

Waking Up
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SETTING: A beach just before sunrise. It is still dark out, but slowly lightens.

AT RISE: A woman sits on the beach. She is calm, but looks exhausted. She begins talking as if someone is there, but does not take her gaze from in front of her.

PAULINE:

(Picking up a handful of sand)

Tiny grains. All just tiny grains. Like tiny planets that I can just...

(She flings the sand into the ocean.)

...drown.

(She begins to cry.)

Stupid planets. Stupid sand...stupid...

(Enter JIM.)

JIM:

What are you doing here, Pauline?

PAULINE:

(Wiping her eyes)

You know what I'm doing here.

JIM:

(He sits next to her.)

You're tormenting yourself, that's what you're doing.

PAULINE:

That's not my fault.

JIM:

It's unhealthy.

Then I'm unhealthy.

PAULINE:

Sweetheart...

JIM:

Don't...please...I can't...

PAULINE:

It's not your fault. There was nothing you could do.

JIM:

Jim...

PAULINE:

(She reaches for him. He holds her and she cries again.)

Jim, Jim, Jim...

Hey. Hey, it's okay...

JIM:

It isn't...it won't ever be...

PAULINE:

Sweetheart...don't cry. I'm not really gone.

JIM:

Prove it.

PAULINE:

You know I can't do that.

JIM:

Then how can I ever be sure?

PAULINE:

You'll just have to be.

JIM:

PAULINE:

It's like I'm not awake anymore...I can't tell what's real and what's a dream. Have you ever felt that?

JIM:

I think we all feel that from time to time.

PAULINE:

You would say that.

JIM:

At least you still know me.

PAULINE:

(She laughs weakly.)

I'm so tired, Jim...

JIM:

I know, sweetheart.

PAULINE:

What should I do?

JIM:

Well, sitting here isn't helping. Does anyone know where you are?

PAULINE:

No. I just left.

JIM:

You didn't say anything?

PAULINE:

Nope.

JIM:

Pauline...

PAULINE:

What?

JIM:

You should have told someone you were leaving.

PAULINE:

It doesn't even matter, I'll be back before they wake up.

JIM:

So you're going back?

PAULINE:

I guess I have to...I can't just...leave. Can I? That'd be so much easier....Can I?

JIM:

You know you can't, sweetheart.

PAULINE:

(She leans into him.)

Mm...don't stop calling me sweetheart.

JIM:

I won't.

PAULINE:

I'm not ready for this, Jim.

JIM:

I know. Nobody ever is. I'm sure as hell not.

PAULINE:

How am I supposed to go back there and face them? What am I supposed to say?

JIM:

Hmm...that's a tough one. It's not going to be easy.

PAULINE:

You made it that way, you know. You're the one who did this.

JIM:

I know, sweetheart.

PAULINE:

You're not going to apologize?

JIM:

Well, to be fair there were certain factors out of my control.

PAULINE:

I wish things were different.

JIM:

You don't think that I do, too? I miss you so much, Pauline.

PAULINE:

I miss you, too, Jim...

JIM:

Let me be the first to say how unfair this is. It...it just...sucks. Yeah. It really sucks.

PAULINE:

(Amused)

You never talk that way.

JIM:

Well, a lot of things changed, Pauline.

PAULINE:

I know...damn it, I really know...

JIM:

Hey. You do know that this will all be okay, right?

PAULINE:

It doesn't feel that way.

JIM:

Well, it'll take a while. But it will happen, sweetheart.

PAULINE:

Promise?

JIM:

I do. From the bottom of my heart.

PAULINE:

I love you so much, Jim.

JIM:

I love you, too, Pauline.

PAULINE:

It's getting light.

JIM:

I know. I have to go soon.

PAULINE:

Please don't...please, Jim...

JIM:

I'll still be around.

PAULINE:

Not in the same way, though...

JIM:

It's the best I can do, sweetheart.

PAULINE:

I know. But for now can you just stay until I wake up?

JIM:

Of course I can.

(She lays her head in his lap and slowly starts to drift off to sleep.)

PAULINE:

Thank you.

JIM:

Sweetheart, I hate to do this, but -

PAULINE:

Wait. Don't tell me when you have to go, okay? Just let me fall asleep like this. Will you do that for me?

JIM:

I will.

Thank you, my love. PAULINE:

(Beat.)

Do you want to know something? JIM:

What? PAULINE:

It's going to get better. JIM:

Really? PAULINE:

Oh, yeah. I'll make sure of it, personally. JIM:

You will? PAULINE:

Of course I will. JIM:

And you'll always be with me? PAULINE:

Always, sweetheart. JIM:

Can I ask you something? PAULINE:

Anything. JIM:

Are you cold? PAULINE:

JIM:

No. As long as I have you I'm nice and warm.

PAULINE:

That's nice to hear.

(They sit for a moment until PAULINE falls asleep. JIM kisses her forehead.)

JIM:

I love you, Pauline. Always.

(He exits. PAULINE wakes up.)

PAULINE:

Jim?

(She looks down and picks up a handful of sand where he was sitting. The lights fade.)