

SPILT MILK

Written by

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INT. APOSTLES OF BETHLEHEM FOR CHRIST - AFTERNOON

From the rafters, a CROWD is in riotous worship below. Half dance while the rest writhe and seize. It's a convulsing scene.

A section of the throng parts for two large MEN. They drag another even larger MAN to the back.

SUPERIMPOSE: "POCONO MOUNTAINS, 1983"

The loudspeaker booms, doubling as the voice of God.

MAN (O.S.)  
Now walk with-- walk with me,  
Diane. Show the unbelievers here  
and at home. No more tendonitis, no  
more arthritis, no more dermatitis,  
spider veins, gout, restless legs,  
you name it! BLESSINGS BE ONTO YOU!  
WOOOOOOO! Let's keep Diane going,  
now, folks, give it up! GIVE. IT.  
UP. EVERYONE!

There is a gap in the crowd.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Ok, ok, folks, bring it down, down  
to the ground. Uh-what?! Did you  
just feel that... right now? That  
sudden wave of warmth? We've got  
inbound from the Almighty!  
(beat)  
Speak up God, the folks are  
calling... Who is next to receive  
your blessed touch?

In the gap is JEANIE HILL (11), holds her own against the packed mass while craning to catch a sliver of ambient light on her CASIO calculator watch.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Say it with me now--LOUD! LET ME  
HEAR IT! EVERYONE, WITH ME NOW!

The faces above Jeanie, including that of her AUNT MARY (LATE 40s) and indebted to Mary Kay, shout together:

CROWD  
GOD... IS ON... THE LINE!

MAN (O.S.)  
Is there a M--

LAUGHS overtake the hall.

Jeanie gives up on the time and gets on her tippy toes searching for any line of sight.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Well, hello, again, didn't see you there! Stay outta that one's way, folks. Such an inspiration. Keep it up, keep it going. Give it up one more time for Diane, folks!

Jeanie, at her wits end, hops up onto her seat.

MARY  
Aye, aye, down, get down!

JEANIE  
How much longer?

MARY  
Not much. Soon. Ok?

Jeanie sits down in a huff.

MAN (O.S.)  
(beat)  
Now, listen, listen to me well.  
(hushing the crowd)  
I'm looking for Margaret... Is there a Margaret here with us today?

A few excited calls fleck the hall.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Ohhh, quite a few! How the good word has spread... Beautiful.  
(beat)  
Does September twelfth, nineteen-forty-four mean anything to you, Margaret?  
(beat)  
September twelfth, nineteen forty-four... God is telling me that's a special day. Do you feel it?

Jeanie gives a raised eyebrow to Mary. Mary doesn't notice as she surveys around.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(beat)  
So much has been taken from you, Margaret.

(MORE)

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Your livelihood, your freedom, the  
 months and years to come.  
 (beat)  
 Are you with us, Margaret? Marge?  
 Margie? No?  
 (looking skyward)  
 Lord, hate to break it to you, I  
 think you got your messages crossed  
 with another one of your far-flung  
 disciples on this here blue marble.  
 (miffed)  
 Marge? Margie? Here it is now.  
 Four... six... five... Drury Lane.  
 Don't tell me you're home,  
 Margaret.

Jeanie jumps to her feet as Mary snaps her head around, mouth  
 hanging wide.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Show yourself! I feel you. I feel  
 your pain, I feel your confusion  
 coming from... right... over...

The crowd around Jeanie gets louder as a new energy washes  
 over the section. Mary stares blankly. Jeanie instinctively  
 shakes her head no. Mary reboots.

MARY  
 (to Jeanie)  
 Holy hell, that's us! That's us--  
 US!

MAN (O.S.)  
 Wave your arms--let us see you. God  
 is on the line... just for you.  
 Question is: are you ready to  
 answer?

The crowd gets more frenzied. Mary makes her decision.

MARY  
 (to Jeanie)  
 God's good, kiddo.  
 (yelling)  
 Here, here, OVER HERE, PASTOR!  
 HERE! US!

JEANIE  
 But, she's--

MARY  
 Shhh, it's ok, it's ok.

Mary waves her arms frantically.

MAN (O.S.)  
 Show us that it isn't the  
 wheelchair that binds you but the  
 need for the Lord's attention to  
 free you!

The last few people are seated. Mary continues jumping up and down. PASTOR RANDY (mid-to-late 40s), a square chinned man, sweaty but a weathered showman is revealed.

Pastor Randy sees Mary, then looks up to the "heavens" confused. In his ear is a well-concealed flesh colored earpiece. An ever so brief crack in his composure shows his true self, Jeanie catches it.

PASTOR RANDY  
 Err, um...  
 (beat, to Mary)  
 Ma... Margaret... Hill? You've been  
 saved--miraculous--praise be!  
 Praise be to him! Praise him!

The crowd begins to swell but Mary shakes her head and beckons him closer. Pastor Randy takes a couple of nervous glances upward before stepping forward. Mary excitedly takes the microphone from him. Jeanie, all the while, lightly tugs at Mary's shirt begging her not to do it.

MARY  
 Pastor Randy, hey, wow, hi, what an  
 honor! I've watched your show  
 hundreds of times and never-- Just,  
 thank you! You don't know what this  
 means... to us.

PASTOR RANDY  
 Don't anoint me yet, my dear,  
 please, what can I do?

MARY  
 My name's Mary and this here is  
 Maggie's daughter, Jeanie,  
 practically her shadow.

Pastor Randy gives Jeanie a look. She shifts behind Mary to escape his gaze.

MARY (CONT'D)  
 I'm Maggie's best friend, see, so  
 I've been watching Jeanie since...  
 like you were getting at, her  
 accident.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

The one on four-oh-two a few weeks back, hers was the car that went down the embankment. Anyway, Maggie is my best friend from pretty much the day I interviewed her. Between working at Mel's, and living so close by in Liberty Square, we've been practically inseparable--just the three of us.

PASTOR RANDY

That's beautiful. That's love.

MARY

But ever since things went tits up, I mean... sideways... it's been one thing after another, and now it's some infection. I don't know. I don't get it. Don't get me wrong, she's a fighter, if you know her, you know. She'll bounce back from anything, but she could use some wins right now, ya know.

PASTOR RANDY

Well I--

MARY

Frankly, I don't know if she goes for all this like I do. She's too proud to ask for help... from anyone... ever. Even from God! But after your letter, we had to.

Pastor Randy takes the mic back, but Mary holds on. He plays it off by leading her into the aisle.

As Mary gets pulled away, Jeanie looks around the unfamiliar, leering faces and quickly moves up to the aisle seat, staying as close to Mary as she can, but careful not get caught up in whatever stunt Pastor Randy has planned.

PASTOR RANDY

You're a dear, dear friend, Mary. Unrelenting, I can tell. A true light. I would like to do something special together with you then, if you'll allow me. It'll take all of us here, but I think we can pull it off. For Maggie. I'd like to take all of God's love, all of it that's been built up here today, and send it to her...

(to the crowd)

(MORE)

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
 You think that'd help, folks?  
 (to Mary)  
 Think it's worth a shot?  
 (beat)  
 Can we use you?

MARY  
 Please, please, I can't beli-- do  
 whatever!

PASTOR RANDY  
 You have no idea how much I love  
 that.

Mary closes her eyes and flings her arms out, turning stiff  
 as a board, as Pastor Randy works about her body.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
 God is touching her spine right  
 now. God is touching her nerve  
 endings now. God is touching her  
 cartilage and bone--all that has  
 been taken away. Give your heart to  
 the Lord, Mary, and hold onto  
 Maggie deep in it. Think of nothing  
 else but of her, and your want for  
 her best life. God will heal all  
 that is open to his eternal and  
 just blessings. Trust that he is a  
 provider in these turbulent times.  
 Be open! Open! Open up! Let him in!

Jeanie's scrunches her face unable to comprehend the sight in  
 front of her. She mouths without really realizing "no...  
 no... no... no..."

MARY  
 YES, YES, YES, thank you, thank  
 you, thank you! Please!

PASTOR RANDY  
 Maggie! Maggie, do you hear me?!  
 Let the Lord in, Maggie. She's  
 ready, Mary! Let's go. Everyone!  
 (beat)  
 Here it comes, Mary, here it comes!  
 Maggie is getting it, I feel it.  
 Ready, Mary, help me... channel...  
 it. Yes! YES, NOW! Ready? Ready?  
 Here! It! G-g-g-goes!  
 (beat)  
 BLESSINGS ONTO YOU! WOOOOOO!

At this and if on cue, Mary's knees buckle, and she drops.  
CONGREGANTS rush to restore her.

Pastor Randy, imbued with a skin-crawling cosmic energy,  
steps over them towards Jeanie, who looks on confused, but  
more disturbed.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
Come here now, come here, Jeanie.  
The Lord has blessings for you  
too...

Pastor Randy runs his hand down Jeanie's face, down her  
chest.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
The Lord feels your potential,  
there's only one thing you need to  
do to receive his love... Are you  
ready, little lamb? Now... LET...  
THE LORD... IN!

With that Pastor Randy palms Jeanie's forehead and throws her  
back into the people behind her. Another miracle to everyone  
in attendance but to Jeanie, an act of war.

As Jeanie gets to her feet, she sees Pastor Randy walk off.  
The shock tempers her rage. To center herself, she puts her  
nose to her left shoulder and takes in all the familiar  
scents she grew up on.

Mary stumbles back to her seat and collapses in it.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
Wasn't that good, folks? Wasn't  
it?!  
(beat)  
Let's all now, together, cast out  
the filth and sickness within each  
of us and let the light of the Lord  
shine down!  
(beat)  
Praise be, ladies and gentlemen.  
Praise be to him!

CROWD  
PRAISE BE! PRAISE BE! PRAISE BE!

He touches hands with his followers as he makes his way back  
to the main stage.



## PASTOR RANDY

This has been a testament, a downright testament to him this day. I tell ya... Now let's all take a moment to reflect, to dig deep and reflect on our own health and the gunk and filth accumulating within us, physically and spiritually. Let's be reaaaaal honest, real honest with ourselves. And let's give those bad spirits that wish to do us harm a relic of our steadfastness and resolve. Pour your hearts out, be true to yourself. Overwhelm the demons and those seeking to do you harm with your kindness, care, generosity, purity, and open hearts. We are all shedding our former unhealthy, broken, sinful selves this blessed day! And let me be the first to cast out all that is keeping me from the full attention of the Lord.

Pastor Randy, now on stage, empties his pockets of all his money and change in a big show. He motions to his minions to pass around the alms baskets.

## PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

Wait!

(beat)

I... can do more... Sorry, my sweet!

Pastor Randy makes a show of removing an expensive looking watch. He holds it up high.

## PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

A gift from my wife for my forty-eighth. She'll understand, I know... I pray. Between me and you, I really hope so, she has a nasty bite. Take my word for it.

Pastor Randy shakes his hand, laughs, blows a kiss above the crowd, then waves off his minions, concluding the final act.

Mary digs in her purse zealously and pulls out a wad of cash.

## MARY

Think this'll be enough?

Jeanie seethes.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DUSK

Mary and Jeanie drive home.

MARY

Wow. Wow, wow, wow, wooooow, wow.  
How good was that?! Better than  
any... sugar rush ever.

Jeanie reading the billboards, snaps around.

JEANIE

He didn't even know who you were.

MARY

He wasn't talking to me, he was  
working through me, to your mom. He  
got your address and her birthday,  
didn't he? And all those other  
people, too, they're all in on it,  
like some grand conspiracy? You  
think I'm in on it?!

Mary cuts around a VOLKSWAGON BEETLE with little abandon. Her  
old car rumbles with the sudden acceleration. Jeanie white-  
knuckles the sides of her seat.

MARY (CONT'D)

You have too many books.

(beat)

You won't understand till you're  
older but, kiddo, the Lord works in  
mysterious ways.

JEANIE

Mysterious? Uh-huh, suuure. I'd  
rather have unicorns.

MARY

They get out funny sometimes--ok,  
fine, granted--but you gotta at  
least give them a chance to happen.

(beat)

Anyway, we had to, she's worth  
anything... Yeah? But I get it, so  
let's keep it between me, you and  
the big guy for now--ok? See if he  
really keeps his word.

Mary eyes the time and picks up the pace, swerving in and out  
of traffic.

MARY (CONT'D)

I hope we don't miss it.

Jeanie clenches as Mary overtakes another car.