

"SAVE ME"

By John Scott Shepherd

DRAFT DATE: Feb. 7, 2011

EXT. WESTCHESTER to HARPER HOME - NIGHT

Historic homes with big porches and brief lawns in this leafy, upper-bracket neighborhood on the best fringe of Downtown Boston. It's late and the lights are out on BARCLAY LANE, including at the Harper home...

TOM (V.O.)

You know, just by telling this tale, I could inadvertently become one of her apostles, which is the last thing I want to be.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

I think we should just keep to the facts for now, Mr. Harper.

TOM (V.O.)

"The facts." Right.  
(deep sigh)  
This is what happened the night of October sixth, 2010...

INT. TOM AND BETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

TOM HARPER, 40-ish and real-world handsome, sleeps on his side facing us.

TOM (V.O.)

I didn't know how close Beth came to killing me that night... assuming that part's even true.

Reveal BETH HARPER, 37, former beauty dulled and bloated by box wine and complex carbohydrates, standing behind Tom with a hammer raised above her head, ready to strike.

TOM (V.O.)

I figured my recent adultery made us even, given that she only became fat, drunk, religious and embarrassing after we got pregnant and then married. But judging from the hammer... I guess she didn't see it that way.

Beth changes her mind, lowers the hammer. Something occurs to her and she quickly heads off.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A light flicks on in the sprawling designer kitchen. Beth heads for the fridge, digs deep, moves cheese and Tupperware and sodas aside.

TOM (V.O.)

What happens next, I have to go by what she says... but the evidence corroborates a lot of it.

Beth pulls out a sandwich wrapped in paper that says "BIG KAHUNA."

TOM (V.O.)

I tried to hide the second half of my Big Kahuna because--

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

Come again?

TOM (V.O.)

Oh, it's like a cheesesteak with mushrooms and jalapenos? Anyway... I wasn't looking out for her health. It's just... it was my sandwich.

(sighs)

I know. Things get really petty when a marriage is falling apart.

Beth doesn't even bother to close the refrigerator door before she unwraps the sandwich and takes a huge bite.

TOM (V.O.)

Beth used to eat like a stoned Doberman. She could take down a quarter pounder in four bites.

Beth tries to swallow the bite... and then her eyes go wide with panic. She spasms a little, unable to get it up or take it down.

TOM (V.O.)

But that night, she met her match.

She goes into full-on panic, tries to Heimlich herself against the counter, but nothing works. Her face turns crimson red. Finally, her eyes begin to loll, her arms go limp, and she falls flat on her face with a SPLAT.

INT. TOM AND BETH'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Morning's first light flickers between blinds. Tom's eyes shoot open. He sits up, realizes Beth isn't there.

TOM (V.O.)  
 Beth drained a box of Chardonnay  
 every Friday night, so she never  
 got up on Saturdays before she  
 could smell the coffee.  
 (beat)  
 Something wasn't right.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Tom enters...

TOM  
 Beth?

.. and sees the half-eaten Big Kahuna on the counter, hastily  
 rewrapped. Next to it: the hammer.

TOM (V.O.)  
 My very first thought: That woman  
 would not leave a sandwich  
 unfinished. No way.

Tom begins to peer around the massive island in the center of  
 the kitchen. Like him, we begin to sense that Beth is lying  
 on the other side of it, where we saw her drop...

TOM  
 (shaky)  
 Beth?

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)  
 How did you feel in that moment?

TOM (V.O.)  
 Believe it or not, I felt sad.  
 Even though I resented her for  
 making such a mess of herself...  
 for devouring the better version of  
 our life together... for ruining  
 our daughter before she ever had a  
 chance... I don't know why, but I  
 felt sad.

He reaches the other side of the island... and there's  
 nothing. No Beth. He's confused. Then...

BETH (O.S.)  
 Hey.

He spins, startled: She's standing there, a bulging sausage  
 encased in an undersized sweatshirt and spandex pants,  
 sweating like a pig but also smiling. Beaming. Eyes alive and  
 alert and blissful.

TOM  
Where were you?

BETH  
I went running. How crazy is that?

She moves closer, her smile turning naughty as she looks him over. It's contagious.

TOM (V.O.)  
When we started dating, my friends said Beth was Future Fat... but I was crazy for her. She was saucy.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)  
"Saucy?" Who says "saucy?"

Beth's hands find him easily through his pajamas. He shudders, instantly turned on.

BETH  
Somebody likes me sweaty, huh?

TOM (V.O.)  
On that morning, Saturday, October sixth, it had been almost nine months since we had sex.

She nibbles his neck, whispers in his ear...

BETH  
Wanna fuck?

TOM  
Definitely.

As they start making out...

TOM (CONT'D)  
What got into you?

She pulls back, holds his face in her fat little hands and smiles so wide it lights up the whole room.

BETH  
God.

Off Tom's confusion, PAN to the window and OUTSIDE...

EXT. BARCLAY LANE - MORNING

Another morning, a new outfit: Beth runs down the driveway and onto the street.

## INT./EXT. "BETH'S METAMORPHOSIS MONTAGE"

- As a BED to our montage, Beth runs through the neighborhood. Leaves fall, autumn turns to winter and winter to spring, and Beth's outfit changes accordingly. She gets stronger, thinner, better. Neighbors gawk.

- Beth pours booze down the sink with the help of daughter EMILY (15), well pierced, too much eyeliner, clearly nine miles of bad road. Beth doesn't see Emily slip a bottle into her massive purse on the floor.

- Beth lifts weights at a health club to the surprise of those who pass.

- Dressed as a sexy angel, Beth animatedly tells her tale at a neighborhood Halloween party. The LISTENERS find her absurd...

TOM (V.O.)

At first, the neighbors rolled their eyes when she told how she choked, died, and got saved by God.

(beat)

I mean, she was Beth, for Christ's sake. She'd been a whole lot of goofy for a very long time.

- In a college lecture hall surrounded by younger, vaguely disdainful STUDENTS, Beth raises her hand excitedly. When we REVERSE to the PROFESSOR, we see THEOLOGY 101 scrawled on the board behind him.

- INTERCUT, Beth runs through Westchester... ever faster, ever sleeker, ever more confident.

- Tom and Beth make wild, passionate sex in their bed. She spins him, gets on top. He still can't believe this is real.

- Beth tells her story again, this time at a Christmas party, pausing long enough to refuse another drink. In less than three months, she's transformed, become confident and powerful. Nobody's laughing now; some hang on her every word.

TOM (V.O.)

But she became her own proof. By Christmas, she'd lost forty pounds and mostly quit drinking. But it was more than paperback self-improvement horseshit... she'd really, truly, profoundly changed. She was just... better.

EXT. BARCLAY LANE - NIGHT

Spring has sprung in the neighborhood, flowers blooming.

TOM (V.O.)

Then last week... that's when it happened.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

What happened?

INT. HARPER HOME - NIGHT

Tom walks down the hall in pajama bottoms and a T-shirt, checks the thermostat. He hears Beth's VOICE coming from Emily's room... moves closer to the door to listen.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM - SAME

Beth sits on the edge of Emily's bed.

BETH

You probably shouldn't tell your friends. You probably shouldn't even tell Dad.

EMILY

Oh, God. Are you pregnant?

BETH

(quick laugh)  
No. Not yet anyway.  
(deep breath)  
You know how God saved me?

EMILY

I guess.

BETH

You know how I said he's inside me?  
How I can feel him?  
(reluctant)  
Well, it's a little more than that.

EMILY

Like what?

BETH

Like... He tells me things.

EMILY

You're hearing voices?

BETH

Not exactly. It's more like I'm  
tapped in. It's not even words but  
I understand. I get it.

EMILY

You are deeply freaking me out. I'm  
never gonna sleep.

BETH

Imagine how I feel.

EMILY

I'd rather not.

BETH

He says you're very special... and  
you're meant for amazing things.

EMILY

Okay then. This god of yours is  
suddenly growing on me.

BETH

He wants you clearheaded, so you  
need to back off the Cannabis and  
Smirnoff.

EMILY

(her mind blown)  
The fuck you say.

BETH

Young lady! Do not--

TAP-TAP. They both jolt; Tom leans in the door.

TOM

Ladies? Shouldn't we get to bed?

BETH

Right. Okay.  
(kisses Emily)  
We'll finish this tomorrow.

Beth leaves. Tom lingers.

TOM

Everything okay?

EMILY

(whispered)  
C'mere!

He moves in further, closes the door.

TOM  
What is it?

EMILY  
If Mom's all filled to the gills  
with God now... how come we don't  
have to go to Church anymore?

Tom's expression: Good question.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BOSTON - DAY - EST.

TOM (O.S.)  
Uhhhhh...

EXT. THE JAMESON HOTEL - DAY

Exclusive, historic, and boutique-ey, probably in South End.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)  
You didn't answer her?

INT. SUITE AT THE JAMESON - DAY

Tom sits up in bed, shirtless, tousled. Post-coital.

TOM  
No.

In a chair nearby in this lush, historic room, CARLY BRUGANO (25, hot without any effort, our "Young Woman" voice) sits with her leg crossed, taking notes like a therapist. Couple quirks, though: She's wearing his button up shirt and panties, nothing else... and hitting a joint.

CARLY  
Why not?

TOM  
Because I don't like church. Didn't  
see any reason to rock that boat.

She snickers, takes a note, takes a hit.

CARLY  
I see. Well, the hour's about up.

She stands, takes off his shirt, tosses it to him. In a word: Wow.

CARLY (CONT'D)

Gotta get back to my desk. Boss is a total prick.

She hands him the joint; he takes a hit, snuffs it out on a saucer on the bedside table. As they dress, we realize she's putting back on a concierge-like uniform.

TOM

Do you really have a Master's in Psychology? I'm not getting played?

CARLY

Yeah, some grift: I fuck you, give you free therapy sessions, and share my pot. Suckah!

(beat)

I'll have you know I was a high school counselor for almost six weeks before the cutbacks.

TOM

Damn. So you actually like me.

With a sigh, she settles onto the bed next to him, pets his cheek and then kisses him.

CARLY

What happened to make you so insecure?

TOM

The I.D. badge says "Executive Director," but I'm still just a hotel manager. Not where I planned to be at...

(clears throat)

Thirty-nine?

CARLY

The guy who runs the Ramada out on seventy-one is "just a hotel manager." The Jameson is one of the best boutique hotels in the world and you are The Man, Tom Harper.

(beat)

Besides, you're part owner now.

TOM

Five percent in return for a five-year No Compete, which would be the end of my career.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm basically trapped under that gin-blossomed blowhard and his Percocet zombie sister.

CARLY

Still have the big meeting on Thursday, about the spa?

TOM

I've had five meetings with the Sibs about the spa. They never listen to anything I say.

CARLY

Well, fuck the Sibs. We'll stage a bloody coup together. Doesn't that sound fun... Mister Harper?

TOM

You know what that does to me, the Mister Harper thing.

CARLY

Yeah. I know what this does to you, too.

She pulls on her black stocking with pin-up girl flourish, toe pointed to the sky. Before he can grab her, she spins away and off the bed, giggles mischievously as she snatches up her pumps. Just before she hits the door...

TOM

Carly?

CARLY

Hmm?

TOM

I really am falling for you.

CARLY

I know.

TOM

Is that enough?

CARLY

Not for long. Get your future ex-wife a CATSCAN. Fifty bucks says she has some kind of brain damage.

She leaves. He'd never considered that.

INT. JAMESON LOBBY - LATER

Looking crisp in his good suit, Tom tightens his tie, signs something for a KITCHEN MANAGER, keeps moving through a lobby that's gathering some early evening heat. The woody bar nearby is starting to HUM.

Carly crosses his path, glances sideways without stopping.

CARLY

Good evening... Mister Harper.

He smiles a little as she takes her place behind the Service Elite counter. But then...

MAN (O.S.)

Tom! Hey, Tom!

He turns to DR. JOHN WILKINS (late 30s, black, tall), wearing scrubs under his hoodie.

TOM

John? What the hell are you--

JOHN

We need to talk.

INT. THE BAR - SAME

FOLLOW a WAITRESS, 20s, as she serves neat Scotches to Tom and John, smiles sweetly, and moves on.

JOHN

That the one you're doin'?

TOM

(whispered)

God, Wilkins, some discretion?

(beat)

Up front, Service Elite desk.

JOHN

Dark hair, green eyes? Holy shit.  
You must be packing for a white  
boy, huh?

They clink glasses.

TOM

So what's up?

JOHN

You know our kids are messin'  
around, right?

Tom almost does a spit take with his Glenfiddich.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'll take that as a no. Good news:  
It's my son, not my daughter. I  
always figured Emily was gay.

Tom bobs his head: He thought the same thing.

TOM

How far?

JOHN

'Bout halfway there when I broke it  
up the other night. I gave Ben the  
condom speech just in case. Feel  
free to go all psycho dad on him,  
imply that you have firearms and a  
history of violence. I would.

Tom worries over that... then looks back up at John.

TOM

There's more?

JOHN

Apparently your wife told Emily God  
talks to her, Emily texted Ben last  
night, Ben told my wife and  
daughter this morning, and when I  
went home at lunch to meet with a  
contractor? There were a bunch of  
people at your house, about eight  
cars parked out front.

TOM

What are you suggesting?

JOHN

Not a thing. Least of all that your  
wife has decided she's Jesus  
Christ.

John raises his eyebrows: That's exactly what he's saying.  
Tom slumps; John sniffs the air.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you smell pot?

EXT. HARPER HOME - NIGHT

A light snow falls.

EMILY (O.S.)  
(quiet)  
Any chance you could stop shootin'  
me the stink eye...

INT. HARPER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom, Beth, and Emily clean up after dinner. Tom is indeed shooting daggers at his daughter and she knows it isn't good. Beth is too distracted with scrubbing pans to notice.

EMILY  
(quiet)  
... and just tell me what kind of  
trouble I'm in?

Without taking his eyes off Emily...

TOM  
Beth, did I mention that John  
dropped by for a drink?

EMILY  
(getting it)  
Oh, shit. I have homework.

BETH  
Again? The mouth?

TOM  
We'll talk later.

Emily hurries off. Beth turns to Tom, not at all concerned, dries her hands with a towel.

BETH  
What's on your mind, Tom?

TOM  
Why'd you stop making us go to  
church?

BETH  
Because it's mostly bullshit. John  
told you about the cars in front of  
the house, right?

TOM  
Who were they?

BETH  
People.

TOM  
I figured. What were they here for?

She considers for a long time. Finally...

BETH  
Answers.

TOM  
Oh, God...

BETH  
Ding-ding-ding!

TOM  
Beth... come on. You're not Jesus.

BETH  
Whoa. Hold on. You think. That I think. I'm Jesus. Seriously?

Tom shrugs: Sorta.

BETH (CONT'D)  
I'm not crazy, Tom. I'm just a normal human being.  
(off his relief)  
And a prophet of God.

After a long beat...

TOM  
I'm sorry. Did you just say you're a prophet of God?

BETH  
That's right.

TOM  
So you weren't making that shit up for Emily's sake? Using it to set her straight?

BETH  
Nobody likes an eavesdropper.  
(short laugh)  
There's a lot He doesn't like about you.

TOM  
He as in God? God's mad at me?

BETH

The He thing is a matter of convenience, you know. It really isn't a he/she situation.

TOM

Why would God be mad at me?

BETH

Because you're hurting your daughter. She smells the perfume and pot on your clothes.

TOM

She told you that?

After a long pause...

BETH

No.

TOM

Ah. I get it. God told you. So is he gonna smite me? Is God big on the smiting?

BETH

(winces)

'Fraid so, babe.

TOM

Beth... sweetie... it's not that I don't appreciate the weight loss or the clean house and great dinners, because I do. But I think you might have brain damage.

She spurts a quick laugh.

BETH

Really.

TOM

Really. Could be oxygen deprivation, could be hitting your head on the kitchen floor. We should've taken you to the doctor that morning.

BETH

Is that what you need... Thomas?

TOM

Damn, that's not half bad, Beth.  
Doubting Thomas.

BETH

I'm so glad you're impressed. We'll  
get a CATSCAN tomorrow.

She walks out of the kitchen, leaves him there unsure how to  
feel about her compliance.

TOM

(called after her)  
Thank you!

EXT. HOSPITAL - DOWNTOWN BOSTON - DAY

DR. MALIKAY (FEMALE, PRELAP)

Calling everything we don't  
understand "damage" is the  
neurology checkdown, the default.

INT. DR. MALIKAY'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON the image of Beth's brain, with a pointer circling a  
BLUE SPOT near the base of the neck. Reveal DR. MILA MALIKAY  
(50s, Persian, no-nonsense pretty) in her austere office,  
using a wall-mounted lightbox for Tom and Beth's benefit.

DR. MALIKAY

We see a flare of electrical  
activity where it shouldn't be, we  
call it "damage," an inflammation  
or reaction to trauma.

TOM

Or oxygen deprivation?

DR. MALIKAY

Profound oxygen deprivation would  
mostly affect the frontal lobe and  
we'd see a broad, general decrease  
in electrical activity. Did you  
experience any loss of balance or  
dizziness after the incident, Beth?

BETH

Nope. None at all.

TOM

So back to this "flare," this blue  
spot. You think that's where she  
hit her head?

DR. MALIKAY

If you'd come in immediately... as you should have... that's precisely what I would have said. But four months later?

She shakes her head, lost in it...

TOM

Doctor?

DR. MALIKAY

Did you read about the neurological tests done on Tibetan monks when they're immersed in deep prayer?

TOM

No.

BETH

We talked about it in my Theology class. They activate a part of the brain most people can't, right?

DR. MALIKAY

Actually, nobody had ever activated that part of the brain.

TOM

Wait. Hold on. Are you saying this blue spot is the same part of the brain those monks were using? The part nobody else can turn on?

DR. MALIKAY

That's what I'm saying.

When Tom looks back to Beth, she's smiling blissfully, eyes misty with tears.

EXT./INT. TRAIN TO WESTCHESTER - DAY

Tom and Beth sit nearly alone on the train as it barrels through the fringes of Downtown Boston.

BETH

So which scares you more, Tom: That I'm a prophet of God... or that there is a God?

TOM

That blue spot isn't proof of God, Beth. It's part of the human brain.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

Maybe it's just a source for really powerful delusions... like a dopamine superstore.

BETH

You think we're delusional. Me and the monks.

TOM

It's a little more feasible, don't you think?

BETH

You need something to believe in, Tom Harper. You've needed it for a very long time.

(fights crying)

Why can't it be me?

He doesn't know how to respond to that. He opens his mouth to try but comes up empty. Beth nods, accepts it as an answer.

BETH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I disappointed you. I wanted to do better, but the hole was so deep and the sides were so slippery... eventually I just started decorating.

(beat)

But I couldn't live with the way you looked at me. And because I was such a selfish, loathsome bitch, I figured I'd kill you, not me.

TOM

If I'd known you were hurting that bad... maybe I could've stopped being pissed off long enough to help pull you out.

BETH

Is it too late for us?

He considers that deeply. Then...

TOM

I don't know.

A fair answer. And an honest one.

BETH

On Thursday evenings, I'll be hosting a Bible group... without the Bible, of course.

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)  
I'll understand if you want to make  
other plans.

And with that, Beth turns away from him. HOLD ON Tom's face  
as he tries to digest it all.

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S., PRELAP)  
About thirty Westchester residents  
gathered last night...

EXT./INT. TELEVISION NEWS REPORT - NIGHT

Seen ON A TV SCREEN:

- Cars arriving and parking in front of the Harper home,  
which is never clearly shown.

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S.)  
... in this upper-middle-class  
home. Not to drink Mojitos, buy  
cosmetics, or share investment  
tips...

- Inside, the Harper front room is at overflow, mostly with  
WOMEN but also a smattering of MEN and even TEENAGERS. Their  
faces are rapt, riveted... they're hanging on every word.

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
But to hear the word of God  
directly from a self-proclaimed  
prophet.

- REVERSE to Beth, smiling and confident, preaching a  
cheerful sermon to her new flock.

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
This is Beth, a suburban housewife  
who swears that God, neither male  
nor female, saved her from choking  
to death on a beef-and-cheese  
sandwich last October... and has  
been communicating with her ever  
since. Count among her unlikely  
believers...

- ON that image of Beth's brain, pulling back to reveal  
Dr. Malikay in her office.

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
... respected neurologist Dr. Mila  
Malikay, who says Beth's brain is  
different than yours and mine.

The image SHUTS OFF, and we are...

INT. JAMESON HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Carly is curled up in her chair, wrapped in a blanket and holding her pen and note pad, a glass of Scotch next to her.

CARLY

Hey! What the hell?

Tom is in his place, propped up against pillows on the bed.

TOM

I can't take it anymore.

CARLY

Bet she gets a big, fat book deal out of this. Maybe even a TV show.

(can't believe it)

That stupid blue spot on your wife's scrambled mess of a brain's gonna make her a fortune.

Tom covers his face in his hands.

CARLY (CONT'D)

You said she was a college dropout weather girl when you met her, right? Just like Sarah Palin?

TOM

Weekends on the local independent. Allusion noted.

CARLY

She's totally insane, Tom. You do realize that.

TOM

Of course. But what sells better than crazy?

CARLY

You need to move out and take your daughter with you. This can't be good for her.

TOM

Judges aren't real fond of adulterous pothead fathers.

CARLY

How does she know you smoke pot?

TOM

God told her.

Carly rolls her eyes, sighs. Tom is amused, too.

TOM (CONT'D)

He also told her I'm hurting my daughter by sleeping with you. He's mad at me.

CARLY

Well, shit. Imagine what he thinks of Little Miss Whore of Babylon here.

Tom looks concerned by that.

CARLY (CONT'D)

What?

TOM

She said He's kind of smite-ey.

CARLY

What kind of atheist are you?

TOM

The agnostic kind?

CARLY

An agnostic is just a pussy atheist hedging his bets.

TOM

Just to be safe, neither of us should go out in a thunderstorm.

Eerily on cue, thunder RUMBLES. Carly scrambles out of her chair and into Tom's arms.

TOM (CONT'D)

Now who's a pussy?

She cops a feel, oozes into him...

CARLY

If I'm going down, I'm taking you with me... Mister Harper.

TOM

(between sexhales)  
Fair enough.

EXT. BARCLAY LANE - DAY

Pan from the Harper home to the house across the street, the DERRING HOME. PRELAP a TELEVISED FOOTBALL GAME...

PETE (O.S.)  
I doubt history will be kind to  
you, Doubting Thomas.

INT. DERRING HOUSE - DEN - SAME

PETE DERRING (40s), soft, entitled, somehow appealing like Philip Seymour Hoffman, delivers beers to Tom and John in a den featuring a small bar, a leather seating area, and a massive plasma playing a college football game.

PETE  
Hey, maybe you should have her  
killed so you can be Judas instead.

JOHN  
Judas had a pair. Big brass ones.

PETE  
Thomas, on the other hand, is one  
of the biggest poofs in history.

JOHN  
If you're gonna be the bad guy,  
fuck, man, do it with conviction.  
Own it. Judas is like the Joker of  
the Bible.

TOM  
I can't believe I hang out with you  
choads. I really wish I could vote  
you both off the island.

JOHN  
What do you mean, "you people?"

PETE  
He didn't actually say that.

JOHN  
Oh. My bad. Jumped the gun.

Pete hits the TV mute button. They look upward and listen.

PETE  
Awful quiet up there.

JOHN  
Maybe Beth had our wives smited.  
Smoten? Which is it?

They listen some more.

TOM  
 Sounds more like God's the elephant  
 in the kitchen.

We go THROUGH THE CEILING to...

INT. DERRING KITCHEN - SAME

We follow Beth from a guest bathroom and into the sprawling kitchen, where John and Pete's wives suddenly stop whispering and go back to cutting vegetables and drinking wine.

MAGGIE WILKINS (late 30s) is a pretty, slender MESTIZA; JANE DERRING (40) is a plucky little southern wife in the Holly Hunter mode. Jane pretends to just notice Beth...

JANE  
 Oh, there she is. Would you like a  
 glass of wine... or would you  
 rather make your own out of water?

Maggie tries not to laugh, but it bursts out anyway. Beth smiles, nods.

JANE (CONT'D)  
 Sorry, kiddo. Couldn't resist.

MAGGIE  
 Would've been so much easier if you  
 were stripping out by the airport  
 or cooking meth in your basement.

JANE  
 But prophet of God... awkward.

BETH  
 I see you two are drunk enough to  
 ridicule me now.

Beth opens the fridge, grabs a diet soda and pops it.

BETH (CONT'D)  
 What else you got?

The two women settle a little bit, smiles falling.

MAGGIE  
 Actually, I was just telling  
 Jane... I think you're a genius.

BETH  
 Meaning a liar.

JANE  
C'mon, Beth. Either you're a  
genius... or you're batshit crazy.

BETH  
No option C? I'm the real thing?

MAGGIE  
Damn, you do look good, girl.

BETH  
I feel good. I feel...  
(considers)  
Clear.

JANE  
So what's your message gonna be?  
What's the one-liner?

MAGGIE  
Are you gonna have commandments or  
a bible or something?

JANE  
Maybe a God blog?

BETH  
Hadn't really thought about it.

MAGGIE  
Did you really tell Dani Fischer to  
start blowing her husband?

BETH  
It's all he wants. It means  
something to him.

JANE  
Like she's his bitch?

BETH  
No. Like... she loves him. That's  
what it means to him.

Her sincerity knocks them back a little.

JOHN (O.S., PRELAP)  
I'm sure Jane and Maggie are  
jealous as hell.

INT. DERRING DEN - SAME

TOM  
Jealous? Of what?

JOHN

Let's face it, Beth was the village idiot. She existed to make those two feel better about themselves.

PETE

Now she's smokin' hot and stealing all the attention. I mean, imagine how Sarah Palin's way smarter college roommates feel.

TOM

Why does everybody keep bringing up Sarah Palin?

JOHN

So you really don't know what she's preaching?

TOM

I think it's specific advice, at least so far.

PETE

Sounds more like a psychic.

That tweaks Tom, grabs his interest.

TOM

That's an excellent point.

PETE

It is?

TOM

Who says it's God?

PETE

Come again?

TOM

What if Beth's death experience made her psychic? What if that little blue spot on her brain really is a portal, a receiver... but the downloads aren't coming from God? Could be the dead... or other people... or the universal consciousness... or--

JOHN

So you're not really a skeptic... you're just afraid of a sentient, omnipotent, old school God?

Tom looks between the two, all mirth draining from him...

TOM  
You guys aren't?

INT. DERRING KITCHEN - SAME

The women settle in at the table with glasses of wine and some finger food, hummus and crackers.

MAGGIE  
What you really need, babydoll, is  
a proper agent.

JANE  
Gotta leverage this prophet thing  
while it's hot.

MAGGIE  
But you gotta have a plan. It's  
like, L. Ron started out with  
"Dianetics," right? Kept the crazy  
to a minimum at first?  
(beat)  
Does your blowjob recommending God  
have anything against you getting  
rich and famous?

BETH  
Not that I know of.

JANE  
You could have a pay site with  
virtual sermons... a syndicated TV  
show... huge public appearances...

BETH  
Well... how do I go about getting  
one of these "proper agents?"

Maggie and Jane look at each other, then back to Beth.

MAGGIE  
She doesn't know?

JANE  
Guess not.

BETH  
Know what?

MAGGIE  
I used to be a hooker, before I was  
mayor, before I was my own twin?

BETH

Look, I'm not retarded, okay? It's not like you can just say anything and I'll--

JANE

She was a soap actress, assbat. She met John in New York, when he was at Columbia Med.

MAGGIE

Point is... I still have an agent.

Beth gets it. Likes it. Washes it around...

BETH

Huh.

MAGGIE

Yeah. "Huh."

INT. TOM AND BETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom bends down to set an alarm clock. In a tiny nightshirt that's sexy for not trying too hard, Beth molds into him from behind, nibbles him, reaches around for a feel.

Tom's torn, turned on but wary. He turns and evades a little, so she backs up.

TOM

Hey. So, uhm... how'd it go with the girls?

BETH

I think they see me as a business opportunity.

TOM

Do you? I mean... see this as a business opportunity?

She sits cross-legged on the bed; he sits in front of her.

BETH

(shrugs)

I need a forum. There are things people need to hear.

After a beat...

TOM

So God's really displeased with me?

BETH

I think it's because He cares so much about you. It's like... you're important somehow. Special.

TOM

Oh, come on. Seriously? Why would--

She gets up on her knees, moves in on him again...

BETH

Can we talk about this after I turn you inside out?

TOM

So He's clearly pro sex, huh?

BETH

Oh, yeah.

TOM

Beth... babe... not to get all gay, but this is kinda weird for me. I thought we were moving more in a me-sleeping-in-the-guest-room direction.

She pulls back, gets it. Finally...

BETH

Is this about the slut from work? Why would you need her anymore?

OFF Tom...

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She hits a joint with her face very near a window, huffs hard to push the smoke outside. Then... a DOOR RATTLES from downstairs. She closes the window, hurries to check her phone for a text.

EMILY

(confused)

Ben?

INT. THE STAIRS

Emily tiptoes her way down carefully, as not to draw attention.

INT. THE KITCHEN

She pads in, leaves the light off. Wind blows... and the back door opens a little more.

INT. TOM AND BETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beth straddles Tom, now, seducing him slow and easy, using her tongue, her hands, everything to melt his resistance. It's working. Tom is leaving this earth with pleasure.

He starts to turn her, to take control, but she stops him.

BETH  
No... like this.

We can tell she's guiding him in. She whispers in his ear...

BETH (CONT'D)  
Gotta go deep to make a boy.

Tom swims for the surface at that...

TOM  
Come again?

But just then, Emily SCREAMS from downstairs. They're both snapped into action.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Emily backs away from a TWEAKER (20s), wiry and tattooed, hair everywhere, the tear-drenched face of a meth junkie. He's scary because he's desperate, not malicious.

MAN  
I don't want any trouble... I'm not gonna hurt you... I just need to see her.

TOM (O.S.)  
HEY!

The Tweaker spins, terrified, to see Tom there, fists balled. The Tweaker holds up his hands defensively.

TWEAKER  
Please... I'm so sick.

TOM  
Does this look like a doctor's office to you?

But Tom has lost the Tweaker: His eyes light up when Beth appears. Before anyone realizes what's happening, he falls to his knees in front of her and starts kissing her bare feet.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Hey! Stop that!

EMILY  
What the fuck is he doing?

BETH  
Watch your mouth, young lady.

TWEAKER  
(between kisses)  
No cursing!

TOM  
Uh, excuse me?

BETH  
He needs this. He's surrendering.

EMILY  
Oh, really? Well, it's majorly fucking disturbing, Mother.

She strides off...

TWEAKER  
(muffled)  
Stop cursing!

... seethes to Tom...

EMILY  
Do you have any idea how much therapy I'm gonna need?

... and bolts up the stairs. Tom looks between the Tweaker showering Beth's feet with kisses, Beth smiling down on him sweetly, and his watch.

TOM  
Uhm... so how long do you think this kind of thing should, uh...

BETH  
Okay. That's enough.

She helps him to rise up to his knees, holds his face in her hands, leans close to him, her eyes glistening with love.

BETH (CONT'D)

Better?

TWEAKER

(smiling through tears)

Yes. Thank you.

BETH

I want you to go home now... and  
flush all that nasty business away.  
Do you understand?

TWEAKER

Yes, ma'am.

BETH

Promise?

TWEAKER

I promise.

BETH

I'll check on you in a couple days.  
Where do you live?

TWEAKER

419 Wetmore. Charlestown. Rough  
neighborhood.

BETH

I can handle it.

Tom looks at Beth likes he's never seen her before. She feels  
it, looks back... and knows exactly what he's thinking.

INT. TOM AND BETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom virtually tackles Beth onto their bed. She giggles  
enticingly as he holds her hands down, devours her in every  
conceivable way. It's raw, animal, out of control... and  
she's loving it.

CARLY (O.S., PRELAP)

You motherFUCKER!

INT. SUITE AT THE JAMESON - DAY

Tom ducks just in time, the tumbler CRASHING on the wall  
behind him. He holds out his hands peacefully...

TOM

Take it easy, okay? I'm sorry. I'm  
really, truly sorry.

REVEAL Carly, fresh from a shower, wearing just a wife-beater and panties, face flush with anger.

CARLY

You're having sex with your goddamn wife again? Are you kidding me?

The tears come no matter how hard she tries to stop them. She falls into the chair, covers her face and sobs. Tom goes to her, kneels in front of her, lowers her hands, finds a fallen towel to dab her tears.

TOM

I had to tell you.

CARLY

Yeah? Why?

He stops dabbing as it dawns on him.

TOM

Because I love you.

It moves her. She stares back into his eyes. Then she SLAPS him hard, startles the shit out of him. He stands, backs away from her.

TOM (CONT'D)

Ow! Why'd you do that?

She stands, stalks him.

CARLY

Because I love you, too.

She moves in, fits perfectly, gets him back against the wall and goes up on her toes for the kiss. It's longing and real, so much that it makes him wince.

CARLY (CONT'D)

What? What's wrong?

TOM

I don't know what I'm gonna do.

CARLY

You're gonna leave that crazy bitch, that's what you're gonna do.

TOM

She said I can't.

CARLY

Uh, hello? If it were that simple, don't you think every wife would play that card?

TOM

This is not a goddamn everywife situation, Carly. You know that.

Carly reads him closely.

CARLY

Did she threaten you with damnation? Is that it?

TOM

Actually... she said I'm important to God. "Special." How weird is that?

CARLY

Please tell me you aren't letting that ridiculous psycho give you an ego erection. I can't express how disappointing that would be for me.

TOM

What? No! My ego is completely flaccid!

CARLY

Do you really love me, Tom Harper? For real?

He settles. His eyes make it obvious.

TOM

Before you, I thought maybe I couldn't. I thought maybe there was something wrong with me.

Her eyes mist over again. After a beat...

CARLY

Then I'm the only one who can save you.

OFF this excruciatingly genuine moment...

EXT. BARCLAY LANE - DAY

It's a major rainstorm, coming down in buckets. FIND the WILKINS home, next door to the Harpers. Thunder RUMBLES... and turns into a rack of pool balls BREAKING.

JOHN (O.S., PRELAP)  
Dude, that's fucking beautiful.

INT. WILKINS HOME - DEN - NIGHT

John's basement is all about the pool table; Tom watches as the other two play. John follows his break, goes for stripes.

JOHN  
I mean, that is some bigscreen movie love right there. I've never had a woman say shit like that to me. She wants to save you? Wow.

PETE  
So is she saving you from yourself... or from a disappointing life of diminished expectations... or specifically from Beth?

TOM  
Kinda ruins it if you pick it apart and analyze it to death.

PETE  
I'm a lawyer. It's what I do.

JOHN  
Too bad your wife's Jesus, huh? I mean... you can't leave Jesus.

TOM  
Come on. You guys don't believe it any more than I do.

JOHN  
My wife's agents believe it.  
(off Tom)  
Two big schlongs who stopped taking Maggie's calls five years ago are flying in from New York on the company jet to meet with Beth. Head of lit and head of talent.

Tom falls onto a bar stool.

TOM  
Well, that's just terrific.

PETE  
You wanna be with that girl, you need to find a quiet island somewhere.

Tom nods distantly...

TOM  
That sounds nice.

Just then, a distant BLARING of a car horn, over and over and over, cuts through the pouring rain.

JOHN  
What the hell?

The door burst open and John's twins BEN and ALLY (16) rumble down the stairs and into the den.

ALLY  
You guys gotta see this!

BEN  
Some chick drove her car into the  
Harper's lawn!

All eyes turn to Tom. It finally dawns on him.

TOM  
Oh shit.

EXT. BARCLAY LANE - NIGHT

In the pouring rain, lightning strobing the sky, a Honda mini-SUV has jumped the curb. At the bumper, one of the old-fashioned street lamps leans at a 45 degree angle, SPARKING at the base.

After one last BLARE of the horn, Carly staggers out in bare feet, slips drunkenly on the wet lawn, accidentally grabs and breaks off her antenna for support. She unconsciously uses it for emphasis...

CARLY  
Get out here, you hateful fucking  
charlatan cunt!

INT. EMILY'S ROOM - SAME

Emily looks out her window at the shocking site in her front lawn, her iPhone stuck to her ear.

EMILY  
Yes, Ben, I can clearly see the  
crazy lady in my front lawn!  
(squints)  
That antenna can't be a good idea.

She hears someone POUNDING DOWN THE WOODEN STEPS...

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Oh, shit. I gotta go.

... tosses the phone onto her bed, runs out of her room.

INT. THE HALLWAY

FOLLOW Emily as she sprints down the hall and down the stairs after her mother, who is heading right for the front door.

EMILY  
Mom? What the hell do you think  
you're doing?

Beth spins so fast that Emily freezes.

BETH  
That slut is on my lawn calling me  
horrible names. I will not cower.

With that, she bursts out...

EXT. HARPER HOME - CONTINUOUS

... and onto the front porch. She shows off her cellphone.

BETH  
I'm gonna press three numbers on  
this phone, little girl... and if  
you're still on my property, you're  
going to jail.

Tom bursts out of the Wilkins' house, takes it in. Carly now uses the antenna as a pointer...

CARLY  
Well there she is, the prophet  
herself. Looks like any other bored  
Westchester housewife to me.

TOM  
Carly!

The Derrings' porch light turns on; Jane and Maggie step out, then Jane turns to shove two mostly-unseen DAUGHTERS back into the house. Lightning strobos and thunder RUMBLES.

JANE  
No! Take her back inside now!

She closes the door.

MAGGIE  
How we doing over there, Beth?

BETH  
 (pressing a number)  
Nine.

Tom heads for Carly. Pete, John, Ben, and Ally step out into the Wilkins' lawn behind him. Ally starts videotaping the whole thing with her iPhone.

ALLY  
 Hello, YouTube.

TOM  
 Carly, I'm gonna drive you home now, okay?

BETH  
 (pressing a number)  
One. The hell you are. She can take a cab like any other whore.

CARLY  
 If you weren't such a conniving phoney, you wouldn't have to call 911 because God would just--

ZZZZZZZZT! A crooked reed of electricity flickers between the antenna in Carly's hand and the sky, illuminates her for just a nanosecond, makes her glow. It ends without any dramatic sound, almost like it never really happened. Carly stands there silent. Frozen. Hair wilder than before. The antenna slips from her limp hand.

JANE  
 No. Fucking. Way.

Beth is in shock. She starts shaking her head.

BETH  
 (barely)  
 I did not do that.

TOM  
 Carly? CARLY? Can you hear me?

Carly turns a little, looks at him... and then smoke comes from her ears and mouth. Her arms go limps, her eyes loll back... and she falls over flat on her face.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 NOOOOOOOOOO--

HARD CUT TO BLACK.

**THE END**