*AUDITION SCRIPTS FOR* **THE GOOD LIFE**

**CHARACTERS**

**ETHAN SANDERS *(Age: 20/30/40ish)***

Before his sister’s death, Ethan was a lively young man with a genuine and good heart. After her passing, he grew cold and money-centric, hardened with the belief he must be successful and rich in order to never experience pain or grief again. However, throughout this journey, opportunities for his kind self to re-emerge appear throughout the story. Ethan’s relationship with his ex-fiancé Grace is important, as it must exude warmth, a hint of romance, and fun banter. He is awkward (in a fish-out-of-water way) with his kids, but slowly begins to love and care for them. He also has some comic-relief scenes. As the heart of this play, his journey towards trusting God is incredibly central and must be performed with likability and an understanding of his character arc.

**GRACE *(Age: 20/30/40ish)***

 Grace is Ethan’s fiancé/ex-fiancé/wife. She is a confident and lovable person. She and Ethan have a fun relationship filled with banter, kindness and support. She teases him and he teases back but they ultimately always have each other’s backs. She loves her family, she loves God, and she is a leader in every ministry she runs. Her relationship with Ethan must show warmth, joy, but also realism as he is guided throughout his transformation.

**ELOISE/BROOKE *(Age: 7-10)***

Brooke was Ethan’s adorable kid sister who passed away at a young age.

Eloise is Ethan’s daughter, the spitting image of Brooke. Eloise is energetic, funny and full of life. She constantly reminds Ethan of his baby sister. Through Ethan’s relationship with Eloise, he slowly is able to come to terms with Brooke’s death. Eloise’s chemistry with her siblings and her father is important as she is rambunctious and easily riffs off her family members. Her care for her father ultimately draws Ethan to love every part of his family.

**LINDSEY, LAUREN, HANNAH, JACKSON, JAMES *(Ages 7-16)***

 The Sanders kids are a lively, energetic, and hilarious group of children who are able to riff off each other with vibrant comic relief, but also earnestly pull off more the serious scenes. The chemistry between the siblings is a central part of the play and allows Ethan to fall in love with his family.

**JUDY MICHELSON**

Judy Michelson (or Jude, as Ethan calls her) is Ethan’s boss. She is smart, calculating, and business oriented. She can be played as a potential love interest in Ethan’s alternate life, representing an antagonistic force against his family and Grace. It is important her interest in Ethan is not over done, but implied through subtle flirting.

**CASSIUS and GABRIEL**

Cassius is the young, inexperienced Angel in charge of Ethan’s case file. He is often a source of comedic relief and his lines must be done with charisma, confidence, and humor. He is ultimately rooting for Ethan but is not afraid to be funny and honest with him. Cassius also serves to provide exposition to the audience so his lines must be clear and serious when necessary.

 Gabriel is the Head Angel and Cassius’ supervisor. He is more serious than Cassius but also can provide some comic relief to the story. He has an air of authority to him as he oversees the entire play.

**RICHARD, HEATHER, PASTOR WILLIAM**

Richard is a family-oriented man. Ethan fires him in his current life but discovers in his alternate life, they are friends. He must be able to seem kind, unassuming, and gentle.

 Heather runs to the ministry Ethan started in his alternate life. She is caring, honest and confident as she organizes the children and makes sure everything runs smoothly.

 Pastor William exudes kindness in every scene he’s in. He supports Ethan and is incredibly understanding through everything going on in Ethan’s life.

**GABRIEL & CASSIUS SCRIPT**

*GABRIEL the Head Angel sits at his desk, ruffling through papers. CASSIUS enters the scene breathlessly.*

**CASSIUS:**

*(Huffing and puffing)* Sir! I’m not late am I?

**GABRIEL:**

Angel Cassius! What took you so long?

**CASSIUS:**

Sorry, sir. I made a wrong turn at a Wal-Mart in South Dakota. But I’m here now.

**GABRIEL:**

*(Unimpressed)* Mmmhmm…*(holding up manila folder)* So. Are you ready for your next case?

**CASSIUS:**

As ready as I’ll ever be! Where are we this time? Egypt? Japan? *(Throws on a pair of sunglasses and grins at the audience)* Aruba? Please say Aruba.

*GABRIEL removes the sunglasses promptly.*

**GABRIEL:**

Where did you get this?

*CASSIUS pulls out another pair of sunglasses from his pocket, puts them on, and smiles.*

**CASSIUS:**

They were a dollar ninety-nine at that Wal-Mart.

**GABRIEL:**

*(Looks up, exasperated)* Why me? *(Sighs)* I hate to rain on your parade, Cassius. But, for *this* case we’re in America. *(Pause)* In New England. *(Pause)* In December.

**CASSIUS:**

Uuuugggghhhhh.

**GABRIEL:**

We angels don’t get to pick the places or people. That’s the Boss’ job.

**CASSIUS:**

Can’t The Boss pick somewhere where it doesn’t randomly snow in October for no reason? *(Starts daydreaming)* Somewhere with beaches! And coconut drinks with the little umbrellas in them!

**GABRIEL:**

I promise it’s an interesting case.

**CASSIUS:**

*(Sadly puts away his sunglasses)* Fine. What’s this guy’s name?

**GABRIEL *(hands Cassius the file):***

Ethan Sanders. He lives in a quaint little town called Cedarville.

**CASSIUS:**

Cedarville? *(Flips through the file)* Huh, this one’s intense. No parents. Hard worker. Lonely. *(Scans the file. Pauses when he sees something that saddens him. Says forlornly)* I was hoping for a happier case.

**GABRIEL:**

This one still could be. Eventually. There’s always hope. *(Pause)* Your case technically doesn’t begin for another fifteen years. But I thought it’d be good to give you some context.

**CASSIUS:**

Okay, okay. I’m in. So where do we begin?

*The ANGELS begin walking off stage. Faint piano music begins in the background.*

**GABRIEL:**

Main Street. On a Sunday. One week before Christmas.

**ETHAN & GRACE SCRIPT**

*ETHAN SANDERS and GRACE HARROW walk on stage together arm in arm. ETHAN stops in the middle of the road and begins nervously adjusting his tie. GRACE pauses and turns to him.*

**GRACE *(comfortingly):***

Hey, we’re almost there.

**ETHAN *(tugging at his tie adorably, nervously rambles):***

I don’t know, Grace. I feel like I’m dressed all wrong. Maybe I didn’t put on my tie right. Does it look crooked? It *feels* crooked. It’s probably crooked. You know what, I should just go home--

**GRACE *(laughs)***

Ethan, there is nothing wrong with your tie. You look fine!

**ETHAN *(anxiously rubs the back of his neck):***

I haven’t been to a church in ten years since my parents passed away. I have no idea what I’m doing. What if they hate me?

**GRACE *(moves to adjust his tie):***

Not possible.

**ETHAN *(still unsure of himself):***

Easy for you to say. You’re perfect. I look like a dressed up potato.

**GRACE *(brushes snow from his coat):***

A handsome dressed up potato.

**ETHAN:**

With a crooked tie.

**GRACE *(laughs):***

I can’t believe I’m marrying you.

**ETHAN *(looks at Grace with a grin):***

No take-backs. You’ve already said ‘yes’ so you’re stuck with me forever.

**GRACE *(smiling):***

Forever, huh?

**ETHAN *(nodding, starts pacing):***

Yep. We’re going to get married, buy a house with a garden in the front, have two dozen kids and---

**GRACE *(laughing):***

Whoa there, Ethan, slow down. You’re not the one who has to be pregnant with two-dozen kids.

**ETHAN:**

That’s a very valid point.

**GRACE *(smiling):***

Good answer. See, I knew there was a reason I liked you.

*ETHAN’S phone buzzes. He turns it off without looking.*

**GRACE *(picks up her purse):***

Who was that?

**ETHAN:**

*(Brushing it aside)* I don’t know. I’ll look at it later. *(Looks ups)* Also, don’t forget we’re going to the hospital after service to visit Brooke. She’s the only twelve-year-old in her wing right now and she told me it’s getting very boring in her hospital room. I promised I’d take her dancing. She *loves* dancing.

**GRACE:**

You can dance?

**ETHAN:**

Hey, I can do a mean salsa.

**GRACE *(grinning):***

I’m gonna hold you to that. *(Laugh)* So, is Brooke by herself?

**ETHAN*:***

They’ve limited her contact with other people in the past week because her immune system has been really weak. So my baby sis has been cooped up since then. Not to mention my boss keeps making it hard to take time off from work, so I haven’t been able to visit her as much as I want.

**GRACE:**

Your sister is a fighter, though.

**ETHAN:**

I wish there was a way we could get her out more. Brooke’s just a kid. She deserves to live a normal life.

**GRACE:**

Well, your birthday is coming up in a day or so. If Brooke’s doctors allow it, maybe the three of us can celebrate it together?

**ETHAN *(smiles):***

My birthday, huh?

**GRACE:**

I didn’t forget! You’re always going on about how your birthday is so close to Christmas, people let it slip their minds. But I would *never* forget.

**ETHAN *(grins):***

See, I knew there was a reason I liked you.

**ETHAN and CASSIUS SCRIPT**

*CASSIUS THE ANGEL enters into his house through the fog wearing a dapper white suit.*

**CASSIUS *(with a booming voice):***

ETHAN SANDERS! AWAKEN!

*ETHAN blinks awake. He yelps in surprise when he sees CASSIUS standing in the room. Grabbing a piece of décor, he jumps behind the arm of the couch holding out the decoration like a weapon.*

**ETHAN *(terrified):***

Who are you and how did you get into my house!?

**CASSIUS *(dramatically, comically almost, arms raised):***

Fear not, Ethan! For I am Cassius, an Angel of the Lord!

**ETHAN *(eyes wide in confusion, still holding out his weapon):***

A *what?*

**CASSIUS *(lowers dramatic stance and starts talking normally):***

You know. An Angel. Messengers from the Above. Servants to the Man Upstairs. Highly qualified butlers with wings.

**ETHAN *(lowers weapon):***

You’re a butler?

**CASSIUS**:

Really. *That’s* the only part of the sentence you heard?

**ETHAN *(slowly backing up):***

Look, I don’t know who you are or how you got into my house. But if you don’t get out, I am going to call the police.

**CASSIUS *(laughs):***

Sorry, buddy. The police can’t help you. You want to know why?

**ETHAN:**

Not really...

**CASSIUS *(matter-of-factly):***

You. Are. *Dreaming*.

**ETHAN:**

What? I’m *dreaming?* *(Sets down décor. Looks behind him and says to himself).* What was in that cupcake?

**CASSIUS:**

It was expired.

**ETHAN:**

What?

**CASSIUS:**

That’s not important. What’s important is that this is a dream.

**ETHAN:**

So you aren’t real? *(Tries to jab Cassius with the décor)*

**CASSIUS *(jumps back):***

Whoa there, buddy. Careful with that thing. *I’m* very real. You’re just having what we call a *vision*.

**ETHAN:**

A vision?

**CASSIUS:**

A vision is a dream with a purpose. Ethan, I was sent here because the Lord saw that you needed help.

**ETHAN *(lowers weapon onto the floor):***

*(Skeptically)* Did you just say, the *Lord?*

**CASSIUS**:

Surprise! God’s real.

**ETHAN:**

Hold on there, I don’t need help. And certainly not help from *God*. He hasn’t done anything for me.

**CASSIUS:**

Bud, it’s obvious you are miserable. And God has noticed. You are not forgotten.

**ETHAN *(growing short tempered):***

Okay, now look here, Cassie--

**CASSIUS *(defensively):***

*Cassius!*

**ETHAN:**

Whatever. I am *not* miserable. I am rich. I have a nice house. I have my independence! That’s all you really need in life. Success. Respect. I don’t need anyone. I don’t need people. And I certainly don’t need God. Things have never been better. *I* have never been better.

**CASSIUS:**

*(Crosses arms)* Who are you trying to convince? Me? Or yourself?

*ETHAN pauses, not sure.*

**CASSIUS:**

Look. You deserve to really, truly see what your life could have been like if you hadn’t been so consumed with yourself. So, this is what I’ve decided. At the snap of my fingers, I’m going to show you an alternate reality.

**ETHAN:**

A what now?

**CASSIUS:**

Ethan, I’m going to show you how everything would have been if you followed God’s way instead of your own.

**ETHAN:**

You can do that?

**CASSIUS:**

*(Shrugs)* Call it taking a few creative liberties. Anyways, when you hear the bell toll three times like this…

***Play Bell Toll Sound Effect***

**CASSIUS:**

It means your vision is ending and you will return to your apartment here.

**ETHAN:**

Don’t I get a say in this?

**CASSIUS:**

You've had a say in your own life for the past thirty-five years. Now it’s time for something different.

**ETHAN:**

Hold on a minute, now…

**CASSIUS:**

Good luck, Ethan Sanders!

**ETHAN, GRACE & the KIDS SCRIPT**

*LIGHTS UP on ETHAN lying on a ratty couch. His younger kids ELOISE (12) and JACKSON (7) run to wake him up. JAMES (15) and HANNAH (14) follow behind them. JACKSON jumps on the couch.*

**ELOISE *(excitedly):***

Dad, wake up! Wake up! Waaaake uuuuup!

*ELOISE jumps on her Dad. ETHAN jolts awake but looks confused and dazed.*

**JACKSON *(sliding next to Ethan):***

Yeah! It’s almost time for the party! We have to get ready!

*ETHAN is still disoriented, starts rubbing his eyes.*

**LINDSEY**:

Whoa there, guys. Slow down.

**LAUREN:**

Yeah, you’re gonna break him.

**HANNAH:**

In *two*.

**JACKSON**:

Don’t be silly. You can’t *break* a person.

**HANNAH**:

Yeah you can, Jackson. I saw a video about it. It’s on YouTube so you know it’s legit.

**JAMES**:

Wait, really? I wanna see, I wanna see!

**ETHAN *(looks up from rubbing his eyes and sees the kids):***

Wait a minute, what in the world--*(quickly stands up in surprise and backs up)* Where am I?

**HANNAH:**

Uh…you’re in the living room, Dad. *Obviously*.

**ETHAN *(anxiously):***

Hold on a sec …I am *not* anyone’s Dad.

**ELOISE *(calls out to her mother):***

MOM! Dad is acting weird again!

**ETHAN *(shocked, peers closer at Eloise):***

Brooke?

**ELOISE *(confused):***

Who’s Brooke? It’s me, Eloise.

**ETHAN *(backs up to the wall, whispers to self):***

What is going on?

*GRACE enters the room through the archway. She leans against it and smiles.*

**GRACE *(gently):***

Hey guys, why don’t you give your Dad some space. He’s had a rough week. I just took the Christmas cookies out of the oven so why don’t you go taste test them for me, all right?

**HANNAH *(glances at James):***

Did you say, Christmas cookies?

**LINDSEY and LAUREN:**

Last one to the kitchen is a rotten egg!

*Everyone tramples each other, booking it for the archway.*

**LAUREN:**

Jinx!

**LINDSEY:**

No way, I said it first!

**LAUREN:**

Did not!

**JACKSON:**

Hey! Someone show me that video on a person breaking!

**ELOISE:**

No fair guys, wait for me! I have little leeeggss!

*KIDS leave.*

**ETHAN *(surprised):***

Grace? What are you doing in my…*(voice trails off, stares down at his own hands to make sure they look the same)* what am *I* doing here?

**GRACE *(concerned, touches his forehead with back of hand):***

Are you feeling all right, Ethan? You look a little like uncooked pasta.

*ETHAN inches towards the door.*

**ETHAN *(closes eyes):***

This can’t be real. This can’t be real. This can’t be real.

*ETHAN starts backing out of the house. LIGHTS UP on busy street with people.*

**GRACE (shouting):**

ETHAN! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

**ETHAN (runs out):**

I DON’T KNOOWWW!!!

**ETHAN & ELOISE SCRIPT**

*Backstage people place benches back in the center with the lamppost. LIGHTS UP on street. It is snowing. ETHAN walks out onto the street. It is empty. He looks up at the snow, kicking the ground. ELOISE runs out onto the street after him holding a scarf. It’s cold outside, so she coughs and shivers in the chill. He glances up just as she runs on stage.*

**ELOISE *(coughing as she runs after him):***

Dad! Where are you going?

**ETHAN *(sliding his hands into his pockets):***

Eloise, you should be inside. It’s cold out here. You could get sick.

**ELOISE:**

But won’t *yooou* get sick?

**ETHAN:**

Good point.

**ELOISE:**

That’s why I brought you my scarf.

*ELOISE goes to wrap it around his neck.*

**ETHAN *(surprised, touched):***

That was…really nice of you.

**ELOISE *(giggling):***

I *am* a pretty great daughter. Right, Dad?

**ETHAN *(smiling very faintly):***

Yeah.

**ELOISE:**

Mom says not to stay out too long! Okay?

*ELOISE turns back to go inside.*

**ETHAN *(long pause):***

Hey, wait. Eloise.

**ELOISE:**

Yeah?

**ETHAN:**

All those people in there…are they always like that?

**ELOISE:**

Like what?

**ETHAN:**

So…*thankful?*

**ELOISE *(smiling):***

Dad, they probably learned it from you.

*ELOISE runs back off stage. ETHAN closes his eyes, thinking. Gets up and talks to himself.*

**ETHAN & JUDY SCRIPT**

*ELOISE runs back off stage. ETHAN closes his eyes, thinking. Gets up and talks to himself.*

**ETHAN:**

I don’t understand. Everyone has their own problems. Why are they always willing to help each other? Isn’t it exhausting? Isn’t it time consuming? And yet everyone in there always acts so…so…I don’t know…*hopeful*. It doesn’t make sense to me.

*JUDY enters from stage right talking on a cell phone. She sounds frustrated. She paces talking on the phone.*

**JUDY:**

Don’t tell me what the investors want. I know what they want. I need someone to tell me how we’re going to accomplish it all! When you figure *that* out, give me a call. *(Hangs up)*

**ETHAN:**

Jude?

**JUDY:**

Excuse me?

**ETHAN:**

Oh sorry, nothing.

**JUDY *(to self):***

Subordinates can be so frustrating sometimes.

**ETHAN:**

*That* I understand.

**JUDY:**

You know, I pay these men good money to come up with ideas. And they never follow through. It’s so disappointing.

**ETHAN:**

Well, *(pause)* if you’re looking for what to invest in, I suggest high-end malls. Regular shopping plazas can’t compete with online stores. But when you spend the extra money to make a shopping center more luxurious, you bring in a whole new class of richer customers. They’re willing to buy more expensive things and they like seeing the products in front of them.

**JUDY *(impressed):***

What’s your name again?

**ETHAN (extends hand):**

Ethan Sanders. I work in business. Or, I used to.

**JUDY:**

Judy Michelson. I work down the street. *(Pause, eyeing Ethan, her tone becoming more interested in him)* Ethan, are you looking for a job?

**ETHAN:**

What?

**JUDY:**

Come with me.

*JUDY walks into the Office. JUDY walks over to the desk. ETHAN smiles.*

**ETHAN:**

I’ve always loved offices.

**JUDY:**

Right? The coffe. The work. The papers warm out of the printer.

**ETHAN:**

I know! Offices! They just make sense.

**JUDY:**

This place just got renovated so---

**ETHAN:**

So it’s got that new carpet smell!

**JUDY *(leaning in to touch his elbow):***

Exactly!

*They both chuckle. JUDY pulls out a business card from her desk and hands it to ETHAN. ETHAN takes it excitedly.*

**JUDY:**

*(Compliment)* Look, you’re impressive. And we’ve been in the processes of trying to find a couple new guys. Are you interested in a chance to show me what you can do?

**ETHAN:**

Me?

**JUDY:**

Yeah, Ethan. You. Working for me will require a lot of hard work. Not to mention long hours. (Laughs) To be honest, I’ll probably take up most of your life because we’ll be spending a lot of time together on the same projects. But I promise. It’ll be worth your while.

**ETHAN *(hesitantly):***

Worth my while?

**JUDY *(smiling):***

With the money, Ethan! This job pays extremely well. You’ll never have to worry about your bills or your house or your future ever again. You don’t have, like, a family or anything like that, do you?

**ETHAN:**

I mean, they can probably handle it.

**JUDY:**

That’s the spirit. Alright, when you’ve made up your mind give me a call. This is my personal number.

**HEATHER, PASTOR WILLIAM & ETHAN SCRIPT**

*LIGHTS UP. Dozens of kids and a couple of adults sit in beds next to IV bags. LUCY runs on stage.*

**LUCY *(excitedly):***

***Signs:*** *MR.SANDERS AND PASTOR WILLIAM ARE HERE*

**HEATHER:**

Mr. Sanders and Pastor William are here? That’s wonderful! We haven’t seen Mr. Sanders in awhile now!

*SCRIM lifts up. ETHAN and PASTOR enter the church. A group of kids shout “It’s MR.SANDERS! HE’S BACK!”*

**HEATHER:**

Alright everyone! Give the man some space! Hello Mr. Sanders and Pastor William!

**ETHAN:**

Those are all IV bags. And there are nurses here.

**PASTOR:**

Hello Heather! It’s been awhile since Ethan was here so he could use an update on how everything has been here.

**HEATHER:**

I’m so glad you could come visit us so close to Christmas! Everyday we bring in more kids who need the home care they can’t afford. It’s been filling up but somehow God has managed to keep our funds balanced.

**ETHAN:**

Heather, where are everyone’s parents?

**HEATHER:**

Many parents have to work or are unable to take care of their kids at home. I mean, you yourself had to take care of your sister, Brooke, despite moving around to different foster homes. That’s why I love that you created Brooke’s Heart! This ministry is giving so much hope to kids with disabilities and sicknesses.

*ETHAN is surprised.*

**LUCY *(holding up a glitter ornament):***

**Signs**: *I MADE THIS! LOOK!*

**HEATHER:**

She said, to look at what she made! Lucy spent all morning crafting that for the Christmas tree.

**ETHAN:**

She’s deaf?

**HEATHER:**

Yeah. And Trevor over here is blind. And Catherine’s got bad legs. But here, everyone has help. Thanks to your faithfulness to God!

**ETHAN:**

I did this?

*Kids still crowd around ETHAN showing them the ornaments they made. ETHAN is surprised. He suddenly spots Brooke’s music box on the table. Slowly, he makes his way over to it.*

**ETHAN *(to himself):***

Brooke’s music box. I thought I’d lost it.

**PASTOR:**

It’s so crazy. Seeing how much hope you’ve had in the past fifteen years since you gave your life to Christ has been incredible. It took so many miracles to get this ministry off the ground. And it hasn’t always been easy. But look at it now!