PROMISE

an original Scene by

Robert Cox
PROMISE

This is a two character scene, both men

Characters:

BARTENDER - 40's, enigmatic, caring, calming influence, and like a bartender, he makes you want to spill everything, but has his own secrets.

MAN - 50's Confused, disoriented, not knowing where he is or how he got there. Carrying a lot of guilt around over his behavior towards his wife during her fatal illness. Reticent at first about speaking up, he shares everything as the time moves on, making it obvious that he loved her very much and finally remembering how he got there. The progression in the script follows the Kubler-Ross seven stages of grief.

BACKGROUND

For Bartender - (A)-Backbar area with glasses and bottles of alcohol. There is no deviation until-

For Bartender (E)(single shot) A fancy restaurant.

For Man - (B)-Area behind him would be tables and/or booths that you would normally see in a Cocktail lounge. The also does not deviate

Shots with no actor Participation:

(C) A set of double doors on a wall, wood with a mother-of-pearl inlay near the knobs.

(D) A verdant meadow behind the doors, and standing in the middle of it, a fiftyish woman in a blue dress.

Numbers for shot participants.

BARTENDER - all odd shots 1 - 31

MAN - All even shots 2-30 plus POV SHOTS, Numbers 12A and 28A and a BACK TO SCENE ON MAN 12B and 28B

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FADE IN:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

(A)- A pleasant neighborhood place. Against one wall is the actual bar, a long straight structure with bottles of alcohol on shelves against the mirrored walls. Glasses are neatly stacked on the counter in front of the wall.

In front of the bar are stools along it's length. Other walls are wood paneled, giving the bar a very warm look. There are a number of tables complete with chairs.

(C)-On one of the walls is a wooden double door. The doorknobs are gold colored with panels behind them that look like mother-of-pearl.

1-ON BARTENDER

Behind the bar, idly drying a glass, is the BARTENDER (40's), a rather nondescript man. Except for the bartender, there is no one else in the bar at the moment.

The Bartender turns and places the glass with the others on the counter. There is the SOUND of a DEEP TONED BELL that catches his attention. He turns and surveys the bar.

2-ON Man

Seated on a barstool, with his head on the bar, cradled in his arms, is a MAN (50's), asleep. (B)-The lounge portion of the bar is behind him, with booths and tables.

3-ON BARTENDER

The bartender goes over to him, calls softly.

      BARTENDER
       Sir, sir?

4-ON MAN

Man stirs and wakes up. He sits up and looks around, confused and disoriented. A look of panic crosses his face.

      MAN
       Where am I? What am I doing here?

5-ON BARTENDER

      BARTENDER
       Easy, it's all right. This is my place. You must have fallen asleep.

6-ON MAN
MAN
Fallen asleep? How long have I been here?

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Not long.

MAN
How...?

BARTENDER (O.S.)
How did you get here?

Man nods.

BARTENDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What do you remember?

MAN
I was.... Funny, I don't know. I haven't been drinking, have I?

7-ON BARTENDER

BARTENDER
No. Do you want one?

MAN (O.S.)
Just some water please.

BARTENDER
You sure that's all you want? I can get you something stronger if you like.

8-ON MAN

MAN
No thanks. Right before my Wife died I promised her I wouldn't drink anymore.

9-ON BARTENDER

The bartender grabs a glass from the underneath the bar and puts ice in it, fills it with water and puts it in front of him.

BARTENDER
When was that?

10-ON MAN

Man picks up the water and takes a sip of it.
MAN
Two years ago. It's not something I really want to talk about.

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Sure, no problem.

Man starts looking around the bar, at various areas.

MAN
Kinda quiet.

11-ON BARTENDER

BARTENDER
Mostly is, but I always have at least one customer in here at a time. I guess right now, that's you.

12-ON MAN

Man looks over.

12A-POV DOOR

MAN (O.S.)
Where does that go?

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Where all doors go, somewhere else.

12B-BACK TO SCENE ON MAN

MAN
Is it locked?

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Only when it needs to be.

Man sighs. Takes another sip of water.

MAN
I really loved her, you know. When she started feeling weak, I told myself, it's just part of getting older, nothing to worry about. I guess I didn't want to know the truth. I kept telling myself that she was going to be fine. Was I wrong to think that?

13-ON BARTENDER

BARTENDER
You tell me.
MAN
When the doctor told me she had cancer, I went crazy. I yelled at him for not finding it earlier, took it out on my co-workers, my kids, even my wife. I thought, how could she do this to me?

Man stops.

MAN (CONT'D)
Why am I telling you all this?

BARTENDER
I've heard it said that Bartenders are good listeners. Maybe you need to talk about it.
(beat)
Finish your water.

MAN
Could I have more? It's delicious. I've never tasted anything like it.

BARTENDER
Sure. The water's special, from our own natural springs.

MAN
The panels on the door look like mother of pearl.

BARTENDER (O.S.)
That's right, they are.

MAN
I gave my wife a pendant made out of it for our twentieth anniversary. Our daughter has it now.
He turns to the Bartender. There is another glass of water in front of him.

   MAN (CONT'D)
   When I was angry, I said some terrible things. I even cursed at God.

19-ON BARTENDER

   BARTENDER
   (smiles)
   Most people do, one time or another. I'm sure He's heard it all.

   MAN (O.S.)
   I guess He has.

20-ON MAN

   BARTENDER (O.S.)
   Go on...

   MAN
   I finally told Him that I would do anything if he would make her well. I'd stop drinking, smoking, try to make up for all the awful things I did to people. Go to Church.
   (beat)
   Wait a minute, I just remembered something. I was sitting in my chair, and my arm was sore. Then I was here. Funny how that popped into my mind.

21-ON BARTENDER

   BARTENDER
   That happens sometimes. Did you do all those things you promised?

22-ON MAN.

Man takes a drink from the water.

   MAN
   No. I thought God wasn't listening. I pulled away from everyone, even my wife. When she needed me most, I wasn't there for her. I was wallowing in my own self-pity. I drank too much, wouldn't talk to anyone.

   BARTENDER (O.S.)
   But that changed.
MAN
(nods)
My son. He sat me down, and I mean, he really gave it to me, and I deserved it. He told me I was selfish, that I was missing out on meaningful time I still had left with her

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Sounds like he loved you very much.

MAN
(nods)
After that, I stopped drinking and I took time off from my job, so that we could be together, to make what time we had left special. We were never apart, until...
(smiles)
The last time we went out, she wore this beautiful blue dress and she was so worried about how it fit because she had lost so much weight. I didn't care. We...
(stops, remembering)
I just remembered something else. My arm was hurting, I couldn't breathe, and my...

Looks toward the bartender. There is a moment of panic on Man's face and then calm.

MAN (CONT'D)
I'm dead, aren't I?

23-ON BARTENDER

The bartender nods.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Then this is--?

BARTENDER
A way station, a waiting room really. Someplace to rest, before you start your next journey.

24-ON MAN

MAN
You knew all along, didn't you?

BARTENDER (O.S.)

Yes.
MAN
Why didn't you tell me?

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Would you have believed me if I did?

MAN
Probably not. Could you answer a question for me though?

BARTENDER (O.S.)
If I can.

MAN
Why a bar?

25-ON BARTENDER

BARTENDER
That's an easy one. What was the last promise you made to your wife?

26-ON MAN

MAN
That I wouldn't... I get it. One last test.

BARTENDER (O.S.)
One last test.

MAN
You seem to know so much. Tell me, will I see her again?

27- ON BARTENDER

The bartender smiles and gestures towards the doors.

28-ON MAN

Man Looks over.

28A-MAN'S POV

(C)-(D)-The doors slowly open, revealing a beautiful meadow beyond, the colors vivid and bright. Light floods the room.

THE WOMAN (50's) stands in the field, wearing a blue dress, that moves slightly in the breeze. She smiles at him.

28B-BACK TO SCENE ON MAN

Man gets off the stool, in disbelief. He turns to the Bartender, tears in his eyes.
MAN
Thank you, Mr...

29-ON BARTENDER

BARTENDER
Just call me Pete.

30-ON MAN

MAN
(smiles)
Of course, I should have known.

Turning back, man steps forward into the light, OUT OF FRAME and OUT OF SCENE. After a moment, the light fades to normal.

31-ON BARTENDER

The Bartender picks up the empty glass puts it under the bar.

(E) - The BACKGROUND changes and now the Bartender is standing in a Fancy restaurant, and he is dressed as a waiter.

There is the SOUND of a DEEP TONED BELL. The Bartender smiles.

FADE OUT: