

THE BINDING OF ISAAC

by

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

(In the darkness, a raging river bellows in the invisible distance. LIGHTS UP on a Montana mountaintop. The date is June 19. The horizon holds a burning, orange, rising sun. Onion skin clouds drift across a turquoise sky. A wooden water bucket hangs from a long leather tether tied to a tree limb. A stone Wishing Well crumbles mortar dust into the wind. A large, smooth top tree stump glistens with dew. ABE, an aged giant hulk of a man with a long grey beard and scraggly hair is dressed in hip-waders and a flowing, rattlesnake trenchcoat, enters. He is followed by his young son, ISAAC. ABE swings the world's biggest long-handled axe as he walks and drinks in the beautiful surroundings. ISAAC, bespectacled in wire-frame glasses, carries a bundle of firewood that obscures his face and his ability to see the sprawling landscape before him. A mourning dove coos.)

ISAAC

We've been walking for three days. Don't you think mother will be worried without us?

ABE

This is the place. A place for resting. A place for final thoughts. A place for visions to visit.

ISAAC

As you wish, father.

(ISAAC drops the wood and massages his tense biceps. ABE violently takes a deep breath through his nose and expels the air from his lungs and mouth so fast and so hard that his face turns purple and the veins in his neck bulge and churn like rafts on a raging river.)

ABE

Smell that? That's the scent of life! The grass. The trees. The flowers.

ISAAC

The ragweed. The leaves. The pollen.

(ISAAC sneezes and wipes his nose with the back of his hand.)

ABE

A sneeze is a sign of life! Embrace these messy marks of Man and make them your own. Show God that you accept whatever he shall deliver unto you! Take in these jewels from God and squeeze the life out of them and spew them back out and take in more!

ISAAC

Where is the hog we are to slaughter for dinner, father?

ABE

In time, my son! All in due time.

ISAAC

I'm getting hungry.

ABE

Everyone is hungry. We all have an appetite that can never be satisfied. But before we eat, we must follow certain steps to fulfill this day, for this day is like no other. Do you understand?

ISAAC

Yes, father.

ABE

Good. Before we begin, I must know if you believe in me. Do you believe in me, Isaac?

ISAAC

Yes, I believe in you.

ABE

Do you believe that every intention I have for you is good?

ISAAC

Yes.

ABE

Do you believe that everything I do, no matter how terrible or unimaginable is, in the end, in your best interest?

ISAAC

I do.

ABE

Do you believe I am the law? Am I infallible?

ISAAC
What does "infallible" mean?

ABE
Am I without fault?

ISAAC
Yes. What you say goes.

ABE
But no one is above God, correct? Man must obey God
and God gives moral law to Man. Isn't that right?

ISAAC
Yes. God's word is Man's Law.

ABE
Excellent, my son. You have learned well.

ISAAC
You are a good teacher, father. I am simply the
paper upon which you place permanent marks of
inspiration.

ABE
You are a good son, Isaac. You are my one and only:
The favorite son by default. I love you more than
my life.

ISAAC
I know.

ABE
Very good. Now breathe with me.

(ABE chucks ISAAC on the back and they
close their eyes and begin to breathe
deeply together.)

ABE
(continuing)
Good. Good. Drink it in. Deeper! Force your
chest out further. Good. Evenly. Don't pull the
air in too quickly. Ah. That's my boy.

ISAAC
I'm feeling. A little. Dizzy.

(ISAAC, hyperventilating, keels over.
ABE catches him.)

ABE
Oh, my! Another sign of life is... impending,
breathless distress!

(ABE plants a juicy kiss on ISAAC's forehead and sits his son upon his shoulder. ISAAC regains his color. He wipes the kiss from his brow as he spies the vistas of of the world from his father's shoulder.)

ABE

(continuing)

There now. Rest with me. Sit upon the throne of my shoulder and rule the world. From here, the world spins. From here, the world obeys. From here, the Word of God is met by your mind, interpreted and delivered unto the universe of the Sinner. It's all happens here...

(ABE lightly taps his temple with an index finger.)

ABE

(continuing)

...in the spry of the mind. The brain is the book of life. Forget it not.

ISAAC

I won't forget it, father.

ABE

Good. Now. Tell me what you see.

(ISAAC shades his eyes with his hands and peers down the mountainside.)

ISAAC

I see trees. I see hogs. I see oxen.

ABE

Hmph! You see only simple beasts of burden, swine unfit for Modern Man and the peaches of life. These are the sights of the common man! Look beyond what you see with your eyes and tell me the visions that dance beyond your mind.

ISAAC

It takes time.

(ABE pulls ISAAC from his shoulder and stands him on the tree stump.)

ABE

There is no time to try! We must progress on to certain steps demanded of us today. I demand more of you. You were placed on this earth and into my hands to fulfill a higher calling. Now. Try again.

ISAAC

Yes, father. I will see.

(ABE adjusts ISAAC's head to point his sight line higher along the horizon.)

ABE

Tell me what you see.

(ABE backs away from the stump. ISAAC furrows his brow, struggling to see something.)

ABE

(continuing)
You must try harder. Tell me what you see.

(ISAAC closes his eyes. He relaxes. His head rocks back and forth.)

ISAAC

I see...

ABE

Yes? Yes?!

ISAAC

Quiet. I must have quiet to see.

ABE

I'm being quiet.

ISAAC

Talking is not quiet, father. If you continue, I must stop. Tell me if I should stop.

(ABE nods his understanding. ISAAC pauses for a reaction from ABE and then continues.)

ISAAC

(continuing)
Very good.

(ISAAC listens and sees.)

ISAAC

(continuing; quietly with force and ageless grace)
I see an infinite... universal... living... darkness.

(A moment. ISAAC is still. ABE is surprised at what his son saw.)

ABE shakes off a chill and changes the subject.)

ABE

Well, what do you know? You are not a Prophet. You are not a Man of God. You are not even a man! You are a little boy with childish visions. Of course you see darkness when you close your eyes!

ISAAC

That was not the darkness I saw, father.

(ABE continues, ignoring ISAAC.)

ABE

I expected more of you, Isaac, and you make this into a game! "I close my eyes and I see darkness!" Ha! Such a silly little boy you are. Now. Come down from there, tiny man. Come down from there now and do your duty as a son.

(ISAAC jumps down from the stump and dismisses ABE.)

ISAAC

The darkness will smother, father. I cannot hide nor run from the truth of what I see.

ABE

Nonsense! How can a boy with schoolgirl glasses see anything other than the nose on his face? Face it, Isaac. You see darkness because you envision nothing.

ISAAC

As you say, father. As you say.

ABE

Good boy. Now. You need to sharpen the axe for the slaughter. Did you bring the snakestone?

(ISAAC pulls the snakestone from his pocket and shows ABE.)

ABE

(continuing)
Use your spit to wet it. And the mittens?

(ISAAC pulls bright red handmade knitted mittens from his pocket and drops them on the stump.)

ABE

(continuing)
Right. We're getting there! Put the mittens over your hands.

ISAAC

Put the mittens over my hands? Why? It's hot out.

ABE

Don't argue with me. I told you to cover your hands with your mittens. Why are you questioning me?

(ABE swings the axe mightily and embeds it deep into the tree stump with a heavy thump. ISAAC cringes at the sound.)

ABE

(continuing)
You cringed. A prophet doesn't cringe.

(ABE pulls the axe out of the stump and heaves it over his shoulder.)

ABE

(continuing)
Let's try that again. Cringing is a sign of weakness. You know what I'm looking for, son.

(ISAAC nods -- he's heard that before -- and so he steels himself by clenching his fists, hunching his shoulders and squeezing his eyes shut.)

ABE

(continuing)
Show me a sign I can appreciate.

(ABE flings the axe whistling through the air and slams it deep into the stump again. The ground resonates with the aftershock. ISAAC has not moved.)

ABE

(continuing)
Better. A sign... of progress... no matter how small. Put on your mittens. I won't ask again.

ISAAC

If I put on the mittens, it will be harder for me to sharpen the axe!

ABE
 Life only gets harder. That I promise you. Now put
 them on.

(ISAAC, with a sigh and a glare, stabs
 his hands into the mittens.)

ISAAC
 I'm hungry.

ABE
 Next time, do as I say when I say and we'll finish
 sooner and you can fill your belly before it
 grumbles. Now... sharpen the axe. Use long, cool,
 easy, strokes to smooth out the burrs like I taught
 you. There's no rush. Make it a perfect job.

ISAAC
 Mother will be worried if we don't arrive home soon
 with the smoked and slaughtered hog. We've been
 gone for three days now... that's three times longer
 than usual...

ABE
 (upcut)
 I'll worry about Mother. A Mamma's Boy should be
 worried about pleasing his Father, not his Mommy.

(ISAAC nods -- he's heard that before,
 too.)

ISAAC
 Yes, father. I'll sharpen the axe now.

ABE
 Now that's my boy!

(ABE thwacks ISAAC heartily on the
 back. ISAAC struggles to pull the axe
 out of the stump. Using the lever of
 his body weight, he is able, after a
 time, to creak the head from the wood.)

ABE
 (continuing; laughing)
 Bwa-ha-ho! Like King Arthur himself!

(ISAAC ignores him and spits on the
 snakestone and begins to carefully and
 expertly sharpen the axe. His
 "sharpening mantra" carries on
 throughout the following action.)

ISAAC

Curve. And Dive. Curve. And Dive.

(As ISAAC continues to sharpen the axe, ABE keeps a keen eye peeled upon him as he moves to the Wishing Well.)

ABE

My father and I built this Wishing Well many years ago when I was your age, Isaac. Do you have any wishes, my son?

ISAAC

No father. Curve. And Dive. Not one. Curve. And Dive.

ABE

Not one? Really? Why, a boy without a single wish to dream upon, is a boy without a higher calling! Certainly you must have some graven want, some macula of Divinity in your young and lonesome life?

ISAAC

No sir. Curve. None. And Dive. Curve. No wishes at all. "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." And Dive. You always said.

(ABE tosses the wooden bucket down the wishing well. It lands at the bottom with a thud and an echo.)

ABE

Ah. And so I did. Well. I suddenly changed my mind. You need a wish. Every boy should have at least one hope for something more. To venture beyond himself and what he naturally knows at least once. I'll fetch you a wish now.

(ABE pulls the wooden bucket up by the leather tether)

ISAAC

Curve. And Dive. Curve. And Dive.

ABE

Your wish has arrived!

(ABE reaches into the bucket and pulls out a handful of fine dust and lets it sieve through his fingers like salt.)

ISAAC

Curve. And Dive. This beggar... Curve. ... Won't ride. And Dive.

ABE
 The wish is more telling than you know. Don't sharpen the blade so much! You'll lose the edge and dull it forever!

(ISAAC, in the midst of ABE's speech, has stopped sharpening the axe. He holds it up to the light for a better look.)

ISAAC
 (Upcut)
 It is done.

ABE
 Ah! Done so soon? Now we must test its mettle.

(ABE slowly unties the leather tether from the wooden bucket and tree limb.)

ABE
 (continuing)
 Go ahead. Test it on yourself. See if it will shave the hair from your forearm.

ISAAC
 May I remove the mittens?

ABE
 Of course not. Pull your sleeve up with your teeth and run the axe up your arm as I told you.

ISAAC
 What if the blade cuts me?

ABE
 You think too much!

ISAAC
 Why must I risk bleeding to prove the axe is sharp?

ABE
 Why must you always question me? Have you no Faith in me? Faith is the highest passion in a human being, and I am asking you to show some Faith in your father since you've proven stillborn with visions and wishes already this morning. Don't make me say that again. It's a mouthful to chew out.

ISAAC
 (to himself)
 An an even bigger mouthful to swallow.

(ISAAC pulls up his sleeve with his teeth and cautiously runs the axe up his forearm.)

ISAAC

(continuing)
It is sharp. My arm is bald. I didn't cut myself.
I'm not bleeding.

ABE

Good. As it should be. You've done well, Isaac.

(ABE slowly and methodically wraps the leather tether into loose loops.)

ISAAC

Thank you, father.

(ISAAC hacks the axe into the stump and begins to stack the firewood he brought to the mountaintop around the stump.)

ABE

Now, Isaac, my son. The time has come. The time has come for you to fulfill the promise of your life.

ISAAC

Am I to become a man today, father?

ABE

Oh, you'll become more than just a man today, Isaac. You will be the epitome of Faith -- a living testimony to the power of God and the will of His law.

ISAAC

Do I get to eat first?

ABE

(Chuckling)
No.

ISAAC

Will we at least get to slaughter the hog first?

ABE

No.

ISAAC

Where is the hog, father?

ABE

The hog is right here.

(ABE motions grandly to the empty stump top. ISAAC stops stacking the firewood.)

ISAAC

Uh, huh. If we don't return soon with the hog shanks from the slaughter, mother will be very upset and we will grow even hungrier tonight.

ABE

As long as there are slaughterhouses, there will always be War. Tolstoy said that. Did you know that?

ISAAC

No. I want to go home. It's getting cold.

ABE

You won't be going anywhere, Isaac. Your time has come. God has tested me, son. And the proof of my fear for His power and my acceptance of the love of His Glory... is you. Give me your hands.

ISAAC

Why? What for? What are you doing?

ABE

You said you believed in me, Isaac.

ISAAC

You're scaring me.

ABE

There's nothing to be frightened of, son. Now is the time for the proof of your Faith in me and my Faith in God.

ISAAC

What have I done to offend God, father?

ABE

You've done nothing more than be my son.

ISAAC

But why would God punish me for that?

ABE

This has nothing to do with punishment. It has to do with Sacrifice. And Faith. And Fear.

ISAAC

Well, you're scaring me. Doesn't that count enough?

ABE

Please. Give me your hands and place them behind your back.

ISAAC

Well, if it's all the same, I'd like you to leave me out of it. If this is between you and God, then let it stay there. I'm going home to mother.

(ISAAC picks up his snakestone and prepares to leave.)

ABE

It is better that you hate me than hate God.

(With that, ABE jumps ISAAC and wrestles him to the ground. ISAAC picks up a piece of firewood and smacks ABE across the head, but the mittens make it impossible for him to get a grip on ABE or his wooden cudgel. ABE bats the firewood out of ISAAC's hand and rolls ISAAC over on his stomach. ABE hog-ties him with the leather tether in record time.)

ABE

(continuing)

Believe it or not, Isaac, this hurts me more than it hurts you.

ISAAC

I find that hard to believe!

ABE

Don't fight it, Isaac. This is God's Will!

ISAAC

God is funny!

(As ISAAC struggles to free himself, ABE lifts him up and places him on his stomach on the tree stump. ABE wildly swings the axe above ISAAC's head.)

ABE

Just look away.

(ABE delicately turns ISAAC's head away from him.)

ISAAC

Look away from what?!

ABE

It will all be over and clear soon enough.

ISAAC

What are you doing with that axe?

ABE

I've told you too much already! This isn't about you!

ISAAC

Let's switch places, then!

ABE

You insult God with that sort of talk!

ISAAC

Am I the hog you plan to slaughter?!

ABE

(Bellowing)

Sacrifice! Not slaughter!

(ABE stands behind ISAAC and, with both hands, deliberately lifts the axe above his head.)

ISAAC

No! Father, you mustn't!

ABE

There are no Angels here to save you now.

(He stares intensely at ISAAC writhing beneath him. ABE closes his eyes tight and brings the axe down upon ISAAC's neck with great force.)

ISAAC

In the name of GOD, stop!

(Before the axe finds its mark upon ISAAC, the scene jabs harshly to a BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 2

(The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Regional Field Office Situation Room appears in silhouette in the sky as THE LIGHTS RISE. Shadowy figures with explicit, military and weaponry outlines silently graze in the deep background. As the FBI SPECIAL AGENTS speak, their FBI ID badges are broadcast across the sky identifying who is speaking while they move in silhouette behind the projection. FLACKSON, a young man dressed in a thin, neat suit, sits at the Communications bay. LOGAN, a 30 year veteran of the Assault and Tactical Division and HASTINGS, a mature Hostage Negotiator and febrile intellectual woman in a power suit and flats, ENTER together in the midst of a rapid-fire discussion.)

HASTINGS

Agent Logan. Update, please. What's the status of the missing child in Raging River?

LOGAN

Nothing new yet, Agent Hastings. Here's the history as of Oh-Eight-Hundred...

(Checking his field report on a clipboard)

The Mother, a "Sarah Smith", reports her young child Isaac missing and her husband unaccounted for. That was three days ago. No known motive.

HASTINGS

Hmm. Raging River is a hotspot for these Montana Mountain Man Militias. Every half-ass with two nuts and a bucket of testosterone thinks he's the second coming of Christ.

LOGAN

And what's your excuse?

(HASTINGS and LOGAN share a quick laugh.)

HASTINGS

Point taken. Moving on. With names like Sarah, Isaac and Abe -- a.k.a. "Abraham"? -- this could be some sort of religious passion play working itself out. What's the M.O. on the father?

LOGAN

"Abraham Smith" -- no prints. No sheet. No letters. No known M.O. We're at Absolute Zero with this guy.

HASTINGS

"Abraham Smith" does not ring a related tone. It appears that we are dealing with an unknown entity somewhere in Montana. Fear of the unknown is warranted in matters such as these. Thank you, Special Agent, Logan. You are dismissed.

LOGAN

If it's all the same to you, ma'am, I prefer to stay. Too see this out. I have a kid at home the same age as the missing boy. You may need me and my men before this pusses to a head.

HASTINGS

As you wish. Having you here does save time if we need to bivouac and engage. Just try to stay out of my way.

LOGAN

(With a smile)
Consider me stowed.

(LOGAN backs off and takes a seat. He checks his automatic weapon from the wall and counts shells as he punches them into the quick-load magazine.)

HASTINGS

Well, then. Agent Flackson?

FLACKSON

Yes, ma'am?

HASTINGS

Status report. What are the Birds showing?

FLACKSON

Satellites are showing several new hot spots on a mountain nineteen miles from the Raging River loop where the boy was reported last seen. No body heat patterns are visible.

HASTINGS

How old are the bird shots?

FLACKSON

They came down 36 minutes ago.

HASTINGS

An eternity! And the next scheduled update?

FLACKSON

24 minutes. I can force one earlier, though.
Download time is 10 minutes.

HASTINGS

Excellent. Do it. Put what you have up on screen.

(FLACKSON punches buttons and the
satellite surveillance map appears in
the sky.)

HASTINGS

(continuing)

Can you get us any closer to that mountaintop, Agent
Flackson?

FLACKSON

Consider it done.

(FLACKSON rotates several jog shuttles
on his control panel and the satellite
pictures progressively magnify the
mountaintop area where the struggle
between ISAAC and ABE began.)

HASTINGS

Interesting. Agent Logan. Tell me if those earth
disturbances are what they appear to be.

LOGAN

Yes. To my eye the terrain has been disturbed in a
deliberate and cyclical pattern rimming the crown of
the mountain.

HASTINGS

A trap of some sort?

LOGAN

Yes. Land mines.

HASTINGS

Agent Flackson? And you?

FLACKSON

I concur with Agent Logan, ma'am. We've seen that
ringlet disturbance pattern before. Let me give you
the Infrared view in an attempt to prove the point.

(FLACKSON spins intricate dials and
knobs. The satellite photo turns red
in the sky.)

HASTINGS

There! I see them. Those are the lying in wait red-hot embers of anti-personnel mechanisms!

LOGAN

No doubt about it. That there's a hot tamale welcome mat that'll blow your leg off with a hello.

FLACKSON

Those hot spots you see around the area are what we believe to be the planted land mines and their residual body heat whigmaleeries. The more intense the red color, the more recent the implantation.

HASTINGS

And what, Agent Flackson, would you guess the length of land mine burial has been based upon the data at hand?

FLACKSON

I'd say four days, ma'am.

LOGAN

Four days? That's one day before our kid gets reported missing, isn't it?

FLACKSON

Yes.

LOGAN

Well, then. It sure looks like there's a plan at hand, Agent Hastings. The traps were planted the day before the child was abducted. Then both the boy and the dad go missing going on three days now.

FLACKSON

It all does seem terribly convenient, Agent Hastings.

HASTINGS

Agents Logan and Flackson? There's no such thing as a coincidence. That's a Universal Truth of Mankind. Make a note of it. We need to move. Agent Logan. Gather a small tactical team and prepare an immediate scramble.

LOGAN

On my way. We'll be on site in fifteen minutes and a command post will be operating and established within the half hour.

HASTINGS

I'll meet you at the heliport momentarily.

LOGAN

Understood.

(LOGAN pulls on a flak jacket and exits. As HASTINGS delivers the following speech, she checks her sidearm, attaches a command radio to her belt, stuffs an earpiece in her ear and wires herself for sound transmission.)

HASTINGS

Agent Flackson. It is your pressing duty to keep me continually informed. Bend some ears down on that mountaintop if you can -- I need dialogue from that peak. A snippet of any word or phrase will help me gain the advantage. I need to know who's what before I step in to talk to that father. I also want updated counter-intelligence reports on the chime of each quarter hour. Even if there's nothing new to report, I want a report that your report has nothing to report. Understood?

FLACKSON

Understood.

HASTINGS

I also want you to track down the mother. Get a deeper profile on her husband's behaviour and politics.

HASTINGS

(continuing)

I'll expect the refreshed bird views as soon as you have them.

FLACKSON

Shall do.

HASTINGS

Good. I'll have a wire so you can listen to me, I'll have a bug in my ear so I can listen to you, and I'll have my Comms Box set on a secure, spread spectrum channel so I can keep in touch with the H.Q. brass if they need to box my ears or pull their thumbs out of their asses to give me a live or die up or down. Are we clear?

FLACKSON

Perfectly.

HASTINGS

Questions?

FLACKSON

None.

HASTINGS

Thank you, Agent Flackson, for your usual timely and outstanding support. You know where to find me if you need me.

(HASTINGS grabs her repeating automatic sidearm out of its shoulder holster and primes the barrel with a shell.)

HASTINGS

(continuing)

Here's another Universal Truth of Mankind for you to notate, Agent Logan: The deadliest bullet is the one never birthed from the bore.

LOGAN

Why is that, Agent Hastings?

HASTINGS

Because, Agent Logan, the unbirthed bullet never breaks its promise to kill.

(With that, the LIGHTS FADE while HASTINGS holsters her weapon and exits.)

SCENE 3

(A painfully slow climb out of darkness occurs as the LIGHTS RISE upon the resumption of the previous action on the mountaintop. ABE is in mid-swing as he lowers the axe upon ISAAC's neck.)

ISAAC

Father, please! I'll be good! This I promise!

(ABE stops his swing half an inch from cleaving ISAAC's head from his body.)

ABE

(Coolly and Professorial)
This is not about goodness, Isaac!

ISAAC

Then it must be about Evil!

(ABE drops the axe and moves around the stump to face ISAAC.)

ABE

Nonsense! This greater than good and bad.

ISAAC

Then unbind me! Let me be!

ABE

This is not about you, oh, boy who wears chickenwire glasses! Why must everything in your petty life be about you and your feelings and your sad lack of wishes? This isn't even about me. I am merely the vessel for the message. I am the agent of change. This is about purity of example in sacrifice. This is about bringing The Law of God back to Man! If you can't stand the sight, then blind ye shall be!

(With that, ABE yanks a kerchief from around his neck and blindfolds ISAAC.)

ABE

(continuing)
Perhaps now ye shall see The Light!

ISAAC

But I haven't done anything! Why must I die? Why does my own father wish me dead?

ABE

Because I love you more than my own life! You are more precious to me than hogs or horses or silver or gold!

ISAAC

Then why must you bury me like lead?

ABE

Because God demands it!

ISAAC

How do you know what God demands?

ABE

Because he told me!

ISAAC

I'd like to speak to God myself!

ABE

Impossible! This is not about you! This is about the Salvation of Mankind!

ISAAC

At my expense?

ABE

Not your expense. My expense! I'm the one who's losing my beloved son!

(ABE lifts his axe again and takes up his former position behind ISAAC and raises the axe for the fall.)

ABE

(continuing)

Enough talk! Close your eyes and let me begin to finish!

(SARAH ENTERS and silently appears behind ISAAC and ABE. She is dressed in a long, flowing dress and a crocheted shawl covers her shoulders. Her long, thick, silver hair frames her creased face -- she is very old. In the quietest voice possible, she speaks softly as ABE once again brings the axe down with a vengeance for planting upon ISAAC's neck...)

SARAH

What's are you doing?

(ABE freezes. The axe head is stopped upon ISAAC's neck but has yet to break the skin.)

ABE

What are you doing here? I don't have to explain anything to you. You are only his mother.

ISAAC

Mother? Praise God!

(ISAAC weeps quietly to himself.)

SARAH

Are you alright, son?

ISAAC

Yes, mother. For the moment only.

SARAH

Unbind Isaac.

ABE

How did you find us?

SARAH

You're not terribly original, Abe. This is the place where Isaac was conceived. We created him right there under the shade of what used to a beautiful cottonwood tree. Then, you made it a stump. Now you've made it into a altar for sacrifice.

ABE

A stump? A stump! A stump is a small Sacrifice for finding the timber to build you a good house -- a shrine to the fruit of your fertility. For three days I labored to fell that tree and drag its pieces down the mountain to provide you a good home.

SARAH

Unbind my son.

ABE

Leave, woman. Here you are not welcome. This is the Lord's work I'm doing. Montana is a place where a man can go and declare his word law. Those men go against God! And like Abraham before me, God has spoken to me -- and the price for once again bringing back the Moral Fiber of God to bowels of Modern Man is the unselfish sacrifice of my son, Isaac. Why do you think I married you, Sarah?

SARAH

Oh, not this silliness again.

ABE

I chose you and you chose me. You are not blameless in this! You provided the means of Sacrifice! You gave me a son, not a daughter! A girl cannot be baptized "Isaac" so you knowingly set forth the truth of God's Second Will with the birth of the boy!

SARAH

We've been over this a dozen times before. Isaac doesn't die in the original story, Abe.

ABE

Don't you teach me! I will not be educated by the likes of you! I am the Chosen One who holds the vessel of God's Will! I will be the harbinger of God's Desire. He will crush you for harboring false witness against His wishes!

SARAH

Darling husband...

ABE

(Upcut)

I am not interested in your totem endearments!

SARAH

Abe. You are confused. You need help. You have been without your medication for three days. We can help you if you'll only put down the axe and come home with us.

ABE

I'm not going anywhere and don't preach to me! You are not morally superior. I am on to you. Your pills only dull the mind and bleed darkness into the brightness of my Visions! I know the story of Abraham and Isaac. I am living it!

SARAH

But Abe, an Angel saves Isaac and he's released. God was only testing Abraham's belief in the power of God. God wasn't seeking to punish him by taking the child's life!

ABE

Yes, I know! That's the problem with the original story -- the boy doesn't die!

SARAH

You know the price of bringing God's Law to Mankind meant the death of Sarah by broken heart after giving birth to a son long after the prime of her life; Isaac and Abraham never speak again; and God and Abraham never speak again. Tell me, are those the results that drive your overriding wish?

ABE

There are no Angels or wishes here! The original gift of God's Law to Man didn't take! Look around you! The world is immoral and mad! The second telling can only work with the Sacrifice of Isaac in total! This I know! Thus, I must do! A final example must be set for future generations and my son, our boy Isaac, will be that immortal example! This I was told by God himself! Now, begone and let the new history of the life of Modern Man take its predestined course.

SARAH

I will leave. First, provide me my son unbound and we'll go. Then you and your new God can frolic in the heather with axes and Testaments and rail against Modern Man until you both bleed to death or die of silliness -- whichever comes first. Me and my God want my son and we all want nothing to do with the stricture of your New Moral Law.

ABE

If you want him, unbind him yourself.

SARAH

Give me my son.

(SARAH pulls out a sawed-off shotgun strapped across her back from under her shawl and points the muzzle directly at ABE's heart. She pumps the slide handle and primes the gun with shells.)

SARAH

(continuing)

Unbind Isaac. I shan't ask you again.

ABE

There's no need for threats, Sarah. If you want Isaac, if you want to interfere with the New Word of God -- unbind him yourself. I cannot be party to your action against the Lord.

(ABE backs away from ISAAC and drops his axe and places his hands in the air.)

SARAH

Isaac? Can you unbind yourself?

ISAAC

No, mother. I have been hog-tied. I cannot feel my hands.

SARAH

You must be strong, boy. Flex your fingers. Get the blood quickly flowing back into your fingertips. Then use your lithe little fingers to unbind the knots.

ISAAC

I cannot. I am wearing mittens. Father made me put on mittens first.

SARAH

Well. Mittens? Rather ingenious, Abe. You're getting more cunning in your old age. Most people grow kinder as they get older -- you grew more clever.

ISAAC

I'm sorry mother. I'm sorry.

SARAH

I am coming, Isaac. I'm coming for you now.

(SARAH takes a cautious step towards ISAAC while keeping her eyes and shotgun aimed at ABE.)

ABE

You will be severely punished for this, Sarah. For this treachery against the Future of Mankind, you must die.

(ABE steps between ISAAC and SARAH and crosses his arms.)

ABE

(continuing)

I cannot let this pass. Nor can I protect you any longer from the Fury of God's distress.

SARAH

Step away.

ABE

You'll have to shoot me.

SARAH

Is that your wish? For me to shoot you?

ABE

If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

(SARAH pulls the trigger of the shotgun
and ABE is blown back as the lead shot
scatters into his chest.)

SARAH

Be careful what you wish for.

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 4

(Isolated pockets of LIGHT RISE upon HASTINGS and LOGAN. They are dressed in flak jackets and field gear and are based at the foot of the mountain. SIX heavily armed and armored SPECIAL FBI AGENTS dressed entirely in black uniforms with "FBI" written largely across their backs and breasts in white French Embroidery. The SIX AGENTS stand solemnly at attention in a half moon ring behind LOGAN.)

HASTINGS

Agent Logan. Did you hear that?

LOGAN

Affirmative.

(HASTINGS and LOGAN look up and behold the majesty of the mountain before them.)

HASTINGS

I believe that was the retort of a sawed-off shotgun.

LOGAN

Concur. I fear we may be too late?

HASTINGS

Use that fear to inspire you, Agent Logan. We are here now and must proceed with greater caution. Are your men ready?

LOGAN

They will be on your mark.

HASTINGS

Good. I'll take the lead contact on this. You pinch around back and cover me -- the remaining Special Agents should take their typical tactical positions. Who is the Sharp Shooter?

(The SPECIAL AGENT SHARP SHOOTER raises his hand.)

HASTINGS

(continuing)

Keep a gentle finger on the hard target.

(The SPECIAL AGENT SHARP SHOOTER nods and lowers his hand.)

HASTINGS

(continuing)

Take your positions on my mark. Woof.

(All of the SPECIAL AGENTS scatter and disappear as a bright strobe of lightning cuts the sky and seven seconds later thunder booms in the distance.)

HASTINGS

(continuing)

Time is of the essence, Agent Logan. A severe thunderstorm is building but only seven miles away from us.

(FLACKSON appears in silhouette in the sky. He is still stationed in the FBI H.Q. and when he speaks, his FBI ID card flashes in the sky. HASTINGS' and LOGAN's radios crackle in their ears.)

FLACKSON

Agent Hastings? Come in, over.

HASTINGS

Hastings here, Agent Flackson. We have shots fired on the scene. No Bureau casualties, but the escalation of possible danger should be noted in the record. Over.

FLACKSON

Noted. It's in the database now. The National Weather Service has issued a Sever Thunderstorm Warning pinpointed precisely upon the crown of your head, Agent Hastings. Over.

HASTINGS

Yes, Agent Flackson. We can see and feel the impending storm and will speed up our actions accordingly. What's the word from the Bird? Over.

(New satellite photos appear in the sky and magnify down to the surface of the mountaintop.)

FLACKSON

Despite the inclement weather, updated infrared satellite photos demonstrate no change in the mountaintop perimeter threat, but they do show three new resonant heat images on the peak of the mountain. Over.

LOGAN

Once there were two. Now there are three. Is the mother now involved?

HASTINGS

Or has she instead found them? Perhaps this is, indeed, the religious passion play playing itself out.

LOGAN

Or it could be three hunters up there skinning a moose.

HASTINGS

Quite on target, Agent Logan. The only way to find out is to go up there and stick our mugs into the fray and... pray... for the best. Agent Flackson? Over.

FLACKSON

Still here, boss. Over.

HASTINGS

Any report on the mother, Sarah? Did you get the information I requested? Over.

FLACKSON

A field agent went back to interview her and found the home empty. Over.

LOGAN

Once there were two. And then there were three!

HASTINGS

(to LOGAN)

Once again, there's no such thing as a coincidence. Three people in a single family have disappeared and three new body images are seen atop that mountain.

(to FLACKSON)

Agent Flackson. What are the ears hearing? Over.

FLACKSON

I've fine tuned our listening stations across the Western half of the United States and we can't pick up a peep. I'm sorry, Agent Hastings. Over.

HASTINGS

Understood. Keep up the good work, Agent Flackson and keep me in the loop. Out.

FLACKSON

Agent Flackson, out.

(FLACKSON nods and disappears from the sky.)

HASTINGS

Agent Logan? I'll meet you on that mountaintop. I wish you Godspeed.

LOGAN

I'll say a prayer for you too, Agent Hastings. I have a feeling your role as chief negotiator will try you deeper than you expect.

HASTINGS

That's why I expect nothing, Agent Logan. That way, I'm never disappointed.

(HASTINGS and LOGAN exit their pools of light and the LIGHTS CROSSFADE into...)

SCENE 5

(Lightning illuminates the scene. Thunder sounds six seconds later as the LIGHTS RISE upon SARAH pulling the blindfold from ISAAC's eyes. ABE is motionless on the ground behind the stump.)

SARAH

Did you hear that? A storm is brewing six miles away. We need to hurry.

ISAAC

Is he dead? Did you kill my father?

SARAH

Hush. That doesn't matter now, Isaac.

ISAAC

Father? Speak to me? Are you there?

SARAH

He's gone, Isaac.

ISAAC

You did! You killed my father!

(ISAAC kicks at her -- a difficult task since he is hog-tied. SARAH backs away. She still holds the shotgun.)

ISAAC

(continuing)
Don't touch me!

SARAH

It was him or us, son.

ISAAC

You could've shot him in the foot. Hobbled him. There was no need to end his life! He needed his medication, not buckshot through the heart! You said so yourself!

SARAH

You shoot to kill. You know that. He taught you that.

ISAAC

You always hated him. Well I am his son. He is part of me so there is some piece deep within me that you must hate, too. Why don't you just shoot me now too and get it over with?

(ISAAC begins to cry. SARAH, seeing the shotgun in her hands is pointed at ISAAC, appears to recognize the shotgun and her deed for the first time. As her eyes swell with tears, she tosses the shotgun into the dirt.)

SARAH

I'm sorry, son. Don't cry. Mother is here. We can go home now. We are finally safe forever.

ISAAC

No! He wouldn't've killed me. I can't believe he would've gone through with it. He had two chances to bloody me and he didn't. He was only testing God. There was no reason to shoot him!

(Another spike of lightning cuts the sky and five seconds later a thunderclap sounds.)

SARAH

We must hurry, son. A terrible, rising, storm is but file miles away.

ISAAC

A boy needs his father!

SARAH

And it appears that this boy needed his mother more.

ISAAC

I hate you!

SARAH

You'll see the righteousness in this act soon enough. But for now? We must hurry!

ISAAC

Hurry for what reason? To outrun a ghost?

SARAH

There's a storm rumbling in the distance. There's no shelter here to protect us from the lightning and the wind and the rain.

ISAAC

God will protect and provide for us!

SARAH

Only if we provide for ourselves first. The storm is God testing us -- to see if we're smart enough to come in out of the rain.

ISAAC

Oh. I can understand that, mother.

(ISAAC stops kicking. SARAH comes to him and pets him soothingly like only a mother can.)

SARAH

Good, my son. Let's be quick. What sort of God would test a weak man's fate by demanding the sacrifice of his only son as proof of his devotion?

ISAAC

I don't know. I can't feel my hands, mother.

SARAH

I'll untie you. Be still. Don't move. Your kicking has pulled the leather taut around your wrists and the binding has strangled your hands.

(A shred of lightning cuts the sky and three seconds later a thunderclap rocks the horizon.)

ISAAC

The storm is only three miles from us now, mother. We won't make it home in time. We should seek shelter here.

(With that, ABE rises slowly from the dirt. SARAH and ISAAC are unaware of ABE's resurrection.)

ABE

NO. You won't be making it home tonight. Or ever. It appears we have new proof of the Lord working in mysterious ways.

ISAAC

Father! You're alive!

(ABE primes the shotgun and shoots ISAAC's foot off.)

ABE

I'll deal with you later.

ISAAC

(astonished pain)
Father? You shot me in the foot! Why?

ABE

Take a load off the one you have left, then, son..
Have a sit.

(ISAAC, his hands still bound behind him, crumples to the ground in pain as his foot wholesomely bleeds.)

ABE

(continuing; indicating SARAH)
You, on the other hand, shall be dealt with now.

(ABE pulls new shotgun shells from the deep pockets of his snakeskin trenchcoat and re-loads the shotgun.)

SARAH

Stay away from me!

(SARAH grabs the axe and holds it out before her as if to fend him off.)

ABE

Too late for you now, wife. That axe won't save you now.

SARAH

One step closer and I'll swing your head off!

ABE

(giggling)
Oh, my! Such an indelicate temperament for such a well-bred woman. But you're missing the irony of all this, dear wife: I didn't bring you here. You came on your own accord.

SARAH

But I killed you! I watched you die! And I said a prayer of thanks over your dead body!

(ABE smiles, adjusts his crotch and gives her a sexy wink.)

ABE

Well, it seems I have now arisen from the dead, then doesn't it? Thanks to you.

(ABE unstraps a Kevlar vest from his breast and dangles it before SARAH.)

ABE

(continuing)
And thanks to the good folks who make Kevlar vests.

(ABE tosses the vest into the Wishing Well.)

SARAH

No Kevlar vest can withstand a blank range shotgun blast!

ABE

Well, I guess that makes me a living Miracle, eh? Next time, try to learn what I teach you: You don't just shoot to kill, you aim for the head instead! Too late for re-education now, though.

SARAH

Goddam you!

ABE

It appears I'm quite the opposite, thank you. I am Heavenly Blessed by the palm of our Lord. How else do you explain me here and you there? Now ye shall succumb to the revelation of my Resurrection.

(ABE aims the shotgun at SARAH.)

SARAH

But you didn't die! How can there be a Resurrection if you've been alive all this time?

ABE

Why must you always be bound up in the details, woman? We're talking about the Spirit of renewal here. The Resurrection of ideas. The re-birth of a new parable for Modern Man!

(Rain begins to pour down in sheets and continues until the end of this Scene. ABE and ISAAC and SARAH do not move.)

ABE

(continuing)
Ah! We are washed free of our Sin to live again. Tilt back your head, boy! Drink in the gift of life!

(HASTINGS ENTERS. She appears over the rim of the mountaintop before ABE and behind SARAH. Her sidearm is drawn and aimed at ABE's head -- the red laser gun sight on her firearm pinpoints the area between ABE's eyebrows.

She stays in the dark, shadowy distance
and speaks to him via bullhorn.)

HASTINGS

Mr. Smith! Mr. Abe Smith! Halt what you are doing.

(ABE stuns to place HASTINGS in sight
as he tries to follow the sound of her
voice.)

ABE

Eh? Who are you?!

HASTINGS

I am Special Agent Hastings of the Federal Bureau of
Investigation.

ABE

Are you alone?

HASTINGS

I am alone.

ABE

If you aren't alone... if you're lying to me... I'll
kill you.

HASTINGS

I assure you, sir, I am alone, and there is no need
for threats.

ABE

What do you want?

HASTINGS

I first want to know if there have been any
fatalities?

ABE

Fatalities? Heh! Best be on your way, sister.
This is no business of yours.

HASTINGS

Will someone please answer this question: Is anyone
dead or dying?

ABE

Yes! Everyone is dying except for me. I have
Arisen again from the earth!

HASTINGS

Sir, you are not helping this matter. I ask that
you keep quiet unless you can give me a clear and
formal answer to my inquiry.

SARAH

Uh, no Agent. No one's dead. Not yet.

HASTINGS

Thank you, ma'am. Are there any injuries?

ABE

Yes! We are all weeping wounded! No be on your way!

SARAH

Eh, yes, Agent. My son, Isaac. His foot was badly hurt in a shotgun blast below the shin bone.

ISAAC

No! I am okay. The bleeding is not bad.

(HASTINGS, hiding her horror, calmly speaks into her command radio and calls up FLACKSON. She does not use the bullhorn.)

HASTINGS

Hastings to Agent Flackson. Come in. I need a helicopter and an emergency medical team on site ASAP along with heavy armor backup. What is the ETA their arrival? Over.

(HASTINGS takes one hand off her weapon and presses a finger hard into the earpiece -- she cannot hear anything. There is no answer to her call from FLACKSON: The sky is empty.)

ABE

Who are you talking to? Who else is out there with you? You said you were alone!

(HASTINGS uses the bullhorn again.)

HASTINGS

No one is by my side, sir. I am merely attempting to divine radio contact with Command Comm back at home base.

ABE

(upcut)

No backup, eh?

(cackling)

You're in quite the Missionary Position, hmm?
Spread your legs and prepare to receive the word of God!

(HASTINGS stops using the bullhorn.)

HASTINGS

Agent Flackson? Come in. Are you reading me through the storm? Over.

ABE

It isn't the storm keeping you from your Agent Flackson, Agent Hastings. The Hand of God is blocking the spread of your Sin against Him!

(HASTINGS flips some knobs and switches on her utility belt.)

HASTINGS

Agent Flackson? I am in voice-type Morse Code Command Mode. Can you pick up my "dit-dahs" on the sub-secondary band at all? Over.

(HASTINGS waits for a response from FLACKSON and gets none.)

HASTINGS

(continuing)

You may not be able to respond to me even though you can hear me. I shall remain in ongoing dual transmittal mode from this moment on. Over.

(Still no response from FLACKSON.)

ABE

Well, then, without your backup team, I guess you'll be on your way? You can't take all of us alive, and I'm for one not going down again. I've been there. I've felt that.

(HASTINGS ignores ABE's taunts and returns to the business at hand. She steadies her aim upon ABE and once again confronts him directly using the bullhorn once again.)

HASTINGS

Surrender yourself to my custody, sir. Make it easy on us all and an early night. Alone I am stronger than you. Alone I am smarter than you. By my own hand alone shall I bring you to Justice.

ABE

Oh really? Well this isn't a Federal issue. I know the Law and you're breaking it. This is a family matter and I must ask you to be on your way. You're presently on Private Property.

HASTINGS

I represent the full power of the State and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies, sir. I also happen to have a twelve-shot, laser-sighted, 9mm. Glock aimed at the precise point that bisects your uni-brow.

(ABE lifts his hand to shield his eyes for a better look. He squints to see HASTINGS in the distance.)

ABE

Why are you here? Who sent you?

HASTINGS

You know why I am here, sir.

ABE

(caught by her honesty)
Yes, I suppose I do.

HASTINGS

Very good sir. I consider our agreement on that matter a sign of progress. Let's continue that mode of positivism: Release your weapon to the ground and we'll be on our way.

ABE

Why, I guess I could even go as far as to say I've been expecting you.

SARAH

What do you mean you've been expecting her?

HASTINGS

Yessir, Mr. Smith. I am aware of your plans. I know you've been expecting me and I have taken extensive counter-measures against that threat.

SARAH

Counter-measures? Abe? What have you done now?

ABE

(under his breath, with a smile, to Sarah alone)
I think you'll soon find out.

HASTINGS

Anti-Personnel traps, ma'am.

ABE

(with a grin)
That's "land mines" to your mind.

SARAH

Land mines! For Pete's sakes! Why?

ABE

Protection from a spot such as this.

SARAH

Well, it didn't work!

ABE

We'll see about that.

HASTINGS

Don't worry, ma'am. The land mines are behind me circling the rim of this mountaintop. They've been marked in my mind. They are not a threat. You are presently safe.

ABE

So says you!

HASTINGS

Do not, however, attempt to leave the crown of earth upon which you stand or you may very well perish by the hand of the land. Consider yourself Blessed that no one was blown up on the way here. So far, everything and everyone are fine. We need to keep it that way to avoid any possible negative end to this matter.

ABE

We'll just see about that!

(ABE pulls out a small, handheld glowing electronic device from a deep pocket within his snakeskin trenchcoat that emits a low whine.)

HASTINGS

Put that handheld device down, sir, or I'll shoot!

(He flicks a switch and magically seven spokes from beneath the earth arise into view.)

ABE

Too late! You shoot me and we all die in a really Big Bang as my finger slips from this action switch!

(At the head of each spoke is a humming and blinking land mine. ABE manipulates a dial on his handheld device and the land mines begin move toward him on each spoke like trains on a rail.)

HASTINGS

Stop! Stop what you're doing right there!

(The land mines are now mechanically moved into position and they form a new line of demarcation between HASTINGS and ABE, SARAH and ISAAC.)

ABE

Well? Now what're you gonna do?

HASTINGS

You have forced my hand, sir. Now I must call in the heavy hands.

SARAH

You planted land mines? You refuse to bend and kneel to even plant a carrot seed in our garden!

ABE

(smugly)

Ah, but these special wishes have a life beyond the ground.

SARAH

Don't test me. You're dealing with the will of a mother scorned.

(HASTINGS activates her command radio.)

HASTINGS

Agent Logan. This is Agent Hastings. Prepare to move on my mark.

ABE

Oh? And what mark is that?

HASTINGS

Woof.

(On HASTINGS' "woof", LOGAN and the SIX AGENTS appear out of nowhere with their rifles trained on ABE -- they are now, however, positioned outside the new ring of land mines: LOGAN appears from the shadows behind ABE; TWO AGENTS rappel down nylon cords from the trees; ONE AGENT appears in the Wishing Well, another AGENT appears from the dirt. TWO MORE AGENTS rise from the land disguised as bushes. The laser sites on their weapons dance across ABE's chest.)

ABE, SARAH and ISAAC look around and drink in this eerie change in circumstance.)

ABE

What is this? It's plain not fair, that's what! Hiding in the trees! Pretending to be bushes! Face paint! Camouflage?! You're going to War on me!

HASTINGS

Mr. Smith! Please do not continue to test my goodwill.

ABE

You disappoint me.

HASTINGS

You can now see you are outpersoned and outarmed.

ABE

I told you I'd kill you if you lied to me. You didn't come alone.

HASTINGS

I was alone until I needed assistance.

ABE

You were never alone.

HASTINGS

Are any of us ever, alone?

(ABE pauses to consider this for a beat...)

ABE

(shaking the thought off)
Now is not the time for philosophy!

HASTINGS

Agreed. I am here only to negotiate with you. My goal is to find a quick and friendly resolution to this matter but you're not making that a simple task..

ABE

You are not my friend! A friend does not communicate through a bullhorn!

(HASTINGS drops the bullhorn and speaks loudly from afar.)

HASTINGS

You are right, Mr. Smith. I have released the bullhorn from service. You are also quite correct that I am not your friend, but I do indeed care for your well-being whether you believe that or not.

ABE

I don't believe that! You are not my Salvation! Why would you help me?

(HASTINGS takes a few steps forward to get closer to ABE.)

HASTINGS

I help you, I help myself by getting everyone and everything home and alive tonight. To make that happen, I want simply to talk. But I will shoot you dead if you do not comply with my wishes.

ABE

If wishes were horses...

SARAH

(upcut)

Oh, shut up, and listen to her. Give it up. Put down that shotgun.

(ISAAC crawls to ABE and pleads with him.)

ISAAC

Yes, father. Listen to mother. You'll feel better. I promise. We can get you help if you'll only drop the weapon.

SARAH

Listen to your son, Abe.

HASTINGS

Yes. The boy appears to love and care for you very much. Even I can see that from here.

(ABE's shoulders slouch a bit.)

ABE

My son?

HASTINGS

Yes, Mr. Smith. Give up your weapon for the love of your boy.

ISAAC

Father, I love you. No matter what. I love you unconditionally. Forever.

ABE

(wearily)

Love? What know you of love, young child with old man glasses? Love is an agent for terror only -- haven't you learned that today? Obedience and fear of punishment is the key to universal understanding.

ISAAC

(quietly, privately)

No, father. Love doesn't have to hurt or wound or kill. Unconditional Love is the greatest method of Obedience known to God and Man.

(ABE is stopped by this. He has no quick answer.)

SARAH

(earnestly, with love)

Listen to the boy you taught. We love you. Come on home.

(ABE looks as if he's just come into his body after being missing for awhile. He seeks out HASTINGS with his eyes.)

ABE

Uh... Agent Hastings? I am very tired. I cannot see well in the rain. Can you step forward? Do you have ID?

HASTINGS

Certainly, sir. I will be happy to present my ID as soon as you lower the weapon to the ground and take three large paces backwards away from Isaac and Sarah.

ABE

Why do you know the name of my wife and son? Oh! Now I see your deceit rather clearly!

(And with that, the anger builds and ABE again appears to leave his body and is replaced with a rigid and menacing spirit of destruction.)

ABE

(continuing)

You're all in this together! You're all conniving against me as Hellhounds to thwart me from bringing the new Law of God to Mankind! Well, Lucifers, die in Hell, you shall!

HASTINGS

We are all concerned for you, Abe. When we care about someone in distress, we do everything in our power to soothe them with our understanding of the joys and the sorrows thriving in their life.

ABE

Yeah. That's a pretty slick, trite, answer there, Agent Hastings, and I don't believe a word of it.

HASTINGS

You are not in a position to judge my veracity accurately. I repeat that I will shoot to kill if you do not lower that shotgun immediately.

SARAH

(privately to him, under her breath)
Do it, Abe. She said she's got her gun pointed right between the bloodshot eyes in your head. For the love of God, give up!

ABE

(under his breath back)
Mebbe so.

SARAH

(continuing earnestly in the open)
And you only have your gun pointed at me. You move to include her in your aim and you're dead before you can even begin to guess where she is and your Resurrection dies with you.

ABE

(an awakening)
Clever. Clever.

HASTINGS

So what'll it be, Mr. Smith? Do we talk? Or do we die?

(ABE speaks out directly to HASTINGS.)

ABE

God's work here is not done and I am pledged to the death to do his bidding...

HASTINGS

(upcut)
Stop right there, Mr. Smith, your answer, though unfinished, is already unacceptable. I'll ask you one last time: What'll it be?

(A beat. The rain falls harder. ABE stares down HASTINGS. Another beat.)

HASTINGS stares back at ABE. Another beat. SARAH has her eyes locked on ISAAC. Another beat. ISAAC has his eyes locked on the Heavens. LOGAN and the SIX AGENTS have their laser weapons targeted on ABE's chest.)

ABE

(with a charming grin)
I believe I'll have to get back to you on that one,
sister.

(Blinding Lighting! Instant Thunder!
BLACKOUT. End of ACT ONE.)

ACT 2

SCENE 6

(LIGHT RISE in the SKY as AGENT FLACKSON frantically tries to contact AGENTS HASTINGS and LOGAN on the radio. FLACKSON is still in silhouette. His words in Morse code appear rapping across the sky instead of his FBI ID.)

FLACKSON

Agent Hastings? This is Agent Flackson in the Command Comm. Can you read me? Come in, Over.

(A beat. No Answer from HASTINGS.)

FLACKSON

(continuing)

Agent Hastings, I'm simulcasting a parallel translation of my speech to you in Morse code on the secondary secure bandwidth. If you cannot read me clearly or if I'm breaking up due to the inclement weather surrounding you on site, please listen to the Morse Code sub-band and reply in same. Over.

(Another beat. Still no response.)

FLACKSON

(continuing)

Agent Logan? Can you read me? Over.

(A beat. No reply.)

FLACKSON

(continuing)

Agents Hastings and Logan -- I am broadcasting to you both on the voice and Morse Code bands. I do not know if you can hear me or not, but the satellite photos...

(The satellite photos appear in the sky along with the Morse Code dots. The mountain area is completely obliterated by the thunderstorm.)

FLACKSON

(continuing)

...Suggest that you cannot. The infrared scans also are blurry and inconclusive...

(The infrared satellite image joins the other satellite map and the Morse Code dots -- it too is a wavy mess of hot and cold areas)

FLACKSON

(continuing)

...But I shall continue to stay in touch with you in the rare case that you may be able to hear me on either band but cannot acknowledge reception of said broadcast. I cannot reach a response from the rest of your field team, either, but I have notified Base Command of this situation and reinforcement troops with heavy armaments are on their way via helicopter. ETA depends upon their ability to find a safe and clear landing in the storm. This is Agent Flackson, Out.

(The satellite images, Morse Code communication and FLACKSON FADE OUT.)

SCENE 7

(The LIGHTS slowly RISE on a resumption of the mountaintop scene that concluded ACT ONE. No one has moved. The stare down continues for a beat as the LIGHTS bleed full. The hard rain falls.)

HASTINGS

(carefully, slowly)

Mr. Smith. My patience with you is finished and I will wait no longer. You have had more than a fair chance to consider every option available to you at this time. Now, drop the shotgun.

(ABE only smiles at her.)

HASTINGS

(continuing)

I shall count you down from ten. When I reach one, you had better have dropped your weapon, or I will shoot you. Ten.

ISAAC

Don't test her, father.

HASTINGS

Nine.

ISAAC

Her resolve is stronger than yours -- she has the muscle of the Federal Government behind her!

SARAH

Not to mention seven other high-powered rifles!

HASTINGS

Eight.

ABE

No man or woman alone or together is greater than the invisible tether of God's will peeling through me like a chorus of church bells.

(ABE stiffens his shoulders and arms.)

HASTINGS

Seven.

SARAH

You fool of a man!

HASTINGS

Six.

SARAH

What kind of example are you setting for the future with the end of your life?

HASTINGS

Five.

ABE

We'll see, old woman.

HASTINGS

Four.

ABE

We'll see who's standing with the dust turns to ashes and the rainbow rings the clouds.

HASTINGS

Three!

ISAAC

She will shoot you, father!

HASTINGS

Two!

ISAAC

Believe me, please! I can see her finger tightening the trigger!

ABE

(quietly)
Blastoff.

(Before HASTINGS can speak "One", ABE grabs SARAH and shields himself behind her as he fires the shotgun at HASTINGS.)

HASTINGS

Unfortunate.

(Hit in the leg, HASTINGS is felled, but manages to squeeze off three rounds before she dissolves into the earth -- the bullets find purchase in SARAH's stomach, collarbone and left wrist.)

SARAH

Abe. Help me. I've been hit. She shot me three times.

ABE

Hang tight, my bride.

SARAH

I am dizzy. I cannot see. Can you hear me?

ABE

We're not dead yet!

ISAAC

I'll help you, mother! Hang on!

(ISAAC struggles to stand and run to his mother but has great difficulty putting weight on his injured leg. ABE pushes ISAAC back down to the ground.)

ABE

(to HASTINGS)
Be cleansed.

(As SARAH goes limp, ABE catches her and continues to use her as a shield as he reloads the shotgun with shells by using gravity alone to move the pump.)

LOGAN

We have an Agent down! Fire at will!

(LOGAN leaps over the circular line of land mines and makes for ABE.)

ABE

Perish, ye. And ye shall be healed by thee.

(ABE fires both barrels directly into LOGAN's abdomen at point-blank range. The AGENTS all fire upon ABE as he sways behind SARAH's limp body, blood spatters everywhere.)

ISAAC

Mother? Are you okay? Say something.

(ABE drops SARAH and melts into the ground.)

ABE

Faith, my son! Now is not your time. Your time shall come and shall be by thine hand -- the palm of God... is now calling me... home.

ISAAC

I am scared, Father.

ABE

Fear thee not, gentle son.

(In the midst of the firepower around him, ABE, bloody but unbowed, rises up to his knees, smiles against his aggressors and covers ISAAC with his body to protect him from the onslaught.)

ABE

(continuing)

I am with you forevermore, Isaac.

ISAAC

We'll be alright, father. If we only Believe. We can be healed.

ABE

Yes, my beloved only son. We shall indeed be healed whole.

(to the AGENTS)

And then it rained... for forty days and forty nights.

(ABE presses the fire button on his handheld land mine control with a dramatic flourish. The AGENTS stop firing, look at each other and freeze for a beat as the idea of the impossible trickles into their common minds.)

ABE

(continuing)

And all Sin was washed away with the great tide of tears from the salty eyes of our Lord.

(As the AGENTS attempt to scatter and run away, the land mines explode in a rapid-fire chain reaction of total destruction. The AGENTS and LOGAN are consumed and tossed in the air by flashes of fire and white-hot shrapnel. The AGENTS and LOGAN are hit and mortally wounded. As ABE is blown back down to the ground and onto ISAAC by the force of the explosion, the LIGHTS FADE as the fires diminish in luminosity.)

SCENE 8

(Total quiet in the DARKNESS lives for a moment. The rain stops. Then, ever-so gently, the SKY comes alive with the beautiful FACE OF GOD. HIS glowing visage fills the sky in its entirety. A breeze blows through his flowing, silvery hair. HIS wide eyes are deep with compassion and love. HIS voice is resonant and rumbling.)

GOD

Isaac?

(A pocket of WHITE LIGHT from above illuminates ISAAC. ISAAC, as if in a trance, struggles to free himself from beneath the weight of ABE.)

GOD

(continuing)
Can you hear me, child?

ISAAC

Yes? I am Isaac. Where are you?

GOD

I am everywhere, Isaac! Look around and ye shall discover me.

ISAAC

Oh. There you are!

GOD

Look at your foot, my son. Where now are the ties that bound you?

(ISAAC stands before GOD and, with amazement, discovers that this foot his healed and his hands are no longer bound. ISAAC shimmers in His light.)

ISAAC

My foot! It's healed!

GOD

Healed, yes. Because you believe in me.

ISAAC

Is this a wish come true? A prayer answered? How can I be so lucky? Am I dreaming?

GOD

No. This is real, child.

ISAAC

Am I in Heaven with you with you?

GOD

(chuckling)

No, you are not in Heaven yet. You have a good long time to wait.

ISAAC

Tell me. Are they all dead? My father? My mother?

GOD

Trust me. I am proud of you and I know you can handle whatever I hand you.

ISAAC

I shall try to be strong. If they are all dead, I will know it was meant to be.

GOD

I wanted to come to you at this moment, child, to touch you directly. I want you to know that this is not what I intended for you. There is damage to you that cannot be undone and for that I apologize. I should've come to you sooner. I am sorry.

ISAAC

That's okay. I'll be okay.

GOD

Your father is not a prophet, Isaac. He is not a man of God. His Calling, his Vision are not of my doing.

ISAAC

I know. I know that now.

GOD

Also know that this shall not stand. His Acts cannot be. This was not the plan. Do you understand me, Isaac?

ISAAC

I love my father. He would never hurt me. He is ill. He needs his medication.

GOD

Medication is not an excuse nor the issue, Isaac. I came to your father several times just as I have come to you here.

(more)

GOD (cont'd)

I extended my hand to him and was rejected. I reached him on deeper levels of consciousness than any medication can touch. I felt his soul and it was cold and lonely. I tried to call him back from his precipice of despair and he would not have me. He rebuked my love for him. But I had Faith in him that he would not act nor go this far. But I misjudged him. Even God can be wrong. The trick is to realize the wrong and right it. Your father's deep-rooted hatred for the love of Man simply was too strong. His arrogance cannot stand unpunished. There is no hiding from the Hand of God when any man's willful fist is raised in cruelty to man or beast.

ISAAC

I miss my mother already.

GOD

Yes, you are a good, loving, honorable son. But tell me if you understand what I've said.

ISAAC

Yes, I do. I do, sir.

GOD

And ye shall do as I say?

ISAAC

Yes. I will listen to your will and I shall do your bidding against my father... if that is your wish.

GOD

Your mother will come unto you again, Isaac. Listen to her. Do as she says and her love for you will heal you forever. Her life will give you life once again. She can help you in a way in which I cannot. Through her shall I speak your name and give you a gift that you must accept even though it will wield a consequence you may not yet comprehend. Will you do that for me, child? Are you able?

ISAAC

What do you want me to do?

GOD

In due time. You will not have to consider anything. The act itself will take you along. Your spirit shall guide you.

ISAAC

Yes. I will do it. I am able. Through you I am strong.

GOD

Good. I then bestow upon you the strength and authority to set this right. Believe in me, Isaac, and ye shall be given eternal life.

ISAAC

I believe. Send me a sign when I've served your wishes well.

GOD

I shall.

ISAAC

I will look for your sign. I believe. I believe.

GOD

Then come to me, child.

(ISAAC is drawn to the sky and he walks slowly into the GLOWING EYES of GOD.)

ISAAC

I am following.

GOD

Walk. Walk into the light of my eyes and be healed from thine darkness. My strength is your strength. See what I see. Feel as I feel. Welcome the power. Use it. Wisely.

(As ISAAC is swallowed into the EYES OF GOD, sky dissolves and GOD and ISAAC are gone. The lights CROSSFADE TO:)

SCENE 9

(RAIN slowly begins to patter the land. ISAAC is still beneath ABE. SARAH, LOGAN and the other AGENTS are lifeless and limp. HASTINGS turns on her flashlight and slowly rights herself as she tries to regain her composure and sense of self. She feels her pulse -- it's okay. She picks up her gun from the ground and inspects it for damage -- it works. She tucks the gun in her waistband and walks slowly to the center of the scene of devastation and feels for a pulse in ISAAC, SARAH, ABE, LOGAN and her AGENTS and finds not a beat of life in one of them. Exhausted, she sits on the Wishing Well and tries to contact FLACKSON on her radio.)

HASTINGS

Agent Flackson? This is Agent Hastings in the field. Do you read me? Over.

(This time, a faint sparkle of a response from FLACKSON fades in and out of the sky in silhouette as HASTINGS strains to hear his response in her ear.)

FLACKSON

Agent Hastings! I copy you! I've been trying to get in touch with you for quite some time now. There appears to be a dramatic change in the landscape in the latest satellite downfeed. What is the live status update for your situation? Over.

(ABE silently rises up from the ground behind HASTINGS and unties the leather tether from ISAAC's limp hands.)

HASTINGS

Dead. They're all dead. Over.

FLACKSON

Dead? Why, that can't be. They all can't be...

HASTINGS

(upcut)
 ...Dead they are. All of them. I stand alone.
 Call off the infantry. Bring the Big Boys back.
 (more)

HASTINGS (cont'd)

Send a Corner's Unit with ten bodybags instead.
Copy? Over.

(ABE quietly creeps up behind HASTINGS.
His footfalls are masked by the sound
of the falling rain.)

FLACKSON

Uh, okay. Yes, I can do that. I copy you. But
surely... Agent Logan and the other Special Agents
in the tactical team must've survived in some small
manner... I mean they all can't be...

HASTINGS

(upcut)

...They're all dead, son. You have your orders.
Carry them out. This is Special Agent Hastings,
out.

(HASTINGS punches off her radio and
FLACKSON's silhouette vanishes from the
sky. SHE rips off her headset and
radio and drops them into the Wishing
Well.)

ABE

I'm not through with you, Agent Hastings.

(ABE encircles the leather tether
around HASTINGS' neck and begins to
strangle her.)

ABE

(continuing)

Didn't they teach you at the Academy to aim for the
head? Another waste of hard-earned Federal Tax
Dollars! Oh, well. Too late for second chances.

HASTINGS

You are the Devil indeed!

(HASTINGS gasps for air and gets none.
SHE wrangles her gun from her waistband
and squeezes off a shot in the air.)

ABE

Consider this my Second Coming and the weak shall
perish in my wake.

(ABE slams her wrist against the
Wishing Well and HASTINGS drops her gun
skittling down the Well. HASTINGS
tries to kick herself free to no avail.)

HASTINGS

God is not within you!

ABE

I told you I'd kill you for lying to me. That's a promise kept!

(ABE tightens his grip on her neck. Her eyes bulge.)

ABE

(continuing)
Why didn't you take me at my word?

(With a last gasp, HASTINGS manages to speak her dying words. As she speaks the sky glows with the faint image of GOD. As HASTINGS speaks, so too, does GOD.)

HASTINGS/GOD

To thine own self be true, / And it must follow, as
the night the day, / Thou canst not then be false to
any man.

(The life drains from HASTINGS as ABE's arms shake with tension as he puts as much muscle as sinew as possible into the task of choking her to death.)

ABE

Foolish child! Dying is too good for you!

(HASTINGS goes limp. She is dead. ABE lets her body flop to the ground. ABE surveys the destruction around him.)

ABE

(continuing; to himself aloud)
Okay, well. This didn't go so well. Time to clean up this mess and be on our way.

(ABE picks up HASTINGS and dumps her dead body down the Wishing Well.)

ABE

(continuing; to HASTINGS' body)
Hell is too good for you. Maybe you'll cool a spell down there. My wish for you, Agent Hastings, is to find the truth in the death of your life.

(to the other dead AGENTS)
Let's make a wish upon each of you! I have seven wishes left!

(ABE begins the task of dragging all SIX AGENTS and LOGAN over to the Wishing Well. He tosses all their weaponry down the Well.)

ABE

(continuing)
 You won't be needing this firepower any more, hmm?
 (cackling)
 You were outgunned by a lonesome, ordinary, old man.

(Rain continues to fall. The LIGHTS DIM and pockets of shimmering light glow down upon SARAH and ISAAC as ABE works his wishes in the darkness. As SARAH speaks the sky glows once again with the faint image of GOD. As SARAH speaks, so too, does GOD.)

SARAH/GOD

My son?

(ABE, throughout the counting of the wishes, is oblivious to SARAH and ISAAC and continues his work unabated.)

ABE

Wish One: I wish you well!
 (cackling)
 Pun intended!

(ABE pushes LOGAN's body down the Wishing Well.)

SARAH/GOD

Do you recognize me?

(SARAH touches ISAAC and he comes dreamily out of what appears to be a deep sleep.)

ISAAC

Mother? Is it you? You're alive!

SARAH/GOD

I have come to you as promised.

ABE

Wish Two: Don't go to pieces over me.

(ABE dumps AGENT ONE down the Well.)

ISAAC

I am frightened.

SARAH/GOD

I am here, Isaac. Be strong.

ISAAC

Yes. Strong. I remember now. I am ready.

(AGENT TWO comes to and grabs ABE's hands. They struggle. ABE bites AGENT TWO's hands and pushes him backwards into the Well.)

ABE

Wish Three: May the Hand of God bend you in two pieces with pity.

SARAH/GOD

We must act quickly. He'll be on to us next.

ABE

Wish Four: Here's mud in yer eye!

(ABE dumps AGENT THREE down the Well.)

ISAAC

Shall I run for help?

ABE

Wish Five: Godspeed -- the first step is a killer.

(ABE dumps AGENT FOUR down the Well.)

SARAH/GOD

No, Isaac. It is too late for wishes.

ISAAC

Tell me what to do.

SARAH/GOD

You must kill him, Isaac. You must cleave your father from this life.

ISAAC

No! I cannot!

SARAH/GOD

You can. And you shall. It is God's desire!

ISAAC

Why does God always desire death?!

SARAH/GOD

Do not betray me, Isaac. Seek your heart for the answer. Look inside yourself for the truth of what I say.

ISAAC

Oh. Yes. I understand. I will try. With your strength I shall heal this chasm my father plowed into the land of our lives.

SARAH/GOD

Good, my son.

ISAAC

I shall obey, thee, Lord. You spoke to me of a gift. What is that gift?

SARAH/GOD

You shall find out very soon.

ISAAC

Please. Help me. Tell me now. What is the gift? Will it help me accomplish my task?

SARAH/GOD

Remember. Remember.

(SARAH gently kisses ISAAC on his cheek.)

SARAH/GOD

(continuing)

There. It is done. Courage. Courage.

ISAAC

No! I need you! I am afraid.

SARAH/GOD

Through a mother's kiss, courage. You are now fearless, Isaac.

ISAAC

No, I am not. I am a frightened little boy with baling wire glasses! Mother? Are you with me?

(SARAH goes limp as GOD leaves her body and fades from the sky.)

ABE

Wish Six: Blessed be the beasts and Ye.

(ABE dumps AGENT FIVE down the Well.)

ISAAC

Mother, please speak to me! Don't go!

(Slowly, SARAH raises her head. GOD is not in her. GOD does not speak through her.)

SARAH

I am here. I love you, boy. Remember that always.

ISAAC

Mother, please! Hang on! Your eyes are dark and without glimmer! Hold on. I can fetch help!

SARAH

No, Isaac. Let me go. I must go. The damage is done. The healing lives within you.

ABE

Wish Seven: Have a great trip!
(sighs with completion)

(ABE dumps AGENT SIX down the Well.)

ABE

(continuing)
Shwhew! And on the Seventh Wish: He rested.
(cackles and grins)

(ABE gathers up all the stray firewood and dumps it down the Well.)

SARAH

Remember me, Isaac. Please remember me always. To live is to remember.

(SARAH dies.)

ISAAC

Mother! Nooooooo!

(ABE is stopped. With all the AGENTS disposed of, he turns to see ISAAC weeping over the lifeless body of SARAH.)

ABE

Well! Look who's back for more! We have some unfinished business, don't we?

(ABE steps over SARAH's lifeless body.)

ABE

(continuing; to SARAH)
You, on the other hand, are not worth the time nor the effort of making a wish upon your soul as you drop.

(ABE drags SARAH's dead body to the Wishing Well and tumbles her down inside.)

ABE

(continuing)

Down you go. Stay there with your Slayers and Resurrect yourself into earthworms.

ISAAC

You bring my mother's body back up here! Why did you kill her?!

ABE

I didn't shoot her. Agent Hastings shot your mother. I tried to save your mother. I did my best to get us out of this mess you started with your refusal to accept's God's Will. You know that.

ISAAC

You used my mother as your shield! I saw you!

ABE

Your mother's death... is... but a mere... footnote in the history of Mankind. We're not archaeologists with pith helmets, magnifying glasses and a research grant! Who can say what happened? Leave that answer to the wisdom of the Ages. We've above that now. We've moved on. Let it go. Everybody dies. If you're upset, take it up with the Big Government Monolith, not me. Your tax dollars will bring your mother back... in a bodybag.

ISAAC

I saw you. I know what you did.

(The SUN begins to rise in the sky.
The rain continues to fall.)

ABE

(ignoring ISAAC)

Ah! And the rising sun lights our path to Glory. Now, my sunny boy, this can go easy or it can go hard...

(ISAAC and ABE stare down each other for a moment -- then ISAAC makes a move to escape. ABE tackles ISAAC and plops him on the stump and viciously re-binds his hands behind his back with the leather tether in a hog-tie.)

ISAAC

You killed my mother. You killed everyone, yet you still live! How? Why?!

(ABE removes his snakeskin trenchcoat and heavy sweater and reveals to ISAAC layer after layer of heavy, kevlar body armor that, while ripped and torn and singed, protected him from the bullets and the destruction of the land mines.)

ABE

A mamma's-boy must learn to accept and identify The Will of God: Kevlar strikes another home run for the home team.

(Without all the body armor, and standing tall in his boxer underwear, ABE's elderly body is revealed to be withered away -- he is skin, bone and little muscle.)

ABE

(continuing)

Is this my third Resurrection today? I'm losing count.

(ABE tosses his clothes, kevlar vests, trenchcoat and his shotgun and shotgun shells down the Wishing Well as well.)

ABE

(continuing)

Clean start. No trail. Do the deed. Be done. Move along.

ISAAC

Unbind me, father. Let me go. And I shall have you spared.

(ABE takes the axe and takes a few practice hacks in the air.)

ABE

You spare me? In who's name? I am the Power, here, son. I have the Light. God is testing my faithfulness, not yours.

ISAAC

Father. I must warn you. I have been given a gift.

ABE

You? A gift?

(ABE stops swinging the axe and kneels
in front of the bound ISAAC.)

ABE

(continuing)
A gift from who?

ISAAC

From God.

ABE

(stifling a laugh)
Uh, huh. And tell me. What is that gift from God
you claim to possess?

ISAAC

You mean you don't know? If you were truly a Man of
God wouldn't you already know?

ABE

You're testing me.

(ABE stands and holds the axe over
ISAAC's head.)

ABE

(continuing)
Tell me.

(SARAH appears glimmering in the sky.
She speaks to ISAAC who never takes his
eyes from ABE.)

SARAH

Tell him, Isaac. Share your gift.

ABE

I asked you to tell me. Why do you continue to test
a man with an axe aimed at your head?

ISAAC

Alright, I'll tell you. God has given me... the
gift of courage.

(SARAH warmly smiles and blows ISAAC a
kiss.)

SARAH

Good. You have started the ending well. Bless You.
I love you, Isaac. I always will.

(SARAH disappears from the sky.)

ABE

(hysterical, bellowing with laughter)
 Courage? You?!! You're as fearless as a Ground Hog
 on a sunny day! Why, you're nothing but a Church
 Mouse with Swiss Cheese glasses!

ISAAC

No. I am courageous and I do not like it when you
 talk to me like that, father.

ABE

Well? What're you gonna do about it?

ISAAC

Watch.

ABE

Show me.

(ISAAC strains against his hog-tie and
 GOD REAPPEARS in the sky. The sky goes
 white as lightning strikes the leather
 tether and GOD DISAPPEARS. Thunder
 rocks the air as the bindings erupt and
 drop from ISAAC's wrists!)

ISAAC

There. It is done.

(Unbound, Isaac rises to his feet and
 stands above ABE.)

ABE

How did you do that? Those leather tethers would
 hog-tie a team of horses for six days! You split
 that leather like kindling sticks!

(The SKY comes alive! One-by-one, GOD,
 SARAH, HASTINGS, LOGAN and the SIX
 AGENTS all appear standing tall in the
 sky. THEY are a CHORUS passing
 judgement upon ABE. THEY send the
 spirit of the species to ISAAC.)

ISAAC

That was only the beginning of your end. Hand over
 the axe and meet your fate like a man, father.

(ISAAC's arm rises, his palm reaches
 out for the axe. ABE backs up,
 clutching the axe.)

ABE

No. Stay away from me!

ISAAC

I said give me the axe!

ABE

This is not the plan! You are an arrogant child!

(ISAAC closes his eyes and his arms throb as his palms focus on the axe.)

ISAAC

I warned you earlier, but you did not heed me. I told you I saw darkness. I saw no future. My vision for you was barren. And now you must pay for your insolence against God and your family! Now give me that axe!

(The axe flies out of ABE's hands, sails through the air and lands lightly in ISAAC's outstretched hands.)

ABE

You wouldn't kill a man in his underwear, would you?!

ISAAC

You sound frightened.

ABE

I am! I believe you! You are a gift from God.

ISAAC

Come unto me, then.

ABE

No!

ISAAC

Kneel before me in prayer.

ABE

Never!

ISAAC

Don't make me chase you down like a dog.

ABE

I am frightened, oh Lord.

ISAAC

Come here, my son.

(ABE, looking for a place to hide, sees the CHORUS of GOD, SARAH, HASTINGS, LOGAN and the SIX AGENTS bearing down upon him from the sky.)

ABE

What are they doing here? What have you done against me?

ISAAC

Look at my foot. Look at the foot you shot off. Don't you see? Are you so Blind you can't see the Miracle before you?

(ABE blinks, staring at ISAAC's healed foot.)

ABE

Your foot? Is healed? That cannot be. That is an impossibility!

ISAAC

I believe you failed the Faith test.

ABE

Who are you?

ISAAC

I am the First Miracle for Modern Man.

ABE

Liar!

ISAAC

Prove me wrong.

ABE

You are tricking me!

ISAAC

I promise you this is no joke. Come to me and find out how serious I am.

ABE

But... you are my son! You said you loved me!

ISAAC

I do love you. And that is why I must end your suffering.

ABE

But suffering is the mark of being alive!

ISAAC

On your knees.

(ABE, frightened and scared with no way out, is drawn to ISAAC through an invisible force.)

ABE

I... I am... sorry. Forgive me.

ISAAC

We are far beyond sorrow and redemption, Abraham. You have nowhere to run. There is no shelter from my Wrath.

(ABE kneels before ISAAC and the hovering axe.)

ABE

I didn't mean any of it. I was Called. I acted. I am blameless in the entirety. Is it my fault God picked a cracked vessel to hold His message? Where is the Revelation in killing me? Where is the sense in any of this?

ISAAC

Precisely my point. In the Bible, Isaac and Abraham never speak again after his Binding and Abraham's act against Isaac is so painful to Sarah that it kills her. And so it must be the same here.

ABE

But why? You just offered proof that I was Called into a situation beyond my control! Why are you punishing me for following the moral of the Myth?

ISAAC

You cannot separate the message from the man. You are not the moral of the myth. I am. And you were told as such. You were Called... off. And yet you continued this drama to its ultimate moral conclusion. Do you think I appreciate your testing of my goodwill?

ABE

I misunderstood the Calling, then! I didn't hurt you! I never drew blood. You are still alive because of me! You can't kill me for wrongly believing I was serving the desire of God!

ISAAC

But you misused the lesson, Abraham. An Angel saved Isaac from Abraham and you know that, yet you said earlier today that "no Angels shall save you now." You are slaughtered by your own damnation of the moral of the myth.

ABE

Kill me, then! Get it over! The Old God would never make me suffer like this with your endless babbling. He'd wave His hand and I'd be dust in the sunset in the wink of His eye!

ISAAC

We live in a New Testament world. The old rules don't apply much anymore except in the abstract example and they only reveal the esoteric, ancient history of the tests we survived.

ABE

Okay, then. Hear me out. Science and Technology have failed to replace the death of the old God... and so we find ourselves in a faithless chasm with no way out to a higher Calling. We are boxed in and buried by a death of our own doing. The only possibility for escape back into the world of the everliving afterlife is to go back and revive the life of the Old God. The Old Testament must be The New Rule of Law and that was the spirit in which I acted!

ISAAC

No. Mankind must move forward. We must continue to evolve into new myths. We hearken back to common, moral, touchstones simply because we've left them behind. Only in the distance of space and time can we find context and joy in the reasonable order of our lives.

ABE

Have mercy upon my soul, then! That's New Testament thinking, isn't it?

ISAAC

This, I shall do for you: In the name of God, I shall cleave Thee into silence and make you an Old Testament Moral for Modern Man. That would please you, would it not?

ABE

Why are you bent on destroying the mystery of God?

ISAAC

I am set upon revealing the truth of your Sin.

(ABE weeps quietly as he pleads for his life.)

ABE
 I beg your forgiveness.
 (to himself)
 My son. My son. My only son.

ISAAC
 Are you sorry?

ABE
 Yes. I am sorry for everything imagined and undone!

ISAAC
 Do you fear me?

ABE
 Yes! I fear you for you have the power!

ISAAC
 Am I courageous?

ABE
 Of course! Your gift is your courage.

ISAAC
 To live is to remember?

ABE
 Yes! Yes! Memory is my punishment! I will be
 haunted for eternity in The New World by the memory
 of my Old Testament Sin against you!

ISAAC
 No. Memory is my Salvation.

(With that, ISAAC sinks the axe into
 ABE's skull -- right between his uni-
 brow -- with a vengeance and a strength
 no man or child alone could possess.)

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 You cringed.

(Lightning rips the sky. A thunderclap
 applauds. The deed is done. The rain
 stops. The sky magically clears. A
 rainbow bends majestically in the sky.)

ISAAC
 (continuing)
 A sign.

(ABE's dead body crumbles to the ground
 looking very fragile and very small.)

ISAAC

(continuing)
My work here is finished.

(ISAAC pulls the axe out of ABE's head
and slams it into the tree stump.)

ISAAC

(continuing)
Let there be Light once again.

(As ISAAC exits into the morning SKY,
a SECOND RAINBOW appears. The DOUBLE
RAINBOWS bleed into each other in
astonishing Glory as the CHORUS of GOD,
SARAH, HASTINGS, LOGAN and the SIX
AGENTS fade away smiling and content
into the ribbons of colour. ISAAC
EXITS and disappears into the eye of
the rising sun.)

(BLACKOUT.)

(END OF PLAY.)