

Jack Weston is on his deathbed. Wavering in and out of consciousness, he is not alone. He is visited by loved ones, alive and deceased. They help him relive past moments of glory and grief, and contemplate what will be.

Sports, God, Parents, Death & Life--A View from the Edge

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**Sports, God, Parents, Death & Life—  
A View from the Edge**

**Anthony Michael Anderson**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Blurred Vision**

He could barely make out the images in the white coats. Their boundaries were blurred. So was everything else. Their postures were erect, and their arm movements limited. They seemed otherworldly.

The air was stuffy. He pushed down the sheet with his right leg, the only leg he could control. Despite his blurred vision, he could see the two Doctors turn to look at him. The Nurse in the maroon blouse was quickly at the foot of the bed. She lifted the sheet high over her head, and moved toward his head, as if she were about to cover a corpse. Walking along the side of the bed with the sheet still held high, she gradually lowered it and tucked it under his arms, both the one that still functioned and the one that did not.

Another unrecognizable figure stood off to the side of the bed.

“How are you doin’, Dad?”

Struggling to open his eyes wider, he felt someone grasp his good hand. Though he couldn’t quite make out the facial features, he sensed that it was Jessica, his younger daughter. He tried to prop himself up to get a better view, but the strength was not there. He let himself fall back.

Through lips that barely moved, he mumbled, “Where’s ... Mom?”

“She’s not here, Dad.”

“Where is she?” he muttered indignantly. “She should be here.”

“She’s home now, Dad,” Jessica stated calmly. “She’s coming back ... she’s coming back ... later this afternoon with Lara.

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Jessica looked at the gray whiskers poking through the rough skin on his face. She felt his hand quiver and she saw the veins in his hand—large protruding veins, deep blue in color.

“She said that she was with you this morning,” Jessica continued the fractured conversation. “Do you remember? .... Dad?”

He tightened the corner of his mouth in a gesture of frustration. Jessica remembered that expression from the days when he had complete control of his facial muscles. She would see it when her grades weren’t what he hoped they would be. She would see it when she didn’t pitch the way he hoped she would. She would see it when she and Lara didn’t get along the way he hoped they would.

He looked straight up at the ceiling. His eyes were barely open. There was a trace of tears in each barely open eye. He turned his head ever so slightly toward Jessica, and he whispered, “how are you, Jess?”

“Ohhh, ... oh, ...good, ....yeah, good, .... thanks,” Jessica responded. She was a bit startled that he would be asking about her at a moment like this. She didn’t quite know how to reply, “Yeah ... no problems. Are you ... are you doing all right?” She squeezed his hand.

“Mmmmmm... uh huhhh,” he shrugged in a barely audible voice. The moisture in his eyes seemed to be getting more abundant.

“Do you want me to read to you or something?”

“Mmmmm, please,” he muttered. He moved his head so that he was looking at the ceiling again. He closed his eyes.

To check that he was still awake, Jessica asked, “How about today’s sports page?”

“Mmmm, thank you,” he muttered with a mild nod.

Jessica knew the answer before he gave it, “okay.”

She quickly glanced through the first couple pages of the Sports section. She found something she knew he would be interested in.

“Here’s something on Pembroke Field Hockey, Dad. It says, ‘Pembroke broke a scoreless tie with a goal by Amy Walters in the last seconds of the game. The goal allows Pembroke to move on to the State Tournament Semi-finals. St. Charles High finishes their season with a record of 15 and 2.’”

Jessica read on a bit.

“Whoa, Dad! ...Hey, Dad, listen to this ... it mentions me! It says, ‘Coach McGuire credits the entire team for the victory and the goal. It was a hard-fought battle all the way, but I have to hand it to Amy for that last-second goal. McGuire noted, ‘It was amazing! It reminded me of a win we had about ten years ago when Jess Weston banged one in from just inside the circle with seconds left.’”

“That was nice of her to mention me, huh?” Jessica asked of her father, “after all these years!” She knew her father would be pleased. She looked at his face. It was wrinkled and whiskered. The coloring was not the healthy color she had become accustomed to seeing on the man who loved to be outdoors. His eyes were just slits, barely open. There was a kind of glaze over his eyes. The glaze was at once both repulsive and frightening. She wondered if he could see through those glazed-over slits. Whether he could see clearly or not, he was still staring at the ceiling. The corner of his mouth on the side that was not paralyzed curled up in what she thought was a smile. A couple tears ran down his face. She reached for a tissue from the table by the side of the bed. She wiped away the tears from his whiskered cheeks.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Tears of Pride**

“We need it, Jessica! We need it! Do it for Lara! You’ve got to do it! ... It’s got to be you ... Do it, Jess! ... Do it for your sister; do it for your team!”

Jack was leaning over the sideline with his feet planted just outside the line. He was screaming, and his arms were waving toward the goal, some 80 yards away. The entire sideline was packed shoulder-to-shoulder with screaming people, sometimes two or three deep. The losers of this high school field hockey game would see their season end today. The winners would go on to the semi-finals for the State Championship. Jessica and Lara’s team -- or better said, “program” -- had a history of doing well year after year.

Jimmy Dolan, standing about ten feet away along the sideline, yelled down at Jack, “it doesn’t look good!” He shook his head dejectedly. His daughter was a defender for Pembroke, and Truman High School was pressing again at the Pembroke goal.

Jack was positioned on the sideline at the defensive end of the field to lend emotional support to his goalie-daughter, Lara. Jimmy was there to support defender-daughter Amy. Because Truman Public High School was dominating the game, Jess was on the defensive side of the field to help avoid a goal that would have left no doubt about the outcome.

Jack looked at Jimmy and then looked down and nodded “no” to show his agreement with Jimmy’s assessment.

“C’mon, Pembroke. All your courage! ... all your strength ... you can do this!!” Jack yelled out.



With the seconds clicking down, a hard shot was delivered by a Truman High player from about five feet away from Lara. Lara was in the center of the goal. She had Truman High attackers pressed against her body to inhibit her movement. She was trying to maintain her position in the slippery muddy surface in front of the goal; the mud had created havoc for Lara all day.

Lara managed to stop the shot with her leg pads, shed the people leaning on her, take two steps forward and deliver a powerful kick toward the sidelines. The action was too furious to make a perfect pass, too furious to aim a pass, but somehow, somehow, the pass went through the Truman attackers and out to Jessica, poised by the sideline near Jack.

At the time a 5-foot tall, 85-pound freshman, Jessica stopped the ball, and headed straight for Truman's goal. She dribbled around and through 3 defenders on her way down the sideline. Her every movement was accompanied by taunts and jeers, and cheers and applause, depending on the allegiance of the fans she along the way.

Jack was "trapped" on the defensive end of the field by the crowd along the sideline. He could only lean out over the sideline to watch the back of his younger daughter weaving in and out of defenders. The rest of the team, clearly exhausted from the tough contest, sprinted as fast as they could toward the Truman goalie. The clock in the corner of the field was ticking down the seconds. People on both benches were calling out the second-countdown as Jess approached the Truman goal.

Jimmy Dolan yelled out to Jack in desperation, "five seconds left ... there's not enough time."

Too far away from the offensive end of the field to cheer, Jack closed his eyes ever so briefly and whispered quietly, "Please,...God ... please, God ... pleeeeeease."

Perhaps having seen the clock, perhaps having heard people call out the seconds left, perhaps just in sheer desperation, Jessica rushed around one more defender. She entered the chalked semi-circle shooting area, and she unleashed an improbable shot, one that she would never dare shoot if there were more time on the clock. With two seconds left on the clock, the shot rocketed under the goalie's extended leg for a very unlikely, very long-distance game-tying goal. The Pembroke crowd erupted into a wild, frenetic celebration. Jess fell to her knees in exhaustion and disbelief. Her teammates rushed around her, picked her up, and all cheered in a circle, jumping up and down. Some sticks were thrown on the ground, some were raised high in the air. The girls from the Pembroke bench rushed out to join the celebration, and the Coaches were not far behind them.

On the other end of the field, by the goal area that goalie-daughter Lara patrolled, Jack was on one knee, despite the muddy ground. Jimmy Dolan saw him, but he turned away in respect for Jack's moment.

"Thank you, ... thank you ... thank you," Jack repeated, tears streaming from his eyes. He had his head bowed, and then he looked up to heaven.

In overtime, Jessica and Lara's team would win, with both playing key roles in the overtime success.

The players deliriously celebrated after the amazing win. Lara hugged her fellow defenders and slapped sticks with them in the Pembroke field hockey tradition. Then she and her defender teammates ran toward the celebration at the other end of the field. Lara sprinted as fast as she could. It was difficult to see her face in the caged helmet, but the roars of joy from within it were not difficult to hear. She ran to find her sister's short and skinny body in the mass of much larger teammates.

For a few minutes, Jack just stood in the spot where he had been for the final moments of the game. While all the activity gravitated to the

other end of the field, Jack just stood where he was. He wanted to take it all in, to absorb every sight and sound. “This will be a moment that I will remember for the rest of my life,” he thought to himself. “I will stay right here and be still for a moment. I want to see and hear everything. I don’t want to miss a thing. When I am on my deathbed, this is a moment that I will remember.”

After a couple moments, he started walking toward all the action. The offensive end of the field was the domain of spouse, AJ. She was “in charge of” cheering on Jess and her fellow attackers.

As he walked slowly toward AJ, Jack was still very conscious about enjoying every moment. The compliments came quickly from one person after another:

“What a run! What a shot! I’ve never seen anything like that!”

“Congratulations! You’ll never forget that one.”

“Wow! Your kids are great. Gutsy goaltending and great shot.”

“Tremendous performance! Your kids are competitors!”

“What courage! What poise!”

“Gutsy ... very gutsy!”

Jack acknowledged the compliments, occasionally wiping the tears from his eyes. The tissues were packed in his pockets every game as “standard game equipment” for moments like this. He shook people’s hands, and he congratulated others on their kids’ performances. He watched the unbridled joy of Pembroke high school players, some still rolling on the ground in ecstasy, others jumping in the air with sticks raised high. A new wave of parents tapped him on the shoulder, slapped him with “high-fives,” hugged him, and laughed with him about the amazing events of the last hour.

Lying in his hospital bed, staring at the ceiling, with Jessica by his side, Jack could see it all. He could see every face. He could see every hug. He could hear every celebration. He could smell the mud. He could feel the cool air. He saw the photographer on the hill feverishly taking pictures of the wild celebration. He saw people laughing, hugging, and

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crying. He saw Jessica and Lara hugging. He could see the tears of joy in AJ's face. He could see the coaches' proud faces. He could feel the pride in himself.

Still standing by his side, Jessica held his once strong hand. She saw the faint smile remain on the pale, wrinkled, whiskered face. Through the slits of his eyes, she could see that the once blue eyes now had a tinge of gray in them. They peered lifelessly at the ceiling. There were still tears in them. She could feel his "good hand" quiver occasionally. The half-smile did not vanish.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Spiritual Discomfort**

“That’s about it, Dad,” Jessica said, closing the Sports Section. “That’s all there is on Pembroke. There’s some stuff on the Giants. Do you want me to read that?”

“Mmmm-mmm, ... no ... thanks,” Jack mumbled, shaking his head slightly in a “no” fashion. He raised his good hand as if to say “enough.”

“Do you want me to read something else?” Jess asked again. “There’s a Bible here on this stand.”

Jack paused for a while. He made no sound or motion.

“Dad?” Jessica asked, checking to see if he was still conscious.

“Mmmmmm,....,” Jack responded, moving his fingers on his good hand as if to say “bring it on.”

Jessica took that muffled noise and that finger motion as a “yes.”

While she paged through the Bible, Jessica thought back to the Sunday mornings when she and Lara were very young. They would sit on the carpet, backs against the couch, on either side of their father. He would read from a book of Bible stories written for children. He would take time to let them look at the big, colored pictures in the book, pictures of Jesus and angels and shepherds and disciples. They would sometimes run their little fingers along the outlines of the pictures, or they would ask to go back a page to see a picture again. Sometimes, he would ask what picture they wanted to hear, and they would enthusiastically agree on one. Sometimes, they would want different stories and negotiate over which story would be read first.

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The ritual gradually disappeared as she and Lara got older. Going to church never seemed to be a real option. In her teens and later years, she would occasionally see her father pick up the Bible and read. He seemed hesitant to read out loud then ... becoming more private in his spiritual activities. She and Lara were glad. It would have seemed “too corny” for him to read to them at that age. It would have seemed like they were little children again.

Since then, Jessica’s sophistication about things spiritual had grown considerably. She had taken a number of religion courses in college, and she had considered different religious views and beliefs. Now, though, she was looking for a story that was familiar, one that her father had read to her and Lara ... maybe the story of Joseph and the coat, maybe Noah’s Ark, maybe the mustard seed, maybe feeding the masses with a few fish and loaves of bread.

Seeing her father grow a bit restless, though, she selected some verses at random.

She read, “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no regard of your Father which is in heaven.”

“This language is so stilted,” Jessica thought to herself. “I’m not really sure what ‘alms’ are.”

To Jack, the language of the Bible sounded comforting. The message he heard, however, was not.

Jessica continued,

“Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

Jack made a brief piercing noise. He startled Jessica. She looked at her father with concern. He appeared to lose consciousness.

She stopped reading and put the Bible back on the table near the bed. Jessica stood, leaned over his face, and called quietly to him.

“Dad? ... Are you okay, Dad? ... Dad?”

She could hear his labored breathing. She concluded that he was asleep.

Jack was neither asleep nor awake. Somehow the dichotomy did not allow for the state he was in. He remained silent, other than for his hard breathing. Nor did he move, other than for his hard breathing. There was noise and movement in his mind, though. The words kept reverberating: “do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

Jessica sat down again. She looked around the room a bit. Everything was quiet. She wondered when Lara or her mother would arrive. She thought of going home to her husband, Howie, and her newborn, Haley. “Ten more minutes,” she thought to herself, “I will leave it ten more minutes.” She picked up an Entertainment magazine from the table by the bed. She sat back, glanced at her father, and then read to herself.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Making Dreams Happen**

He sat there in the wooden stands with his wife, AJ. They knew three or four of the girls playing, but the girls on the Pembroke High School Softball team were a few years older than Lara and Jessica, so there really wasn't much of a social connection. Jessica and Lara were sitting a few seats lower and to the left. They were somewhat watching the game, but more energy seemed to be invested in talking with a couple of their friends.

"Someday, I want one of our kids standing on that mound," Jack blurted out in a whisper so no one would hear other than AJ.

"What?" AJ responded, turning her head from watching the game to looking at Jack.

"Someday, I want one of our kids standing on that mound and pitching for the High School," Jack said with a very serious face. "I mean it. That is very important to me. I really mean it."

"I know you do," AJ answered, with an equally serious face. "I know you do, and I know they will."

"I hope so," Jack replied, looking back at the action on the field, "... that would be like a dream come true. I know it sounds foolish, but I really want them to be a part of something like this. I want them to be in key roles, critical situations. I want them to have to perform under pressure, ... and I want people to root for them ... and applaud for them. I want newspapers to write about them. I want them to have headlines ... praise. I want radio stations to talk about them. I want them to be on TV. I want them to BE somebody. I want them to go to high school functions and have people look at them and say 'do you know who that is? She is a great athlete.' I want people from other towns and schools to know them."



“I know you do,” AJ said again, holding her index finger up to her mouth to quiet Jack down a bit.

Jack quieted down, but he was seemingly oblivious to any cue that he should stop talking.

“I want them to go to high school reunions, and I want people to say, ‘I played with them; they were great.’ I want them to be recognized when they are seen walking down the street twenty years after they graduate. I want people to say about them, ‘remember when they pitched that game ... when they made that play ... when they scored that goal ... when they saved that game ... when we won that game.’ I’ll do whatever I have to do to make that happen. I mean it.”

“Whoa ... whoa...” AJ cautioned again, holding up her hand. “Slow down. ... slow down. It’ll happen.”

Jack looked back at the game, and whispered again, “damn right, it will. It will happen.”

He looked back down at Lara and Jessica laughing and talking with their friends. “We’re going to get them some more coaching. We’re going to get them to some clinics.”

AJ didn’t hear these words, but she looked at him and nodded “yes.” Jack seemed contented with her nod, so he continued to watch the game.

From his hospital bed, Jack mumbled “...More, please... more”

Jessica was a bit startled that he was awake.

“What? ....What, Dad? ... more? ... Do you want me to read more?” Jessica asked.

“Mmmmmmm ... please” Jack muttered.

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“I will ... I will,” Jessica promised, putting down her Entertainment magazine and picking up the Bible from the little table by his bed. Again, she fanned through the pages quickly and selected a passage at random.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Where Your Treasure is**

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Jack grunted. Jessica looked at her father; he appeared to nod somberly. She paused for a moment.

“We will not make the mistake that we see others making,” he said to AJ, “they work and work and work, and their kids are like orphans. I will be a FATHER, and you will be a MOTHER.” AJ just nodded agreement; she hardly needed encouragement on this theme. She also sensed that Jack was not in the mood for a conversation. He was more in the mood for making pronouncements.

“C’mon, kids. Let’s go.” Lara and Jessica climbed into the backseat, sometimes reluctantly. AJ carried some Gatorades and Juices into the front seat. Softball season was long over, but that is what made the evening trip so worthwhile—no one else was likely to be on the field. The Weston’s would have the field to themselves. The kids could take turns pitching from the mound, fielding bunts, and standing in for each other as batters. Jack would play catcher. AJ would alternate as a fielder, a batter, or as a scout for softballs hit long ago into the woods behind the field.

Standing by his hospital bed, Jessica saw her father’s face twitch slightly. It appeared to transform into a smile. Still holding the Bible in one hand, she didn’t even ask her father if he wanted her to read on. She held off for a minute, and he quickly seemed to go back into a sleep.

“Do you have the hot chocolate?” Jack asked Lara. Nodding within her blue hooded winter coat, Lara held up the container. “...and the

Christmas cookies?" Jack asked, looking at Jessica. She gave a faint smile and held up the tin of cookies.

"Okay, we're all set," Jack announced. "Let's go."

"Just minute," AJ would protest, taking this last minute to be sure that each child's winter coats were buttoned up well.

These winter softball practice trips truly tested the commitment of the Weston's. The setting was a field protected from the winter winds by trees. On a cold winter day, with the sun shining, the field could reach a "comfortable" forty degrees. The trees also served to protect the Weston's from the eyes of the public. The privacy afforded by the trees was particularly important as Jessica and Lara reached the teen years, an age when it was not particularly "cool" to be seen practicing a spring sport with their mother and father in the middle of winter.

"Shorten that stride more on that drop," Jack would caution, as he walked behind a fence that the girls were pitching into.

"That's nice," he would compliment, "that rise ball has a nice hop to it. You're getting nice and low on that."

"...More wrist... more wrist on that. You're not snapping enough," he would yell.

"Okay, ... okay ... nice job ... let's swing the bats now," Jack would command. "Do you need a break first?"

The girls--7, 8, 9, 10 years old--would nod and run over to the jungle gym area near the softball field. Their "break" would involve running and jumping on the play equipment. Then, it might be "hot chocolate" time. Jack loved these days. He was never quite sure that his daughters felt the same. Having to function under his tyrannical eye was probably not a pleasure, he often thought.

“Someday, they’ll be happy they did all this prep-work,” Jack kept reassuring himself.

Later in the workout, as they ran laps around the field, he assured himself again, “Someday, they will get the recognition from others that they deserve. They will get the recognition for the hard work that they did. People will praise them for their skills, and they will feel that all this work was worthwhile.”

By his bedside, Jessica looked at her watch. “I need to get back to Haley soon,” she thought to herself. She felt a tap on her upper arm and turned to see who that was.

“Hey, Jess,” Lara grabbed Jess’s arm as a greeting, and she looked somberly at her father. “How is he?”

“Hi, ... hi, Lara,” Jess responded quietly. “Yeah, ... he uhh ...he seems to go in and out of consciousness.”

“Dad ... Dad ... it’s me ... Lara.” She reached down and rubbed his hand.

“I don’t know if he has any feeling in that hand,” Jessica whispered softly. “He can’t seem to be able to move it.”

Lara looked at Jessica and clenched her teeth to fight back the emotions. She grabbed Jack’s other hand and held it in her two hands. Jack did not respond.

“I have to get back to Haley and Howie soon,” Jessica whispered.

Lara just nodded acknowledgement.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The Mote in Their Eyes**

“It’s not fair; she never gets the credit she deserves,” Jack shouted as he threw the sports section of the newspaper on the kitchen table.

“I know, I know,” AJ responded, “it really is not fair .... She deserves better.”

“We’ve worked, she’s worked, too hard to get this kind of treatment. She pitches a game like that, and she barely gets mentioned! Balls are allowed to drop in the outfield without an effort, grounders go through people’s legs, and those are base hits! Some of her teammates don’t practice; they go out and get drunk; they play half-heartedly. The coach either doesn’t see it, or ignores it. I don’t know how this kid puts up with this treatment. This is cruelty to her and to our whole family. It’s been a lousy sports program, and it is still lousy. These kids ... these parents ... have never been shown how to play. They don’t know what competing is all about in this sport.”

“It’s just not that important to them,” AJ agreed. “I just don’t think it’s that important to them.”

“I agree,” Jack said, still angry at the newspaper account, “and I don’t have a problem with that. But, you know, we have sacrificed a lot and worked hard. I can deal with people who don’t think this game is important. There are other things in life, I understand that, but the newspapers need to be fair. Lara is not a pure power pitcher. She gets grounders. She gets pop-ups. Somebody has to make plays!

“Please don’t yell at me,” AJ said calmly.

“No ... no, I’m sorry,” Jack relented quickly, “I’m not mad at you. I just have to vent. If people don’t make plays on the team, somebody

should write that in the paper ... instead of making her look like some jerk.”

“You know how it works better than I do, Jack,” AJ tried to urge understanding. “There are a lot of high school games. Frequently, there isn’t even a reporter there.”

“Yes, true ... yes, that’s true ... but frequently there is a reporter there. Freakin’ Sam Brown is frequently scheduled to cover the games. Do you think he might write something?”

“No ... no,” AJ intervened, “you know he can’t. You know that there are people in town who would crucify him. It’s all politics. It’s easier ... politically, it’s a lot easier to just blame it on Lara.”

“Damn it!” Jack yelled, throwing the paper now from the kitchen table into the living room.

“You know, Jack,” AJ continued, “a lot of this bad press isn’t even aimed at Lara.

Jack squinted in confusion.

“A lot of it is aimed at you,” AJ said matter-of-factly, “and me ... and maybe even Jess.”

Jack looked out the window in disgust. He said nothing.

AJ was not ready to stop now. “They are paying us back for all those years of trying to develop our kids ... for years of trying to develop even their kids in this sport. They have resented us for a long while.”

Jack continued to look out the window. He nodded again.

“Lara is just a sophomore, and she has been the starting pitcher since her first game as a freshman,” AJ continued to state things that Jack already knew.

Jack continued to look out the kitchen window in disgust.

“Do you think that people don’t resent that?” AJ posed the rhetorical question. “Now that Lara is doing so well, do you think that they want Jess to step in after her?”

Jack knew that the questions needed no answer. He knew that AJ knew that he knew.

“...And the coach?” AJ continued, “do you think that he is anything but a puppet of some of the parents with players. There have been three coaches in the past five years. He can’t please one set of parents. He has to please as many of the key parents as possible ... or he will no longer be a coach.”

Jack tightened the muscles around his mouth. He knew everything that AJ was saying. Hearing her say it, though, put the momentary fury in perspective. Her remarks didn’t alleviate his feeling of powerlessness and frustration, but they helped quench the flood of anger.

In his hospital bed, he could vaguely hear some words, “Bye-bye, Dad. I’ll be back. Take care. I love you.” He felt a squeeze on his good hand.

He heard Lara say, “Take care, Jess. Say hi to Howie and Haley for me.”

“I’m going to read to you for a bit, Dad,” Lara continued, “Okay?”

Jack did not respond, but he soon heard Lara reading again.



“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”

Lara immediately saw a pained look come across her father’s face. She read on further, but she saw that the pained look did not disappear. She put the Bible back down on the little table by the bed. She squeezed her father’s hand again. There was no response.

Jack Weston is on his deathbed. Wavering in and out of consciousness, he is not alone. He is visited by loved ones, alive and deceased. They help him relive past moments of glory and grief, and contemplate what will be.

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