

# NIGHT SKY

"To The Stars"

EPISODE 101

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# NIGHT SKY

EPISODE 101 "TO THE STARS"

CAST LIST - FULL BLUE - 06.05.21

IRENE

FRANKLIN

JUDE

DENISE

BYRON

YOUNG IRENE

YOUNG FRANKLIN

CHANDRA

JEANINE

DR. MAREESE

SADIE

NURSE NELL

LEE

TOM

RANDY (YOUNG)

SECRETARY

AAA MAN

DEREK/YOUNG BOY

DEREK'S MOTHER

GROCERY CLERK

ROY/OLD MAN'S VOICE

MAN IN LINE

BARGOERS

DINERS

PATIENTS

GROCERY SHOPPERS

NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

NURSING HOME EMPLOYEES

# NIGHT SKY

EPISODE 101 "TO THE STARS"

SET LIST - GREEN PAGES - 07.05.21

INTERIORS	EXTERIORS
<p>ALBEMARLE HOUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home office</li> <li>• Kitchen</li> </ul> <p>BAR</p> <p>DOCTOR'S OFFICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination room</li> <li>• Reception</li> </ul> <p>GOLDEN BOUGH NURSING HOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bedroom</li> <li>• Hall</li> <li>• Lobby</li> </ul> <p>GROCERY STORE</p> <p>JELINEK'S CAFÉ</p> <p>SHED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneath the shed</li> <li>• Chamber</li> <li>• Hallway</li> <li>• Observation room</li> </ul> <p>YORKS' CAR</p> <p>YORK HOUSE (FARNSWORTH, IL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Den</li> <li>• Dining Room</li> <li>• Downstairs</li> <li>• Guest room</li> <li>• Kitchen</li> <li>• Living room</li> <li>• Second floor</li> <li>• Staircase</li> <li>• Upstairs Bedroom</li> <li>• Upstairs Hallway</li> </ul>	<p>ALBEMARLE HOUSE</p> <p>DOCTOR'S OFFICE</p> <p>JELINEK'S CAFÉ</p> <p>ROAD</p> <p>TOWN SQUARE</p> <p>YORK HOUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back yard</li> <li>• Driveway</li> <li>• Porch</li> </ul>

1 INT. BAR - ILLINOIS - 1969 - NIGHT 1

IRENE BALLARD, 21, sits in front of a dark, tobacco-stained wall, her face turned just so in a timeless profile. Strawberry blonde hair surrounds her head like a wild halo.

Despite the noisy room -- the billiards, the jukebox, the banter -- Irene exudes a detached calm. A confidence.

She watches a coil of smoke drift from her cigarette.

LEE

Irene, I'm bored.

Irene's roommate LEE swirls a finger idly through her beer.

IRENE

You said you wanted to go out. Here we are. Out.

LEE

I said go out *and* have a good time. *And* maybe talk to some boys.

Irene crushes the butt in an ashtray.

IRENE

I don't have the patience.

Lee lifts her chin toward a group of guys shooting pool.

LEE

What about them? They look kinda cute, right?

IRENE

They look dim. But have at it.

LEE

I can't go over there alone.

IRENE

Then I guess you'll just have to wait for them to come to you.

AT THE POOL TABLE

RANDY sulks as TOM returns from the bar with a full pitcher of beer.

TOM

Alright, what did I miss?

RANDY

I bet Franklin twenty five bucks he  
couldn't run the table on me.

All of the striped balls are still on the table. The 8-ball  
is the only solid. Franklin is one shot away from winning.

TOM

Yikes. Where's Franklin?

Standing at the jukebox, FRANKLIN YORK, 20, holds a hand up.

FRANKLIN

Just a sec. They mixed it all around.

After keying in his choice, he turns to the guys. Franklin is  
tall and strong, built like the quarterback, but with an  
inherent sweetness. He's just got that twinkle in his eye.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Chin up, Randy. I could miss.

RANDY

What do I need money for anyway...

TOM

They don't have beer in Saigon?

Franklin is reaching for his own glass when something catches  
his eye from across the room: Irene. She returns his gaze and  
time seems to slow down...

BACK AT IRENE'S TABLE

Lee is giving up on her night out.

LEE

I guess we should just go then.

IRENE

You already dragged me out here.  
Might as well stay a bit.

LEE

Excuse me?

BACK AT THE POOL TABLE

Franklin lines up his shot. It's an easy one. A no doubter.  
Randy shakes his head. The guys watch in anticipation.

FRANKLIN

I'm gonna miss you, buddy. But at least I'll have twenty five bucks to remember you by.

Franklin pulls back and pops the cue ball over the 8, and off of the table. It rolls away along the floor.

The guys all yell out in surprise. Randy can't believe it. Franklin clearly missed the shot on purpose.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Damn. Good game.

Franklin smiles, puts two bills in Randy's front pocket.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Excuse me, gents.

Franklin follows the ball across the bar to where it finally stopped: at a wary Irene's feet. He crouches to pick it up.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Lucky shot.

IRENE

You hit it this way on purpose.

FRANKLIN

Well sure, but what are the odds you'd be sitting in this seat?

A beat.

IRENE

That's the silliest thing anyone has ever said to me.

FRANKLIN

Southern girl, huh? What are you doing all the way up here?

IRENE

Why should I tell you?

The jukebox switches to a new record. Franklin's choice. It begins with a plaintive, descending guitar strum.

FRANKLIN

Say: you like Elvis Presley songs?

IRENE

Elvis? Isn't he a bit over the hill?

Franklin shakes his head. In the jukebox, the record spins.

ELVIS (MUSIC)  
*Hold me close, hold me tight, make  
me thrill with delight...*

FRANKLIN  
You'll come around.

IRENE  
Is that right?

Franklin stares into Irene's eyes. She stares back.

ELVIS (MUSIC)  
*Let me know where I stand from the  
staaaart. I want you, I need you, I  
loooove you-*

A smile begins to form on Franklin's face. He holds his hand out to her. A dance? Then...

2 INT. KITCHEN - FARNSWORTH, ILLINOIS - PRESENT DAY - NIGHT 2

Fifty years pass in the blink of an eye. Franklin, now 72, stares into a microwave as it hums to life. A bowl adorned with hand-painted bluebells rotates inside.

He wears glasses now, most of his hair lost to time. But the same twinkle is still there.

In the microwave, a fork in the bowl begins to pop with diamonds of ionized plasma. Franklin quickly hits STOP.

FRANKLIN  
Son of a swineherd...

He yanks the bowl out of the microwave. Though half a century older, he still looks strong and vital, if just a bit slower.

His leather jacket has been retired, traded for a worn cotton shirt and jeans. He wears orthopedic shoes for his back.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)  
Sweetheart, I think you have to  
trade me in for a new model.

Franklin looks across the cozy kitchen--

Past the well-worn spoons hanging in a row above the powder blue enameled stove, the stack of embroidered pot holders, the dent in the wall from the Turkey Incident of 1982--



Past it all to his wife, Irene. Now 73, she arranges two place settings at the table, using a cane to steady herself.

Her hair, now streaked with grey, coils like a serpent over her shoulders. She hasn't lost her thoughtful air, but there is something different about it. A preoccupation. A sadness.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I left the darn silverware in again. Should we still eat it?

IRENE

Oh, why not. Let's live dangerously.

He sniffs the food as she takes a seat.

3

INT. YORK HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

3

Sitting across from each other, the Yorks have dinner. Franklin's plate is almost empty. Irene only picks at hers.

FRANKLIN

Everything all right?

IRENE

Oh yeah. Just not very hungry.

FRANKLIN

You need to eat, hon.

He lifts the salt shaker, shakes it repeatedly onto his food.

IRENE

Please don't use so much salt.

FRANKLIN

What? I thought we were living dangerously.

IRENE

You know what the doctor said. And don't say "what?"

FRANKLIN

You know, they told me not to marry an English teacher. But I went and done did it anyways.

IRENE

"Really, must you, over-familiar dense companion, be there always?"

FRANKLIN  
Calvin and Hobbes?

IRENE  
Auden, you dolt.

FRANKLIN  
Hmmm, no I'm pretty sure it was  
Calvin and Hobbes. They were  
building a snowman.

Irene rolls her eyes. He grins at her.

4 INT. YORK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER 4

In a pensive moment, Irene stares out the bay window.  
Franklin appears from the kitchen.

FRANKLIN  
Easy fix. Gasket was coming loose.  
Shouldn't make that noise anymore.

IRENE  
You know we could just get a new  
dishwasher, right?

FRANKLIN  
No need. The one we have is fine.

Irene turns back to the window.

IRENE  
How 'bout we go see the stars  
tonight?

FRANKLIN  
Again? It feels like we just went.

IRENE  
Please?

He can't say no to her. Not really.

5 EXT. YORK HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER 5

The back door of the house opens and Franklin steps into the  
warm Illinois night, the sound of cicadas filling the air.  
Trees surround their large and untamed back yard.

FRANKLIN  
Ready?

Franklin reaches through the door to help his wife back out.

We see that Irene is using a wheelchair.

Franklin begins to push her across the duff-strewn grass.  
Irene holds on to a tote bag in her lap.

IRENE

You're sure you don't mind?

Franklin leans down and kisses the top of her head.

FRANKLIN

I'm fine.

In the distance, sits a darkened shed.

6 INT. SHED - LATER

6

Irene's hand flicks a switch and two lights shine down into a normal-looking shed. A third lightbulb is out.

FRANKLIN

Remind me to replace that, wouldya?

There are tool racks on the walls, metal shelves full of appliances, knick-knacks, gardening equipment.

Franklin clears some equipment from one side of the shed.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

And get gas for the car tomorrow.

Franklin grabs a small metal ring and pulls. A rectangular hatch door heaves open. Steps lead down into the dark.

IRENE

Gas. Lightbulbs.

FRANKLIN

And the ice cream with malt balls.

IRENE

Got it.

He descends a few steps and turns to Irene.

FRANKLIN

Come on now, I got ya...

7 INT. BENEATH THE SHED - CONTINUOUS

7

A long, narrow room. Stone walls. Bare. Dark, a single bulb lighting the space.

The light coming from the trapdoor illuminates Franklin descending the stairs backwards, slowly helping Irene as she carefully takes each step.

His foot slips slightly as he reaches the bottom step, the unexpected motion making him grab at his back in pain.

IRENE

Oh, be careful!

Franklin nods as he wipes his brow, catches his breath.

FRANKLIN

Never get used to how hot it is.

At the bottom of the stairs now, Irene reaches into her tote bag and removes a bottle of water, hands it to Franklin.

IRENE

Here. Rest for a second.

While Franklin catches his breath, Irene reaches the ground and steadies herself on a taut rope running along the wall, just above waist height.

She begins traversing the room, moving towards an open doorway connecting to a dirt-lined tunnel. A wooden sign hangs above, painted in simple lettering: "TO THE STARS..."

FRANKLIN

Hold your horses.

He steps forward extending his arm. She hooks her arm through his, leaning on him as they walk into the tunnel.

A flickering light reveals the far wall, rock and soil suddenly giving way to something else. Some curved surface, metal or mineral, caked in rust. It's clearly not natural.

In the center is a large, aged door with a strange handle.

8

INT. CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

8

The door slides open with a groan, revealing a darkened cylindrical space. Light reflects off of the cold metal walls. The sliding door is the only entrance or exit.

Franklin helps Irene into the unadorned space. Their motions seem practiced, habitual.

Irene hands Franklin a small piece of Tupperware.

FRANKLIN

You don't trust me?

IRENE

Take the bowl.

Irene looks at him expectantly.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Ready to make history?

FRANKLIN

You say that every time.

IRENE

Still applies.

In the center of the Chamber, embedded in the floor, is a circle of metal, the area around it pocked with holes.

In unison, the couple move forward into the circle, and... At first, nothing. But after a moment, the door SLIDES SHUT.

And now a sound- not even a sound: a feeling. A vibration.

The hum gets louder, deeper. The air begins to SHIMMER. Lights dim up from the floor, the walls.

Franklin grimaces.

Everything grows in intensity, it's almost unbearable, and then -- it's gone. Like a balloon filling and bursting. The lights drop back down to a glow, before rising slightly.

Franklin shudders. Then, recovers.

FRANKLIN

See? I don't always...

Suddenly, he leans over and vomits in the Tupperware.

Sheepishly, Franklin seals the lid and puts it on the ground. Irene hands him a stick of chewing gum.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

It's because you talked about it.

IRENE

Yeah, sure.

Franklin pops the stick of gum into his mouth. And then the door OPENS. The door that should lead back to the tunnel. Back to their house. But it doesn't. Not anymore...

9 INT. HALLWAY/OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS 9

A short hallway that tilts subtly upward, the matte walls smooth, almost like porcelain.

Light is coming from the end of the hallway, drawing us towards it along with Franklin and Irene.

They enter an uncanny but serene space. It's partially furnished, a cozy living room set in strange architecture.

But most importantly, at the far wall, the window. A massive pane of thick curved glass that cuts down right into the room.

And through it: the jagged rocky surface of ANOTHER PLANET.

Desolate, blanketed by fields of strange mineral deposits stretching to the horizon. Now look up...

A gaseous planet belted by two rings floats past triplet moons across a vast alien sky. And THE STARS. This isn't our galaxy. And it's magnificent.

Still in awe after all these years, the Yorks grasp hands.

FRANKLIN

I love you, Irene.

IRENE

I love you too, Franklin.

The heavens move.

TITLE CARD - **NIGHT SKY**

10 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - LATER 10

Irene is in one of the chairs, staring intently out the viewing window, a thermos of tea at her side.

Beside her, Franklin sits reading a paperback, some sports biography. He glances up at Irene, then shuts the book.

FRANKLIN

How's it looking out there tonight?  
Anything interesting?

IRENE

It's always interesting to me.

Franklin leans forward.

FRANKLIN

I know it is.

(then)

Hey, you ready to head back soon?  
The game is on.

IRENE

You go back. I'll stay.

FRANKLIN

I'm not gonna leave you here alone.

IRENE

Just a couple more minutes then.

Irene turns back to the window, still entranced. Franklin considers picking up his book, but then:

FRANKLIN

Is something going on with you?

(off her look)

Lately you've been wanting to come  
out here more and more.

IRENE

That's not true.

FRANKLIN

Yeah, it is. Ever since you fell  
last year, actually.

IRENE

It's good to get out of the house.

Franklin looks out at the planetary surface.

FRANKLIN

Out of the house... Most people go  
to dinner and a movie.

IRENE

Most people don't have this.

Franklin knows he should stop.



FRANKLIN

Something's different. I can tell  
you're thinking about it, even when  
we're not here.

Irene is getting annoyed.

IRENE

Now you can read my mind?

FRANKLIN

Well, we've been together for a few  
years, so I'm getting there.

\*  
\*

IRENE

What's your point?

FRANKLIN

I'm just saying, aren't you a  
little tired of this?  
(then)  
Cause I am.

\*

This takes Irene by surprise.

IRENE

Well I'm not. Look...

She gestures at the window.

FRANKLIN

I get that it's a heckuva view.

IRENE

It's more than that.

FRANKLIN

Is it? Eight hundred and fifty six  
trips. You know I keep count. And  
nothing has happened. We sit in  
this room, and look out the window.  
That's all there is, and I'm pretty  
sure all there will ever be.

A beat.

IRENE

What about the door?

Irene looks across the room at another door that clearly  
leads out to the surface of the planet.

FRANKLIN

What about it? The mice didn't make it more than a minute out there.

IRENE

We're not mice.

FRANKLIN

Now you're scaring me. As far as I'm concerned, that door is a one way ticket neither of us is taking.

IRENE

Then I guess we'll just wait.

FRANKLIN

For what? We're not getting any younger. These trips have to take a toll. We can't just keep doing this forever.

\*

\*

Irene stares out the door, and the view. Deep down, she knows he's right.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Maybe we should tell someone else?

(then)

Like Denise.

IRENE

No. This is the last thing Denise needs. It would only scare her.

(then)

There's a reason we were the ones who found it. It was meant for us. It's our riddle to solve...

(then)

Don't take that away from me.

Franklin takes a deep breath. She's won the argument again.

11

EXT. YORK HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER

11

Franklin is struggling to get Irene back across the lawn.

Suddenly, we're observing the two of them from a new perspective, tucked into the trees. We see someone else is there. A MAN, watching Franklin pull Irene into the house.

The Man looks down at a dog waiting patiently at his feet.

BYRON

See that, Roxy? They're at it again.

The dog stares at him unimpressed. The Man turns and leads her back through the woods, towards a neighboring house.

12 INT. YORK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME 12

Shutting the door to the back yard, Franklin sits, spent.

FRANKLIN

At least I'm getting my exercise.

Irene stands up from the chair and grabs hold of a cane positioned by the door. She uses it to get around inside.

IRENE

Would you like to ride the tram upstairs? My treat.

She gestures to a stair lift behind her.

FRANKLIN

No, you go ahead. I might put the end of the game on. Besides, I think I'm gonna sleep downstairs tonight. Back is acting up.

IRENE

You should really try the yoga...

FRANKLIN

I'm fine. A night on the other mattress'll fix me right up. Happy dreams, hon'.

He grabs the remote. She hesitates, but walks to the stairs.

13 INT. YORK HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS 13

Irene sits on the stair lift as it slowly climbs.

14 INT. YORK HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - LATER 14

Irene sits on the side of the bed, a sleeping gown spread out on the counterpane. She undoes the button on her pants and begins the process of shimmying out of them.

She struggles, eventually falling back on the bed in frustration. She kicks off her shoes and leaves it at that.

15 INT. YORK HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT 15

Dark now except for the glow of the television -- set to anything, really. Irene lays there. Awake. Can't sleep.

16 INT. YORK HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - SAME TIME 16

Franklin lies in the bed downstairs. He stares at something, a hint of melancholy in his eyes.

At the foot of the bed, something is carved into the bedframe. Initials-- a remnant of when this room was their deceased son, Michael's.

17 INT. YORK HOUSE - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING 17

The Yorks sit at the table, with two glasses of water. Each has a plastic pill planner in front of them. All different colors, sizes. They each take pills with small sips of water.

IRENE

What are you going to do while I'm at the doctor later?

FRANKLIN

I got some errands to run.

IRENE

Why don't you do something fun? When was the last time you went to see Randy?

FRANKLIN

You want me to go to the poolhall on a weekday afternoon? Not sure I'm built for that anymore. I fall asleep after one beer.

Irene looks disappointed. Franklin holds up a large pill.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Trade ya?

IRENE

I've got enough of my own, thanks.

18 EXT. YORK HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER 18

The Yorks' car, an early 90s Jeep Wagoneer, rolls down their driveway, away from the house. Partway down, Franklin notices something about the grass flanking the drive.

FRANKLIN (PRE-LAP)

Is this grass cut?

19 INT./EXT. YORKS' CAR/YORK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

19

Franklin is driving, clearly annoyed.

FRANKLIN

God dangit. Where is he?

They see a man operating a small John Deere mower near the base of their driveway. It's the same man who was watching the Yorks the night before.

This is BYRON ALBEMARLE (30s). A gregarious but odd busybody who moved in next door to the Yorks six months ago.

Franklin slows to a stop, HONKS. Byron turns, noticing them. He hops off the mower and waves, coming over.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Unbelievable.

IRENE  
He's just trying to be helpful,  
Franklin.

Irene rolls down the passenger window as Byron arrives.

BYRON  
Hey, you two. Had the mower out.  
Figured I'd give your side a little  
trim. Hope you don't mind.

IRENE  
Thank you for taking the time,  
Byron. You really didn't have to.

BYRON  
Don't mention it. I'm a simple man:  
I see grass, I mow it.

FRANKLIN  
You see a property line, you  
trespass it.

Byron cracks up, putting his hands in the air.

BYRON  
I'm innocent, I swear. Hey, you  
ever want to borrow this bad boy  
you just let me know. We can do a  
tool swap. I sure could use your  
planer if it's available.

FRANKLIN  
Planer's broken.

BYRON  
Maybe when it's back in action?

Franklin pops a thumbs up out the window. His face says  
otherwise. Byron waves at them as they drive off, smiling.  
After a moment, his facial expression drops.

20 OMITTED 20

21 INT. ALBEMARLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - SOON AFTER 21

Byron enters his house. His wife JEANINE (late 30s), grounded  
but acerbic first generation Asian-American, is at the table  
on her phone, his dog on the floor nearby.

JEANINE

Lunch is in the fridge. It's half a salad, so don't get too excited. Well, it does have bacon.

(then)

I'm texting with this woman I met at the gym last week. There's a bowling league here we can join. What do you think? Time for the Banana Splitters to ride again?

BYRON

That Franklin York is a liar.

Jeanine is slightly annoyed but unsurprised.

JEANINE

Hon, please... Not this again.

BYRON

He said his planer was broken, but I saw fresh planed wood by his workshop.

JEANINE

What is your obsession? He's just an old guy who doesn't like other people using his tools.

BYRON

I know you're going to laugh but... I think they're hiding something in that shed.

(off her stare)

Why else would they be wandering out there all hours of the night?

JEANINE

Look, I found the granddaughter on Facebook and sent her a message telling her what you saw. It's their problem, not ours.

(then)

We've only been here six months... Leave them be. For my sake. You don't have the best history with neighbors, and I'd like to keep getting invited to things.

That stung him. Some old wound.

BYRON

Did you want the Wilpons' tree to fall on our house?

Jeanine doesn't answer, goes back to her phone.

22 EXT. ROAD - LATER

22

The Yorks' car moves along the wooded back roads of Farnsworth, IL. Population 6,281. A private, humble place.

The Yorks are going slowly. Very slowly. An SUV behind them honks a few times, then passes.

IRENE (PRE-LAP)

Can't you speed up a bit? We're not exactly made of time.

23 INT. YORKS' CAR - CONTINUOUS

23

FRANKLIN

Thirty's my pedal to the metal.

The radio is on to an oldies station.

IRENE

You could be nicer to him.

FRANKLIN

Who? Byron? No, thanks.

IRENE

Maybe if you gave him a chance you'd be friends.

FRANKLIN

Guy gives me the willies. Told me he lets his dog sleep in his bed.

IRENE

He loves animals.

FRANKLIN

It's his marriage bed!

IRENE

You're so stubborn.

FRANKLIN

Alright. What's wrong? You're asking me to make friends with Byron. Trying to set me up on chess dates.

(MORE)



FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Telling me to go to the pool hall.

IRENE

I just think it could be nice for you to get out and about, be social. It keeps you sharp.

FRANKLIN

I don't want to see other people.

IRENE

Well, I don't want to feel like all you do is take care of me.

They drive in silence.

24

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - FARNSWORTH, ILLINOIS - DAY

24

Franklin helps Irene out of the car and into her wheelchair. They're parked at the edge of the charming town square.

FRANKLIN

You remember Denise's birthday is coming up, right?

IRENE

It's not for three weeks.

FRANKLIN

Maybe I'll stop somewhere when I'm doing my errands. I wanna get her something good this year.

IRENE

Get her a card. We can write her a nice check.

Franklin makes a face, indicating disappointment.

IRENE (CONT'D)

A woman her age doesn't want a silly gift her grandparents pick.

FRANKLIN

Maybe I'll carve her something.

They continue along a sidewalk that leads off of the square.

25

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION - DAY

25

Franklin and Irene sit in the waiting room of Dr. Mareese's family practice. There is a wall of photographs showing Dr. Mareese (40s) smiling with her patients, mostly older folks.

A younger SECRETARY (20s) plays around on her cellphone. Irene fills out a medical questionnaire while Franklin does the crossword puzzle in an entertainment magazine.

FRANKLIN

Didn't you have an appointment?

IRENE

Be patient.

Irene is writing down a lot.

FRANKLIN

Yours seems harder than mine.

Franklin leans over to and look, but Irene turns it away. The exam room door opens and DR. MAREESE emerges.

DR. MAREESE

Hey there. Sorry for the delay.  
Irene, you can come back now.

Franklin stands to push her, but Irene waves him off.

IRENE

I can do it.

DR. MAREESE

We've got a few scans and tests to do this afternoon. All routine. But it might take a little bit.

IRENE

(to Franklin)

I'll call you when we're finished.

DR. MAREESE

How's the back, Mr. York?

FRANKLIN

Good days, bad days. Can't complain.

DR. MAREESE

Well, this is a doctor's office.  
Complaining is encouraged.

IRENE

Don't forget the ice cream.

FRANKLIN

Yes, ma'am.

Irene wheels into the exam room. Franklin pauses at the front desk. The Secretary is deeply focused on her phone.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Got something good on there?

SECRETARY

Sorry, what?

FRANKLIN

You should try looking up once in a while. You'd be surprised how interesting the real world is.

SECRETARY

Got it. Thanks.

FRANKLIN

Have a nice day!

Franklin heads to the exit.

26

INT. GROCERY STORE - ILLINOIS - LATER

26

Franklin pushes a shopping cart loaded with five pints of Malted Milk Ball Ice Cream. A YOUNG BOY in a toy knight helmet waves around a plastic sword and accidentally knocks a couple of cereal boxes to the floor.

FRANKLIN

Hey, you gonna pick those up?

The boy just stares at him.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You're a knight, aren't you? Well, a knight would pick 'em up. Chivalry and all that.

The boy looks in Franklin's shopping cart.

YOUNG BOY

Why do you have so much ice cream?

FRANKLIN

Because I like it. And I'm old so I can buy as much as I please. I can have it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner if I want to.

The boy seems intrigued by this.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Tell you what: if you put those boxes back, I'll give you a reward. Sound good?

The boy nods. Franklin helps him put the boxes back on the shelf. Then, Franklin fishes around in his coat pocket and removes a small plastic figurine. An astronaut.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Here you go. It's a spaceman. Much cooler than a knight.

Franklin smiles. The boy's MOTHER steps into the aisle.

MOTHER

Derek! What are you doing?

The boy turns to talk to his mother.

YOUNG BOY

He eats ice cream for breakfast.

MOTHER

Come here right now!

The boy toddles over to her. She scowls at Franklin.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

We don't talk to strangers. What is that? Did he give you something? Give me that-

They stray out of earshot. Franklin continues on his way.

27

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

27

A concerned Dr. Mareese looks over Irene's chart.

DR. MAREESE

You haven't come to see me in months. I assumed that was because you were improving.

IRENE

Am I not?

DR. MAREESE

I see you're still using the chair.

IRENE

Only when I leave the house. I just try to be extra cautious.

DR. MAREESE

And how often are you leaving the house? Are you eating? Exercising? Did you finish your appointments with the physical therapist?

IRENE

Is this some sort of inquisition?

Dr. Mareese puts down Irene's chart.

DR. MAREESE

Look we've known each other what? Ten years?

IRENE

At least.

DR. MAREESE

So I won't sugarcoat this. I know you'd hate that. I'm concerned. You shouldn't be in this condition at seventy-three, even after the fall.

IRENE

You're making it sound worse than it is. I'm fine, Sandra.

DR. MAREESE

I'm sorry, but you're not fine. I think you know that. What we need to do now is hone in on potential causes. Is there anything in your life that could be contributing to these symptoms?

Irene thinks about her and Franklin's trips to the Stars.

IRENE

No. Nothing I can think of.

DR. MAREESE

Irene, some of the things you're experiencing are often made worse by depression...

IRENE

I'm not depressed.

An awkward moment.

DR. MAREESE

Well I want to run more tests.

As she continues, Irene stares into the middle distance, Dr. Mareese's words becoming an inaudible wash of sound.

DR. MAREESE (CONT'D)

We should up the Benazepril for  
your blood pressure. Levothyroxine  
as well...

A28 INT. THE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

A28

Suddenly, we're in the Chamber, empty now. The soft light coming from the ceiling throbs gently, almost sinister. It feels like the machine is alive. A being unto itself.

The humming sound begins, growing louder, and then--

B28 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

B28

Something Dr. Mareese says snaps Irene back to reality:

DR. MAREESE

Have you considered in-home care?

IRENE

Franklin can take care of me.

DR. MAREESE

Irene... I'm not sure he's up for  
that. Not anymore.

(then)

This is your health. Your life. I  
don't want you to end up bedridden.  
Or worse. But you have to fight to  
regain your strength. It's going to  
take effort. You have to want it.

Irene considers Dr. Mareese's words.

28

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATER

28

Franklin is checking out-- ice cream, light bulbs, cling peaches, Raisin Bran, a bag of onions.

CLERK

Do you have a Rewards Card?

FRANKLIN

Yes, somewhere in here-

A SOUND from Franklin's jacket. His phone ringing.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

One second.

He pulls a cellphone from his pocket. "DENISE" is calling.

FRANKLIN (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Hey, Denise! I'm out at the store,  
can I give you a call back?

DENISE (O.S.)

Hey, Grandpa. Guess what? I'm  
coming to town! I'm driving in  
right now.

FRANKLIN

Right now?

Franklin's phone starts to beep in his ear. It's another call, from Irene, but Franklin doesn't notice.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Denise, stop making my phone beep.

DENISE (O.S.)

Beep? What are you talking about?

The people in the line behind Franklin are getting impatient.

MAN IN LINE

Maybe let someone else go, eh pop?



Franklin is getting very flustered.

DENISE (O.S.)  
Meet me at Jelinek's, OK?

She hangs up. Franklin turns his phone off, frustrated.

FRANKLIN  
Dang thing.

CLERK  
Finished?

FRANKLIN  
Let me just find my Rewards Card-

The man behind him groans.

29 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS 29

Irene listens as Franklin's cellphone goes to voicemail.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)  
*Hi, this is Franklin. I'm not-*

Irene hangs up. She looks up to a concerned Dr. Mareese.

IRENE  
I'm sure he'll be here soon.

DR. MAREESE  
OK. Irene? Please don't disappear again. You can't ignore this.

IRENE  
I understand.

Irene forces a small smile.

30 EXT. JELINEK'S CAFÉ - AFTERNOON 30

A small family-owned diner that's been around a long time.

31 INT. JELINEK'S CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS 31

Franklin enters and soon notices his granddaughter, DENISE (24), at a table on her phone. Young, dressed in professional attire, and biracial -- Denise stands out in Farnsworth. She notices Franklin.

DENISE

Grandpa.

FRANKLIN

Hi, Princess.

She stands to hug him warmly.

DENISE

Where's Nana?

FRANKLIN

She's at the doctor's.  
(before Denise can react)  
Don't worry, just a checkup.

DENISE

You're sure? She looked so frail  
last time I saw her...

FRANKLIN

She's fine. You know your Nana.  
Now: how about a piece of cake?

He nods to the waitress, gesturing at a cake on the counter.

32

INT. JELINEK'S CAFÉ - LATER

32

Franklin and Denise sit at the table, a tall piece of half-eaten cake between them. Denise just picks at her side. She's preoccupied.

FRANKLIN

You're one of them now, huh?

DENISE

What?

FRANKLIN

You've stopped eating gluten. I  
heard it was trendy.

DENISE

I eat gluten.

She takes a big bite of the cake.

FRANKLIN

Atta girl. The cake always wins.  
Hey, how's your mom doing?

DENISE

Oh, good. She and Trevor just had their ten-year wedding anniversary.

FRANKLIN

Ten years?

DENISE

I know. You should see the kids. Brandon is like five feet tall now.

FRANKLIN

And how are you? How's school going? They're treating you okay?

DENISE

School is great. Internship is great. And my succulent plant hasn't died yet. That's about all that I have time for.

FRANKLIN

An MBA. I don't know how you do it. I barely got through high school.

DENISE

It's simple. I just keep swimming.

FRANKLIN

No shame in taking a break every once in a while. They put walls in pools for a reason.

DENISE

Only you would say that...

An awkward silence. Denise goes back to the cake.

FRANKLIN

So?

DENISE

What?

FRANKLIN

Are you gonna tell me what's bothering you so much it's got you crumpling up that napkin?

DENISE

Promise you won't be mad.

FRANKLIN

What's wrong? Are you okay?

DENISE

I'm fine. It's about you and Nana.

He gives her a wary look.

DENISE (CONT'D)

I was planning on waiting a little bit longer to do this, but I got a message this morning-

FRANKLIN

What do you mean you got a message?

DENISE

One of your neighbors found me on Facebook and said that-

FRANKLIN

Facebook? Was it Dennings? Jim Dennings has Facebook?

DENISE

It doesn't matter who. What matters is, they were walking their dog. And they saw you pushing Nana around in the middle of the night.

FRANKLIN

Oh that! You know how much she loves the night air. That's what you're worried about?

DENISE

Yeah. I am.

(hesitant)

And I think you two should consider moving out of the house.

FRANKLIN

Because we went on a walk?

DENISE

Not just that. I've been thinking about this since Nana fell.

FRANKLIN

Last year? That was nothing!

DENISE

She could have died. And she's still using that wheelchair. And what about the expired food I'm always finding in your fridge? And your car accident-

FRANKLIN

It was a fender bender. It wasn't even my fault. They were texting!

DENISE

I know how long you've been in that house. But it doesn't make sense for people your age. The stairs, the driving. Why take those risks? I've been doing some research...

Denise reaches in her bag and pulls out some papers and brochures. She hands them to Franklin. Each shows smiling seniors, engaged in various activities.

DENISE (CONT'D)

These are all places in Chicago. They're not nursing homes. They're like nice condos, just with a little extra help. I could see you a lot more. And guess what? They all have openings!

FRANKLIN

Denise... Those aren't real old people. They're actors. Real old people aren't that happy.

DENISE

Some of them are!

Franklin hands her back the brochures.

DENISE (CONT'D)

I know there are a lot of memories. But couldn't it be nice to let go of them? Have a fresh start?

Franklin genuinely lets this sink in. And in a way, he seems tempted. Maybe they could use a fresh start.

But then he remembers what's hidden in the back yard. And more importantly, the promise he made to Irene: "have faith."

FRANKLIN

Princess, I know this may be hard for you to understand, but we're sticking where we are. If that means I die climbing the stairs, or trimming the roses, or pushing Irene across the lawn in the night, well, so be it.

DENISE

But it doesn't make sense-

FRANKLIN

I said no.

Another uncomfortable silence.

DENISE

Right. Of course. I'm sorry.

FRANKLIN

There's nothing to be sorry about. I love you. We love you.

Denise gives him a weak smile. This didn't go as planned.

33

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION - LATER

33

Still waiting, Irene stares across the street at a building: The Golden Bough Nursing Home. Some elderly residents sit on a patio, talking, playing cards.

Irene turns to the Secretary.

IRENE

Excuse me?

The Secretary jumps, nearly dropping her phone.

SECRETARY

Jesus! I forgot you were here.

IRENE

If my husband arrives, can you let him know I went across the street? I'm going to visit an old friend.

34

INT. GOLDEN BOUGH NURSING HOME - LOBBY/HALL - AFTERNOON

34

Irene wheels herself through the lobby of the Golden Bough. Residents and employees mill about. Old music on the PA.

No one notices Irene until a NURSE grabs her chair from behind and starts wheeling her down a hallway.

NURSE

Mrs. Boyle, how did you get out here?

IRENE

What are you doing?

NURSE

Let's get you back to your room.  
You don't want to miss "Wheel of  
Fortune."

Irene is flummoxed. Another employee grabs the Nurse. This is CHANDRA NEWBURY (40s), overworked, tightly wound.

CHANDRA

Hey!

NURSE

What? I'm just taking Mrs-

Chandra points down at Irene, drawing the Nurse's eye.

NURSE (CONT'D)

You're not Mrs. Boyle!

CHANDRA

This is Irene York. As far as I  
know she doesn't live here.

NURSE

I'm so sorry, I-

IRENE

It's fine.

CHANDRA

Try to pay more attention, Nell.

The Nurse scuttles off. Chandra watches her go.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

(quietly to Irene)  
And yet, she gets the good shifts.

IRENE

Thanks. Sorry, but, do I know you?

CHANDRA

The Bronte sisters.

IRENE

What's that, now?



CHANDRA

It's Chandra. I was one of your students. I wrote my final paper about the Bronte sisters? You said it was one of the best you'd...

As she trails off, a wave of recognition passes over Irene.

IRENE

Chandra, yes. Right. I remember. The Brontes...

CHANDRA

I was obsessed. In college I once introduced myself as Chandra Bronte. Never did publish anything, but I am miserable, so I got that part right.

An awkward pause.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. That was just a joke.

Chandra changes the subject.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

Are you thinking about moving in?

IRENE

Oh, no. I was actually hoping to visit a friend. Sadie Norton.

CHANDRA

Of course... Did you know George?

IRENE

Only a bit. I did see the obituary in the paper, though.

CHANDRA

I'll take you to her room. May I?

Chandra starts to push Irene down the hallway.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

They were really in love those two. But he was pretty gone by the end. He didn't even recognize her. After sixty years, just like that.

(then)

So how are you doing, Mrs. York? Are you still teaching?

IRENE

Oh no. I retired quite a while ago.

CHANDRA

And you stayed in Farnsworth? I would be out of here so fast. Somewhere warm. Ever get back to school?

IRENE

I don't. Not in many years.

CHANDRA

That's a shame. You were a really important teacher for me. British Lit, room 107. I loved that class.

IRENE

That's very nice of you to say.

CHANDRA

I even majored in English. Thought I would be a teacher too. Just like you. Didn't work out. Seems a little unfair, right? I mean it's not like I wanted to be president or anything. No offense.

IRENE

I'm sorry to hear that.

CHANDRA

Eh, I've learned to lower my expectations. That way I get disappointed less.

IRENE

But this is a good job. You're helping people.

As they wheel past a door, an OLD MAN calls out.

OLD MAN

Nurse!

CHANDRA

I'll be right there, Roy.

(then)

This job... it's tough. I know you've still got it together, but the truth is most of the people in here don't know what they want. Or need. And they don't appreciate what you do for them.

Chandra realizes she might have gone a bit too far.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)  
Look at me, blabbering again.  
Well, this is Sadie's room.

Chandra stops by a door. Irene clearly wants to go in alone, but Chandra isn't taking the hint.

IRENE  
I don't want to take up more of your  
time. I'm sure you have work to do.

CHANDRA  
Right. Of course. It was nice to  
see you again, Mrs. York. And who  
knows: maybe you'll move in here  
some day. There's always new spaces  
opening up.

Chandra strides off down the hall, feeling spurned.

35

INT. GOLDEN BOUGH NURSING HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

35

Irene opens a door to a small room. One hospital-style bed, made to look as cozy as possible by pillows, stuffed animals. A second bed, empty and perfectly made, is positioned nearby.

SADIE NORTON (80s) lies in the bed staring into space.

SADIE  
Are you here to fix the window?

Irene wheels closer to the bed.

IRENE  
Sadie it's me, Irene. Irene York.

SADIE  
Irene. Is that really you?

IRENE  
It's been a long time.

Irene puts her hand over Sadie's.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Are you doing okay here?

SADIE  
I have my friend.

Sadie picks up a small stuffed toucan, then puts it down.

SADIE (CONT'D)

Did I tell you that I used to own a bridal shop? I would sew all the veils. Look, you can see where I pricked myself with the needle.

Sadie shows Irene her hands.

IRENE

I know, The Lovely Bride. I worked there one summer, remember? Irene.

SADIE

Oh yes, Irene, is that really you?

IRENE

Yes!

SADIE

Ah. You had that incredible hair. You used to tie all of that ribbon in it. I was so jealous of that.

IRENE

You made me pay for the ribbon.

SADIE

It was a lot of ribbon!

(then)

Are you here to fix the window?

IRENE

No, no. I wanted to see you. I was very sorry to hear about George. I wanted to see how you were doing. Now that you're alone. I thought you could use a visit from a friend.

SADIE

Oh, we weren't friends.

IRENE

Yes, yes, I'm Irene, I worked at-

SADIE

I know who you are, Irene. We were never friends. You were not a very good employee. Always taking those long lunch breaks with your husband.

Sadie laughs.

SADIE (CONT'D)

You thought you were very smart.  
But really, you were quite silly.

Irene is taken aback, and they sit in silence.

SADIE (CONT'D)

Have I told you that I used to own  
a bridal shop?

Irene's demeanor shifts.

IRENE

Sadie, I have something to tell  
you. And you're very lucky because  
it's something I've never told  
anyone before in my whole life.

Irene leans in close. Quiet.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I've been somewhere. Somewhere far  
from here, very far. From Earth.  
Another galaxy, maybe another  
universe. Farther than any human has  
ever gone by lightyears. I've  
seen... miraculous things. Things  
that would bring you to your knees.  
I am the envy of Galileo, Da Vinci,  
Newton. Of anyone who has looked up  
at the sky and wondered. I'm  
special, Sadie. The most special  
person you've ever met in your life.

Irene's facade begins to crack.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I thought I knew what I was doing.  
But now I'm sick. And I'm scared.  
And I'm not so sure anymore...

Sadie reaches out and touches Irene's cheek.

SADIE

Are you here to fix the window?

Irene begins to cry softly.

37 INT. YORK HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 37

Franklin enters the kitchen, hands full with groceries. He plops the bags down, one now leaking ice cream.

FRANKLIN

Hey sweetheart! I'm home!

He starts to unload the groceries.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Irene?

He stops suddenly. The realization punches him in the gut.

38 EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EVENING 38

The headlights of the Yorks' car pass over Irene where she sits waiting in the twilight outside the doctor's office.

39 INT/EXT. YORKS' CAR/ROAD - SOON AFTER 39

The Yorks drive back towards home. Irene breaks the silence.

IRENE

Are we gonna talk about it?

FRANKLIN

I can take care of myself.

Irene remembers what Dr. Mareese said.

IRENE

But it's not just yourself. You have to take care of me too. And that's not fair.

FRANKLIN

You're twisting it around like it's a burden. You sound like Denise.

IRENE

Denise?

FRANKLIN

Yeah. I saw her today. That's why I was so damn distracted. She thinks we're getting senile or something. She wants us to move.

Irene processes this. Thinks about the nursing home. Sadie.

IRENE

Do you want to?

FRANKLIN

Want to what?

IRENE

Move.

Franklin looks at her, confused.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You said it yourself last night. We  
can't keep doing this forever.

Just then, the engine begins to sputter, and the car slows.  
Franklin pulls to the side of the road, ashamed.

FRANKLIN

I forgot to get gas.

40 EXT. ROAD - ILLINOIS - LATER 40

A TRIPLE-A MAN feeds gas into the Yorks' tank with an orange  
can. He makes small talk with Franklin, the two of them lit  
by the Jeep's flashing hazard lights.

41 INT. YORKS' CAR - CONTINUOUS 41

Irene listens to their muffled conversation.

AAA MAN

Gotta pay attention to these  
things. Especially at your age.

FRANKLIN

I know. Won't happen again.

(then)

You don't have to report this to  
anyone or anything, right?

Irene looks up at the night sky and speaks softly to herself.

IRENE

What do you want from me?

A42 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS A42

As before, in the Doctor's office, suddenly we are  
transported now to the Observation Room.

The window looms hugely in the center, drawing us towards it. There is a deeply uneasy quality about the space right now.

On the surface of the planet, a powerful wind blows, sending dust skittering across the glass.

Tiny particles of sand pound mercilessly at the glass, in a foreboding way. The sound of wind builds as--

B42

INT. YORK CAR - CONTINUOUS

B42

Franklin gets back into the driver's seat. Irene shakes herself out of her reverie. Franklin starts the car.



42 INT. ALBEMARLE HOUSE - HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

42

Jeanine sits at a desk, with a phone headset on and a computer in front of her.

JEANINE  
(into headset)  
OK, Mr. Nichols, we have you all  
booked, traveling August 13th from  
Knoxville to Dallas, seat 11B.  
Aisle seat, like you wanted.  
Anything else I can help with?

The door opens and Byron walks in, holding his laptop. He tries to get her attention, but she holds her hand up.

JEANINE (CONT'D)  
(into headset)  
That's very nice of you, sir. If  
you'd be willing to complete a  
survey after the-

She stops talking. She hears a click.

JEANINE (CONT'D)  
Son of a bitch.

BYRON  
They always hang up.

JEANINE  
Not always.

BYRON  
I don't like it. You help them and  
they won't even do a little survey.

JEANINE  
It's okay. I wouldn't want to do  
the survey either.

BYRON  
You almost done? I have something  
to show you.

JEANINE  
I want to do a few more calls.

BYRON  
I'll be quick. How does this look?

He shows her the screen. It's the design for a sign:  
"ALBEMARLE FOR TOWN COUNCIL". The name looks especially  
unwieldy cramped in such a small space.

JEANINE

We've been married seven years and I still have trouble saying Albemarle. How about just "Byron?"

BYRON

Huh. "Byron for Town Council." I like it. Plain and simple. You always have the best ideas.

There's something on Jeanine's mind.

JEANINE

Do you really need signs?

BYRON

If I want to win, I got to get my name out there.

JEANINE

But... why not next year? Once we're a little more settled.

BYRON

Look, I never could've done this back in Champaign. People didn't see me that way. Here, I can be...

He shows her the sign again.

BYRON (CONT'D)

Councilman. And you can be Mrs. Councilman. Sounds nice, right?

Jeanine thinks, then points to her headset.

JEANINE

I have another call.

43

EXT. ALBEMARLE HOUSE - SOON AFTER

43

Byron, hands stuffed in his pockets, walks through the woods behind his house, watching the dog run around nearby.

Soon, it becomes clear where he's going. The edge of the Yorks' property. Through the trees, he stares at the shed. Byron lets out a light whistle. The dog comes to him.

BYRON

Stay here.

Carefully, Byron makes his way towards the shed, staying in the shadows. He's just going to take a peek. *What's the harm?*

44 INT. SHED - NIGHT

44

The door creeps open. Byron steps warily into the darkened space. He turns on his cell phone light and scans the room.

But there's nothing suspicious. Just a shed.

Until... the light catches a small metal ash can with a lid.

Byron lifts the lid to see it's filled with dead lightbulbs.

BYRON

What the...?

Just then, Byron's phone BUZZES loudly. He promptly DROPS it into the can, shattering several bulbs loudly.

BYRON (CONT'D)

Shit...

Byron fishes around to retrieve his phone, shaking shards of glass off his hand. The text is from Jeanine:

*"Should I wait for you??? Jeopardy starting [Thinking Emoji]"*

Byron stares at it, then puts the lid back on the can, feeling guilty now. He puts his phone away and exits.

45 INT. YORK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

45

Franklin sits at the table. He has a small glass of whiskey in front of him. He looks humiliated, angry.

Irene is in the kitchen, putting away the groceries.

IRENE

Franklin, just forget it.

He tilts the glass from side to side.

FRANKLIN

You asked me in the car if I want to move. Honestly? I thought about it.

Irene stops what she's doing.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

It's the stars. I know how much they helped us. But at the same time... they scare me.

(MORE)

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You think there's a reason we found it, but sometimes when I'm looking at that sky... So I'd be lying if I said I didn't think about it.

Irene enters the Dining Room.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

But the answer is no. Not because it'd be too hard or cost too much. Not because we'd be leaving behind memories. Not because we have a... a machine in our back yard that takes us god knows where.

(then)

It's because I know that you don't want to. That you can't. So I don't want to, either.

IRENE

Thank you.

(then)

I went to see Sadie Norton today... George passed away.

FRANKLIN

Really? But he was always exercising. Jogging. Biking. Swimming. Goes to show you...

IRENE

Franklin, we need to talk.

Instinctively, Franklin stands, turns to the Living Room.

FRANKLIN

Can't it wait? It's been a long day.

He walks away slowly, trying to escape the conversation. She follows close behind him.

IRENE

I don't think it can, no.

(pause)

What would you do if I died?

He turns back to her.

FRANKLIN

What did the doctor say?

IRENE

This isn't about the doctor. It's about you and me. What would you do?

FRANKLIN

I'd die too.

IRENE

Don't say that. It's unacceptable.

FRANKLIN

I don't care what's acceptable.

IRENE

I want you to make me a promise. If I go first, I want you to sell the house. Move on. Maybe let someone else give it a go.

He's silent for a long time.

FRANKLIN

But our secret.

IRENE

It'll have been our secret long enough, don't you think?

He looks into Irene's eyes. He wants to say no, but he can see how much she needs this. He sits back down, overcome.

FRANKLIN

OK, I promise.

A great weight lifts from Irene. A new sense of clarity falls over her, of gratitude, and understanding. It is as if she finally knows what to do. Franklin looks up at her.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

What's a good age?

IRENE

A good age for what?

FRANKLIN

To live to. A hundred? I'd be happy with that. Who wouldn't?

She gives him a look. He knows it's a fantasy, but he doesn't care. So she lets him continue.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)  
Promise me you won't even *think*  
*about* dying until we're a hundred.  
Because I want those years.

He smiles at her pleadingly.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)  
Come on. Just promise.

An impossible request. But he just wants to hear it anyway.  
She smiles tenderly. Then, picks up his whiskey glass.

IRENE  
I promise.

She downs the whole thing.

46 INT. YORK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

46

A peal of laughter from Irene.

FRANKLIN  
What? You asked me to!

Irene is reclining on the couch. Her legs extend into  
Franklin's lap, who sits in Irene's chair rubbing her feet.

IRENE  
It does feel good. But it tickles.

The bottle of whiskey sits on the coffee table, emptier.

FRANKLIN  
You could really use a pedicure.

IRENE  
How dare you!

FRANKLIN  
I'm kidding. I love your feet.

He kisses her toe.

IRENE  
You're disgusting.

Irene covers her eyes, lost in a happy thought.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Do you remember how much Michael hated cutting his toenails when he was little? When he saw the clippers he would run and hide in the pantry. It was so cute.

Franklin smiles with melancholy at the memory.

FRANKLIN

I like hearing you talk about him.

They share a look, recalling their time as young parents. Not wanting to let the mood turn mournful, Franklin pivots.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Hey. Let's try something.

47 INT. YORK HOUSE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

47

Giggling like school-kids, Irene sits on Franklin's lap as they ride the stair lift together.

IRENE

Is this going to work?

FRANKLIN

You're the one always asking me to ride it.

IRENE

Not with me!

FRANKLIN

Just hit the button already.

Irene hits UP and the lift begins to strain up the stairs.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

It's a miracle!

Irene and Franklin laugh. But halfway up it grinds to a halt from the excess weight.

IRENE

Uh-oh.

They lock eyes. Irene begins to laugh.

48 INT. YORK HOUSE - STAIRCASE - SOON AFTER

48

Franklin stands below Irene on the stairs.

FRANKLIN

Come on, I got you. I got you.

She climbs gingerly into his arms.

49 INT. YORK HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SOON AFTER 49

Franklin carries Irene across the threshold and into their room. She's nuzzled into his neck.

50 INT. YORK HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT 50

Irene lays on her back in bed, Franklin cradled around her.

FRANKLIN

Do you hear that?

IRENE

What?

FRANKLIN

They're playing our song.

Franklin begins to sing softly, slowly.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

*Hold me close, hold me tight. Make  
me thrill with delight, let me know  
where I stand from the start. I  
want you, I need you, I love you:  
with all my hea-ea-rt.*

IRENE

Stop.

He slows as he falls closer to sleep.

FRANKLIN

*Every time that you're near, all my  
cares disappear, darling you're all  
that I'm living for. I want you, I  
need you...*

He stops. Fading. Irene is wide awake. She looks around her, then down at her sleeping husband.

This is a good moment. For Irene, it's the perfect moment.

Irene leans over and gently kisses Franklin's forehead. She picks up his arm, moving it off of her.



A51 INT. YORK HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT A51

Irene slips quietly into the hall.

Soon after, we see her making her way slowly down the stairs, leaning on the bannister, taking each step carefully.

B51 INT. YORK HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT B51

Using her cane, Irene moves silently around the first floor of the house, tidying up. She picks up the empty glasses in the LIVING ROOM. Fluffs some pillows. Washes a plate.

C51 INT. YORK HOUSE - NIGHT C51

The house cleaned, Irene now peers into various rooms. The last one being the GUEST ROOM, Michael's room. She places her hand lightly on the doorframe.

D51 INT. YORK HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT D51

Irene now at the desk, a piece of stationery in front of her.

IRENE (V.O.)

Dear Franklin.

She picks up a pen and begins to write.

IRENE (V.O.)

Let me first say I'm sorry.

51 INT. YORK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 51

Irene moves towards the back door.

IRENE (V.O.)

I'm not doing this to hurt you. You know I would never. It's only that-

She leaves her cane there. She won't need it anymore.

IRENE

I'm finished waiting. I've waited long enough. I'm ready. I know what's probably on the other side of that door, but I have to see for myself. To make my own choice while I still can. And I was running out of time.

She grabs the door handle.

52 EXT. YORK HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT 52

With great difficulty, Irene moves across the lawn.

IRENE (V.O.)

Like so many times my own words  
have failed me in life, I turn  
again to Auden.

The shed looms in the distance.

IRENE (V.O.)

"Looking up at the stars, I know  
quite well/That, for all they care,  
I can go to hell,/"

She's getting closer.

53 INT. SHED - NIGHT 53

Exhausted, Irene shuts the door to the shed behind her.

IRENE (V.O.)

"But on earth indifference is the  
least/we have to dread from man or  
beast."

She begins to push the equipment away.

IRENE (V.O.)

"How should we like it were stars  
to burn/With a passion for us we  
could not return?/If equal  
affection cannot be,/ Let the more  
loving one be me."

She positions herself to open the trapdoor.

54 INT. BENEATH THE SHED - SOON AFTER 54

From the trapdoor, a flickering glow shines into the tunnel.

IRENE (V.O.)

"Admirer as I think I am/Of stars  
that do not give a damn,/"

Irene begins to come down into the tunnel, sitting, sliding  
down step by step, holding the lantern.

55 INT. BENEATH THE SHED - SOON AFTER 55

Irene is almost at the metal door leading to the Chamber, leaning heavily on the railing to steady herself.

IRENE (V.O.)  
"I cannot, now I see them, say/I  
missed one terribly all day.

She yanks the door open.

56 INT. CHAMBER - SOON AFTER 56

Irene positions herself over the center of the Chamber.

IRENE (V.O.)  
"Were all stars to disappear or  
die,/I should learn to look at an  
empty sky/And feel its total dark  
sublime.. "

The humming begins.

57 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SOON AFTER 57

Growing exhausted, Irene makes her way towards the window.

IRENE (V.O.)  
Be strong. I know you can be. Tell  
Denise how proud I am.

Irene places an envelope marked "Franklin" on the table.

She stands in front of the window, taking one final look.

IRENE (V.O.)  
I'll give your love to Michael. And  
I'll see you again. I promise. All  
my love. Irene.

She moves to the wall. To the door that leads outside. Ready to face the surface. To finally see what comes next. Irene grabs the strange, oblong handle. She TURNS IT to the side. With a HISS, the door begins to rotate open.

It reveals a cramped pod, the oval window now facing out towards the planet. And below it, we see, on the inside of the pod, another handle.

She steps inside. All that's between here and the surface is turning the second handle. She reaches out her hand.

VOICE (O.S.)

Help me...

The hair on the back of Irene's neck stands. Slowly, she turns around to see something nearly hidden by shadows, tucked in the corner of the Observation Room:

A human being, collapsed in a heap. The figure crawls forward. A YOUNG MAN, maybe 20 years old. He is dressed in ragged clothing. He summons his energy to look up at Irene.

YOUNG MAN

Please.

IRENE

Who are you?

He reaches a hand out to her in desperation. This is Jude.

END OF EPISODE