  
What's the purpose of making it to heaven if the tests aren't fun?

DANNY

Have you taken any of these tests?

Pete thinks.

PETE

Since I'm Catholic, I don't think I have to. It's just automatic.

DANNY

That's cool.

PETE

Yeah. But you know what. For my first communion next year, I have to

complete first communion training.

DANNY

What's communion?

PETE

This piece of bread that is Jesus.

DANNY

And you eat it?

PETE

Yep.

DANNY

Gross.

PETE

I watch people eat it and they don't gross out. And my brothers say it tastes like wheat bread.

DANNY

Not as good as white. So I should do the first communion training.

PETE

I haven't done it yet, so I don't know what it is.

DANNY

Darn.

PETE

But we can make up our own.

The kids think.

DANNY

How about something like Bruce Jenner and a decathlon? Win the decathlon, go to heaven.

Pete thinks.

PETE

Yeah, something like that.

DANNY

And then we should have a gold medal ceremony. Gotta have a medal.

PETE

Communion can be your medal.

DANNY

The Jesus wheat bread?

PETE

Yeah.

DANNY

I'd rather have a medal.

PETE

We can talk about it later. Let's go, we can't be spotted.

DANNY

Why can't we spotted?

PETE

We're undercover.

DANNY

Right.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN - MINUTES LATER

Pete and Danny sit on the Elevated Train that runs from Chicago's north side to its south side. Pete looks out the window. They pass a car wash. Danny looks up and down the aisle.

DANNY

My parents don't let me on the El without them.

PETE

Father Kelly always talks about a risk reward. I think you'll be OK if your parents find out. We'll just explain the risk was worth the reward.

DANNY

Right.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAK STREET BEACH - MINUTES LATER

The beach is pretty full. Lake Michigan's waves crash weakly against the rocks. Gymnastic rings are set up at the north side of the beach along with an area filled with weights. Elevated five feet above the beach is a paved area for runners and bikers.

PETE

If we see my sister, just start running.

DANNY

How am I gonna know it's your sister?

PETE

I'll be running.

DANNY

Right.

The boys look around. Two teenage girls in bikinis walk past them.

The boys smile. The girls smile back. Danny does his best



Fonz impression. Pete laughs.

PETE

Bruce Jenner is faster, stronger,  
and can jump higher than anyone else.  
So that's how we should do this.

DANNY

OK. I'm fast.

PETE

But first, you need to be baptized.  
My baby sister just got baptized. We  
all got baptized. I don't remember  
mine, but I've seen pictures.

Danny nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - MINUTES LATER

Pete is trying to pick up Danny by his ankles. He lifts Danny up and they both fall into the water. Pete, determined to do it right, then grabs Danny by the ankles and lifts. Danny's head, along with his shoulders, wade back and forth in the water.

PETE

Amen!

Pete lets go of Danny's legs and Danny crashes completely into the water. Pete falls in also. They both wipe away the water from their faces.

PETE

I think it would have been easier if  
you were a baby.

DANNY

Let's get started. What should we do  
first?

CUT TO:

EXT. OAK STREET BEACH - LATER

A SERIES OF SHOTS. Pete counting as Danny runs toward him. Danny hanging from a ring as Pete counts him down. Pete and Danny talking to a man with weights. Danny trying to lift the weight. He can't.

Pete tries. He can't. They take off some of the weight. Danny lifts the weight over his head. Danny climbs a small hill of rocks. Pete waits for him at the bottom, about six feet below. Danny jumps, hits the sand, and rolls.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAK STREET BEACH - LATER

Pete and Danny alternating turns drinking from a thermos.

DANNY

Nine down. One to go.

PETE

This one's gotta be tough.

DANNY

Some of those were tough.

PETE

Yeah, but the last one's gotta be real tough. Something that takes strength, speed, and courage.

DANNY

I don't know.

PETE

What can't you do well?

DANNY

I'm not a strong swimmer.

Pete looks out to Lake Michigan. A buoy signals the spot where the lifeguards don't want you to swim past.

PETE

Swim out to the buoy.

Danny looks for the buoy.

DANNY

I can't even see the buoy.

Pete points to it.

DANNY

I can't get there.

PETE

You're going to have to if you wanna win the decathlon.

Pete and Danny head toward the water.

PETE

Look, I'm not asking you to do something I can't. When I was your age, I could swim to the buoy.

DANNY

Do I have to get to the buoy and back under a certain amount of time.

Pete looks at the buoy. He looks at Danny.

PETE

What do you think?

DANNY

No.

PETE

Getting there and back is enough.

Danny smiles.

PETE

Don't worry. I'm here. And there are lifeguards everywhere.

Danny starts swimming. He dips his head in the water and slowly one arm dives in the water while one arm raises out of the water. He brings his whole head out of the water to breathe, dips his head in the water, and repeats the process. Halfway to the buoy, he tries to pick his head up to see where the buoy is. He begins to sink and panics. His arms start to flail. Pete dives into the water as Danny turns his body so he can float on his back. Pete reaches Danny and grabs him.

PETE

You OK?

DANNY

I couldn't make it. And then I remembered what my swim teacher taught me about floating. But I don't think I could float there and back.

PETE

No, I don't think so either. Can you make it back?

Danny nods and rolls over to his front. Danny starts swimming in and Pete follows him.

CUT TO:

INT. EL TRAIN - MINUTES LATER

Pete and Danny sit on the El. Danny's dejected.

PETE

In one day you passed nine tests. God's gotta be happy with you.

DANNY

Yeah, but I don't know how I'm gonna pass the last one. That's tough.

PETE

Look, we got all week. Trust me. You can do it.

DANNY

I hope so. I really want to go to heaven.

PETE

You will. Do kids die from what you have?

Danny nods.

DANNY

The first time I took chemotherapy,  
two other boys and a girl took it  
with me. When they started me on it  
a second time, I was the only one.  
The others died.

PETE

How do you know?

DANNY

I asked. The nurses got all quiet.  
Grown ups always get quiet when they  
talk about death.

PETE

Not at my uncle's funeral.

DANNY

Sometimes I hear my parents talk  
about it late at night and they cry.  
I feel so bad. And now with my  
brother, my mom cries all day and  
night. I don't want her to be so sad  
if I die.

PETE

No, I wouldn't want that either.

DANNY

So if I can convince her that I'm  
going to paradise, maybe she won't  
be so sad.

Pete nods. The boys look out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - THE NEXT DAY

Danny swims out toward the buoy. He doesn't make it. He floats  
and waits for Pete. He follows Pete back to the shore.

PETE

I don't understand. You look like  
you're going to get there, and then  
you don't.

DANNY

I don't know.

PETE

But you swim back to shore fine with  
me.

DANNY

I know.

PETE

So what is it?

DANNY

I look up to see where the buoy is,  
and I can't see it. And then I start

to realize how far out I am and...

PETE

What if I go with you?

DANNY

No. I gotta do it alone.

PETE

Well maybe if you don't look up.

DANNY

But then I don't know where I am.

PETE

We'll figure this out.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - NEXT DAY

Danny puts on the goggles. But he still can't do it.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAK STREET BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Pete puts on the goggles. He looks out toward the buoy.

PETE

I can see fine.

Pete hands the goggles to Danny. Danny puts them on and looks toward the buoy.

DANNY

I can see it from here. But when I get in the water, I can't see it and then everything starts getting really fast and I can't go any further.

Pete plays with the sand. Danny scoops sand and throws it.

PETE

Stand up.

Danny stands. Pete raises Danny's hands over his head. Pete then raises his hands over his head. He measures the difference.

PETE

You stay here and watch me swim to the buoy. I'll be right back.

Pete swims out to the buoy.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - MINUTES LATER

Pete swims ashore.

PETE

It took me fifty strokes there, and fifty five strokes back. One hundred and five strokes.

DANNY

So?

PETE

Your problem is when you look up and you can't see the buoy, you get scared and panic.

DANNY

I don't get scared.

PETE

Yeah you do.

DANNY

No I don't.

PETE

Listen. All you have to do is count your strokes. You don't need to look up. Can you count to fifty?

DANNY

Yeah.

PETE

Well, I'm a little bigger so it's going to take you a few more strokes. Can you count to sixty?

DANNY

Yep.

PETE

Well then, just count to sixty strokes and then swim back. It might take you a few more strokes on the way back.

DANNY

I can do that. But I'm real tired and I need to get back for my treatment this afternoon.

PETE

Right. Tomorrow. Tomorrow you complete the decathlon.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - THAT AFTERNOON

Danny sitting in a chair with IV's stuck in him. He's watching the White Sox. Through the door window, a doctor speaks to Rabbi Jacobsen and his wife.

DOCTOR

This last treatment will weaken his immune system greatly. The red blood

cells don't seem to be responding,  
so we upped the dosage.

RABBI

What's the prognosis?

DOCTOR

I don't know. If this treatment  
doesn't work, I don't think there's  
anymore we can do.

MRS. JACOBSEN

Why? Isn't there a stronger dosage  
or more intensive treatment?

DOCTOR

This is the most intensive treatment.  
And a stronger dosage would kill  
him.

Mrs. Jacobsen goes to speak but the rabbi grabs her hand. He  
squeezes it. The Jacobsen's enter the room.

DANNY

The Sox are getting clobbered Dad.

RABBI

They've been getting clobbered all  
my life.

DANNY

Mine too.

The rabbi squeezes his wife's hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - NEXT MORNING

Pete sits in the a doorway hidden from plain sight. The rabbi  
walks up to Pete.

RABBI

Danny told me I might find you here.

PETE

I don't know how he knew I would be  
here.

The rabbi smiles.

RABBI

Danny wanted me to tell you that he  
wouldn't be able to complete the  
decathlon today.

Pete stares at the Rabbi, hoping to be able to figure out  
how much the rabbi knows.

RABBI

You see, the medicine Danny's  
taking...

PETE

Chemotherapy.

RABBI

Yep. Chemotherapy. It zaps him of his strength. And weakens his ability to fight off disease.

PETE

Sounds like bad medicine.

RABBI

Yes it does. But that's how doctors fight cancer.

PETE

My oldest brother wants to become a doctor. My mom always tells me to do my homework so I can be smart and become a doctor.

RABBI

It's a noble profession.

PETE

My dad thinks they play too much golf. And they charge like assholes.

RABBI

I hate to disagree with your dad, but he probably wouldn't want you using that word.

PETE

Seamus says you can use swear words if you're quoting someone.

RABBI

Seamus sounds like a fine journalist. Is your oldest brother going to college to study medicine?

PETE

No. He can't afford college.

RABBI

Higher education is expensive. But worth it if you work hard.

PETE

Rabbi, when do you think Danny will be better?

RABBI

I did not study medicine in college, but even if I did, I don't think I could answer that. It's in God's hands now.

PETE

Well, you're close with God. Hopefully that rubs off a little on Danny. I hope he gets better, we've got some



unfinished business.

RABBI

I hope so too. Praying for Danny is all we can do now.

PETE

OK. I'll pray to Jesus, you pray to God, and hopefully somebody listens.

RABBI

That's a deal.

Pete jumps on his bike.

PETE

See ya later Rabbi Jacobsen.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLY CROSS CHURCH - MINUTES LATER

Pete sits by himself in a pew at church. Father Kelly, 71, snow white hair, skin cancered face, cantankerous old man, notices Pete and walks over.

FATHER

Mr. O'Malley? Are you lost?

PETE

Hey Father. No, I promised a friend I'd pray for him. He's sick.

FATHER

Well, maybe I can say a prayer for him also.

Father Kelly sits down next to Pete.

PETE

His name's Danny. He's got cancer.

Father Kelly does the sign of the cross. He closes his eyes. Pete stares at him. Father Kelly opens one eye at Pete.

FATHER

You finish your prayer?

Pete nods.

FATHER

Well, let me finish my prayers without you bothering me.

Pete stands up and walks toward the altar. Father Kelly watches him.

FATHER

Where are you going?

PETE

Just checking out how this place looks from your seat.

Pete takes a seat in a chair to the left of the altar. Father Kelly stands and walks toward the altar.

FATHER

That's my seat. Don't mess it up.

PETE

You get nervous with everyone looking at you?

FATHER

I'm used to being looked at.

PETE

You ever get nervous that you won't know what to say or you'll forget what you wanted to say?

FATHER

No.

PETE

How do you get paid?

FATHER

That's between me and the IRS.

PETE

Do you get the collection money?

FATHER

No. Someone tell you I did?

Pete shakes his head.

FATHER

Do you need to get home?

Pete shakes his head.

PETE

Your job's to help people to get to heaven, right?

Father Kelly nods.

PETE

How do you know if you've done your job good?

FATHER

Well. I pray that I do it well. Why? You have any complaints?

PETE

You ever actually seen someone in heaven?

Father Kelly shakes his head.

PETE

Then how do you know if the people

you're helping made it to heaven?

FATHER

Faith.

PETE

Faith?

FATHER

Yep. Believing in something completely without actually having proof of it. Faith. I don't have any proof of heaven, but I have faith it exists.

PETE

What's the best way to get to heaven?

FATHER

By believing in Jesus and doing as he taught us.

PETE

How do we know if we're doing that? Is there some test?

FATHER

Life is a test.

PETE

But then you need to die to figure out how you did on the test?

Father Kelly laughs. He nods. He opens the altar and fills the chalice with hosts.

PETE

Don't you just once want to know if one of the people you prayed for made it to heaven?

FATHER

In due time.

Father Kelly finishes filling the chalice with bread.

PETE

What's the purpose of communion?

FATHER

To have a piece of Jesus be a part of us.

PETE

Why do I have to wait till third grade for that? Wouldn't that help me now?

FATHER

The Church believes that Catholics should fulfill a few requirements before they earn communion.

PETE

Like passing a few tests?

FATHER

Yes.

PETE

So if I pass all the tests, I get to have communion.

FATHER

Yes.

PETE

Thanks Father. You've cleared up a few things for me.

Pete runs off the altar.

FATHER

Good, glad the grilling is over.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY KITCHEN TABLE - THAT NIGHT

The family sits around the table.

MARGARET

Rabbi Jacobsen wanted to see if he could stop by after work. I said fine.

Pete's eyes light up but he doesn't want to say anything that would get him in trouble.

JOE

This gratitude stuff is becoming intrusive.

MARGARET

If the only fault you can find with a person is that they go overboard with kindness and gratitude, I can live with that.

KATIE

Me too.

JOE

Yeah. Yeah.

(To Patrick's chair)

Where's knucklehead?

KATIE

He said he'd be home late for dinner.

JOE

Oh yeah. Did he say why?

KATIE

He told me to mind my own business.

JOE

He's probably sitting on his ass  
reading a book in that lifeguard  
tower. Where the others?

SEAMUS

Tommy and Eddie have a game up north.  
Another doubleheader. And Mary's  
eating at a friends.

The doorbell rings. Pete and Katie run to get it. Pete lets  
Katie open the door. Rabbi Jacobsen stands with a tray of  
rugala, a Jewish pastry.

RABBI

Hello. I know Pete, and whom may I  
ask are you?

Katie puts her hand out. The rabbi goes to shake her hand  
but she put her hand out to take the tray.

RABBI

This might be too big for you.

KATIE

I handle bigger trays than that in  
the kitchen. How do you think I feed  
eight kids?

The Rabbi nods and hands the dish to Katie. She carries it  
into the kitchen.

PETE

How's Danny doing?

RABBI

He's doing better. Still not ready  
to play but he said to say hi and  
he'll stop by to see you when he can  
play again.

Pete looks back to see if his dad heard that. He didn't.

PETE

Come on in. We're just eating dinner.

The rabbi follows Pete into the kitchen. Seamus sits eating  
his potatoes. He stands up and shakes the rabbi's hand.

SEAMUS

Rabbi Jacobsen.

RABBI

Seamus. Nice to see you.

Joe stands up and shakes the rabbi's hand. The rabbi walks  
over and says hello to Margaret and pats little Molly on the  
head.

MARGARET

Would you like some dinner? There's  
plenty.

The rabbi looks at the well sliced pieces of ham and huge

bowl of mashed potatoes.

RABBI

No thank you. My wife knows when I've been eating other people's dinner. She considers it a form of adultery.

Margaret laughs.

MARGARET

How 'bout some coffee?

RABBI

Sure.

Katie stands up and walks toward the coffee pot.

KATIE

Black? Cream? Sugar?

RABBI

Two sugars. Thank you.

KATIE

You're welcome.

JOE

Please sit.

The rabbi takes a seat at the table.

JOE

How's your little boy?

RABBI

Hanging in there, thank you. He just finished more treatment and hopefully this works.

JOE

We hope so too.

Margaret comes back with the rugala on a plate. Katie hands the rabbi his coffee. Margaret takes a bite of the rugala.

MARGARET

It's absolutely delicious.

The rabbi takes a little.

RABBI

She can't get mad at me if I'm eating her own stuff. Rugala, a Jewish pastry. My favorite.

Margaret hands the rugala out to the boys and Joe. They're all very happy.

JOE

So what's going on?

RABBI

Well, remember when I told you that my congregation will want to formally thank you for your bravery.

JOE

There's no need, Rabbi. And that's the end of that.

RABBI

Well, maybe Margaret and you would like to talk about it more in private?

Joe looks at the boys. Seamus's busy eating his rugala and Pete stares at the rabbi.

JOE

That's OK.

RABBI

Well, you personally showed bravery beyond the call of duty when you saved Danny, and if it weren't for the gas pipe blowing up, you were going back in against the wishes of your partners.

Joe is embarrassed and quiet.

RABBI

The firemen saved the fire from spreading and many of the people from my temple live in that neighborhood.

Patrick enters the front door. He walks into the kitchen.

MARGARET

Patrick, I would like you to meet Rabbi Jacobsen.

RABBI

Patrick, your brother Peter has told me much about you. Nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

PATRICK

Nice to meet you, Rabbi. I'm sorry for your loss.

RABBI

Thank you. Well, Patrick, I was just telling your father that my temple would like to say thank you to him. And it might interest you.

Patrick sits down.

RABBI

Pete has told me of your wish to go to college and study medicine.

Patrick looks at Pete. Joe looks at Pete. Pete knows his

dad's look is not the same as Patrick's and Pete looks down.

RABBI

My temple gives educational  
scholarships to deserving students,  
and the scholarship board has  
recommended Patrick for a full  
scholarship to a state university.

Patrick's jaw drops. Margaret sits shocked and Joe stands  
up.

JOE

Rabbi Jacobsen, that is an extremely  
kind offer, but one that we cannot  
accept.

Patrick looks at Joe and tears form in his eyes.

RABBI

It would mean a lot to our  
congregation and personally to my  
family if you would accept it.

JOE

Other men risked their lives that  
day and every other day.

RABBI

We understand that. But, to be frank,  
it's more personal than say giving  
the fire department a sculpture in  
gratitude. Your fire chief approved  
it.

JOE

You spoke to my boss?

RABBI

Yes. We wanted to make sure it was  
within the rules. The scholarship  
board can only grant one scholarship,  
and when Pete told me of Patrick's  
desire, I recommended Patrick.

JOE

I imagine they want to give it to  
him in a big ceremony?

RABBI

Yes, I would imagine so. I think it  
would be a good public gesture.

JOE

Free publicity for the temple.

Patrick stands up at that last comment.

MARGARET

Joe!

JOE

Rabbi, thank you for stopping over.



My son Pete has a big mouth, and my family doesn't need your handouts. We thank you for your kindness.

PATRICK

You can't do this to me.

JOE

You will shut your mouth.

The rabbi stands from the table. He thanks Margaret and Katie for the coffee.

RABBI

I did not mean to cause any harm.

MARGARET

Rabbi, you have been anything but harmful. Thank you.

The rabbi pats Pete and Seamus on the head. He heads for the door.

RABBI

Mr. O'Malley. I did not intend for this to be thought of as a handout or a payout. But I did hope it would serve as a steppingstone for our two communities to come together. Have a good night.

The rabbi walks out the front door.

PATRICK

You're so proud that you won't let me accept it.

JOE

You have done nothing to deserve it. It's a publicity stunt.

MARGARET

It is not a publicity stunt. It is returning an act of kindness with an act of kindness.

PETE

Dad, the rabbi is the nicest man in the world.

Joe looks at Pete furiously.

JOE

You have a big mouth. You tell the rabbi that we don't have enough food to eat? Maybe he'll set up a food drive for our family?

PETE

I never said that. We talk a lot.

JOE

I thought I told you to leave those

people alone?

Pete stays quiet.

JOE

You've been going to the temple?

Pete puts his head down.

JOE

You disobeyed my orders.

PETE

I was on a quest. To get Danny to heaven. And we're almost there.

JOE

On a quest for heaven? By disobeying me, all you have done is put yourself on the road to hell. Go to your room and don't come out 'till I tell you to.

MARGARET

Joe!

Pete starts to cry.

PETE

I was just trying to do the right thing.

JOE

(To Margaret)

He disobeyed my word.

(To Pete)

The right thing? You're not even eight. You don't know what the right thing is. You know what I tell you, and what your mother tells you. Jewish people believe in their own thing. They do not go to heaven. And neither do Christians who disobey their fathers. Now get upstairs. Now!

Pete walks up the stairs. Joe walks into the kitchen and grabs a beer. Patrick follows him.

PATRICK

I'm going to see the rabbi myself and work out a deal.

JOE

Over my dead body. Do you understand it's not about you? It's not about kindness. It's about good publicity. The Jews help out a poor Irish Catholic family and they get on the news and the people think, how nice is it that the Jews share their money.

PATRICK

Why are you so cynical? You're too

proud to take a handout?

JOE

Too proud? Maybe a little pride  
wouldn't hurt you. Instead of sitting  
there with your hand out, maybe if  
you took pride in a little hard work,  
you'd understand.

PATRICK

There you go again. I work hard. My  
dad worked hard. You will work hard.  
I will work hard. At school. To get  
a good job.

JOE

Bullshit! We are not discussing this  
anymore tonight. I didn't spend my  
day at the beach. I'm tired!

Patrick begins to speak. Joe gets in his face and puts his  
finger in Patrick's face.

JOE

No more! No more!

Patrick storms out of the kitchen. He stops to look at his  
mother, who holds Molly in her arms.

PATRICK

How can you just stand there? You're  
married to an asshole and you just  
stand there like this innocent  
bystander.

Joe rushes into the living room.

JOE

You will not speak to your mother  
like that. Get the hell out of my  
house.

PATRICK

Your house? Who wants your house? Or  
your bullshit rules.

Joe holds his ground though he wants to whack Patrick. Patrick  
walks out the front door. Seamus still sits at the table  
eating pastries.

Joe walks out of the living room. Margaret, with tears  
beginning to form in her eyes, looks at Seamus. Seamus shrugs  
his shoulders, takes a bite of his pastry, and stands up. He  
puts his arms out to take Molly from her arms.

SEAMUS

Mom. You know how after you send me  
to my room, you come into my bedroom  
and we talk? I think Dad needs you  
to talk to him.

Margaret hands Molly to Seamus and kisses him on the forehead.  
She enters the kitchen.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Joe sits in his lounge chair drinking a beer and looks out at the sun setting. Margaret pulls up a chair next to him.

JOE

Honey, I know what you're going to say. And my decision about the scholarship is final.

Margaret stares at the sunset.

MARGARET

You know, when Father Murphy married us...

JOE

Don't start with this crap.

Margaret stops.

MARGARET

Father Murphy said...

JOE

Father Murphy was an idiot.

Margaret grabs the beer right out of Joe's hand. She throws it against the fence.

MARGARET

I have got something to say and you will not interrupt me until I am finished.

Joe shrugs but realizes this isn't the time to fight her.

MARGARET

We agreed on a partnership. And our partnership has been for you to provide for the family while I raise the family. But somewhere along the line, this partnership has gotten out of whack. You come home, the house is clean, your food is hot, and your kids are behaved. You then bark orders at these children like a drill sergeant.

JOE

Cause they need discipline.

MARGARET

I am not finished. Trust me, these kids are disciplined. You think I run this house without discipline? Joseph, the older ones, they need more guidance than sternness. We've done our work with them, they now need to feel they can bounce things

off us.

JOE

That's a bunch of crap. You think I bounced things off my dad? Hell no.

MARGARET

You hated your dad growing up.

JOE

Yeah, he was an asshole, but I respected him. And looking back, he did a great job.

MARGARET

But looking back is too late. It would be nice for Patrick to feel close enough to you so that he could tell you his dreams, tell you that even though he doesn't want to grow up to be you, that you are still his hero.

JOE

That's bullshit.

MARGARET

Everything is not bullshit. I will not allow you to take away the chance for Patrick to pursue his dream. The rabbi is being generous and you think it reflects poorly on you.

JOE

That's not...

MARGARET

Yes it is. You can't afford to put your children through college, so you've decided that college is bad. You know what, I agree college is a waste of time for most kids. But not Patrick. He wasted his first few years of high school, but the last two years he has worked his butt off and he generally loves to learn. That's what college is all about.

JOE

How do you know what college is about?

MARGARET

Just because I didn't go doesn't mean I didn't think about it. But I fell in love, had babies, and haven't regretted one thing about the last nineteen years. Until now! You will not squash your children's dreams because they aren't your dreams.

JOE

It's not about dreams, it's about what's right. If Patrick really wanted

college, he could have gotten better grades and earned a scholarship.

MARGARET

He didn't take school seriously. Why? Cause he thought it was a waste of time because he would work for the city whether he got A's or C's. But one day he woke up and decided that not doing his best was not the O'Malley way. And he learned that from his father. And he's got nothing but A's that day forward. And he will do the same in college. From a scholarship that he accepts from Rabbi Jacobsen, or so help me God, Joe, the only thing colder than your food when you get home will be your bed.

Margaret stands up and walks back into the house. Joe is alone looking at a sun that has set in the sky.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Pete sits on the floor alone playing the board game "All Star Baseball". He's busy spinning when Seamus enters.

SEAMUS

You can't play that game alone.

PETE

You wanna play?

SEAMUS

No.

PETE

So I gotta play alone. I'm crushing you.

SEAMUS

How can you be crushing me?

PETE

I picked one team for me and one team for you.

Seamus grabs the circular cards and looks at the teams.

SEAMUS

You've got Babe Ruth, Lou Gerhig, and Reggie Jackson. I've got nobody.

PETE

I gave you Harmon Killebrew. And Reggie strikes out all the time anyway.

SEAMUS

These teams are unfair.

PETE

Then we can redraft.

Seamus grabs his bat and glove.

SEAMUS

Maybe later.

PETE

How long do you think Dad will ground me?

SEAMUS

Who knows. Today's only the first day. Definitely longer than one day.

Seamus walks out of the bedroom and down the stairs. Katie is dancing in the living room. Seamus walks out the front door. Danny is standing at the door. He's sweaty and his White Sox hat is cockeyed.

SEAMUS

Hey. How you doing?

DANNY

Good thanks. Is Pete home?

SEAMUS

Yep. Upstairs. First room on the right. Take it easy.

Danny enters the house.

CUT TO:

INT. PETE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pete spins. The spinner lands on nine, which indicates a strikeout.

Pete laughs. Pete talks as if he's announcing the game.

PETE

Another strikeout for Seamus's team.

Pete's team, trying to be the first team ever in the history of baseball to go undefeated, comes to bat with a thirteen run lead. (other announcer voice) Jack, they're not only undefeated, but they've ten run ruled every team they've played. (back to original announcer voice) Good point, Charlie.

Danny enters the bedroom. Pete looks at him. He runs to the door, looks out in the hallway, pushes Danny inside the room, and shuts the door.

PETE

What are you doing here?

DANNY

We've got to complete the decathlon.

PETE

We can't. You gotta get outta here.

DANNY

We have to. I know I can do it.

PETE

I'm grounded forever because of you.  
If my dad saw me with you, I'd be  
grounded to infinity.

DANNY

I'd be grounded to infinity if my  
parents knew I was here. They think  
I'm napping.

PETE

I can't.

DANNY

I might not have another chance for  
awhile. I heard my mom talking to  
the doctor this morning. I think  
they're going to put me back in the  
hospital.

PETE

Listen. I'm not going to disobey my  
dad again.

DANNY

You told me about risk/reward. The  
risk is worth it.

PETE

No it's not.

DANNY

Yes it is. I gotta be able to tell  
my parents I'm going to heaven. They  
need to know I'm happy in paradise.

PETE

You wanna know the truth?

Danny nods.

PETE

You can't go to heaven. It's out of  
bounds, off limits, to Jews. There's  
nothing you can do.

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY

But you said.

PETE

I was wrong. The only thing that I  
did was put myself on the road to  
hell with you.

Danny screams.



DANNY

No, you said if I finish the  
decathlon, I'm going to heaven.

Pete grabs Danny.

PETE

You gotta go home. You're going to  
get me into trouble, and then I'm  
going to hell for sure.

Danny opens the door and leaves the bedroom. Pete lays down  
on the floor.

PETE

(announcer)

That was a brief rain delay. Pete's  
team comes to bat.

Pete places a circular card into the spinner. He can't  
position the card into the spinner. He throws the game across  
the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAK STREET BEACH - AN HOUR LATER

It is overcast at the beach with the usual Chicago wind  
whipping off the waves of Lake Michigan. The beach is quiet,  
with just a few people running and biking. Danny puts on his  
goggles. The waves are a little rougher today. He walks into  
the water. He dives in. Like a windmill, his arms splash in  
and out of the water.

DANNY

One. Two. Three. Four.

Danny continues to count his strokes. He breaks through the  
initial group of waves, but beyond the waves the water is  
choppy. The lifeguard in the tower looks out toward the lake.  
From his view, Danny is not visible. Danny's head barely  
bobs out of the water as he swims.

DANNY

Fifty five. Fifty six. Fifty seven.  
Fifty eight. Fifty nine. Sixty.

Danny looks up to see where the buoy is. He takes in some  
water. He thinks he sees the buoy but takes in more water.  
He flips to his back and floats. He coughs up what water he  
can. When he calms down, he turns his head slowly to check  
for the buoy. He sees it not too far off in the distance. He  
flips himself over, takes a little water, and begins to swim  
toward the buoy. He counts his strokes.

DANNY

Sixty one. Sixty two. Sixty three.  
Sixty four. Sixty five. Sixty six.  
Sixty seven. Sixty eight. Sixty nine.  
Seventy. Seventy one.

Danny's hands grasp the buoy. He looks up at the buoy. The

water splashes off the buoy onto Danny. Danny flips over and floats on his back. A big smile crosses his face.

DANNY

Seventy one strokes. And a little more on the way back. I can do it.

Danny floats on his back. He turns over and begins to swim toward the shore.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY HOUSE - A FEW NIGHTS LATER

Pete walks down the stairs. Joe passes the stairs on the way to the front door. He looks at Pete but doesn't say anything. Joe walks out the front door. Pete heads toward the kitchen. Patrick runs past Pete and also heads out the front door. Mary takes a crying Molly out of the kitchen. Margaret cleans off Molly's high chair.

PETE

Hey Mom.

MARGARET

Hi honey.

PETE

Where are Dad and going?

MARGARET

They have some business to take care of.

PETE

Patrick's getting a job?

Margaret bends down and fixes Pete's hair.

MARGARET

Always so busy worrying about everyone else's business. That's from my side of the family, you know?

PETE

Yeah. Dad tells me I get a lot from your side of the family.

MARGARET

That's right. Your sweetness, your humor, and definitely your nose.

PETE

So you think Dad will end my grounding?

MARGARET

Are you sorry for disobeying your dad? And lying to your mom?

PETE

It wasn't really a lie. I told you I was going out to play.

MARGARET

But you forgot to mention you were going to Lake Michigan and swimming with Danny.

Pete nods.

PETE

I'm sorry. It's just... it was a quest... and on a quest you have to take risks.

MARGARET

Lying to your mother is not a risk. It's wrong.

PETE

I know. Can you talk to Dad and put a good word in for me?

Margaret nods. Pete slowly heads out of the kitchen.

MARGARET

How did your quest end up?

PETE

Not good. I had to give it up.

MARGARET

You know, the way you went about your quest was wrong, sneaking to the beach and such, but the quest itself, it was good.

PETE

But Dad said...

MARGARET

Sometimes, even dad's are wrong.

PETE

Easy for you to say. He can't ground you.

MARGARET

Don't give up your quest.

PETE

How do you know the quest is good?

MARGARET

I have faith.

Pete nods and walks out of the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. SYNAGOGUE - MINUTES LATER

Rabbi Jacobsen sits at his desk. He is hurriedly shuffling papers when he hears a knock at his door.

RABBI

Come on in.

Joe and Patrick enter the rabbi's office. The rabbi stands up but is not his usual effusive self.

RABBI

I'm glad you came to see me but when we spoke before, I thought I would have time to talk. My wife called and told me I am needed at the hospital.

JOE

Is everything OK?

The rabbi shakes his head.

RABBI

Danny's not doing well.

JOE

I am sorry.

PATRICK

I'm sorry.

RABBI

I assume you want to talk about the scholarship?

Patrick nods.

JOE

It seems. I think. It's an opportunity for my son.

RABBI

It will open doors for Patrick that would be closed in today's society without a degree.

JOE

I just can't...

Patrick interrupts.

PATRICK

We know it will and if the offer is still there, I would love a chance at it.

The rabbi grabs his briefcase.

RABBI

Patrick, the scholarship is yours. You will make us all proud.

PATRICK

Thanks. Thank you.

JOE

You better get going. We better get

going. I hope everything gets better  
with Danny.

RABBI

Thank you.

The rabbi shows Joe and Patrick the door. The three exit the  
office and then the synagogue. They talk for a few more  
seconds and then part ways.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY STATION WAGON - MINUTES LATER

Joe and Patrick listen to the White Sox game on the radio.

JOE

Luckily, the Cubs stink, or else a  
lot of White Sox fans would be  
flocking north.

PATRICK

Never. There will be peace in Ireland  
before a Sox fan becomes a Cub fan.

Joe laughs.

JOE

You're probably right. And that's  
the way it should be.

They listen to the game. A White Sox batter strikes out with  
the bases loaded.

JOE

But they sure do test our loyalty.

PATRICK

I'm gonna work my ass off, Dad. I'm  
not going to be some pot smoking,  
sleep 'till noon college slacker.  
I'm gonna do it right.

Joe nods.

JOE

I know.

The two sit in silence as they drive home.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Pete is sitting on his bed tossing a tennis ball to himself.  
Joe walks in.

JOE

Pedro.

PETE

Hey Dad.

Joe motions for the ball. Pete tosses it to him. Joe throws it back.

JOE

Seamus said there's a big game over at Holy Cross and they could probably use another player.

PETE

So can I go?

JOE

Yep.

Pete jumps up from the bed.

PETE

Sorry Dad. I won't disobey you again.

Joe puts out his hand and Pete shakes it.

JOE

I saw Rabbi Jacobsen last night. I guess Danny's back in the hospital.

PETE

Yeah, Danny thought they might put him back in there. I hope he's doing all right.

JOE

It's tough. What he's got. It's tough on a kid. And the family.

PETE

I'll pray for him.

JOE

That would be nice.

PETE

I'll see you later Dad.

Pete walks out of the room.

JOE

Pete?

Pete pops his head back in.

JOE

The rabbi also told me to tell you that Danny completed the decathlon. Seventy-one strokes there, eighty-six back.

Pete's face lights up with a smile.

PETE

No way?

Joe nods.

PETE

I do it in fifty-five strokes.

JOE

That's good.

PETE

Yeah, but for his age and size,  
seventy-one strokes is great. He  
finished the decathlon!

Pete walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH STREET - MINUTES LATER

Pete rides his bike down the street toward the park. Holy Cross Church is attached to Holy Cross Elementary which is attached to Holy Cross Field, where the baseball field is located. Pete rides by the church and looks up at the big cross at the top of church. He rides toward the field and sees some of the boys playing catch while others sit on the bench and eat sandwiches. Seamus screams to Pete.

SEAMUS

Hurry up!

Pete waves to the guys. He gets to the field and hops off his bike.

He walks over to the bench where some guys are eating lunch. The corners of Jimmy Burns's lips are covered with jelly.

JIMMY

Pete, you missed the first game.  
Your brother's team won again. Are  
you going to start playing with us  
again.

PETE

Yep.

JIMMY

The quest over?

Pete nods. Kevin Muldoon pulls out a ham sandwich on wheat.

KEVIN

(To Jimmy)

Trade you my ham and cheese sandwich  
for your other peanut butter and  
jelly sandwich?

JIMMY

What's your ham sandwich on?

KEVIN

Wheat. Got extra mayo.

JIMMY

I hate wheat. Tastes like a sandwich  
on communion bread. Gross.

Pete ears perk up at the sound of communion. He looks up at the cross hanging high above the church. He takes off in a full sprint for his bike. He jumps on it and heads toward the church.

SEAMUS

Where you going?

PETE

To finish the quest!

Pete doesn't look back. He rides to the church, jumps off his bike, and runs into the church. The church is empty. Pete runs to the altar and grabs the communion chalice. He takes one, looks at it, and puts it in his pocket. He then takes another one just in case something happens to the first. He puts the second communion host in his other pocket. Father Kelly enters the altar from the hallway attached to the altar.

FATHER

Mr. O'Malley? Stealing communion?

Pete stops dead in his tracks. He slowly turns and faces Father Kelly.

PETE

Father Kelly.

FATHER

What are you doing? Tell me you're not hungry?

Pete laughs.

PETE

No Father, I'm not hungry. I hear this stuff isn't good anyway.

FATHER

I wish we'd change bread distributors, but that's neither here nor there. What are you doing?

PETE

I've got a friend who really needs a piece of Jesus.

Father Kelly looks perplexed.

PETE

Ya see, he's really sick and in the hospital.

FATHER

We have people that give communion to the sick in the hospital.

PETE

But they can't give it to him.

FATHER

Why?



PETE

He's not Catholic and he's only six.

FATHER

Well, that poses a problem. Communion is for Christians who have earned the right to receive Jesus and are of age.

PETE

He's earned the right. He passed the tests.

FATHER

What tests?

PETE

Tests we made up to see if he's worthy of Jesus. And he is Father Kelly, he's as worthy as any Catholic I know. And just because he's not old enough, well that's not fair, because he may not live long enough to be old enough, and if Jesus didn't want him to have a piece of him only because he wasn't old enough, well, that doesn't seem like anything that sounds like the Jesus I know.

Father Kelly stands speechless.

FATHER

Go give your friend the host. May God bless him. And you.

PETE

Thanks Father. You too.

Pete runs out of the church and onto his bike. WE FOLLOW him as he rides a few blocks to the hospital. He enters the hospital and goes to the front desk.

PETE

Danny Jacobsen?

NURSE

Room 4104. Fourth floor.

Pete runs to the elevator, jumps in, and gets off on the fourth floor.

He looks at the sign that points rooms 100-115 is to the right. Pete turns the corner toward room 104. The hallway is empty. Room 115 on the right. Room 114 on the left. And the rooms descend in order as you walk the hallway. The hallway turns into another hallway to the left. Pete turns the corner and sees Rabbi Jacobsen in the hallway with many friends and relatives. Pete walks closer and the sound of crying fills the hallway. Pete starts to run. Rabbi Jacobsen sees Pete as Pete pushes through the crowd. The rabbi makes his way to Pete. Pete stops before the Rabbi, who's eyes are red and cheeks are tear stained.

PETE

Rabbi? Rabbi? I need to see Danny.

The rabbi starts to cry. He opens his arms for Pete.

PETE

Rabbi! No! Rabbi! I need to see him.  
I've got his communion. Right here.

Pete pulls out the communion from his pocket.

PETE

See! Danny earned it! He passed the  
decathlon.

RABBI

Danny passed on. He's no longer in  
pain.

PETE

No! No! He didn't get his medal!

The rabbi hugs Pete. Pete starts to cry. Harder. And harder.  
In the rabbi's arms. The rabbi holds Pete tight. Pete breaks  
away and runs into the room. Nurses attend to the equipment  
in the room.

Danny lays on the bed with a sheet over his body. The rabbi  
comes into the room.

PETE

I promised Danny, rabbi. I promised  
him.

RABBI

He told me.

PETE

The prize for finishing the decathlon  
was a piece of Jesus. So he could go  
to heaven.

RABBI

He told me. He wanted to thank you.  
He told me that he'll see you in  
heaven some day.

PETE

But he can't go without eating this.  
Rabbi! He can't go!

Pete moves toward the bed. A nurse blocks him. The rabbi  
gently grabs Pete. Pete starts to cry. The rabbi carries  
Pete out of the room. The rabbi whispers in Pete's ears.

RABBI

God will let him into heaven, Pete.  
Danny has a good soul, and God will  
let him into heaven.

The rabbi holds Pete in his arms outside of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - TWO WEEKS LATER

Pete takes a stick and cleans out the dirt in his cleats while he sits on the bench.

COACH

All right, guys, we need baserunners.  
Three runs to tie, four to win. Let's  
go get 'em.

The players scream. Jimmy Burns pulls his hat backwards.

JIMMY

Rally cap! Rally cap!

The players turn their caps inside out and backwards. In the stands behind the players, the fans, mainly parents, cheer. Joe sits with Margaret.

JOE

Last chance. I can't believe their  
not beating this team.

Rabbi Jacobsen and his wife spot Joe in the stands. They wave to him and climb the stands. Joe and Margaret move down to make room for the Jacobsens. Joe shakes the rabbi's hand and Mrs. Jacobsen.

JOE

We're down three runs.

The rabbi nods.

MARGARET

We're very sorry for your loss.

MRS. JACOBSEN

Thank you. The flowers you sent were  
lovely.

A player comes to the plate.

RABBI

I called your house and your daughter  
Mary said you'd be here.

JOE

Yep. Can't miss a game.

RABBI

Nope.

A base hit. The fans cheer. Another player walks to the plate.

RABBI

How's Pete doing?

Joe shrugs his shoulders.

MARGARET

He loved Danny. But he's a kid. They

move on better than we do.

RABBI

We can learn a lot from our children.

The next batter pops out to second base. Another batter steps to the plate.

RABBI

We sent the check for the University of Illinois. This is the receipt.

The rabbi hands Joe the receipt. The batter singles to left field.

The rabbi pulls out another document.

RABBI

And this is the legal document that explains our legal responsibility. Thirty pages to pretty much say we pay room, board, and tuition as long Patrick maintains a three point oh grade point average.

Joe accepts the document and shakes the rabbi's hand. The batter grounds out. Two out. Another batter walks to the plate. Pete puts on a helmet and stands on deck.

JOE

Patrick will meet every requirement. This I know.

RABBI

Me too.

JOE

Thank you. Are you sure you don't want to do this in front of cameras?

RABBI

You didn't rush my burning house so you could get your picture on the front page.

JOE

I looked around for the cameraman. I couldn't find him.

RABBI

A selfless act deserves a selfless act in return.

JOE

Thank you.

RABBI

Thank you.

Ball four! The batter walks to first base as the other base runners advance one base. Bases loaded. Down three runs. Two outs. Last inning. Pete pops the weight off of his bat and heads toward the plate. He looks into the stands and sees

the Jacobsens sitting with his parents. He smiles. Before he steps to the plate, Pete closes his eyes. He opens his eyes and steps to the plate. The pitcher winds up and throws the ball. Pete swings with all of his might and connects. The runners are off with the crack of the bat. The ball sails in the air and toward center field. Deep center field. The crowd stands as Pete puts his head down and runs toward first base.

The center fielder speeds after the sailing ball. Pete rounds first base and looks up. The center fielder dives as the ball looks like it is out of his reach. The ball hits the outer web of his glove and stays there miraculously like a snowcone. Out! The center fielder caught the ball and the visiting crowd erupts. Pete falls between first and second base and the home crowd lets out an audible groan.

The visiting team runs out to center field to congratulate the center fielder, who stands, shows the ball, and smiles wildly as his teammates tackle him. Jimmy Burns walks over to Pete and helps him up.

Joe watches wide eyed from the stands as Margaret covers her face in disbelief. The rabbi pats Joe on the back. Pete walks back to the bench as his teammates and coaches console him. Pete looks up into the stands quietly.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALLPARK - MINUTES LATER

Pete walks out to the stands where his parents and the Jacobsens wait for him. Margaret wants to hug him but knows that a hug from Mom in public is not what he wants. He looks to her wide eyed and she smiles.

MARGARET

You gave it your best shot.

PETE

Yep.

Joe pats him on the back.

JOE

You gave that ball a ride, son. I've never seen you hit a ball so well.

Pete nods. Rabbi Jacobsen puts his hand out. Pete shakes it.

RABBI

Nice try, Pete. Nice try.

PETE

Thanks Rabbi. Hi, Mrs. Jacobsen.

Mrs. Jacobsen smiles and hugs Pete. Pete looks at his mom and she gives him the OK sign. Pete hugs Mrs. Jacobsen.

MRS. JACOBSEN

I baked you some of that rugala you liked so much. It's in the car.

Pete smiles.

MARGARET

I'll come with you to get it. I'd  
love to know your recipe.

Margaret and Mrs. Jacobsen walk toward the parking lot.  
Another parent walks over to talk to Joe. Pete stands alone  
with the rabbi.

PETE

How's everything going?

RABBI

Well. And with you?

PETE

I really thought I hit that one over  
his head for a grand slam.

RABBI

You will.

PETE

You know how you said Danny was in  
heaven?

The rabbi nods.

PETE

He's not.

The comment staggers the rabbi. Joe looks over.

PETE

I prayed to Danny before I hit that  
ball. I prayed to him in heaven to  
help me hit a grandslam.

The rabbi nods.

PETE

He's not in heaven to answer my  
prayers, rabbi. I thought you should  
know.

RABBI

Peter, our prayers are not answered  
in our time, but in God's time.

PETE

No. Rabbi. Danny said he would answer  
my prayers to let me know he was in  
heaven. I gave him two weeks till I  
prayed. He didn't answer my prayer.

The rabbi is visibly hurt. Joe walks over.

JOE

Everything OK?

The rabbi nods.

RABBI

Yes. I better get going. I have temple  
in a few hours. It was nice to see  
you.

The rabbi turns and walks toward the parking lot. Joe looks  
at Pete.

Pete turns and walks toward the bench where some of the  
players are still sitting. Joe watches the rabbi walk to the  
parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT, O'MALLEY BACKYARD - LATER

Pete stands in the backyard throwing the ball to the dog. In  
the background, in the kitchen, Joe hands Patrick the legal  
document stating the rules of the scholarship. Patrick hugs  
his dad. Joe pats Patrick on the back. He lets go and Patrick  
bear hugs Margaret. The dog returns the ball and drops it at  
Pete's feet. He bends down to pick up the ball and throws it  
again. The dog chases after the ball.

Joe walks outside. Pete turns.

PETE

Hey Dad.

The dog returns the ball. Pete picks it up.

JOE

Let's see your arm.

Pete tosses the ball. The dog chases after it. Joe catches  
it.

JOE

Nice throw.

Joe looks at the rubber ball.

JOE

What'd you say to Rabbi Jacobsen?

PETE

Not much.

Joe tosses the ball. Pete catches it.

JOE

You must have said something.

PETE

I told him Danny wasn't in heaven.

Pete throws Joe the ball.

JOE

How do you know?

PETE

I prayed to Danny to let me hit a  
grand slam. I didn't.

Joe hands the dog the ball and walks closer to Pete. He sits down in the lounge chair and motions for Pete to sit down next to him.

JOE

Your brother Patrick is going to college.

PETE

I know. He's so excited.

JOE

I never went to college.

PETE

Why not?

JOE

Cause I couldn't afford it. And I got a good job. And then I started a family. And I had to take care of my family

PETE

That sounds good.

JOE

It is good. And you know what I've learned?

PETE

Huh?

The dog drops the ball at Joe's feet. Joe picks it up and tosses it softly in the air to Pete.

JOE

I've learned that you take care of family. No matter what your differences are. You're family. And taking care of them is a dad's job.

Pete nods. He tosses the ball and the dog chases it.

JOE

You know Jesus is Jewish?

PETE

Yep.

JOE

And you know God is Jesus' father?

PETE

Uh-huh.

JOE

So God's probably Jewish too.

PETE

OK.



JOE

What I'm getting at, and I'm just thinking aloud, but if God is any kind of father, do you think he would turn his back on his own people, the Jewish people, and not let them back into his house?

Pete shakes his head.

JOE

Of course he wouldn't. Just like I wouldn't turn my back on you or any of your brothers or sisters. Dads take care of their family.

PETE

So what are you saying?

Joe laughs.

JOE

I'm saying, maybe Danny is in heaven. Even though he's Jewish. I'm saying maybe when they say the kingdom of heaven can only be reached through Jesus, maybe what they really mean is heaven can be reached through being a good person just like Jesus. An Eskimo at the North Pole, who never heard of Jesus, who's been a good person all his life, shouldn't he be allowed into heaven?

PETE

Yes. But...

JOE

But what?

PETE

But then there's no need for me to listen to the nuns at school anymore.

Joe laughs.

JOE

You're not going to get out of Catholic school that easily. You still have to listen to them.

PETE

But they're wrong.

JOE

They're not wrong. They're just teaching one way to get to heaven.

PETE

Sister Leonora Mary says there is only one way.

JOE

Well then, you and I will have to  
keep a secret from Sister Leonora  
Mary.

Pete laughs. The dog brings back the ball and drops it at  
Pete's feet.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - LATER

Joe and Pete enter the synagogue. Rabbi Jacobsen stands at  
the pulpit and he is speaking to a quarter full audience.  
Pete grabs a yarmukle and puts it on his head. He looks at  
his dad to do the same thing.

His dad, reluctantly, puts on a yarmukle. The two take a  
seat in the back row. The rabbi finishes speaking and the  
people disperse. Pete waits for them all to pass the last  
row when he stands up. Rabbi Jacobsen has his back to Pete  
as he gives instructions to his assistant. Pete heads toward  
the altar as Joe stays in the pew.

PETE

Rabbi Jacobsen.

The rabbi turns. He smiles at Pete. He notices Joe in the  
back and waves to him. Joe gestures back.

RABBI

You cleaned up well from your game.  
What can I do for you?

PETE

Do you have a moment to talk?

RABBI

Sure.

PETE

You know how I had my quest to get a  
Jewish person to heaven?

The rabbi nods.

PETE

Did you realize that my quest is  
just like your quest as a rabbi,  
it's just that I called mine a quest  
and you call yours a job.

RABBI

I didn't realize that but it seems  
to be true.

PETE

Well, my quest ended with Danny.

The rabbi nods.

PETE

But your quest never ends cause it's  
your job.

RABBI

I think you're right.

PETE

Well I learned something on my quest  
that might help you on your quest.

RABBI

What did you learn?

PETE

I learned that just saying you believe  
or just praying to Jesus isn't how  
you get to heaven.

RABBI

No?

PETE

Nope. Jesus is only a symbol, like a  
letter or a number. You could really  
use anyone's name just so long that  
the person's name symbolized being  
good.

RABBI

That is interesting.

PETE

Yeah. I thought you might think so.  
My dad says I better stick to praying  
and acting like Jesus because the  
nuns wouldn't understand as well as  
you and him do.

The rabbi looks up and smiles at Joe. Joe waves back.

PETE

But, my dad and I think if the Jewish  
people don't want to copy the  
Christians by praying to Jesus, you  
guys can make up your own name to  
pray to.

RABBI

Do you have a suggestion for a name  
that I can bring to my congregation?

PETE

Danny.

The rabbi's eyes fill with tears and he puts his arms out  
for Pete.

Pete hugs him. And the rabbi squeezes tight. Pete lets go.

PETE

I thought that might help you in  
your job. On your quest.

RABBI

Thank you. It will.

PETE

I'll see you later.

Pete turns and walks toward his dad, who stands at the back of the temple. Pete turns back to the rabbi.

PETE

I almost forgot to tell you the most important thing.

RABBI

What's that?

PETE

That Danny is in heaven.

RABBI

How do you know?

PETE

Faith.

Pete smiles and turns around. He walks to his dad and Pete and his dad walk out of the temple together.

THE END