Week 2 Assignment: Chapters 4-10
Audio on iTunes: Tracks 8-15

Chapter 4: Hot Wheels
Setting: the rehab floor in the hospital

Paul moves to the rehab floor of the hospital. He has a new nurse named Terry. Terry teaches Paul how to dress himself with only his left hand. Paul has paralysis in his right arm and right leg, so he will work with an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. Stephanie buys Paul a used wheelchair.

Paul is still very frustrated that he can not tell people what he is thinking, but they can understand his gestures better now. His speech therapist tells Stephanie and Paul that he has both receptive (comprehension) and expressive (speaking) aphasia and apraxia. The speech therapist predicts that Paul may learn to say “yes” and “no” and a few other key words by the time he leaves but that he won’t be talking much. Stephanie gets very emotional when she hears this prognosis. Paul vows to prove the speech therapist wrong: *When I can talk again, I’ll tell her how wrong she was. If she or anyone thinks I can’t do it, I’ll just ignore them.*

It has been almost three months since his stroke so Paul and Stephanie begin to prepare for his return home.

Chapter 5: Dress Rehearsal
Setting: his house

The doctors want Stephanie, Paul’s wife, to practice taking care of him at home. One day, she takes him to their home for a “dress rehearsal”. Paul is sad because he realizes that living at home is going to be more difficult than living at the hospital. He can not do activities like he could
before his stroke. His wheelchair does not easily move on the carpet. He wishes he could stay in the hospital.

Stephanie decides to keep working and hires a woman named Janey to help Paul with his daily schedule.

Stephanie is afraid that Paul will fall down and that she won’t be able to help him up by herself. Paul’s physical therapist shows Stephanie how to position Paul’s body if he falls so that Paul can pull himself up.

Chapter 6: Coming Home to a New Reality
**Setting:** the hospital and his home

After three months in the hospital, Paul prepares to move home. Paul leaves the hospital with a vocabulary of about 10 words. He says goodbye to the patients, nurses, and doctors.

Stephanie and Paul arrive at their home. His neighbor built a ramp for his wheelchair—Paul thinks it is ugly and too small.

His wheelchair does not easily move on the carpet. He uses a rented stair glide to take him upstairs. It works to get him up the stairs but it is difficult to use. The wheelchair does not fit in the bathroom or on the stair glide.

Paul remembers that he used to take care of the house. He can not do this right now, and thinks: *I didn’t like feeling so helpless in my own home.* Paul is frustrated because it is difficult to shower and to dress. On the first morning that he is home, it takes him 2 and ½ hours to get ready with Stephanie’s help.

Chapter 7: Starting Over
**Setting:** his home and offices of the therapists

His caretaker (Janey) takes Paul to his appointments. Paul likes her because she is kind, upbeat and has a good sense of humor.

Stephanie looks for therapists but has a difficult time. Paul thinks speech therapy is going to be difficult. His new speech therapist (Jenny) tells Paul that he “has lost almost everything”. Jenny explains that they will begin by working on nonverbal communication such as gestures so that Paul can communicate some basic ideas. Paul wants to know how long it will take for him to be speaking and writing again like before his stroke. Jenny is cautious in her response and says it is too soon to tell if he will return to that level. Paul is disappointed that Jenny is not more optimistic about his potential to fully recover.
Paul has a new physical therapist named Sally and a new occupational therapist named Mary. Paul’s arm hurts when they touch it. They are both upset that he didn’t receive more therapy for his arm while he was in the hospital. They plan goals for therapy that include learning to climb the stairs in Paul’s home.

Chapter 8: No Pain, No Gain

**Setting:** his house

One morning, Paul is angry because Stephanie and Janey are talking “about” him—he wants them to talk with him. Stephanie and Janey promise to never talk “about” him again.

He is frustrated because he is not as flexible as he used to be. He is more tired and has a hard time with daily activities. He is afraid he will not recover. Paul is scheduled to go back to work in eight months.

He and Stephanie drive to Philadelphia. He has a party to see his parents and friends. He is happy to see them, but he does not understand their jokes. This makes him angry and sad. Stephanie tries to explain the joke to him, but he does not think it is funny. He thinks: *It’s the stroke’s fault again.*

Paul buys a chrome cane. He thinks: *this cane is the beginning of a new phase of my recovery.* He learns to use the cane on the stairs.

Paul gets depressed because Jenny, his speech therapist, tells him he will not get back to 100% and may not even get back to 50%. Stephanie tells him to never ask about his recovery and she talks about how much progress he has made so far.

Chapter 9: System Failure

**Setting:** his home and the Department of Rehabilitative Services

Stephanie and Paul plan for his return to his job. The Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) was not helpful. A DRS counselor asks Paul to do office tasks. The tasks are difficult. The DRS counselor tells Paul and Stephanie that he “did not demonstrate the ability to participate in ‘competitive’ employment.” Stephanie refuses to believe this and asks Jenny, Paul’s speech therapist, to help with Paul’s return to work.

Chapter 10: Returning to “Normal”

**Setting:** his house and his office
Paul gets stronger, but he is frustrated with his speech. His walking and stamina have improved so much that he donates his wheelchair to a local charity. He goes to New Orleans with Stephanie and Janey. Traveling is difficult, but he loves exploring.

Paul returns to work on December 1. Stephanie goes to work with him on the first day. He has a difficult time, but works hard. Paul accepts clerical tasks since writing memos and giving reports is too challenging. He thinks: each time I completed a task, it feels like revenge on the DRS counselor. It has been one year since his stroke. He feels like the old Paul: always striving to do more, to do better, and to push forward.