

You Can't Patent the Sun

by  
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Based on the life of Dr. Jonas Salk

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FADE IN:

EXT. BRONX, NEW YORK CITY - SUMMER 1919 - DAY

The tenement apartments are packed together so tight, they're practically sweating off the asbestos siding.

Several KIDS play MARBLES on the sidewalk as a LARGE BLACK GOVERNMENT CAR casts a shadow and causes THE STREET to freeze.

On a nearby porch, DORA SALK (28), stops sweeping and casts a nervous glance at her son, JONAS (5), as he watches the game of marbles.

DORA  
(slight Russian accent)  
Jonas! Come here.

Dora is perfectly put-together; bad hair days aren't permitted and they know it.

Despite the apparent poverty of the neighborhood, her small plot that serves as a porch stands out with its spotless exterior.

Jonas is skinny, but in dress and posture, he matches his mother.

He, like the other KIDS, immediately runs to his mother's side and watches to see where the mysterious vehicle will stop.

It stops at the next apartment building.

DORA  
(under her breath)  
Not the Abbler's daughter. They  
only have one child.

JONAS  
What's happening?

DORA  
Jonas, go inside.

JONAS  
Why?

DORA  
Now. And don't touch Herman until  
you've washed up.

Jonas reluctantly enters the house, deliberately leaving his shoes outside.

More RESIDENTS come onto their porches to see what is happening.

Dora is oblivious to the fact the Jonas remains pressed against the window, soaking up everything.

A MALE SOCIAL WORKER exits the vehicle followed by a NURSE.

A woman, NORMA (32), appears on the porch. Norma appears exhausted, her nerves shot, she holds up her hands to ward them off.

WOMAN

She was sick, but she's not anymore.

SOCIAL WORKER

Then you won't mind if we have a look?

CUT TO:

INT. NORMA'S FOYER - DAY

It's an oven inside and it immediately shows on the Nurse's face as beads of sweat form on her brow.

SOCIAL WORKER

Where is she?

NORMA

She's asleep. Can I offer you something to drink?

The nurse moves about the stifling room, critically. She stops on a cracked window.

NURSE

It's not sealed.

NORMA

It's so hot, and she's being kept in another room.

SOCIAL WORKER

We need to see her, please.

Norma's husband, ELIJAH (33) enters the room, blocking the doorway that evidently contains what they're looking for.

DANIEL  
She's no longer contagious.

The Social Worker offers a well-practiced grin.

SOCIAL WORKER  
That's what we're all hoping.

NURSE  
But, you must understand, we need  
to see her to be sure.

Norma nods at her husband and he reluctantly moves aside,  
permitting them to enter the next room.

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

A little girl, MARY(4), nothing but a ball of bright red  
curly hair, lies on a couch. She's as still as stone.

SOCIAL WORKER  
Ahh, there you are? And how are  
you feeling?

Mary's face is flushed, her breathing shallow and requiring  
some effort.

The social worker feels Mary's head and neck.

SOCIAL WORKER  
She's warm.

The nurse immediately frowns at the open window behind her.

NORMA  
(quickly)  
It's an oven in here...and since  
she's no longer contagious, we  
figured a little breeze couldn't  
hurt.

NURSE  
Can you raise your head, child?

Norma motions for Mary to try.

ELIJAH  
I'll give you a nickel if you can  
show these people that you can  
raise your head up.

Mary tries to raise her head but can't get it more than an inch off of the pillow.

The Nurse and Social Worker exchange looks and without another word he scoops her up.

NORMA

What are you doing?

SOCIAL WORKER

We need to get her to the hospital.

NORMA

What can a hospital do that we aren't already doing?

Falling on deaf ears, Norma pleads with Elijah.

NORMA

You can't let them take her.

NURSE

We don't want to have to come back with the police. The whole neighborhood will learn how you've put them at risk.

SOCIAL WORKER

You want what's best for Mary, don't you?

Practiced in dealing with the hysterical parents of infantile paralysis, the Social Worker is at the front door before Elijah has a chance to even try and stop him.

The DRIVER is there to meet him and Mary is to weak to put up much of a fight of her own.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Dora looks on with a mixture of fear and sympathy as Elijah holds his sobbing wife back, preventing her from following Mary to the car.

All of the mothers watch. Frozen and petrified that their child could be next.

Jonas runs back onto the porch, despite his mother's orders.

JONAS

Where are they taking her?

DORA  
To the hospital.

JONAS  
Her mom's not going?

DORA  
They aren't allowed.

JONAS  
Why?

Dora looks at Jonas quickly, realizes he doesn't have shoes on. Her anger flares.

DORA  
What do you think you're doing?

CUT TO:

INT. SALK'S HOUSE - DAY

Dora scrubs Jonas' feet and while he's a bit scared of his mom, he's too curious to keep quiet.

A baby, HERMAN, sits on a blanket nearby.

JONAS  
Will she come back?

DORA  
I don't know.

JONAS  
So her mom might not ever see her again?

DORA  
No.

JONAS  
How can they do that?

DORA  
It's the law.

JONAS  
It's a crazy law.

DORA

It's crazy for you to be out  
without shoes knowing what could  
happen if you don't stay clean.

DANIEL SALK (30) enters the house and starts for the baby but  
Dora practically flies at him.

DORA

Why didn't you leave your shoes on  
the porch?

Daniel looks at his feet, sheepishly, he's tall and trim, not  
as high-strung as Dora.

DORA

Wash up.

Like many of the men in the neighborhood he perpetually wears  
his Kippah.

He tries to distract her. Opens the package he's carrying  
and holds up a blouse.

DANIEL

Newest design. Actually let me  
bring one of them home. Not even  
out yet. Nice, don't you think?

Dora dries off Jonas' feet and motions for Daniel to come  
over to the bowl to wash up.

DORA

It's yours. They should let you do  
what you want with it. Did you  
touch any babies today?

DANIEL

A few.

Dora looks at him quickly.

DANIEL

Well. You know people. Always  
bringing their babies into the  
factory and passing them down the  
line like garments.

DORA

You shouldn't joke, they took away  
the Abbler girl today.

Daniel looks pained but sees Jonas' attentive face and makes an effort to distract him.

He starts digging around in his pockets.

DANIEL

Let's see, I had something else in here too.

Jonas goes to his father and stands, expectantly.

DANIEL

I'm sorry, did you need something?

JONAS

No.

Jonas starts to walk away, disappointed.

DANIEL

That's too bad, because some friends from work wanted me to give you these.

He holds out a stack of baseball cards and Jonas races back as Daniel tucks them in his pocket.

DANIEL

But since you don't want them...

DORA

Stop teasing him.

Daniel hands over the cards and Jonas sorts through them quickly, his disappointment returning.

DANIEL

(chuckles)

You really don't want them?

JONAS

I needed Wagner to complete the set.

Daniel looks at Dora, helplessly.

DANIEL

That one doesn't come with tobacco.

DORA

We can't afford to buy baseball cards.

JONAS  
We can't afford anything.

DANIEL  
The trick is to want what you've  
already got.

DORA  
The trick is to do well in school.

JONAS  
Didn't you do well in school?

DANIEL  
(to Dora)  
Kid's got some moxy, eh?

Dora takes Daniel's shoes, the cards, and hands Daniel a wash-rag before exiting into the kitchen.

DORA (O.S.)  
If I'd had the opportunity to  
finish my school, I'd be driving  
that factory by now.

DANIEL  
Instead of us crazy with this fear  
of babies.

As soon as Daniel has cleaned his hands he picks up baby Herman.

JONAS  
Why couldn't you finish?

DORA (O.S.)  
Not enough money.

JONAS  
Then, probably, I won't either.

Dora appears in the doorway and watches Jonas lay out his baseball cards.

She's pensive and Daniel knows enough about what she's thinking to reach into his pocket and hand her his paycheck before bouncing past with the baby.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - SWINEBURNE ISLAND - NIGHT

Mary drifts in and out of consciousness as TWO MEDICS carry her into the hospital on a stretcher.

A MAN screeches into the driveway and scrambles out of his car carrying a bundled INFANT.

MAN  
Someone, help me!

The MEDIC touches the child and quickly pulls his hand away.

MEDIC  
He's gone.

MAN  
You have to take him.

MEDIC  
There's nothing we can do for him.

MAN  
But, I've driven four hours to bring him here. Please.

The Medics exchange looks and continue inside with Mary, who looks on as the MAN continues to hold the infant next to him, as though he were still alive.

MARY  
Am I going to die?

No one answers her.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

As the sun peeks in through the window, Mary appears as lifeless as the child.

However, she soon opens her eyes. The light enables her to see her surroundings for the first time since she's arrived.

She appears shocked, as we too see...

Hundreds of beds of IMMOBILE CHILDREN.

NURSES move about in a full white gown, caps and masks over their faces.

Mary's eyes search for anything that might bring comfort; she looks out the large window at the end of the room and sees children on crutches passing by.

With some vague comprehension as to the few options her condition might bring, the kid fights back the tears.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

SEVERAL BOYS move past the window on crutches.

AERIAL VIEW:

The lawns are covered with seated children in leg braces, children moving in groups on crutches.

The hospital is large and at the front is a sign marking it 'QUARANTINED FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS.'

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPOBELLO ISLAND, NEW BRUNSWICK CANADA - DAY

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (39), a recently retired secretary of the Navy, vacations with his family after a heavy campaign and vice-presidential loss.

Tall and athletic, it should be an easy win, as he races his teenage sons across the lake.

Eleanor cuts roses nearby and looks on as her husband lags behind, struggling more and more with each stroke.

He finally makes it to where the boys are waiting at the waters edge but resists their attempts to help him out of the water.

He climbs out on his own and tries to shake it off.

ROOSEVELT

Change out of your suits before you  
catch cold.

Roosevelt staggers into a chair at a lawn table, still in his own wet suit.

ELEANOR

You're the one who should be  
changing, what with your cold,  
Franklin.

ROOSEVELT

I'm fine.

Eleanor gestures to the mail on the table.

ELEANOR

That's all of it. I don't know how they've found you out here.

Roosevelt begins opening an envelope but his hands are shaking too badly.

ELEANOR

You need to get yourself in bed.

He tries to stand but his legs collapse beneath him.

Eleanor drops her gardening sheers and runs to him.

Both sons run out of the house as he convulses on the lawn.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWINEBURNE HOSPITAL - DAY

Mary is now in a leg brace on the lawn. Her curly red hair is done up in a plaid ribbon for the holiday.

She takes a few loping steps before she starts to fall forward. A NURSE races to catch her but not before she falls face first in the mud.

She looks up to see; her mother, Norma and father, Elijah stand near a car.

Her mom turns so she can't see her tears.

MARY

Mom! Dad!

Her mom gets into the car as her dad makes his way to her.

They have brought her presents but the MEDICS stop him from entering the quarantined area and take the gifts from him.

Mary is helped up by the NURSE, and she wipes the mud from her eyes and realizes that her parents aren't getting any closer than this.

CUT TO:

EXT. 120 BROADWAY, NEW YORK - DAY

A long black car pulls up to the law offices as CROWDS of PEOPLE look on from the street.

The DRIVER gets out and opens the door.

Franklin Roosevelt, now skinnier, paler and with a great deal of help is pulled out of the back seat and positioned over crutches, seemingly oblivious to the stares or the trickle of cameras going off.

Jovial, he nods at a few of the ONLOOKERS and tries to make a joke of the show he seems to be creating.

ROOSEVELT

Fine weather for a walk.

With the help of his driver he maneuvers his crutches and his body to the door of his office building.

The quieted crowd following every labored movement with their eyes.

INT. 120 BROADWAY, NEW YORK - DAY

Once inside the building another, business CROWD within freezes.

The marble floor is slick and it's harder for him to plunk the crutches down and swing his body along towards the staircase.

ATTORNEYS whisper amongst themselves.

ATTORNEY ONE

What's he doing here?

ATTORNEY TWO

He can't possibly make it up the staircase.

BASIL O'CONNOR (29), a small, thin, Attorney watches Roosevelt with both sympathy and admiration.

At last, Roosevelt falls, his crutches and limbs splaying across the marble floor like a doe just learning to walk.

Basil is immediately there to help him, as Roosevelt sends out a hearty laugh.

ROOSEVELT  
Oh, what a good show!

BASIL  
Take my arm.

ROOSEVELT  
I'm alright, son.

Roosevelt rights himself with the help of his Driver and slowly makes his way out of the building.

The CROWD mumbles as everyone sees the scratches left by the crutches on the marble floor.

ATTORNEY ONE  
He should retire.

ATTORNEY TWO  
He certainly doesn't need the money.

BASIL  
He'll never retire.

Both Attorneys turn as they finally notice Basil listening.

BASIL  
He's too determined.

Basil follows after Roosevelt.

EXT. 120 BROADWAY, NEW YORK - DAY

Roosevelt has hidden himself back inside the sleek, black car.

Basil quickly knocks on his window and Roosevelt lowers it a crack.

BASIL  
Basil O'Connor, sir.

Surprised, Roosevelt nods, takes the card and nods to the driver.

Basil watches with the rest of the crowd as the car drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNSEND HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL - 1926 - DAY

JONAS SALK (12), still recognizable due to his lean build, pale complexion and the perpetual presence of the formidable Dora.

They sit in chairs outside the HEAD MASTER'S office.

Dora taps the arm of the chair, anxiously, while Jonas appears calm and lost in thought.

The HEAD MASTER, appears wearing a smirk. He holds an exam in his hands and looks Jonas over in curiosity.

HEAD MASTER  
He missed only one. Can he can  
start next week?

Dora claps her hands together and even Jonas looks a trifle relieved.

DORA  
He can start today.

HEAD MASTER  
We begin instruction next week.

The Head Master starts to retreat back into his office.

JONAS  
Sir?

The Head Master looks at him with the same curiosity.

JONAS  
Can I know which one I missed?

Dora gives her son a quick warning glance and he shrugs.

HEAD MASTER  
It was the verbal reasoning  
problem.

DORA  
Verbal reasoning? That's normally  
his strength.

HEAD MASTER  
You aren't allowed to rewrite the  
questions on the exam, no matter  
how much you disagree with the  
wording.

With the same smirk the Head Master closes the door, leaving Dora to unleash her fury on Jonas.

She leads him out of the school by his elbow.

EXT. BRONX, NEW YORK CITY - 1926 - DAY

Jonas can barely keep up with her as she leads them home. He watches some crippled World War I VETERANS, begging in the street as they pass.

DORA

Better that way? You're lucky he was in good humor. You'll have to learn to respect tradition before they'll even let you consider rabbinical school.

As Jonas watches the Veterans, he stops abruptly and swallows, determined.

JONAS

I'm not going to Rabbinical school.

Dora turns to her son, furious, but he remains firm.

JONAS

I'm going into law.

DORA

Law school?

JONAS

I want to be in a position to try and change things.

DORA

You're doing enough of that without the law degree.

JONAS

But as a congressman, I could...

DORA

How will you do at law when you can't even win an argument with your mother?

Dora keeps walking, leaving the speechless Jonas to run and catch up with her.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL - MONTAGE

Leaves fall from the trees outside. Jonas sits in a PACKED CLASSROOM. He's one of the youngest students.

Jonas watches cold rain hit the glass as he sits in the same classroom; a few students missing.

Spring rains and blossoms tap the classroom window as Jonas, now older, is one of ten students remaining.

CLOSE ON:

ENTRANCE TO CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Jonas, (15) stands amongst a LARGE GROUP OF STUDENTS as schedules are handed to each of them.

Jonas frowns over his list as SEVERAL BOYS huddle around, wearing the same expression. Again, he's the youngest in the group.

BOY  
You get Political Science?

JONAS  
No. Microbiology.

The Boy rolls his eyes.

BOY  
I tell them science, I get poli-sci, you're pre-law and you get science. All part of their crazy inter-disciplinary philosophy.

JONAS  
We could trade.

BOY  
They'll notice.

JONAS  
We could tell them I've decided to change to science and you to law?

The boy starts laughing.

BOY  
Just try and stay awake. I can use  
your notes next term.

## INT. MICROBIOLOGY CLASS - DAY

Half the class sleeps as a LECTURER drones on, writing on the board, never turning around to see who's still alive and kicking.

Jonas sits in the front of the class. Quite awake. He doesn't take notes at all.

He stares at the board, taking it all in.

CUT TO:

## INT. MICROBIOLOGY CLASS - DAY -LATER

As the Lecturer erases the board and the class scurries out, Jonas slowly stacks his books waiting for an opportunity to approach.

The lecturer turns around and finally seems to realize Jonas' presence.

LECTURER

Yes?

JONAS

Earlier you said that we can immunize against diphtheria and tetanus using chemically treated toxins?

LECTURER

And?

JONAS

Well, today you said it isn't possible to immunize against a virus using chemically treated toxins?

LECTURER

If you'd been paying attention, you'd realize that diphtheria and tetanus are bacterial infections and so they're very different.

JONAS

No, I was. However, what makes them so different? I mean, they both elicit the same immune response, and in effect, that's what we're interested in whether it's bacterial or viral.

The lecturer scoops up his notes and makes a beeline for the door.

LECTURER

You simply cannot compare the two.

He exits the lecture hall leaving Jonas staring after him, alone in the dark.

INT. WARM SPRINGS RESORT CORRIDOR, GEORGIA - DAY

Franklin Roosevelt, now in a wheelchair moves through the recently restored resort with Basil O'Connor.

The rapport between them indicates Basil was successful in making both a friend and business partner out of Roosevelt since the day he first passed him his business card.

ROOSEVELT

And you warned me against her?

BASIL

I didn't think this squirrel infested hovel could be converted, but you did it.

Roosevelt smiles, the resort is a far cry from a hovel. Dense carpets and fine paintings hang on the walls.

Two well-dressed, pinched-nosed, ELDERLY WOMEN nod as they pass the two men.

ROOSEVELT

They could go to any hotel in the world but only this one has the springs.

Roosevelt stops at a window and they look out over the beautiful mountain springs.

ROOSEVELT

Fifteen hundred gallons a minute, constant temperature of eighty-eight degrees.

Only Basil seems to notice what Franklin does not; that the springs are also flowing with people; and it's not the paying guests but the polio victims who are happily floating about.

ROOSEVELT

They say it's a strange mix of chemicals. Some think there's electricity in them.

Franklin turns his wheelchair before he sees Mary, now fourteen, same bundle of curly red hair, move toward the springs with the help of her mother, Norma.

A WEALTHY FAMILY quickly move their kids away from her. The slight doesn't pass Mary, her mother, or Basil. All frown, although with Basil it's because of the bad business omen.

He quickly turns from the window and begins to look at the surroundings in a different light.

BASIL

You paid two hundred thousand before renovations?

ROOSEVELT

A bargain.

BASIL

What are they paying?

ROOSEVELT

A fortune.

BASIL

The polio patients?

Roosevelt looks at him quickly.

ROOSEVELT

Nothing. That was the plan. The paid guests support it.

Roosevelt leads him through two doors.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The room is as breath-taking as the rest. As Roosevelt gazes on it with pride, Basil is silently computing losses.

The buffet is beautiful and as it's not quite lunch, Basil and Roosevelt are alone in the giant room.

Roosevelt points out the items he wants and the SERVERS race to get it.

ROOSEVELT

We've worked together several years now and I've come to realize that you're a shrewd, calculating, yet honest man.

BASIL

(slightly offended)

You flatter me much too much.

ROOSEVELT

So when they asked me to run for governor, I naturally knew you were the only one I could trust with Warm Springs.

Basil straightens. Not exactly delighted.

The doors open and WEALTHY GUESTS breeze into the dining hall. Many with SERVERS or HELPERS of their own.

They quickly fill the tables and Roosevelt begins shaking hands and greeting his guests.

Slowly but surely, the VICTIMS OF POLIO make their way in. The WEALTHY GUESTS are less delighted by this mixed atmosphere.

Mary comes in with her mother. She uses crutches, and still wears the metal leg braces. Her mother goes to fill plates for Mary as well as herself.

She and Basil look on as the PAYING GUESTS begin to flee. She stands helplessly as a GUEST rudely pushes past her mother, causing her to drop both plates.

Basil looks at Roosevelt, but he's again too immediately occupied to see what's happening.

INT. JONAS SALK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas (18), tall, intense and handsome, holds a letter from HARVARD in his hand.

From the look on his face it's definitely not an acceptance letter.

He adds it to a drawer of letters.

Dora comes in with laundry and he hurries to close the drawer, but nothing escapes her.

DORA

Well?

JONAS

Not Harvard.

Jonas sinks into his chair.

JONAS

(as if he's reading)

While I'm an outstanding applicant,  
they've had many outstanding  
applicants and so they regret they  
cannot admit into this year's  
incoming class.

Dora's rage is barely concealed.

JONAS

Same goes for Cornell, Yale and  
Columbia, even Pennsylvania.

DORA

You're too smart for them. It  
scares people. Being too smart.

Her argument is ridiculous enough to make Jonas smile.

DORA

And New York University means  
you'll be near.

Jonas' brother, HERMAN (13) practically flies into the room,  
upon hearing the news.

HERMAN

New York University? My brother  
stays!

Jonas takes a jar off his desk and tosses it to him.

JONAS

Yeah, but this stays too.

He scrambles to catch it.

DORA

What is it?

Herman reflexively tosses it to Dora. Who let's out a scream as she nearly drops it.

Dora holds it up and sees it's a preserved PIG FETUS. The look of horror on her face sends Herman into a fit of laughter.

HERMAN

He stole it from the anatomy lab.

JONAS

Borrowed.

HERMAN

For two years?

JONAS

I'll take it back.

DORA

Take it back!

Dora hands it back Jonas as though it weren't perfectly contained in the jar.

HERMAN

Only imagine the other things he'll be bringing home, now that he's in medical school.

Dora beams at her eldest son. Who cares if he brings a cadaver home? He's made it to medical school.

HERMAN

We should have a celebration dinner.

Jonas sends his smirking brother a look.

DORA

Of course. We'll invite the Abblers, the Benedicts...

Dora wanders out as she tallies the guests for dinner.

HERMAN

(mocking his mom's tone)

Oh! I think the Benedicts have a daughter about your age, Jonas.

Jonas tosses the pig fetus back at his brother and his brother immediately sends it flying back.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

True to her word (and Herman's), Dora has managed to invite several families with daughters about Jonas' age.

Only the Abblers have come alone.

While Jonas is ill at ease, Herman is relaxed and enjoying the female company.

The youngest brother, LEE (7), like Herman, is delighted to have so much female company.

When he sees a GIRL searching for anything he immediately passes her the gravy, the butter, the salt, his own napkin, his own knife, until they indicate they have what they need.

DORA

How is Mary doing?

NORMA

She's still at Warm Springs, but we're not sure how much longer.

HERMAN

Have you met Roosevelt?

DORA

Herman, I'm certain whether or not they've met Roosevelt isn't relevant...

ELIJAH

Yes, Mary's spoken with him several times. She likes him a good deal.

HERMAN

Is it true he's going to run for president?

ELIJAH

I don't know. Sadly, the resort seems to be failing and he's there less and less.

JONAS

Oh, I am sorry. I know how much  
Mary enjoys the springs.

It's the first time Jonas has said much of anything and the whole room falls silent as he speaks; which succeeds at making him feel even more awkward.

NORMA

Yes, well we're here tonight to  
celebrate your admission into New  
York University.

JONAS

As it seems, no one else would have  
me.

Jonas' attempt to downplay guest of honor has only left the table momentarily speechless.

GIRL

What do you mean? Surely with your  
grades you were accepted  
everywhere?

DANIEL

Not with quotas. I bet half the  
best applicants to Harvard this  
year were Jewish, and not even five  
got in.

DORA

Daniel?

DANIEL

Why else wouldn't he be accepted  
into any school he wanted?

DORA

Well, it won't make any difference  
in the end. It's how you use the  
tools you're given and in four  
years we'll have the first  
physician in the family.

JONAS

Researcher.

DORA

What?

JONAS

I don't want to help people on a patient to patient basis, I want to reach as many as I can.

As the TABLE exchanges uncomfortable glances seeing Dora's reaction to this, it's Daniel who best knows how to defuse the conflict.

DANIEL

Jonas, we could use more water, could you flag the waiter?

But Jonas is up and out of his chair before he even has to finish. He's more than eager to leave his spot as 'man of the hour'.

As he exits Dora smiles encouragingly to the GIRLS. Jonas sees this, and practically runs from the table.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jonas leans into the kitchen of the small restaurant and sees the WAITER holding a light for a REPAIRMAN near one of the stoves.

JONAS

Excuse me? Could we get more water?

WAITER

Uh, I'm sorry.

Jonas wanders into the kitchen as the waiter tries to find a place to position the light.

Jonas takes it from him and holds it in place, watching the REPAIRMAN work.

JONAS

Well, how did that happen?

The REPAIRMAN looks at Jonas, surprised.

WAITER

I'll bring it straight away if you want to go back to your table?

Jonas gives him a look, indicating he's in no hurry to get back to his table.

REPAIRMAN

You ever see anything like this?

JONAS

No.

The waiter exits with the water, leaving Jonas with the Repairman.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS' ROOM - DAY/NIGHT - MONTAGE

Jonas studies at his desk. The pig fetus still in place.

Rather than getting rid of it, he has extended his collection.

As the pickled anatomy jars grow in number, so do the books, the medical charts, the note pads.

Only Jonas stays in one place, always studying at his desk.

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL - MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY - DAY

Jonas wanders into the lab and while he doesn't touch anything, he pauses on the equipment, thoughtfully.

Several LAB WORKERS watch him carefully and talk amongst themselves, one SCIENTIST approaches him as another SCIENTIST disappears into a nearby office.

SCIENTIST

Can I help you?

JONAS

Just wanted to see where Dr. Francis first isolated the influenza virus.

Jonas picks up a tube and examines it.

SCIENTIST

Well, it wasn't right *here*. This is where we place glassware that needs disinfecting.

Jonas carefully puts the tube down, to the resounding snickers of the growing group of onlookers.

TOMMY FRANCIS (42), appears in the doorway of the office and watches Jonas with some interest. Francis is thin, wears a typical mustache of the 1940's.

Jonas notices him immediately, and nods, somewhat embarrassed.

Francis hesitates and then approaches.

FRANCIS

I recognize you. You're one of our senior medical students.

JONAS

Yes, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I'm just curious about how you isolated influenza.

Francis looks around and the gawking SCIENTIST immediately return to their work, or at least pretend to.

FRANCIS

As you can see, I didn't isolate influenza. Like all research, it involved a heck of a lot of collaboration a good deal of time and a great deal of tedium.

JONAS

Yes.

Jonas gazes about the lab. It is divided up into separate stations; one for growing virus, another for centrifugation. Everything is meticulously clean and each SCIENTIST has her own work space.

JONAS

(quickly)

I'd like to work for you.

Francis tries not to reveal his amusement.

FRANCIS

I've had a lot of medical students claiming an interest in my research. They seem to think it's something quite glamorous. They're disappointed and gone within a week.

JONAS

I spent a year working for Professor Cannan.

(MORE)

JONAS (cont'd)  
I found a method for isolating  
large quantities of Streptococcus  
bacterium.

Francis' amusement is replaced with surprise.

JONAS  
(quickly)  
With a lot of help, time and  
tedium. Of course.

FRANCIS  
I just don't have a need for  
another...

JONAS  
I'll do it on a volunteer basis. I  
just want to soak up whatever I can  
while I'm still here.

Professor Francis looks at him a little stunned.

FRANCIS  
With your experience, you may find  
what I have to offer quite boring.

Now it's Jonas' turn to smile.

JONAS  
So you do have something I can do?

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE - DAY

Jonas enters, still in his white lab coat causing many stares  
from the COLLEGE KIDS that surround him.

Suddenly realizing, he bundles it up and goes to a table,  
alone.

He pulls out a note pad and writes quickly. Tearing out  
pages and beginning again.

A COUPLE sitting at the adjacent table cast a curious glance.

DONNA LINDSAY (21) gestures for her date, MIKE to quit  
staring at the pale and oblivious Jonas.

Both Mike and Donna are tan, well-dressed New Yorkers who  
have probably never even seen the neighborhood Jonas grew up  
in.

Mike snaps his fingers to alert the WAITER they're ready to order.

Donna smiles at the Waiter apologetically.

MIKE

Pork chops, a side of potatoes, not too heavy on the sauce.

WAITER

(thick Spanish accent)

And for you miss?

MIKE

She'll have the same.

DONNA

(quickly)

I actually want the steak.  
Potatoes are fine, and lots of that wonderful sauce.

Mike looks at her surprised as the waiter nods and walks away.

DONNA

You know I don't eat pork.

MIKE

So you actually follow all that Kosher stuff?

DONNA

Yeah, I follow all that kosher stuff.

MIKE

Then what's all this about wanting to be separate from your family?  
Do your own thing? Be your own 'entity', I think you said.

DONNA

It means I want to get out of the upper west side. Experience life.  
Meet people with different experiences and stories.

MIKE

Just go on a vacation.

Jonas has stopped scribbling and is not making much effort to hide that he's listening to their conversation.

DONNA

When our families went to the Riviera, we were never among people who didn't speak English. We saw the culture, but we were never part of it. I want to be among people who get dirt under their nails, speak their language, and...

Donna stops, realizing Mike is looking around for the waiter.

MIKE

We should have gone to Dempsey's. Go to a place full of Mexicans, you get Mexican service.

Not only was he not hearing her, but he was REALLY not hearing her.

Mike snaps his fingers again and the waiter races over.

MIKE

(to waiter)

How long does it take to pull a pork chop off the grill?

DONNA

Actually, can we cancel our order?

MIKE

Now, you don't want to eat here?

WAITER

Is everything alright, miss? He's working on your entree now.

DONNA

(in Spanish)

Your restaurant is excellent, it's my fault for bringing an ass to the table.

The waiter barely suppresses a smile, actually the entire surrounding wait-staff tries not to react.

MIKE

What did you say?

Donna gets up and starts walking for the door.

Mike quickly follows her.

MIKE

Hey, Donna, what's the matter?

Jonas has completely abandoned his note pad and stands to watch as Donna walks past the window and Mike hurries to try and stop her.

Actually, all of the servers at the restaurant watch the scene with a grin as well.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PLATFORM - NIGHT

An ENORMOUS CROWD remains CHEERING even as President Roosevelt wheels away into the curtains.

Basil paces somberly as he waits for him.

ROOSEVELT

Basil! When did you get in? Can you believe all of this insanity?

Basil looks out at the still cheering crowd, and despite his mood, he can't help but smile.

PEOPLE hustle to bring Roosevelt water, to powder him before Photographers capture him and to fix his hair.

Basil leans over his chair so that only Roosevelt can hear.

BASIL

We're going to have to close Warm Springs.

Roosevelt starts at this.

ROOSEVELT

Oh! Enough with the fuss.

Then, recovering.

ROOSEVELT

Give me a moment with Mr. O'Connor, please.

The ASSISTANTS back away.

BASIL

I've gone through the figures forwards and backwards. There's nothing to sustain it.

ROOSEVELT  
But people are still coming?

Basil hesitates.

BASIL  
Polio victims are still coming...

ROOSEVELT  
Then it's a success.

BASIL  
Regular vacationers are no longer coming. Without them, we can't afford the overhead.

ROOSEVELT  
(more to himself)  
Warm Springs is just as dear to me, if not more so, than all of this.

Basil looks out at the CROWD beyond the curtains.

BASIL  
People won't vacation amongst polio victims because they don't understand the disease. But they love you.

ROOSEVELT  
How does loving me do the rest of the world any good?

Basil smiles, the money-making calculator gleaming in his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Donna Lindsay rests on a towel amongst a group of WOMEN.

Now we can see that the woman from the restaurant not only has a mind of her own, but also a body. She's leggy, slim and buried in a book.

Jonas sees this too. He's a stark contrast to the other beach-goers with his pale skin.

He walks directly over to Donna as though this was his sole reason for coming anywhere near the water.

JONAS

You were in the restaurant the other night.

Donna doesn't look up from her book.

DONNA

Is that the best you can do? I think most everyone was in a restaurant the other night.

JONAS

You spoke Spanish.

Donna finally looks at him.

DONNA

Oh, that other night. Yeah, you look different without your lab coat, but I think I remember you.

JONAS

I agree with what you were saying.

DONNA

You speak Spanish?

JONAS

No. I meant earlier. About how when we experience the world we bring so much of our own culture with us, that it doesn't really count much for experience.

DONNA

Well, I don't think I put it quite like that, but it's nice to know someone was listening. Or eavesdropping.

JONAS

I didn't mean to eavesdrop, I just couldn't help but...

Donna smiles warmly.

DONNA

I'll take my ears anyway I can get them.

Jonas smiles back as Donna's friends look on with some curiosity.

DONNA

And what is it about you that made  
my rambling resonate? You're in  
school for archeology? History  
perhaps?

She suddenly grabs his hand and examines it, her friends  
exchange smirks but Jonas is taken with her abrupt mannerisms  
and confidence.

DONNA

No, your hands are too fine. An  
artist?

JONAS

A medical student.

Donna drops his hand, disappointed.

DONNA

And soon to be a doctor. With  
those hands probably a top-notch  
surgeon. One with altruistic ideas  
about saving people now, but you'll  
find the overhead and cost of a  
family too much to bear and abandon  
the ideals of your youth for a fine  
office on the upper West side, no  
doubt.

Donna's friends burst into giggles as Jonas doesn't quite  
know how to respond.

GIRL ONE

Her father's a doctor.

GIRL TWO

On the upper West Side, if you  
hadn't guessed already.

DONNA

A dentist.

Jonas recovers and kneels so he's eye level with Donna.

JONAS

I'm going into research.

DONNA

Researching what?

JONAS

Viruses. It's what I do now.

Donna raises a brow and smiles.

DONNA  
You do viruses?

The GIRLS exchange looks. It's just the right kind of weird to interest Donna Lindsay.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Mary, now in her twenties, is beautiful and vivacious, her red curly hair flowing every which way. She's propped up in bed.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL:

She's in a full leg cast.

As are all of the WOMEN in the room.

MARY  
Blake?

BLAKE (O.S.)  
Mary?

MARY  
It's time.

AERIAL VIEW OF HOSPITAL:

A corridor separates two rooms. One room contains MALE polio victims recovering from surgery, the opposite room the female polio victims.

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

BLAKE (20's), sandy blond hair, handsome but exceedingly pale turns on the radio.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Franklin Roosevelt sits in a chair next to a fireplace.

A microphone held near him, Basil looks on as an INTERVIEWER sits opposite.

INTERVIEWER

I'm here to bring you another evening of fireside chat with President Roosevelt. Mr. President?

ROOSEVELT

Good Evening, Friends. As many of you know, last night was the beginning of my birthday ball fund raiser and it I want to thank you for making it an enormous success.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Blake and all of the BOYS in the room are silent, ears glued to the radio.

A NURSE enters and immediately freezes, upon hearing the broadcast.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

How many of these balls were given?

ROOSEVELT (O.S.)

Nearly six thousand, and thousands of those who couldn't attend, returned our cards with dimes attached.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

And how much was actually donated?

ROOSEVELT (O.S.)

It exceeded a million.

The interviewer whistles but this is lost beneath the cheers from the boys in the room as well as those coming from the women's chamber.

MARY (O.S.)

Turn it up!

The room falls silent again.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

And can you tell us how these funds  
will be allocated?

ROOSEVELT (O.S.)

To cover the operations, housing  
and help support the recovery of  
hundreds of thousands of polio  
victims worldwide.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

The women's chamber is even quieter as they strain to hear  
the radio across the hall.

CLOSE ON:

Mary's face.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

And what is the next step?

ROOSEVELT (O.S.)

To stomp this disease flat.

Cheers break out throughout the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. SALK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Donna sits next to Jonas on the couch, they're holding hands.

Mary's parents Norma and Elijah sit on an opposite couch as  
Dora serves appetizers.

They too surround a large radio, listening, keenly.

ROOSEVELT (O.S.)

I accept this tribute. I thank you  
and bid you good night on what has  
been the happiest birthday I have  
ever known.

Daniel turns off the radio.

Norma has tears in her eyes.

DANIEL

Well, that is something.

JONAS

A research institute is being created with the funds.

DONNA

Maybe you'll get the opportunity to work there.

Dora sends a disapproving glance their way, and Donna releases Jonas' hand.

Jonas notices and quickly stands.

JONAS

We have good news of our own.

Everyone in the room stops as Jonas purposefully takes Donna's hand.

JONAS

Donna and I are to be married.

Daniel claps his hands delighted. Jonas' brothers, Herman and Lee exchange grins.

Only Dora is frozen for a moment and as all eyes wander her way, she pulls herself together.

DORA

Well, this calls for some real celebration.

She hurries into the kitchen and Jonas follows her.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dora is steadying herself on the icebox. Jonas and his brother, Lee enter the room.

Jonas puts a hand on her shoulder.

DORA

She isn't Jewish.

Dora doesn't look at him as she prepares a tray of drinks.

LEE

Ma, how many times do I have to tell you? She is Jewish.

DORA

She doesn't look Jewish?

LEE

How do you look Jewish?

Lee makes a face. Both his mom and brother, ignore him.

JONAS

I love her, that's the important thing. Would it even matter if she's human?

LEE

Human matters. It's more an issue of mechanics, really.

Jonas gives his brother a look to 'shut-up'.

JONAS

You are going to be so involved in the planning of this wedding after graduation.

DORA

(perks up)

So, you're waiting?

JONAS

One of her father's conditions, I need to be finished with medical school.

DORA

His 'conditions'? Well, I'm sure her mother will want to take care of the planning.

JONAS

No, she already said that weddings aren't really her thing.

Dora gets misty-eyed.

DORA

You told her parents first.

JONAS

Well, they kind of had to give permission.

DORA

Why wouldn't they give permission?  
You're perfect.

Lee bats his eyelashes at his 'perfect' brother.

JONAS

You can even choose my middle name  
for the wedding announcement.

Dora stops dropping ice long enough to look at her son.

DORA

What are you talking about?

JONAS

Donna's father thinks a middle  
initial looks more refined and will  
be better for my career in the long  
run.

DORA

What does a middle initial have  
anything? Ridiculous.

Dora exits and Lee looks at his brother and wipes away fake  
tears.

He then gives him a big hug that turns into a hair ruffling.

CLOSE ON:

MEDICAL DEGREE:

Awarded to Jonas Salk on June the Seventh.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT:

Jonas E. Salk & Donna R. Lindsay Announce Their Marriage On  
June the Eighth, 1939.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is asleep in the women's chamber and although Mary's  
legs are in full casts she holds the PHOTO of the wedding in  
front of her.

Everyone looks thrilled except for the two pairs of parents, who flank the Bride and Groom, who eye each other wearily. Mary smiles at the photo.

BLAKE (O.S.)  
(calls softly from  
opposite room)  
Mary?

MARY  
I'm awake.

BLAKE (O.S.)  
What do you want to do when you get  
out of here?

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF BOTH CHAMBERS:

Blake appears to be the only one awake in the men's room.

MARY  
Go to the movies. Listen to music,  
Eat ice cream.

BLAKE  
No, I mean for the rest of your  
life?

Long pause.

MARY  
Go to college. Maybe. Become a  
teacher. What do you want to do?

Blake holds up his hands; they've lost much of their dexterity with the virusl, one arm is withered.

BLAKE  
Play piano again.

A BOY, who wasn't asleep, lets a chuckle escape.

MARY  
If that's what you want, then I  
think, that's what you'll do.

BLAKE  
I think you'll make a fine teacher,  
Mary.

The BOY rolls his eyes.

BOY

Swell. Now that you've got the rest of your lives all mapped out, can you stop talking for this bit, so that I can sleep?

Mary puts the wedding announcement down as Blake lets his hand rest beside him.

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

A NURSE checks Mary's vital signs as she sleeps. She begins to wake up and she hands Mary a white cup.

NURSE

Drink all of it.

Mary drinks it, making a face.

NURSE

Now go back to sleep.

The Nurse starts for the door.

MARY

Wait. The man in the next room?

The nurse looks at her with a knowing grin.

NURSE

Blake.

MARY

Yes. What's he look like?

NURSE

Blond hair, freckles. He's attractive.

Mary turns over to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas walks with a clipboard from one patient to the next.

His badge designates him as STAFF PRESIDENT.

An unconscious PATIENT is brought in and several INTERNS move to stabilize him.

INTERN  
Salk?

Jonas moves to the patient's side and the MEDICS move back.

INTERN  
He's going down fast.

JONAS  
(to Medic)  
How was he when you found him?

MEDIC  
Like this, and we ain't never seen  
anything like it. Didn't respond  
to anything...

Jonas leans over the patient and sniffs.

JONAS  
Acetone.

Everyone looks at him surprised.

MEDIC  
He drank acetone?

JONAS  
No, he's secreting it. He's  
diabetic. Get some insulin in him.  
Now.

As an INTERN injects the patient the rest of the TEAM watch  
Salk move calmly to the next patient.

CUT TO:

INT. STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas flips through charts as a RADIO broadcasts news of the  
allied invasion in the background.

The HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR enters and places a pin on the  
table in front of Jonas.

CLOSE ON:

THE PIN, IT READS: SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

INT. STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas waits patiently for an explanation as the Administrator taps angrily on the pin.

ADMINISTRATOR

A few of the interns have taken to  
wearing these.

JONAS

Support our troops?

ADMINISTRATOR

Not here.

Jonas puts the medical charts down and looks at the Administrator in keen interest.

JONAS

Why shouldn't we support our troops  
here?

ADMINISTRATOR

Suppose a patient were to object?

JONAS

To our allies?

ADMINISTRATOR

They aren't part of the uniform.

JONAS

What do you want me to do?

ADMINISTRATOR

See that they're removed.

Jonas nods and watches the Administrator exit.

CUT TO:

INT. STAFF ROOM - DAY -LATER

Jonas is gathered with all of the INTERNS and holds up a box of the pins.

JONAS

The Hospital Administrator has informed me that several of you have started wearing these over your medical uniforms.

TWO INTERNS in the back touch their pins, sheepishly.

JONAS

The Administrator objects as it's not part of our uniform and they aren't hospital issued.

Jonas passes around the box of pins.

JONAS

Now they are hospital issued and if we all wear one, they will become part of the uniform.

INTERNS follow Jonas' lead in pinning them to their coats.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas walks from patient to patient. His pin is in place. Front and center on his jacket.

The entire room; NURSES, INTERNS, MEDICS and even several PATIENTS now have on pins.

The Administrator walks through and the room falls silent, all eyes on him, as he looks from pinned coat to pinned coat.

He nods a 'hello' at Jonas before he exits, saying nothing of the pins.

Jonas tries to ignore the smirks of the satisfied staff, as they see the Administrator isn't interested in pursuing the issue of the pins further. They've outnumbered him.

AN INTERN looks up from a PATIENT.

INTERN

Salk? I'm having a hard time figuring this one out, could you maybe come and smell him?

The room bursts into laughter. Jonas only smiles and continues with his work.

CUT TO:

INT. RESEARCH INSTITUTE MEETING ROOM - DAY

Jonas stands in a suit amongst a group of RESEARCHERS and returns papers to his attache.

His interview completed, and from the expression on his face, he didn't get the answer he was looking for.

RESEARCHER

We thank you for your time in coming down here, Dr. Salk, but as you can see we just don't have the need for another virologist right now.

Jonas nods politely.

JONAS

Yes, well please keep me posted if something does come along.

RESEARCHER

We certainly will.

Jonas shakes hands and exits.

EXT. RESEARCH INSTITUTE MEETING ROOM - DAY - SECONDS LATER

Jonas pauses and loosens his tie outside the door.

RESEARCHER (O.S.)

Next thing you know, they'll have us interviewing blacks.

Jonas turns quickly, about to burst back through the door.

Stops himself, and exits.

INT. JONAS SALK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jonas talks on the phone as Donna enters carrying a pile of books.

DONNA

Who is it?

Jonas covers the receiver.

JONAS

Tommy Francis.

JONAS

(talking into the phone)  
I've applied for every position in New York.

(MORE)

JONAS (cont'd)  
I'm either not experienced enough,  
or just not right for the position.

Donna looks up.

DONNA  
That's ridiculous.

JONAS  
I've already tried there.  
Considering the army, really.

Donna takes the phone from a surprised Jonas.

DONNA  
Tommy? How are you? Would  
appreciate it if you could do  
something to keep my husband out of  
the war he's trying so hard to  
enter?

Jonas unsuccessfully tries to recover the phone.

DONNA  
Huh. Seems the Foundation for  
Infantile Paralysis is funding  
everything these days. Never wanted  
to leave New York but Michigan is  
certainly better than a  
battleground.

Donna hands the phone back to Jonas and disappears into the kitchen.

DONNA  
Army needs an influenza vaccine.  
We'll need to go to Michigan.

He watches her walk away.

JONAS  
Tommy? I'm sorry. Maybe I will  
reconsider that offer. Can I call  
you back?

Jonas hangs up the phone and yells after Donna.

JONAS  
Have you thought about what you're  
saying? You love New York?

DONNA (O.S.)  
Yeah, well, I also agree with  
Tommy.

(MORE)

DONNA (O.S.) (cont'd)  
You're going to be more useful in  
this war if you're doing what you  
do best.

Jonas pauses at the window and looks at the buildings and the bustle of the New York City streets.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Jonas and Donna pull into the long driveway of a farm house. The tires squeal as they hit ice and the car refuses to go further.

Donna looks at Jonas, sighs and exits the car. She's thigh deep in snow.

Even the front door is partially buried beneath snow drifts.

Jonas attempts to open it but it's frozen shut. Donna looks around the yard. It's barren and white.

DONNA  
There's no wood.

Jonas kicks at the door.

JONAS  
What?

DONNA  
We don't have any wood for the  
stove.

JONAS  
I'll chop some.

DONNA  
You're going to chop wood?

JONAS  
Yes. It's all part of the joy of  
that comes with living in the  
country.

Jonas finally gets the door open and a LARGE RACCOON runs out and disappears into the trees.

DONNA

There are just so many joys to the living in the country, how will I ever come down from this state of euphoria?

Jonas gives her a smile and they enter the house, forcing the door shut behind them.

The door opens again and Jonas lets a SECOND RACCOON out.

CUT TO:

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY - LATER

Donna sits at the table reading THE NEW YORK TIMES. A wood burning stove and boxes cover the interior of the kitchen.

Jonas sits across from her.

Donna looks up from her paper wearily as the stove shoots flames and she starts to get up.

We now see that she has a small bump; she's pregnant.

Jonas waves at her to sit down and wrestles with the furnace, poking around in its belly and swearing under his breath.

It seems country living may be wearing him a bit thin and while Donna inwardly smiles at this, she seeks to distract him.

DONNA

Your old mentor is certainly happy to have you back. What is it that binds you and Francis?

JONAS

We're both methodical. I try and make sure everything he wants is taken care of even before he asks.

DONNA

Maybe, but there's something else that connects you.

JONAS

Perhaps our approach, it's different than all previous attempts at a vaccine and many people in the scientific community don't agree with it.

DONNA

How so?

JONAS

When I was first learning about viruses, I wondered if you could effectively vaccinate someone with killed virus given that it would be so much safer and was told you could not.

DONNA

Why?

JONAS

That's the thing, there was no reason. Francis, like me, thinks we can develop our influenza vaccine from the dead bug.

DONNA

I do too.

JONAS

Well, a lot of people are opposed to the idea.

DONNA

(muttering)

Especially if it's counter to their own research.

Donna resumes reading: Roosevelt's FIGHT AGAINST POLIO shows across the back page.

INT. CAMP WELLSTON - MICHIGAN - DAY

HUNDREDS of ARMY MEN have gathered and Jonas hurriedly enters the room.

The men are good natured but rowdy.

The NURSE of the barracks talks softly to Jonas as she leads him to the front of the room.

NURSE

I have to warn you, they aren't exactly excited about this. You're dealing with men who fought for their right not to be sent overseas.

JONAS  
Do they know what's being tested?

NURSE  
Not really.

Jonas looks at the young faces in the CROWD. He's only a few years older and he's not exactly comfortable with public speaking.

They use his hesitation against him.

ARMY MAN ONE  
They say you've cooked up some formul-ae and we're going to be your lab monkeys.

JONAS  
Okay, let's start with what you understand about the vaccine?

ARMY MAN TWO  
We know you're going to be giving us the flu. See how long we live.

ARMY MAN ONE  
I heard it's been taken from a Nazi's corpse.

The CROWD reacts to this and Jonas holds up a hand.

JONAS  
The dead part's right. That is, what we're injecting you with isn't any living material or anything that can hurt you.

ARMY MAN TWO  
And we're supposed to believe you because you said so?

JONAS  
No, you can believe me because I tried it on myself three months ago.

The CROWD erupts in MURMERS again, even the NURSE looks at him quickly.

JONAS  
Wouldn't be fair to test on you if I didn't trust it on myself, would it?

A SKINNY ARMY MAN raises his hand.

JONAS

Yes?

SKINNY ARMY MAN  
Is the vaccine only going to be  
good for these parts?

JONAS

What do you mean?

SKINNY ARMY MAN  
I'm being sent out.

MEN slap him on the back in sympathy, as being 'sent out' is considered far worse than being injected with strange and unknown concoctions in this group.

JONAS

Our lab has collected hundreds of strains from all over the world and you will be inoculated with every type, all in their inactive form.

ARMY MAN ONE

So you're saying I could get some sort of German fever from this shot?

JONAS

No. I'm saying you will never get most types of influenza once you have this shot.

ARMY MAN TWO

So you're giving us super powers?

Long pause.

JONAS

You will have resistance to hundreds of strains of influenza.

The SKINNY ARMY MAN looks around.

SKINNY ARMY MAN  
I'll do it.

ARMY MAN TWO  
Might as well too.

The Nurse smiles at Jonas as he walks to retrieve the syringes; he's won them.

NURSE

Now you just have to tell them that you'll be exposing them to the live virus after the vaccination.

Jonas looks at the strapping MEN slowly shoving their way into some sort of a line.

JONAS

Maybe I'll save that for next time.

CUT TO:

INT. LITTLE WHITE HOUSE - WARM SPRINGS, GEORGIA - DAY

Roosevelt sits at his desk sorting through mail. He's paler, skinnier. Literally wasting away.

Through the window we can see POLIO VICTIMS sun bathing or picnicking on the lawn.

A PAINTER quietly sets up an easel as Basil O'Connor enters the room. Basil is anxious but Roosevelt lights up at seeing him.

BASIL

Some of the new kids are already seated at their tables. They wanted front row seats to meet the president.

ROOSEVELT

But dinner isn't for another four hours?

BASIL

You try explaining that.

ROOSEVELT

We did it, didn't we? Warm Springs worked out alright.

Roosevelt returns to opening mail with his shaky hands.

ROOSEVELT

And to think, you didn't want any part of this 'retreat for cripples', but I didn't give you much choice, and you made her far better than I could have.

BASIL

I'm sorry I wasn't as excited about the idea as I should have been.

Roosevelt waves an arm without looking up.

ROOSEVELT

Well, excited or not, you came through.

BASIL

No. It...the March of Dimes may be the most significant thing I've ever been a part of.

Roosevelt looks at him quickly.

BASIL

Bettyann has contracted Polio.

ROOSEVELT

How is she?

BASIL

She'll make it through, but she's lost her job, and a good part of her spirit.

Roosevelt lets the mail drop and leans back, letting this sink in.

ROOSEVELT

Every day I am just so thankful that this happened to me and not one of my kids. I am so very sorry.

Basil walks to the window to hide his emotion. He watches the polio victims outside but this time the money calculator is off, and he sees them.

BASIL

We're not doing enough.

ROOSEVELT

I'm sure you're doing everything you can for her.

BASIL  
No. The March of Dimes.

Roosevelt smiles to himself as the room begins to fill with people. His SECRETARY approaches him.

SECRETARY  
Sir, we'll need you by the fireplace for the portrait.

Roosevelt touches his head, as if in pain, but he smiles at Basil through the commotion.

ROOSEVELT  
Somehow, I always knew you were going to be the right one.

BASIL  
For what?

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE - DAY

Mary walks through campus wearing a noticeably longer skirt than many other STUDENTS, but it still reveals leg braces near a shoe that's slightly taller than the other.

Even with all of this, she has a limp.

Blake sits on a bench and waits for her. His shriveled hand is hidden beneath his jacket.

THREE COLLEGE STUDENTS shove past and she nearly loses her book bag.

COLLEGE STUDENT  
The war has made them so desperate, they're letting in gimps.

She looks directly at them and smiles, while Blake looks as though he may kill them.

She slides in next to him and pulls him back.

MARY  
If they see it bothers you, they'll never stop.

When he looks at her, she sees he's been crying.

MARY  
What is it?

BLAKE  
Roosevelt died at Warm Springs  
today.

CUT TO:

EXT. WARM SPRINGS, GEORGIA - DAY - LATER

CROWDS have filled the sidewalks. Many POLIO VICTIMS have come as well.

Tears and embraces fill the street as a LONG BLACK CAR with two American flags slowly passes.

Basil stands off to one side. He isn't watching the car, but the crowd.

While two KIDS rambunctiously play on one side of the street, two POLIO KIDS stand, hands locked, watching the car.

He scans the ADULTS in the crowd and sees that the healthy adults stand nearer to the curb, the POLIO ADULTS have been pushed to the rear and struggle to maintain their footing there.

Finally he turns to watch the car, his expression blank, still in shock.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Jonas works at the stove. His son PETER (3) sits at the table. Peter pours ketchup on his plate and then draws pictures in it with his fingers.

PETER  
When is mom coming back?

Jonas takes in the ketchup covered kid.

JONAS  
Soon, I hope.

PETER  
What if I don't want a baby brother?

JONAS

Then you should have said something  
nine months ago.

PETER

Nine months ago? What's for  
breakfast?

JONAS

Eggs.

PETER

We had eggs yesterday.

JONAS

I make superb eggs.

PETER

That's the only thing you know how  
to make, isn't it?

Jonas pauses on Peter for a moment.

JONAS

In the kitchen.

PETER

(skeptical)

What can you make that's not in the  
kitchen?

A THUD hits the door and Jonas goes to open it.

JONAS (O.S.)

Vaccines.

Peter laughs.

PETER

(more skeptical)

What?

He returns to drawing in the ketchup as Jonas comes in with  
the paper.

Roosevelt's death is the headline and from his expression,  
it's the first news he's caught of it.

Basil's face is amongst the crowd of mourners in the photo.

PETER  
What's wrong, daddy?

CUT TO:

INT. INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS -  
HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Basil O'Connor looks at Newspaper photo of Jonas Salk and  
Tommy Francis. It announces the success of their flu  
vaccination using dead virus.

His daughter, BETTYANN (30), quietly talks on a phone behind  
the desk.

She stands with the help of a walker and places files in a  
box.

BETTYANN  
Daddy. The numbers are in from  
last year.

He looks at his daughter.

BETTYANN  
Twenty-seven-thousand cases  
minimum.

Before Basil has time to react, HENRY WEAVER, a sharp-  
looking, amiable man walks into the office and nods politely  
at Bettyann.

He sees Basil holding the picture of Salk.

WEAVER  
Well?

BASIL  
He looks young.

WEAVER  
He is young. And the young are  
always looking for something  
better.

BASIL  
But can he do it?

WEAVER  
Helped do it with influenza.

BASIL  
Polio's a different monster  
altogether.

Bettyann quietly moves with her walker so that she can better hear the conversation.

WEAVER  
What about Sabin?

WEAVER  
Sabin will attend the conferences  
and consult but he won't be  
interested in work that involves so  
much tedium.

BASIL  
What makes you think Salk will sign  
on?

WEAVER  
Just took a position in Pittsburgh.  
It's a poor facility and he's going  
to be desperate for funds. Did you  
read his ideas on polio?

BASIL  
Unusual.

WEAVER  
But it shows he's hungry and isn't  
afraid to think outside of  
mainstream academia.

BASIL  
Which can be dangerous. We just  
have to remember the Brodie scandal  
and...

BETTYANN  
I'm all for someone who has new  
ideas about our disease. None of  
the old ones seem to be working.

Both Basil and Weaver look at Bettyann as she struggles to hold her weight over her walker.

CUT TO:

INT. PITTSBURGH MEDICAL LABORATORY - DAY

Jonas and Donna walk through the dank, cramped basement at Pittsburgh.

It more closely resembles a morgue than a working virology lab, and indeed it is next door to one.

DONNA  
Where is it?

JONAS  
You're looking at it.

Donna turns and looks at the cramped room that might better serve as a storage closet.

DONNA  
Francis said you could come back  
anytime, right?

JONAS  
The nice thing about nothing, is  
that it's completely yours.

Donna doesn't look like she's a complete believer in this philosophy as she blows soot off of a table.

DONNA  
This stuff is everywhere.

JONAS  
I'll lobby for more space, of  
course.

DONNA  
And a wrecking ball. At least  
they're giving you funds.

Jonas looks at her quickly and walks toward the morgue.

JONAS  
If I can get this space too...

DONNA  
They're not giving you funds?

JONAS  
I have to lobby private  
institutions.

DONNA  
Bastards.

JONAS  
Donna.

DONNA  
Empty promises are what they made.

JONAS  
This was the only promise I got.

DONNA  
Why? Because other places didn't  
like your upbringing?

JONAS  
If I had gotten what I wanted then,  
it would have been a greater  
tragedy than my not getting what I  
wanted. The same could be true  
again.

DONNA  
What in God's name can Pittsburgh  
possibly give you?

Jonas leads her to a back staircase.

CUT TO:

INT. PITTSBURGH POLIO WARD - DAY -LATER

Donna and Jonas enter the ward and Donna immediately stops.

The corridor is lined with DOZENS OF CHILDREN encased in iron lungs; the capsules are large, predominantly metal and only their heads protrude.

Their eyes follow Donna and Jonas as he slowly leads her through the ward.

JONAS  
The virus paralyzes them and  
prevents them from breathing.  
These machines mimic the action of  
breathing.

DONNA  
How long will they be on them?

Jonas leads her around the corner and Donna sees HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN inside the iron lungs.

She tries to suppress her shock as the heads turn and watch them.

JONAS

A few weeks for those who survive,  
forever for others.

DONNA

This is why you've come?

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - WEXFORD, PENNSYLVANIA - NIGHT

Jonas cuts Peter's hair while Donna types at the kitchen table.

Peter sits perfectly still; in complete fear of the sharp shears snipping methodically around his head, but with trust in his father.

Donna has a stack of LETTERS next to her.

A baby, DARRELL, eats SPAM in his high chair; the container on the table.

Jonas nods in that direction.

JONAS

Want to get rid of that before mom comes downstairs?

DONNA

I think this is better.

Donna pulls the sheet from the typewriter and reads aloud.

DONNA

Dear Dr. Lauffer, if we are going to have a working virology laboratory by October we are going to need a great deal more funding...

JONAS

I'm tired of having to beg for money.

DONNA  
That's what you signed up for.

JONAS  
I'm a researcher.

DONNA  
This is part of the job of being a  
researcher.

Dora, a little older, but still unmistakably Jonas' mother, enters the kitchen with a LARGE ENVELOPE.

DORA  
Who's this Doctor Weaver?

Donna quickly scoops up the spam can and tucks it away in a cupboard already full of spam.

DONNA  
He's responded?

Donna picks up Darrell as he tries putting another handful in his mouth and he begins crying.

Jonas tears open the envelope.

DORA  
Who is he?

JONAS  
He's the director of research for  
the Foundation of Infantile  
Paralysis.

DORA  
What does he want?

Jonas scans the letter.

JONAS  
He wants me to be part of their  
typing project.

DORA  
Their what?

Dora picks up the scissors and Peter's eyes grow terrified as his grandma begins snipping.

JONAS

They want to know how many different types of Polio they're dealing with and how frequently they occur in different regions.

DORA

Does that interest you?

JONAS

It's tedious, laborious and mindless, but it could, eventually, lead to better opportunities.

DONNA

Typing? That's his offer? What about work on the vaccine?

JONAS

It's what's needed before a vaccine can even be considered.

DONNA

But that means years of working with live Polio?

Jonas nods.

DONNA

That's just too dangerous.

Jonas pauses on this.

JONAS

Yes. We'll need to ask for more health insurance. Maybe life.

He leaves the kitchen, lost in thought, and Donna follows him in disbelief.

Dora puts down the scissors.

DORA

There. How's that?

Peter examines himself in the reflection of the toaster and sees that he no longer has more than a millimeter of hair.

DORA

Now how about some tea?

Dora opens the cupboard and gasps at the containers of spam.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jonas sits at his desk to write as Donna hovers holding baby Darrell.

DONNA

What if the boys are exposed? Have you thought about that?

JONAS

Yes. I have. They could be exposed tomorrow at the pool, or at school, or at the grocery store. We have no way of preventing it or protecting them from what may happen.

Jonas stands and paces as he talks.

JONAS

I think about that every time I enter the polio ward. You and I are possibly already resistant since we've avoided it this long. Perhaps it entered and left our bodies when we were children without wreaking the horrendous havoc it does on others.

He holds up the letter from Weaver.

JONAS

This is the only way I know how to protect our children.

Pause.

JONAS

How to protect any child. It is a risk, but risks, I've found, usually pay off.

DONNA

Fine.

Dora and Peter enter the living room.

DONNA

But you're going to wear a lab coat and gloves the second you walk into that laboratory.

(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)  
You'll remove your shoes before  
entering this house and go straight  
to the bathroom to change and wash  
up before touching the children or  
anything else in this house.

Donna walks upstairs with the baby. Dora watches her; she's  
in many ways reminiscent of herself as a young mother.

DORA  
Just get her to stop feeding that  
kid garbage and she's practically  
perfect.

DONNA (O.S.)  
You think we want him eating that?  
A neighbor gave it to him and now  
you should try telling him no.

Dora flushes in a rare moment as Jonas returns to writing.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - STATLER HOTEL - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Jonas walks into a room full of SCIENTISTS and sees his old  
mentor, Tommy Francis, talking near a poster for the National  
Foundation of Infantile Paralysis.

Jonas starts for Tommy when Henry Weaver steps forward and  
asks the men to take their seats.

Jonas finds his seat marked by a name plate. He sits down as  
the lights dim and Weaver begins speaking from the front.

WEAVER  
Thank you for coming. We have  
assembled the leaders in Polio  
research and I'm aware that some of  
you have never met. I would like  
to take a moment to introduce Dr.  
Paul of Yale, who first showed that  
there is more than one type of  
Polio Virus two decades ago.

Weaver points in DR. PAUL's direction and he smiles modestly  
at the curious eyes.

WEAVER  
I would also like to introduce  
Doctors Bodian and Howe who first  
showed the infection can occur  
through oral administration.

(MORE)

WEAVER (cont'd)

Also, here, we have Dr. Albert Sabin who recently created a vaccine against encephalitis and has been working with polio since his return from the war.

Jonas looks at DR. ALBERT SABIN (43), carefully. He's tall, wears a meticulously groomed mustache and appears more aware of his contributions than perhaps anyone.

He carries none of the modesty Dr. Paul exhibited, and he seems bored and a little irritated by the meeting.

Weaver continues with his key introductions.

WEAVER

Let us also acknowledge Dr. Armstrong, who was able to save a great deal of cost by showing the virus could be grown in cotton rats. Also, let me introduce Dr. Isabel Morgan who has already begun the typing project at Johns Hopkins.

The only woman amongst the Scientists, DR. MORGAN, nods politely and smiles. However, that smile quickly fades as Weaver continues.

WEAVER

Gentleman, do you believe it is important to determine the regional types of poliomyelitis, and if you deem it important then have methods been developed to permit a solution to this task?

DR. SABIN

It is clear that the only way to do the study is to infect the animal with a known virus first and then inject it with an unknown virus...

Jonas sits a little more erect, he wants to say something but he's restraining himself as he's well aware that he's the youngest scientist in the room.

DR. TURNER does not have this restraint.

DR. TURNER

Why not reverse it?

DR. SABIN

What?

JONAS

Yes! Along that line...

DR. SABIN

Excuse me. Let me hear what Dr. Turner has to say.

Jonas slumps back, a bit embarrassed.

DR. TURNER

Why not give the animal a low dose of unknown virus and then once it has had time to generate a sufficient antibody response, we can inject it with just the right amount of known virus. If it resists infection, we know the type. It could save animals, cost, time and make things much easier.

JONAS

It could, and in view of the fact that it makes very little difference how much virus you use to infect the animal...

DR. SABIN

It makes a world of difference.

JONAS

But the only relevant measure is how much antibody is in the blood, isn't it?

DR. SABIN

Dr. Salk, you should know better than to ask a question like that.

The room bustles about as all eyes move from Sabin to Jonas, and Jonas recognizing his youth and being naturally more polite, lowers his head.

DR. SABIN

It simply would not work. Now if I may continue...

CLOSE ON:

Jonas calculates numbers on a piece of paper.

CUT TO:

## INT. PITTSBURGH LABORATORY - DAY

Jonas holds the same piece of paper as he talks to a group of a DOZEN SCIENTISTS. His laboratory has changed immensely; he now has the entire basement and it's lined with monkey cages and lab benches.

The conditions are pristine.

Dr. Weaver enters the laboratory behind Jonas but he doesn't interrupt and Jonas doesn't notice him.

JONAS

We'll first infect the monkeys with a low dose of unknown virus and once sufficient time has permitted an antibody reaction we'll inject our fixed amount of known virus. Does anyone see any problems with this procedure?

He scans his group and no one says anything.

JONAS

Good. Based on my calculations it could mean only a year on this project and it will save thousands of monkeys.

Jonas heads for his office and Dr. Weaver quietly follows him.

## INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jonas looks up, surprised, as Weaver enters.

JONAS

Dr. Weaver.

WEAVER

I see you've got her up and running. I wanted to make sure everything had arrived?

JONAS

Yes.

WEAVER

Dr. Sabin wouldn't agree with how you're doing this.

JONAS  
No.

WEAVER  
You had better hope it works.

Dr. Weaver turns to exit but Jonas quickly stands.

JONAS  
Dr. Weaver?

Dr. Weaver turns, surprised.

JONAS  
I'm sure you're aware of Dr. Enders  
feat in growing poliovirus in  
tissue cultures?

WEAVER  
Of course.

JONAS  
His methodology is going to save  
thousands of animals. Not to  
mention enormous costs.

WEAVER  
Let me guess? You want some?

JONAS  
If we could get just a smidgen of  
his supply we could get to work in  
immunizing the monkeys as we  
continue the typing project.

Weaver's a man who knows well how to say 'no' without doing  
so directly.

WEAVER  
Perhaps you should write to Dr.  
Enders and see?

JONAS  
Without the foundation's approval I  
don't think Enders will...

WEAVER  
Well, you are certainly free to  
try, Dr. Salk.

Jonas sinks.

JONAS  
Thank you, sir.

Jonas sits down to write at his desk and as soon as Weaver exits he picks up the phone.

JONAS  
Dean McEllroy? Dr. Jonas Salk here. I'm wondering if you can help drudge up some funding to help our lab acquire equipment necessary to grow our the virus in tissue cultures?

Jonas beams.

JONAS  
No. This research would be attributed solely to Pittsburgh University, of course.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Mary stands amongst a line of teachers greeting students as they shuffle into the auditorium.

MARY  
Johnny, come here.

JOHNNY (8) obliges and she smooths his hair.

MARY  
Now break a leg!

He looks at her in confusion.

MARY  
It's theatre talk for be wonderful.

JOHNNY  
Oh. Thanks Mrs. Silberstein.

He runs ahead to join the KIDS already inside.

A young girl in leg braces, PATSY (9), makes her way inside with the help of her parents. Her face lights up when she sees Mary.

Mary goes to them immediately and we see that beneath her long skirt, her braces remain as well.

Patsy looks at her parents.

PATSY  
This is her.

PATSY'S MOTHER  
Patsy just adores your class. We  
wish you could move up with her to  
the third grade.

MARY  
(to Patsy)  
Are you nervous.

Patsy nods.

MARY  
Remember what I told you?

Patsy takes a deep breath.

PATSY  
The worst thing that can happen is  
that I won't play at all, even if I  
play poorly people will love me  
because music isn't what defines  
me.

MARY  
How are you going to play?

PATSY  
I'm going to try and play well.

MARY  
I think so too.

The first few chords mark the beginning of the performance  
and Blake motions for Mary hurry inside.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Mary and Blake sit at the back of the auditorium where  
there's more space for them to sit and they don't have to go  
down the wretched steps.

As soon as she slides in, he points at the Teachers at the  
front.

BLAKE  
You should be down there.

MARY

They know I'm here for them.

He hands her a program and looks at her thoughtfully.

BLAKE

You did it.

MARY

Yes. We were cutting it close, but we pulled it together. I think they'll do well.

BLAKE

No. I mean you did it. You're not only a teacher, you're probably the best one here.

Mary flashes a quick smile and the curtains rise to reveal Patsy seated in a chair.

Her leg braces covered with a long skirt.

She holds a violin to her ear and slowly begins to play. It's beautiful. She plays better than well. She plays amazingly.

Mary glances at Blake and sees he's as mesmerized but he's also lost in his own thoughts.

She notices his jacket covering his withered arm and it always is in public venues and she becomes almost sad, despite the effort of Patsy's performance.

CUT TO:

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

Jonas sits at his desk with newspapers laid out before him.

CLOSE ON:

Newspaper Headlines-

33,000 Struck with Poliomyelitis.

This County is Ready if Polio Epidemic Hits.

Pittsburgh Part of Fight Against Polio.

Jonas scans the article detailing his work on the typing project and sets it aside.

He removes his white lab coat and walks through the laboratory.

His office is no longer in the basement.

FIFTY SCIENTISTS move busily around the more spacious first floor laboratory, working with test tubes containing cell cultures.

The lab is immaculate and Jonas stops near a YOUNG TECH and holds up a tube.

JONAS  
It's cloudy.

YOUNG TECH  
Only a little cloudy.

JONAS  
A little contamination is far too much.

The Tech nods and continues out the door.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - LATER

Jonas pulls his car into a small town in the country.

A sign reads: CHILDREN UNDER SIXTEEN NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THIS TOWN.

He drives through main street and it is nearly a ghost town. There aren't any children playing outside.

The public pool is deserted.

He pulls into a high school parking lot.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Scared parents have packed the auditorium.

Jonas paces behind the curtains.

Basil O'Connor and Henry Weaver slip into the back row, unnoticed by Jonas.

Jonas goes to the lectern.

JONAS

We are not in the midst of an epidemic.

Relief permeates the room.

JONAS

There were no more than a hundred cases in your county last summer and that certainly doesn't qualify as an epidemic.

PARENT

That was still a hundred too many!

Jonas takes a step away from the lectern and looks out over the crowd of scared faces.

He moves closer to the crowd, and speaks more thoughtfully.

JONAS

I've been working directly with Poliomyelitis for some time. I think people are acting unnecessarily fearful and it's leading to a lot of silly superstition.

PARENT

Are you working on a cure?

Jonas pauses on this.

JONAS

I do think a solution is coming and that it may come very soon.

PARENT

But are you working on this solution?

CLOSE ON:

Weaver and O'Connor talk amongst themselves at the back of the room.

WEAVER

He's finished every sample and he's done it well ahead of the other labs.

O'CONNOR  
I read his request for vaccine  
funding.

WEAVER  
Well?

O'CONNOR  
Send him more samples to type.  
He's jumping the gun on this one.

With that O'Connor slides out of the crowd and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Jonas shakes hands with the departing parents and Weaver  
waits for him.

WEAVER  
Tough crowd.

JONAS  
Can't say I wouldn't be as scared  
if I didn't know the science.

WEAVER  
We're going to send you more  
samples to type.

JONAS  
What of my other request?

WEAVER  
The Brodie vaccine left a mark.

JONAS  
That was over twenty years ago, and  
it could have been prevented. I  
can assure you, I wouldn't start  
human testing until...

WEAVER  
Stick to the typing. It's what we  
really need.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT - LATER

Jonas enters his lab and even this late it's still half full  
of RESEARCHERS.

A DOCTOR steps in front of him as he makes his way back to the office.

DOCTOR

Dr. Salk? Was the meeting alright?

JONAS

Yes. I've also heard from the foundation. They're going to be sending more samples to type.

Jonas continues for his office but stops again.

JONAS

I encourage several of you to set aside some time to work on chemically modifying the virus and testing it for vaccination properties.

DOCTOR

The foundation said that?

JONAS

I'm saying that.

The doctor nods, knowing what he's instructed and returns to the laboratory bench.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - COPENHAGEN - DAY

Jonas stands at the lectern as a crowded room including international scientific figures such as NIELS BOHR in the audience.

It's clear from the people in attendance that polio falls at the heart of international concern; only two dozen are from the states.

Among those from the states, include Dr. Albert Sabin, and he watches keenly from the front row.

JONAS

The direct results of the typing study show that eighty-five percent fall into the Type I category, twelve percent were the most dangerous and paralytic Type II and the remaining were Type III.

Jonas nods as Dr. Sabin rises to speak.

SABIN

However, it remains to be seen  
whether or not there exist  
subtypes.

JONAS

I know that you have enthusiasm for  
the subtype theory, but I worked  
extensively with just this sort of  
thing with influenza and  
poliomyelitis shows none of these  
characteristics. I believe looking  
for these would be a waste of time  
and resources when we could be  
working on a vaccine.

Sabin reddens.

SABIN

I do not have what you call  
'enthusiasm' for subtypes. I do  
know that you have enthusiasm for  
work on a killed vaccine and I  
think it would be a very temporary  
solution that will turn out to be  
very costly, perhaps in lives as  
well as money.

Basil O'Connor is seated next to Sabin and he gives him a  
polite tug to remind him that this isn't the place to argue  
differences in scientific philosophy.

Sabin reddens further, but he sits down.

CUT TO:

INT. QUEEN MARY SHIP - NIGHT

Jonas sits across from Basil O'Connor and next to his  
daughter, Bettyann. Bettyann remains crippled by polio and  
seems withdrawn, despite the beautiful surroundings of the  
ship.

While Basil exchanges polite words with his neighbors, he  
also listens as Jonas draws his daughter into conversation.

JONAS

How long have you suffered from  
polio?

BETTYANN

Almost a year.

JONAS

How are you doing?

BETTYANN

Not as well as I wish.

JONAS

I think that is said of everyone after only a year. But I've seen some of the most paralytic cases completely alter after several years of dedication to physical therapy.

Bettyann perks up a little at this.

BETTYANN

Really? Were they also damaged enough to need leg braces?

JONAS

They were in an iron lung.

BETTYANN

But that's not common?

JONAS

I think the state of mind has a lot more to do with it than the state of the body.

BETTYANN

Perhaps.

BASIL

Bettyann, Jonas has ideas about developing a vaccine and doing so this year.

BETTYANN

Really?

Basil good-naturedly pokes fun of Jonas about his grandiose proposal.

JONAS

(quickly)

Well, I did.

(MORE)

JONAS (cont'd)  
However, I haven't received the  
funding or support I would need to  
undertake such a project.

Bettyann looks at her father.

BETTYANN  
Why in the world not?

JONAS  
There's too much dispute about the  
best methods to go about developing  
a vaccine and even whether a  
vaccine is the best route.

BASIL  
We may someday have a vaccine, but  
I'm afraid it isn't going to be  
this year.

BETTYANN  
Why does it matter how it's  
developed? Everyone should be  
working on it as they know best.

Bettyann looks from her dad to Jonas and from the silence, it  
appears he could get his funding, yet.

CLOSE ON:

Newspaper Headlines-

Polio Infects 57,000 and Rising.

3,000 Children a Week Infected By Polio.

Thousands of Summer Camps Will Be Closed.

Movie Houses Vacant Due to Fear of Polio Spread.

And finally...

Salk Team Dedicated to Creating a Vaccine.

INT. JONAS SALK'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jonas flips over the paper as his three boys; Peter, Darrell  
and Jonathan now fill the house along with several neighbor  
KIDS.

He seems immune to the noise and Donna walks in with one of  
Jonas' scientific papers.

She hands it to him and he sees she's crossed out entire passages, rewritten things here and there.

DONNA  
It's better. Don't you think?

Jonas smiles and tucks it in his pocket.

She pauses on the boys running through the house.

DONNA  
I think you're ready for human trials.

JONAS  
It's a problem of whether or not the foundation will say we're ready.

DONNA  
Why do they always have to slow everything down? Doesn't the head have a daughter who...

JONAS  
The Kolmer and Brodie vaccine.

DONNA  
What?

JONAS  
In nineteen-thirty-five they worked on a polio vaccine. Only the virus wasn't completely killed. Many children became ill and no one was protected from polio.

DONNA  
But that was nearly twenty years ago?

JONAS  
It's a horrible coincidence that we're using the same chemical to kill it.

DONNA  
But you're screening it in animals to make certain it's killed. There's no way this could happen again.

JONA

I still need to test it on children with polio first. They'll already have resistance so there's no way it can hurt them, and I can see if it triggers the desired level of antibody response.

DONNA

Will they let you do that?

JONAS

Yes, a rehabilitation school signed on this morning.

Jonas starts for the door, but stops before exiting.

JONAS

Dr. Albert Sabin is coming through here prior to the Hershey conference.

DONNA

Your best friend? He hasn't had enough of you?

Jonas tries not to laugh.

JONAS

I think he wants to know what we've got.

DONNA

Well, we won't tell him. It will be worth it to see the look on his face at the conference. Can I come?

JONAS

We don't even know anything to tell him.

DONNA

It will work.

Donna scoops up the youngest, Jonathan, and watches the other KIDS now playing the yard. A NEIGHBOR GIRL has on a pair of leg braces.

INT. WATSON SCHOOL - DAY

All ages of GIRLS line the corridor.

Most are in leg braces or large wicker wheelchairs.

Jonas kneels beside one of the oldest girls; she too is in a wheelchair.

She eyes the large syringe.

JONAS  
I hope you're not scared?

She looks scared but quickly shakes her head.

GIRL  
I'm more scared than my little  
sisters might get it.

JONAS  
Is that why you've volunteered?

She nods.

JONAS  
Are you ready?

Jonas swabs her arm and injects the serum. He quickly presses a cotton swab to the place.

JONAS  
Do you feel any different?

She shakes her head.

JONAS  
You won't, not until we're clear to  
give this to your sisters and it  
will be because of you.

She wheels off past the waiting line of tense-looking girls.

GIRL  
It's easy! Didn't feel a thing.

They relax a little bit as the line shuffles forward.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - HERSHEY HOTEL - HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA -  
DAY

Jonas and Dr. Albert Sabin arrive together and Tommy Francis, Weaver and O'Connor all exchange looks of surprise as they seem perfectly amiable in each other's company.

Sabin goes to greet several Scientists as Jonas goes to the front of the room.

Jonas clears his throat, indicating people should take their seats.

JONAS

I've made some progress with various formalin-inactivated viral preparations.

Jonas looks out over the room as a silence falls over everyone.

JONAS

I've tested it on one hundred and sixty adults and children and the antibodies it produces seem very promising.

Several SCIENTISTS immediately stand to congratulate him.

Dr. Isabel Morgan breaks into applause.

DR. MORGAN

Finally, we have an actual vaccine!

Calling it by this formal name causes even Jonas to pause and he looks out over the room.

CLOSE ON:

Dr. Albert Sabin. Frozen to his seat or so it seems, finally recovers himself.

DR. SABIN

Wait. We know nothing of this study and a hundred and sixty adults and children, many of whom may already be immune tells us nothing worth celebrating. We have no idea if the effects will last and with a killed virus they very likely won't...

He's too late. Jonas is quickly surrounded by other questions and Sabin's arguments pass without notice.

JONAS

I'll be the first to admit that these are very preliminary studies and we are a long way off from mass production. Dr. Sabin's correct the vaccine hasn't yet been tested on a random population...

But Dr. Sabin is already headed out the door and Jonas is swept aside by Weaver and O'Connor.

WEAVER

It's important that the information conveyed today not leave this room until further notice, but I do believe we have just cause for celebration.

He turns to Jonas.

WEAVER

When do you think it can be tested on the 'random population?'

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS SALK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas comes home to find Jonathan waiting for him. The other boys are absent and the house is quiet.

Donna enters the room.

JONAS

Where are they?

DONNA

I made the mistake of telling them.

Then lower.

DONNA

Darrell is under the bed and Peter has somehow managed to have squeezed behind the refrigerator.

JONAS

The refrigerator?

DONNA

They don't like your needles, Dr. Salk.

(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)  
And if they hear Jonathan scream it  
will be even harder, so we need  
them first.

JONAS  
I'll get Darrell, you get Peter.

DONNA  
Maybe we should leave them a bit.  
Quietest this house has been in  
awhile.

Jonas goes upstairs and within a few minutes there's a SHRILL SCREAM and then nothing.

Jonas comes back down and scoops up Jonathan.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Donna has pulled an arm out from behind the refrigerator and that's all Jonas needs.

He quickly swabs it and injects it.

JONAS  
None of our boys are going to get  
polio. Ever.

Peter makes very little noise and as soon as it's over he's out the door.

Donna and Jonas look at Jonathan in trepidation. He's the tough one, because he's too little to understand the lasting importance of this small torture.

DONNA  
It won't seem fair to go to the pool, or to send them to school and to not carry the same fears as the other parents.

JONAS  
It's necessary. We can't have it leak if I find it can't be scaled up.

CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS - HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Basil O'Connor sits at his desk with a paper in front of him.

CLOSE ON:

The Headline: Salk has Formulated a Polio Vaccine.

Jonas paces in front of Basil.

JONAS

This is the worst thing that could have happened to us. I don't know how it leaked...

BASIL

Johns Hopkins.

JONAS

What?

BASIL

Someone from the conference talked to a journalist visiting Hopkins.

JONAS

Who?

BASIL

Does it matter, now?

JONAS

Well, it makes it look like I'm a publicity chaser. And that I have a flawless vaccine that can be delivered to the masses. People are going to expect something I can't deliver in this moment.

BASIL

What do you think should be done?

JONAS

I think I should make an official statement, dispel any myths about what we actually have.

Basil leans back and smiles at this thirty-nine-year old who could possibly wipe out polio for good but who is too controlled to state anything he isn't absolutely certain of.

BASIL

Could you make a radio statement?

JONAS

If I had some time.

BASIL

I'll arrange for you to go on a nationwide program by the end of the week.

Jonas starts out the door.

BASIL

Jonas?

He turns and looks at Basil.

BASIL

Is it possible that we could start field tests by next year?

JONAS

It's....possible.

BASIL

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. CBS RADIO - NIGHT

Jonas and Basil are shown into a tiny room and are seat in front of microphones.

ANNOUNCER

Tonight we bring you a special program that we believe will be of great interest to families across America...

CUT TO:

INT. DORA AND DANIEL'S HOME - NIGHT

It appears Dora has invited half the neighborhood as PEOPLE stand frozen, listening to the cranked radio.

JONAS (V.O.)

Thank you.

DORA

It's Jonas!

JONAS (V.O.)  
Studies are indeed in progress for  
a vaccination against  
poliomyelitis...

CLOSE ON:

Norma and Elijah, older, are pressed against a back wall.  
Arms locked as they listen to the announcement.

JONAS (V.O.)  
We now have an experimental vaccine  
that appears to be safe...

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Blake and Mary sit across from each other in a nearly empty diner. They listen to a radio at their booth. He reaches for her hand as they hear the broadcast.

JONAS (V.O.)  
And induces antibody formation  
against all three types of polio  
virus...

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS SALK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Donna stands next to the radio, a coffee cup in one hand.

JONAS (V.O.)  
These results are preliminary and  
many more experiments remain, yet  
there is justification for  
optimism.

Peter scampers into the kitchen with Darrell on his heels and they notice a tear running down their mom's cheek, as she quickly turns off the radio.

PETER  
Why are you crying?

DONNA  
Because I'm so happy.

DARRELL

Weird.

Just as quickly, they scamper out.

INT. JONAS SALK'S KITCHEN - DAY

Donna, sleepily comes into the kitchen and answers the ringing phone.

DONNA

Hello? No. He's at the lab.

She hangs up and it starts ringing again.

DONNA

I'm sorry, he can't be reached.

She hangs up and heads for the tea kettle when it rings again.

Before she can react there's a knock at the door. She peeks around the corner and sees THREE NEIGHBORS trying to see inside.

She quickly pours her coffee before reacting to either sound.

DONNA

And the hooplah begins again.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS SALK'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonas' desk is covered with mail. He holds a letter in his hand.

WOMAN (V.O.)

(thick accent)

Dear brave doctor, I need some of  
your magic serum for my little one  
immediately...

PULL OUT TO REVEAL:

His office is covered in packages and letters.

Jonas appears exhausted and nearly jumps when the phone rings.

JONAS

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS -  
HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Basil sits at the other end of the phone. Bettyann sits near him, grinning from ear to ear.

BASIL

You hanging in there, Jonas?

JONAS (V.O.)

When will it end?

BASIL

I've sent a request to the Dean to start fielding most of this. I have some good news; Francis has agreed to head the field trials.

JONAS (V.O.)

He changed his mind?

BASIL

No. He said you changed yours and agreed to the double blind. He phoned in his decision a few minutes ago.

JONAS (V.O.)

Thanks.

BASIL

Bettyann wants to say something.

She quickly takes the phone.

BETTYANN

I think it's going to be this year!

INT. JONAS SALK'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonas looks out into the lab through the open door; the Scientists racing back and forth and looking as haggard as he does.

JONAS

I hope so!

He tries to sound delighted but his expression grows more stressed.

He hangs up the phone and goes to the door, calling the lab to attention.

JONAS

They want to start field trials in  
two weeks, we've got a lot of work  
to do!

As if they weren't racing fast enough, like Jonas, they look more stressed than elated.

CLOSE ON:

THE CAGES OF COTTON RATS-all of them running a seemingly endless race in their wheels.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Mary lumbers her way down the aisle and goes to the front of a small auditorium.

A chair on the end has her name on it.

She sits with a program, which she wrings in her hands.

With the help of a cane, Blake walks onto the stage and takes a seat at the lone piano.

The lights dim, and a spotlight shines on him.

He's already sweating and looks like he might be sick.

As he bangs out the first few cords with one hand, the other attempting to maintain a few keys, it's obvious even his good hand is stiff and it sounds wretched.

Mary has nearly destroyed her program as the audience mumbles and several PEOPLE start to leave.

He stops and looks out into the audience. He sees her and she tries to smile encouragingly.

He takes a deep breath and starts again. It's as awful as the first but he continues, despite the departing audience.

After several eternal seconds...

He loosens up and the sound changes. It's pretty and as his determination grows so does the passion.

When he finishes his piece with the last dramatic chords he stands and looks out into the audience...

It's half empty but those who remained are on their feet; they've witnessed not just a beautifully played piece but more determination than they may ever see again in their lifetime.

Mary slowly stands and applauds, tears streaming down her face.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Dozen of REPORTERS occupy the front row seats.

The rest are empty and bulbs begin flashing as hundreds of CHILDREN file into the auditorium, carefully watching the MEDICAL STAFF, including Jonas, waiting for them on the stage.

They begin to stream onto the stage and a GIRL (6) confidently marches across to Jonas, her arm already extended.

JONAS

You know what this is for?

GIRL

Yes.

He swabs her arm with rubbing alcohol.

JONAS

Are you afraid of anything?

GIRL

Will it hurt?

JONAS

For a moment.

Jonas gives her an encouraging smile and produces the syringe full of vaccine.

He quickly injects her and she doesn't even wince.

When he's finished, he swabs her again and hands her a badge that reads: POLIO PIONEER.

She motions for him to come closer and when he does she throws her arms around his neck and squeezes tightly.

The bulbs flash like crazy.

CLOSE ON:

That photograph in a newspaper with the headline: Our First Polio Pioneer.

A similar photograph of a black child with the same headline.

Again a smiling boy and a Newspaper claiming to have captured the first to receive the vaccine.

HEADLINES:

1.8 Million Involved in Polio Field Study.

Too Early To Know But Field Study Seems Promising.

Tommy Francis to Announce Vaccine Results at Michigan.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - RACKHAM HALL - DAY

Hundreds of reporters fill the room.

Salk and his family, along with his brother, Lee comprise one row.

They try and ignore the flashing bulbs in their direction as well as in the direction of the speaker.

Basil O'Connor sits in the first row. Tommy Francis talks at the lectern.

FRANCIS

The poliomyelitis vaccine was sixty-eight percent effective against Type one, one hundred percent effective against type two and ninety-two percent effective against type three.

He pauses, waiting for the reaction. He gets none and realizes he needs to state it with less scientific flavor.

FRANCIS

The vaccine works. It is safe,  
effective and potent.

The auditorium remains silent.

PAN ACROSS AUDITORIUM:

Tears silently stream down faces of the people gathered.

Hands are taken, arms are linked and as we move to the Salk family we see...

Tears stream down Donna's face as well. Only Jonas, who always knew his vaccine was safe and effective remains expressionless.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

A SHOPKEEPER paints THANK YOU DR. SALK in his window.

Cars honk their horns in recognition.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

A SUPERVISOR comes onto the steps of his upper office.

He looks at the FACTORY WORKERS busily stitching.

SUPERVISOR

Today, my friends, an effective polio vaccine has been declared.

A WHOOP comes up from the group.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The PLAYERS are frozen as the announcement comes over the loud speaker.

ANNOUNCER

We want to take a moment of silence to say our thanks that Polio will finally be eradicated. The Vaccine was deemed safe.

Players take off their hats.

EXT. BASEBALL STANDS - DAY

Dora and Daniel stand in the bleachers.

Dora for once, is completely silent while Daniel waves his arms and shouts.

DANIEL

That's our son! Jonas Salk is our son!

He captures the attention of the PLAYERS and one runs up the steps to meet him.

They hand him an autographed baseball.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

The church and school bells are ringing out the good news.

Mary stands on the steps and watches as children wave at her from the playground.

Patsy wobbles up on her crutches and wraps her arms around her teacher.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Blake sits at the piano and hears the ringing bells. He goes to the small balcony and looks out over the city.

Cars continue to honk, bells continue to ring, shops continue to close in celebration and people stop to hug strangers in the street.

EXT. MICHIGAN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jonas and his family are escorted to a waiting car as he is bombarded by REPORTERS.

REPORTER

What will you do now, Dr. Salk?

Jonas pauses before slipping into the car.

JONAS

I will return to the lab and work to get the vaccine to one hundred percent effectiveness.

With that the long black car pulls away, the barrage of REPORTERS attempting to run after it for one last photo or quote.

This is the last time a black car will be seen in any neighborhood for the purposes of polio.

CLOSE ON

Jonas' serene face as he remembers the first time he saw that car.

INSERT OVER  
BLACK:

IN 1960 THE SALK DEAD VIRUS VACCINE WAS REPLACED BY A LIVE VIRUS VACCINE AS FORMULATED BY ALBERT SABIN.

THE LIVE VACCINE IS NOW KNOWN TO CAUSE POLIO IN A SMALL NUMBER OF CASES AND THE UNITED STATES HAS SINCE RETURNED TO A DEAD VIRUS VACCINE.

SALK OPENED THE SALK INSTITUTE FOR BIOLOGICAL STUDIES IN LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA IN 1962 AND METHODICALLY SELECTED SCIENTISTS THAT WERE PHILOSOPHICAL BY NATURE.

SALK DIED IN 1995, IN HIS REMAINING YEARS HE WORKED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN HIV VACCINE.

FADE OUT: