

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

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TABLE READ VERSION

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE DORMITORY - DAWN

A small brick room where rows of homeless men sleep in cots, or wake up and get ready for the day. Most of them are middle age or older. They are decently clothed and fed. "ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE" is written in green lettering on the wall.

EVAN (about 20) is one of these homeless "men." He sits on his bunk wearing a boy's Catholic school uniform that is too small for him. He has meticulously taken care of, beautiful long hair.

He is in the middle of quietly, quickly praying a rosary made out of pink plastic beads and twine.

He has said it so many times that he does not need to pause or process what he's saying. He feels something like peace and security, smiling slightly.

EVAN

The fourth luminous mystery is
transfiguration.
Our Father who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name thy kingdom
come thy will be done on Earth as
it is in heaven give us this day
our daily bread and forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive those who
trespass against us and lead us not
into temptation but deliver us from
evil amen.

(next bead)

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is
with thee blessed art thou among
women and blessed is the fruit of
thy womb Jesus Holy Mary mother of
God pray for us sinners now and at
the hour of our death amen.

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE FRONT DESK - MORNING

Evan joins some volunteers and homeless folks in cleaning the facilities: wiping windows, sweeping floors, changing out bedsheets.

Evan goes to the front desk office area. Here, GRACE (about 20) sits behind a computer and finishes up her scone and coffee to go. She has a name tag on.

She smiles at him. He empties the trash can behind her desk, too shy to look at her.

She nudges over a second cup of coffee from the coffee shop. He takes it, cautious, and takes a sip.

She laughs a bit at his weirdness. She gently taps his arm to guide him to follow her to a different room.

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Evan, Grace, and other volunteers deftly handle cooking a huge breakfast of toast, eggs, fruit, and oatmeal.

They act in harmonious sync, making space, weaving around each other.

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE SIDE ROOM - MORNING

This room is filled with tables and chairs and a large line of homeless people waiting to be served buffet-style breakfast--far more than just the ones who are sheltered here.

Evan works at the toast station, using tongs to transfer it to people's plates.

SAGE (early 20s transgender man) is among those waiting in line. Sage appears to be straight off of a seventies hippie commune--acoustic guitar always strapped to his back, his clothes worn and dirty. Sage knows he is hot in his ridiculous way.

Evan recognizes Sage in the line and gets increasingly terrified but keeps doing his job.

Sage arrives at the toast.

Evan passes Sage a piece of toast.

Sage smiles and lingers there.

Evan gives Sage another piece of toast.

Sage stays put, trying to see if Evan will return his obvious interest at all.

Evan pretends to be distracted by something to avoid making eye contact.

Sage walks off.

Evan is relieved. He catches his breath.

LATER

Evan eats his breakfast sitting across from Grace.

EVAN
...How was your final?

GRACE
My final? Oh yeah good memory. I
got an A.

EVAN
What did you write about?

GRACE
Uh... Medieval Synodality.
(changes subjects)
Right, so. Thanks for reminding me.
I talked to Father Andrew a bit and
I think we figured something out.

He doesn't process this.

GRACE (CONT'D)
If you're interested in seminary.
We're gonna make sure you go. If
you really want to go.

He's overwhelmed with emotion. He really wants to be able to say yes.

EVAN
.....I can't. I can't...

GRACE
(concerned, confused)
But...

Evan's not going to elaborate.

GRACE (CONT'D)
We'll support whatever you choose,
Evan.

Her kindness nudges him closer to crying.

Sage is sitting some distance away minding his business. Evan doesn't like being vulnerable in front of Sage.

EVAN

I have to talk to--

GRACE

You have to eat. We'll head over soon.

Evan concedes and picks at his breakfast. He tries to smile at her.

EVAN

Thank you.

She nods.

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

Catholic mass in a gloriously ornate, spacious, colorful church. The rest of Evan's world is washed out and claustrophobic compared to here.

The pews are mostly empty: of the four columns of pews, only the middle two have people in them, and they're sitting quite spread out. Churchgoers are largely over 60 and white. The few young people are here with their parents.

Grace and Evan stand next to each other in the pews. Grace is joined by a big extended family--she is the oldest child and has four younger siblings. Evan is alone, still fragile and shaken.

FATHER ANDREW (30s), wearing green robes, smiles at the churchgoers. He is a young man from Southern Ohio.

FATHER ANDREW

Lord Jesus Christ who said to your
Apostles: Peace I leave you, my
peace I give you; look not on our
sins but on the faith of your
Church, and graciously grant her
peace and unity in accordance with
your will. Who live and reign
forever and ever.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

FATHER ANDREW

The peace of the Lord be with you
always.

CONGREGATION
And with your spirit.

FATHER ANDREW
Let us offer each other the sign of
the peace.

The congregation waves, shakes hands, smiles genuinely,
exchanges "peace be with you" or just "peace" with one
another several times. Families hug one another.

Evan tries to quickly shake hands with Grace's whole family--
they are happy to do this--but there isn't really time.

Grace offers Evan a hug.

GRACE
Peace.

He hesitates--this is new.

He takes it. It feels good. He holds on.

EVAN
Peace.

They step back. Evan's nerves are somewhat calmed.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

In a plain, small room, Evan sinks down in a comfy chair
across from Father Andrew and makes the sign of the cross.

Father Andrew took off the green robes and is instead wearing
a hoodie with the Catholic school logo on it over his
clerical shirt and collar.

EVAN
...I forgot my lines.

FATHER ANDREW
That's alright. It's an honor to
have you here, Evan. What's on your
mind?

EVAN
There's so many lines.

FATHER ANDREW
(whispers, cueing)
"Bless me, Father, for I have
sinned."

EVAN
May God who has enlightened every
heart help you to know your sins
and trust in His Mercy.

FATHER ANDREW
...

EVAN
Oh! I thought-- I thought we were
like running the--

FATHER ANDREW
(laughs)
It's fine--

EVAN
Sorry! I'm so sorry--

FATHER ANDREW
It's okay.

EVAN
Um, I have your book.

Evan gives back a musty dusty tome of theology. Father Andrew
takes it.

FATHER ANDREW
How'd you like it--?

EVAN
Why did God put the apple tree
there?

FATHER ANDREW
...Without the possibility of
choosing evil, choosing the right
thing has no meaning. God blessed
us with agency and freedom. True
good can't exist if we can't make
our own choices.

EVAN
You believe that?

FATHER ANDREW
(nods)
It's the Church's stance.

Evan ponders. He decides he got what he needed. He stands to
leave without being dismissed.

EVAN
Thank you, Father.

FATHER ANDREW
Evan.

Evan panics.

FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)
You already knew that.
(beat)
Is that all?

EVAN
Uhm-- Thanks be to God. Thank you.

He bows, to be safe.

FATHER ANDREW
Go in peace?

EVAN
And with your sprit.

Evan gives Father Andrew a dorky little wave and leaves.
Father Andrew returns the dorky little wave.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Grace leans against the back of a pew and waits for Evan. A few of her younger siblings run around.

Evan goes to her but doesn't say anything for a while.

GRACE
You know-- I really don't think
there's any shame in making
absolutely sure that you want to--

Some ways away, Grace's younger siblings line up a bunch of hymnals domino style and knock them all over.

GRACE (CONT'D)
(yells at them)
Guys I am telling Mom!

Evan goes to clean stuff up.

GRACE (CONT'D)
No you shouldn't--

EVAN
Well if you ever-- If I can help...

GRACE
Really?

EVAN
I'd love to.

Grace's siblings start banging out a rendition of "heart and soul" on the church piano.

GRACE
It's not too much to ask?

EVAN
No--

GRACE
Well I'm kind of having a thing
with some of the Students for
Christ and it would be so so so
amazing if you happen to be free
then.

EVAN
Oh. Wow. Um. Okay.

GRACE
Really?

EVAN
I'd love to go.

She forces a smile.

GRACE
...Absolutely! I will see you
there.
(kind of to herself)
They're fairly diverse.

EVAN
Diverse?

GRACE
Like, there's a Methodist.

EVAN
(judgey)
Protestants?

GRACE
(talking dirty)
Unitarian universalists.

Evan is horrified and disturbed.

GRACE (CONT'D)
(laughs)
I got you so good. Can you imagine?

Grace runs off and steers her siblings away from the piano.

INT. BUS - EVENING

It's winter in Cincinnati. Dirty snow is piled up along the sidewalks. The sky is white-gray. Everyone is bundled up in black puffy coats.

Evan gets on a grimy city bus outside the church and ponders his situation.

Sage chills in the back of the bus with some other (non-worker house) homeless people enjoying the heating.

Sage passes out what is clearly a grocery store value bouquet of roses to them. He has his guitar strapped to his back as always.

Evan takes this in very cautiously.

Sage notices Evan's attention, smiles, picks his way over to Evan.

Evan silently berates himself for getting caught and pretends to see something interesting out the window. Nothing is out the window.

Sage offers him a flower.

Evan ignores him, doesn't make eye contact.

SAGE
You're really Catholic huh?

EVAN
(genuine)
Thanks.

SAGE
My god is Dionysus.

Evan is boring. Sage starts to move on.

SAGE (CONT'D)
(farewell)
Peace and love!

EVAN
What?

SAGE

I said, peace and love.
 (sings "All You Need Is
 Love" with guitar
 accompaniment)
 Nothin' you can do, but you can
 learn how to be you in time, it's
 easyyy.
 It's all love here.

EVAN

What?

Sage stands up on a bus seat and addresses the whole vehicle, but especially Evan. This is his theater whether anyone likes it or not and he is going for the Tony.

Evan tries to make himself invisible. Bus patrons stare at their phones.

SAGE

Dionysus is the gentle, jealous
 joy, vengeful and kind, an essence
 that will not exclude nor be
 excluded. He pounds in the blood of
 wild-haired women and tyrants cower
 under his gentle hands. He is the
 sacrament of the earth. Liberation.
 Madness. Ecstatic pleasure.
 (to the heavens)
 Bacchus! Bromius! Eleutherios!
 Thebes taints You with bastardy--!

The bus turns a sharp corner and Sage almost falls. Evan yanks Sage to a seated position.

SAGE (CONT'D)

Thanks comrade!

Evan lowers his voice, like approaching a wild animal.

EVAN

...Whatever sad crumbs of attention
 you get from all this are not worth
 the sacrifices. ...Aren't you
 lonely?

SAGE

(flirty)
 Dreadfully, why?

EVAN

...What's your name?

SAGE
It depends.

EVAN
Come on, what's your name?

SAGE
You can call me anything you want.

EVAN
I want to call you your name--

SAGE
What are you, a cop? Today it's
Sage.

EVAN
What is it tomorrow?

SAGE
Ask me tomorrow.

Sage offers Evan a rose again. Evan doesn't take it.

SAGE (CONT'D)
I stole them from a Kroger!

Sage reaches to tuck a Kroger rose into Evan's hair. Evan draws sharply back like he thinks Sage is reaching out to grab him.

Evan relaxes a little, barely nods, lets Sage tuck the flower in his hair.

The bus comes to a stop. Evan runs off like the wind.

INT. STUDENT TOWNHOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Evan enters (in his one outfit, the uniform), holding the rose Sage gave him, takes in:

A cute townhome living room where members of the Students for Christ group spread out across a dining table and couch sitting area. Students chat calmly, eat chips, do Wii Sports bowling. No alcohol here.

Grace's siblings also run around. The Wii seems to be containing their energy for the time being.

Girlboss bible verse typography on the walls: "God is within her, she will not fail." Upbeat, sanitized Christian pop rock music plays.

The Students for Christ are dressed more modestly than secular college students but are otherwise indistinguishable from any other college group. Everyone is a little bit dressed up for whatever this is.

Grace sits with three other female students, her housemates. They laugh and chat with each other and take cute pictures. Grace also dressed up a little and looks especially nice.

Grace notices Evan and waves him over. He goes. He feels awkward about holding the flower. It's in rough shape.

GRACE

Hey! Oh wow that's beautiful. Let me grab a vase for it.

EVAN

Uh--

GRACE

I'm gonna get a vase.

She stands up and leaves her friends.

Evan waits around with this group of young women who just stare at him for a while.

Evan gracefully takes his leave. He meanders over to a larger group as he waits for Grace to come back.

He watches them talk about how stressful finals were, how bad their jetlag is after break, what they got for Christmas, other things he can't relate to.

He finds himself next to a STUDENT who isn't talking a lot also.

EVAN

Are you a Protestant?

STUDENT

Are you in high school?

EVAN

(shaky and desperate)

I'm in seminary. I'm gonna be a priest. So...

The lie is super obvious through his tone of voice. Student rejoins the larger conversation.

Evan follows where he saw Grace walk off.

INT. STUDENT TOWNHOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Evan enters the kitchen. He finds Grace leaning against the counter, drinking a bottle of beer, gazing at the rose, which is in a disposable plastic drinking cup.

Grace is startled to be intruded upon. She tries to hold the beer discreetly with her hand around the label.

GRACE

Hey! Sorry are you hungry?

Yes, of course he's hungry.

She looks around for something in her cabinets to give him. It's just ketchup, plastic utensils, popcorn kernels, random other college student kitchen junk.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I can order you something.

Her phone buzzes.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Shit, hang on.

Grace texts the pictures of her smiling and hanging out with her friends to her parents. Good wholesome fun.

Parents reply with enthusiastic emojis. Grace turns off her phone again.

She really looks at Evan for the first time tonight. She sees how intensely he is looking at her.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Do you want to go upstairs?

EVAN

Metaphorically?

GRACE

To my room upstairs where there's better music.

EVAN

(beat; as if offered
heroin)

No.

GRACE

Okay well I'm going.

EVAN

Grace you-- This isn't--

She brushes past him, taking the rose.

Beat.

He hurries after her.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Grace's room is decorated in a more neutral way. It's cluttered with clothes, papers, cosmetics, books. There's a bible on her bedside table underneath a bunch of other stuff, including Sage's/Evan's flower. Nothing on the walls.

Grace sits by a record player and thumbs through her record collection.

GRACE

What do you like?

Evan doesn't know.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Do you like, um, like... David
Bowie?

Evan doesn't know.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Nevermind. Uh...

She puts on a lowkey instrumental record of some kind instead.

Evan and Grace sit side by side on the floor, leaning on her bed, staring out the window.

She closes her eyes and scoots subtly closer to him. He follows her lead and closes his eyes too.

It's peaceful after the Wii and upbeat Christian rock and loud-ish conversations.

He opens his eyes again to look at her. A strand of hair is loose from her hairdo. They're sitting really close.

He reaches to fix it, then stops. It's way too intimate.

EVAN

...Um so... Can I ask, um...

GRACE
Sure. You can.

EVAN
How many kids do you want?

She snaps awake, alarmed.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Sorry--

GRACE
How many do YOU want?

EVAN
Five--

GRACE
Who cares how many you want, they
have to come out of my body--

EVAN
(all at once, in one
breath)
I know I just mean I'm just saying
like "the husband is the head of
the wife" or whatever it's just
saying like you know that verse
uses the metaphor of the body and
compares it to different parts of
the church so he's like the head of
the church who you know served the
followers and submitted himself to
dying powerless betrayed broken and
alone--

GRACE
I'm not gonna crucify you Evan.

EVAN
No, no. ...Metaphor.

Several beats.

GRACE
Have you tried hiking? Fresh air is
important. We should go on a hike.

Evan briefly casts a longing glance at Sage's flower. Grace
catches this.

GRACE (CONT'D)
From hippie man? Hare Krishna man?
"All you need is love"?
(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)
(joking)
I'll pray for you.

EVAN
(serious)
Thank you.

Evan keeps looking at the flower. Grace can tell he wants it.

Grace takes it from her table and puts it in his hands. Evan slowly accepts it.

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Evan sits in his cot and buries his nose in the flower. He inhales deeply, desperate, like he's been restraining himself from doing this since Sage offered it to him.

This is a suicidal level of release. It feels terrible.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Evan enters. He notices Grace hurrying out of Father Andrew's office looking troubled. She is in her own world and doesn't notice him.

Grace kneels in the pews and begins to pray her penance.

Evan goes into the office.

INT. CHURCH SIDE ROOM - DAY

Evan fidgets restlessly, sitting across from Father Andrew.

EVAN
I just have this terrible feeling
that you're going to give up on me.

FATHER ANDREW
God never gives up on anyone.

EVAN
But you won't stop reminding me,
right?

FATHER ANDREW
(means it)
Right.
(beat)
(MORE)

FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)
You know there are many ways to be
involved in the Church aside from
the priesthood if--

EVAN
I feel called to be a priest.

FATHER ANDREW
But?

EVAN
But...

FATHER ANDREW
How could we understand let alone
ease anyone's pain if we weren't as
flawed and human as them?

Evan tries to absorb.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Evan heads to the exit and notices Grace finish up:

GRACE
--and forgive us our trespasses as
we forgive those who trespass
against us--

They meet eyes for a second.

Grace continues:

GRACE (CONT'D)
--and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil--

Evan gives her some privacy and exits.

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE FRONT DESK - MORNING

Evan takes Grace's trash and then accepts his coffee from
her.

GRACE
...Sometimes I just...

EVAN
Yeah?

GRACE
I just get so tired. You know?

EVAN

Of what?

She tries to laugh it off like it's nothing.

INT. CHURCH SIDE ROOM - MORNING

Breakfast time again. People already got served. Evan takes his own plate.

Evan sees Sage sitting near a window by himself, staring out at the snow. Sage is not dressed for this weather.

Evan takes a few deep breaths.

He sits next to Sage and nudges an envelope into Sage's hand.

Sage looks surprised and intrigued. He discreetly checks what's inside the envelope--

Sage finds a small folded and stapled booklet of Catholic hymns for guitar in the envelope.

SAGE

Uhm, did you not hear me about
Dionysus?

(preparing to stand on
chair)

I can explain again--

EVAN

No no, I got it. Um, what's your
name today?

SAGE

Onyx.

Evan makes himself not cringe. He extends his hand for Sage to shake. [For clarity's sake, we will continue to call him Sage.]

EVAN

You're always welcome here and at
our services, Onyx. I'm happy to
answer any questions you have about
the Church. My name's Evan.

SAGE

(laughs, ridiculing)

Evan. Please comrade! You are not
"Evan"--!!

EVAN

People call me by it and I respond--

Sage checks out Evan's beautiful hair.

SAGE

Actually now that you mention it I
do have some questions about the
Church--

EVAN

Okay yes I'm listening--

SAGE

First, is the handshake still on
the table? You're very warm.

EVAN

You don't have questions--

SAGE

Of course I have questions, there's
a lot going on
("here" = with Evan)
here to question--

Evan looks around for other people he can test himself with.

SAGE (CONT'D)

No wait I'm serious, I'm so
serious.

EVAN

Okay?

SAGE

...Who's she? She's really nice.

Evan tracks Sage's gaze.

EVAN

Grace??

Offended, Evan stands to leave.

SAGE

Wait, woah! Andromeda, why so
tense--?

EVAN

Excuse--?

SAGE

That's your name.

(all at once)

Anyway I was just thinking maybe if we met somewhere else it might put you at ease a little and I could definitely share what's on my mind better in a more *private location*--

Evan starts to walk away.

SAGE (CONT'D)

Diner, third street, ten PM-ish, any night you want, okay?

EVAN

Absolutely not.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Sage and Evan sit across from each other at a booth in a cheap, 24 hour, seedy, greasy diner. The place is mostly deserted.

Sage takes out a bottle of cheap red wine from a tote bag, breaks the seal on the screw-top, and pours some for the two of them in plastic diner cups.

SAGE

(the wine)

I stole this too.

Evan takes a polite sip.

They enjoy looking at each other until a waiter brings them some pancakes.

They have their pancakes and wine for a while.

Sage checks that no one is watching and steals the salt and pepper shakers, the sugar and ketchup packets, and the napkin dispenser, tucking them into his bag.

Evan tries to make charming first date banter:

EVAN

Petty theft won't fill the void in your soul. You don't have to submit yourself to a life of paganism and disco--

SAGE

This is an act of revolution.

EVAN

What will corporate America do
without their salt shaker.

SAGE

Shall I grab the register instead?

EVAN

Do it.

SAGE

.....I'm not trying to go to jail!
I sell shit for my job okay?

EVAN

Salt shakers?

SAGE

All kinds of shit. Services.
(flirty)
Religious ones.

EVAN

Jesus Christ never gives up on
anyone and it's never too late to
accept Him as your savior and
completely--

SAGE

Paganism and disco! You make me
sound so cool!
(sings "Stayin' Alive")
Well you can tell by the way I use
my walk I'm a woman's man--

EVAN

(lies)
It's not cool. You're not cool.
Also I'm not your comrade.

Sage checks out Evan's outfit. Evan sits there, resplendent
in high school uniform.

Evan looks down at his clothes, for once self-conscious about
them.

SAGE

...I was the most masculine my
first couple years as a man, you
know, I'd wake up, douse myself in
motor oil, drop a couple slurs in a
call of duty lobby-- it's fun for a
while, you know what I'm saying?

EVAN
No.

SAGE
Exactly, of course you don't.

Evan scoots closer.

EVAN
(whispers)
You're... biologically...?

SAGE
I'm--

EVAN
Shhh--

SAGE
(yells)
--transgender!

Patrons glance up at Sage.

Evan scoots away from Sage like he was caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

SAGE (CONT'D)
(to patrons)
Please vibrate in sync with your
cosmic truths, friends.

Patrons return to their business and ignore him.

Evan starts mumbling an "Our Father" in order to not punch Sage in the face.

SAGE (CONT'D)
I wish you could see your own
beauty, Andromeda.

Evan mumbles more energetically.

Evan suddenly realizes: wine. The pancake is highly reminiscent of a communion wafer.

EVAN
...Are you trying to--? You can ask
me anything--

SAGE
You wanna get out of here?

EVAN
--about the Church--

SAGE
Do you really need me to be so blunt? If you make every compromise, if you make yourself smaller and smaller, you know, there's no point where the world gives you permission to stop. You'll shrink yourself into oblivion. That's what I'm seeing you do right now. Dionysus doesn't want that for you and especially not in exchange for an entirely tepid and transactional support--

EVAN
You want to talk to me about transactional support?

SAGE
Yes--!

EVAN
I have nothing--

SAGE
I'm trying to give you options. You could just try having money in your pocket and see how it feels to not rely on--

EVAN
That's working so well for you--

SAGE
--a decrepit institution--

EVAN
That saved my life--

SAGE
People don't know what the fuck to do with me, you are a gorgeous virgin--

EVAN
(offended to be called a virgin)
Woah...

SAGE
You'd make MONEY money.

Evan starts laughing almost hysterically.

EVAN
Don't mess with me like that.

SAGE
You don't even know what it is
you're rejecting. Is your faith so
fragile that it can't accommodate
just a simple glance?

Evan decides it's time to go.

SAGE (CONT'D)
Cuz it's looking like yes! Why do
you run from me? Are you afraid
"Evan"?

EVAN
We'll see how you fare at Mass and
then you can talk "Onyx"--

SAGE
Wait wait wait.

EVAN
Yes?

SAGE
Today it's actually Sparrow.

Evan takes a step towards the door--

SAGE (CONT'D)
One more question! Serious
question.

EVAN
What?

SAGE
(the food)
You got this one right?

Evan digs in his pockets for a bill.

SAGE (CONT'D)
(surprised)
Actually?

EVAN
I'm not gonna let you starve just
cuz you're a pagan.

SAGE
You're so sweet!

Evan tosses the money on the table.

EVAN
Be extra nice to Grace--

SAGE
I can do that--

EVAN
Leave her alone--!

SAGE
(calling after him)
Dionysus has freed you from your
sins! Go in peace!

Evan leaves.

Evan lingers a bit outside of the restaurant.

A MAN passes by Evan into the restaurant and takes Evan's place across from Sage.

Sage starts flirting with his new companion.

Evan hurts for Sage. He doesn't want to leave.

For a moment, Sage makes confrontational eye contact with Evan through the window.

Evan walks away.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - MORNING

Grace hangs out in her room, getting ready for the day. She picks out a crop top and skinny jeans.

She looks in the mirror and hugs her midriff, oscillating between feeling wildly sexy and wildly self-conscious.

The doorbell rings downstairs.

She freezes in panic as she hears her siblings' and mom's conversation drifting through from outside the door.

The doorbell rings again.

Grace quickly changes into whatever random clothes are nearby--a T shirt and sweats.

She ransacks her own closet, grabbing everything even vaguely short and tight.

She goes through her makeup and pulls out a red lipstick, a dark eyeshadow.

She pulls out a bunch of records and books from her shelves, knowing which ones and their locations by memory.

Grace hears one of her housemates opening the front door and greeting her parents.

She sprints down to the kitchen--

INT. STUDENT TOWNHOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Grace bursts through the door, holding her accumulated hoard of stuff.

She takes a few bottles of beer from the fridge.

She stumbles to the cabinets, struggling to juggle all her things, and opens them.

In a state of panic, she grabs a bag of sugary candy.

She runs back upstairs.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Grace tries to figure out what to do with everything.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GRACE'S MOM (40s) opens the door (DOES NOT KNOCK!) to find Grace convincingly asleep in bed. The loot is nowhere to be seen. Though the room has clearly just been violently searched.

Grace shifts and fakes a terrible cough and congested voice.

GRACE

Hey Mom...

GRACE'S MOM

Hey sweetie.

Grace's mom comes over and sits on her bed.

GRACE

I think I'm sick... I don't think I
can watch them today...

Grace's mom feels Grace's forehead gently.

GRACE'S MOM

You feel fine.

GRACE

I'm throwing up.

GRACE'S MOM

Did you eat too much sugar sweetie--

GRACE

I literally never eat sugar--

GRACE'S MOM

You know it's not good for you--

GRACE

It's fine--

GRACE'S MOM

The freshman fifteen is a real
thing--

GRACE

I'm fine Mom! Gosh.

GRACE'S MOM

I'll be back by five.

GRACE

I can't always just be-- I have to
do my own--

GRACE'S MOM

You all can work together--

GRACE

I can't focus when they're always--

GRACE'S MOM

What do you want them to do?
They're children, Grace.

As she talks, Grace's mom clears the junk off Grace's beside
table bible and dusts it off pointedly.

GRACE'S MOM (CONT'D)
I know you can't stand them but
you're just gonna have to find a
way to pull through.

Grace is sufficiently guilt tripped.

INT. STUDENT TOWNHOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grace sits down with her siblings, giving them some leftover pizza, and looks over at their homework that she's supposed to help them with.

Siblings are really happy and thankful for Grace giving them pizza.

The homework is a worksheet that has questions like "How do Adam and Eve show that marriage is between a man and a woman?"

She looks at the picture book version of Genesis she is supposed to read them.

She puts her head in her hands, preemptively exhausted.

Her siblings enjoy snack, oblivious. Two of them start throwing pizza crusts at each other.

With no feeling, Grace drags one of their chairs with them sitting on it to a different spot, breaking up the conflict.

She calls a contact on her phone labelled "Worker House Desk."

INT. STUDENT TOWNHOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Evan takes over this job, reading Grace's siblings the Genesis picture book out loud.

He gets quite into the story and does voices. Siblings enjoy this.

Evan then easily helps them with their worksheet. "Because God meant for everyone to join together the way Adam and Eve did." Simple! They copy it down in their lopsided handwriting.

Evan heads upstairs for a little break.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Evan knocks.

GRACE

Yes Evan?

He opens the door but stays in the hallway.

EVAN

How'd you know--?

GRACE

You knock.

EVAN

Do you have more kid's books?

GRACE

Yeah, hang on.

She heads out past him.

Evan, staying in the hall, looks around the room a bit as he waits for her.

The bible is freshly unburied and dusted. The record collection is noticeably smaller. Grace's laptop is open to readings on social work.

Grace's rosary hangs on a little hook along with a jumble of random necklaces (where it is not really supposed to be). It is gold with small rose quartz beads.

He drifts into the room, over to her rosary, and admires it. He wants to put it somewhere nicer but doesn't.

Evan drifts over to her closet, which is open and hasn't been tidied since Grace rummaged through it this morning.

He barely brushes his fingers over the outfit she wore during the party.

Grace comes back in emptyhanded.

Evan pulls back, ashamed, but too late for Grace not to notice his interest.

EVAN

Sorry--

GRACE

For what--?

EVAN
I shouldn't be in here.

She kneels and scoops everything (the clothes, the media, the food) out from under her bed, where she zipped it all up in a sleeping bag.

GRACE
Jolly rancher?

He takes one.

She sifts through her hidden books to find a few wholesome kids books mixed up in them. Evan tries to catch titles, but she does a good job of hiding them even from him.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I just wear that stuff like around the house and to sleep and stuff, I found it at the bottom of a box that someone was like getting rid of and I didn't even know it was in there, and it's you know bad for the environment to throw away perfectly good--

EVAN
For research purposes.

GRACE
For research purposes!

EVAN
It's good to know what we're up against, as Christians.

GRACE
(beat)
Actually? Could you take the clothes back to the donation bin? Someone could probably use them.

EVAN
...Okay.

Evan is disgusted with himself for knowing exactly what he's going to do.

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

In a bathroom stall, Evan tries on some of Grace's "immodest" clothes. They are still pretty modest, but show some combination of cleavage, midriff, and thigh.

He chooses things that are blousy and white, giving the vibes of a tighter, shorter First Communion dress.

He can't see himself, but he stands there and touches the delicate buttons, the neatly finished hems. He revels in them. This is damning and heavenly.

EVAN
(barely a whisper)
God help me... Jesus help me...

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

The churchgoers, standing up, finish up a processional hymn as Father Andrew walks down the aisle to the altar. Again, the place is mostly empty, mostly elderly white people.

FATHER ANDREW
In the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

The door to the chapel creaks loudly. Evan turns around to give a judgmental look to the latecomer.

It's Sage. He yawns, sleepy, and waves a little at Evan, Father Andrew, whoever has turned around to see who's late.

Evan continues to stare.

Sage walks right past the basin of holy water, does not make the sign of the cross, does not genuflect, just simply sits down in the back pew.

FATHER ANDREW
The Lord be with you.

Evan can't keep himself from glaring. Sage holds eye contact with him.

CONGREGATION, INCLUDING SAGE
And with your spirit.

FATHER ANDREW
Brothers and sisters, let us
acknowledge our sins and so prepare
ourselves to celebrate the sacred
mysteries.

Moment of silence.

CONGREGATION, INCLUDING FATHER ANDREW
I confess to almighty God and to
you, my brothers and sisters, that
I have greatly sinned in my
thoughts and in my words, in what I
have done and in what I have failed
to do--

Grace hits Evan's shoulder.

Evan turns back around to face front.

Evan can't see it, but Sage is clinging to the pew in front
of him with white knuckle intensity, almost shaking.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

FATHER ANDREW
Let us offer each other the sign of
the peace.

Sage feels lonely and uncomfortable for a moment as families
first turn to each other to wish each other peace.

A single elderly lady turns around and waves at Sage.

ELDERLY LADY
Peace be with you.

Sage waves back and smiles.

When the families in front of him finish up among themselves,
they smile and wave at him as well.

Sage waves back. The gesture of welcoming makes him more
emotional.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

Communion time. Everyone lines up to take a piece of wafer.
Sage joins the line without thinking about it.

FATHER ANDREW
The Body of Christ.

GRACE
(quick)
Amen.

She accepts it in her cupped hands, puts it in her own mouth,
and heads back to the pew.

FATHER ANDREW
The Body of Christ.

EVAN
Amen.

Evan kneels and lets Father Andrew place it on his tongue.

He heads back to the pew.

Just about everyone else takes Communion in their hands.

As Sage gets closer he worries more about what he is going to do.

He arrives to the front. Father Andrew presents Sage with a wafer. He is smiling, warm, genuine.

FATHER ANDREW
The Body of Christ.

Sage stands there for a long time.

Evan watches from the pew.

Sage is holding up the line.

Musicians vamp on the Communion hymn, really stretching it out.

Sage slightly shakes his head.

Sage briefly meets Father Andrew's eyes, waiting for some kind of scorn.

Father Andrew continues to smile genuinely, though is a bit confused, waits for Sage to figure it out.

Sage places his hands on their opposite shoulders.

Father Andrew no longer offers the wafer.

FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)
God bless you, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit.

Sage doesn't respond. He heads back to the pew and gratefully sits.

Sage wipes tears from his eyes.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

Mass is done. Evan turns around to talk to Sage, but Sage has disappeared.

Evan scoots out of the pew, quickly genuflects and makes the sign of the cross, and then runs down the aisle to go find him.

EXT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Father Andrew waves goodbye to the churchgoers, shakes their hands, and chats with them as they head out.

There's a table out here with a bunch of Catholic paraphernalia--cards, pamphlets, booklets with various reflections and devotions, and a box of cheap plastic rosaries like Evan's in different colors.

Evan looks around out here. Sage is nowhere to be seen. His face falls.

Evan realizes he totally ignored Father Andrew in his focus on Sage.

He shakes Father Andrew's hand.

EVAN

Thank you, Father.

The two of them start chatting about something.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Sage sits on the floor in front of his pew, hiding.

Grace sits next to him. He startles.

GRACE

(whispers)

I'll let you out the side way if
you want.

SAGE

(whispers)

Thank you!!

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Grace leads Sage out a side door through a winding little garden path lined with statues of saints.

It has not been well maintained. It is overgrown with weeds and the saints are a bit chipped. Tree roots crack the walkway.

The quiet stretches out between them.

GRACE

...Why are you here?

SAGE

This is exactly the conversation I was trying to avoid.

She accepts the silence.

SAGE (CONT'D)

Jesus called me to the supper of the lamb, right?

GRACE

Did Jesus pay for your bus pass or give you a ride or??

Sage re-evaluates her.

SAGE

I wanted to remember how I felt when I was normal.

GRACE

How did you feel?

SAGE

I don't think I DID feel. Why do you ask?

They arrive at the road.

GRACE

You're free.

She turns to go back in.

SAGE

Grace?

She is briefly weirded out by him knowing her name.

SAGE (CONT'D)

We could run away together.

GRACE

That's okay.

SAGE
We could go somewhere warm, like
Modesto--

GRACE
I have a boyfriend.

SAGE
He's invited too! Let's build a
life together and never fight.

She goes back inside as he says this.

Sage lingers for a moment with the church looming over him.

Grace peeks back out of the door.

GRACE
What would actually happen if I
said yes?

Sage takes a few enthusiastic steps closer to her.

GRACE (CONT'D)
--Not that I am. Saying yes.
(beat)
I think you just want to hear it.
That's why you came, right? To hear
it? You don't want to be Christian
though, and you don't want to run
away. Right? I mean, do you?

Sage finds somewhere else to be. Grace disappears inside the church.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Evan, in uniform, sits down across from Sage at a booth.

EVAN
(sighs)
Okay.

SAGE
...What?

EVAN
The people who come to you are
probably most in need of guidance
towards God and His Church.

One of Sage's clients approaches--a middle-aged woman who seems frail and depressed.

Sage switches from being tired and confused to charming in an instant, smiles and waves her over.

Evan panics and quickly blesses himself in the sign of the cross. Sage bumps him under the table to get him to stop being weird before she can see.

They get into a quick whisper argument:

SAGE
You shouldn't be here--

EVAN
But you said--

SAGE
I just say words recreationally--!

EVAN
It's what Jesus would do!

Sage takes the client's hand and kisses the back of it like nothing's wrong.

SAGE
Hey darling, this is my friend
Andromeda, do you mind if she joins
us tonight?

Client looks to Evan, who is completely frozen.

Sage knees Evan again. Evan makes an expression that approximates a smile.

CLIENT
Not at all.

SAGE
She's a little shy but she's so
excited to meet you...

Evan starts to dissociate as he watches them flirt. Their conversation fades away.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Evan wanders the hallways of a gross motel, pacing back and forth, back and forth.

He heads downstairs to a swimming pool. He splashes the water. It looks dirty.

He finds his way to a vending machine and looks at the snacks.

He gives it a shake. Nothing's coming out.

He looks around and then kneels down and tries to stick his hand up through the dispenser and grab a snack. His arm isn't long enough.

Embarrassed, he gets back up, dusts himself off, and keeps wandering around.

He goes to a door and cautiously leans his head against it.

Muffled through the door, Evan hears Sage in what could be either pain or ecstasy.

Grossed out and scared, Evan backs away.

He slowly leans back against the door. It doesn't stop being distressing.

Noises eventually die down. Evan gets more scared.

He presses his ear completely against the door and considers jostling the doorknob.

Sage opens the door. Evan stumbles a bit.

Evan tries to check Sage for signs of injury. Sage is drained and out of it but seems physically okay.

Sage puts some money in Evan's hand. Evan tries to give it back immediately, almost spooked.

SAGE

You're the only person in the
audience of the church play version
of your life.

Sage closes Evan's fingers around the cash without gravitas or feeling. He starts heading out.

EVAN

I don't want to do this again.

Evan looks at the money in his hand. A hundred dollars in twenties!!!

He goes back to the vending machine and shoves the bills in.

He takes an armful of snacks and eats them right there on the ground by the vending machine.

[Here is where things start to get funky. The pacing and structure are going to make less sense going forward.]

[Midpoint: Evan starts to interact with clients, who are often quite lonely and have guilty consciences. Sage is uncomfortable with all this emotion but Evan has a bit of success in confessional interactions with clients which affirm Evan's gender, sexuality, and spirituality. Evan feels empowered and submits the papers to enroll in seminary for real.]

INT. MOTEL - LATER

Evan grabs a snack from the vending machine, quite happy.

Sage, overwhelmed but not unimpressed, lingers next to Evan.

EVAN
Sage? ...Sage? ...Sage--?

SAGE
What?

EVAN
You're supposed to say my name.

SAGE
Evan?
(short beat)
Andromeda?

EVAN
(smiles)
That's such a stupid name.

SAGE
What do you wanna be called? Maria?
Prudence?

EVAN
No.

SAGE
Then?

EVAN
Evangeline. You can probably just
continue calling me Evan for short.

Sage can't tell if that's a joke.

Evan laughs. Sage laughs too.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Evan intercepts Grace, who is helping set up a discussion group in the side room with some chairs.

As always, her siblings run around, undoing Grace's work with the chairs to build a fort situation.

GRACE
Everything okay?
(an apology)
We start in five--

EVAN
Yeah.

GRACE
It's women's group.

Several beats.

EVAN
I need to talk to you about something.

GRACE
Now?

Grace notices her siblings messing up her work.

GRACE (CONT'D)
(to siblings)
Guys are you serious?

They laugh nervously.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Could I just have one day where you aren't messing up my--?!

Siblings seem remorseful.

EVAN
Um. Never mind.

GRACE
(to Evan)
No I'm sorry, what were you saying?

EVAN
Nothing.

GRACE
It sounded important.

EVAN
Nope.

GRACE
Is this about the clothes?

EVAN
(pretends to be innocent)
The...?

GRACE
It's fine.

EVAN
I don't know what you--

GRACE
It's fine. I gotta clean this up,
we'll talk soon, okay?

Evan heads out. Grace cleans up the chair situation.

[Pretend that Grace has a whole confrontation with her parents here about something that is ideally a bit more theologically grounded than her siblings being annoying.]

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Evan and Sage sit at the booth with a client, a YOUNG MAN. Evan sits next to the client, facing the door, wearing some of Grace's clothes, getting his hair played with. Sage sits across from the two of them, flirting.

Evan notices something. The color drains from his face.

Sage turns around. Grace is walking down the sidewalk towards the diner, opening the door.

Evan dives under the table. Client is confused.

Sage laughs. Evan doesn't think it's funny.

Sage taps Evan with his foot and then gestures towards the bathrooms.

SAGE
Go. I got this.

Evan tentatively peeks out from under the table. Grace talks to a waitress.

SAGE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Go!

Evan starts running from the table to the bathroom.

CLIENT
...I want my money back--

SAGE
You'll get what you paid for
darling--

CLIENT
Nah man, this wasn't the deal--

He tries to pat Sage down for money and reach into his pockets.

SAGE
Hey brother I said you'll get what
you--

Client is starting to get aggressively handsy and push Sage around to get into his pockets.

Evan doubles back, grabs client's hand, and pulls him into the men's single user bathroom.

Sage looks after them, alarmed.

Oblivious, Grace takes a seat across from Sage, somber.

She notices that there are three drinks on the table.

Sage takes small sips from all three of them.

She just sits there, bummed out.

SAGE (CONT'D)
What can I do for you, Grace?

She puts a twenty dollar bill on the table.

He just lets it sit there.

SAGE (CONT'D)
Could you be more specific?

She shrugs.

Sage glances towards the bathroom. It's quiet. Suspiciously quiet?

SAGE (CONT'D)
I'm... busy.

She looks around the empty, calm diner.

SAGE (CONT'D)
Another time.

GRACE
You've got to have something, I
don't really care what. Please.

Casting another worried glance at the bathroom, he gestures her to follow him and leads her out.

EXT. SAGE'S TENT - NIGHT

Sage leads Grace to the tent he lives in on the small patch of wilderness at the edge of the Ohio River. There are highways on bridges overhead. The ground is frozen mud.

INT. SAGE'S TENT - NIGHT

Sage gets in and turns on a lantern that's clipped to the top of the tent. It's cold enough to see his breath.

Grace follows him, bordering on having an anxiety attack. She sits on her feet on the ground and tries to rub her hands together to warm up.

Grace sees a small altar to Dionysus in the corner: prints of paintings of him, bottles of wine, stacks of paperback plays.

She notices a box of discarded needles. She tries to keep up her courage.

Sage looks through his few belongings, his back to her. He unlocks a combination lock used to keep a small duffle bag from being unzipped.

He looks through his "stash": it is mostly testosterone injections and weed gummies.

SAGE
Up or down?

GRACE
Why does everything have to be
about that, sometimes it's not that
simple--

SAGE
Down it is.

Something makes him pause.

He digs out a pill bottle. It is clearly labelled
"ibuprofen."

He looks at her.

He takes out two ibuprofens.

He pulls her money from his pocket and zips it into the bag
and locks it up.

He reaches out with the ibuprofens.

GRACE
What is it? No don't tell me.

SAGE
Fentanyl.

GRACE
(naive)
Cool.

Tentatively, she sticks out her tongue and tilts her head up
at him. He places them in her mouth. She swallows.

She sits there. He sits across from her.

She almost starts to cry grateful tears.

SAGE
Uh-- Look, no, don't cry, uh...

He takes out his guitar and the booklet of Catholic music
that Evan gave him a while ago, and plays something for her.

She leans against his shoulder and listens. He is neither
comfortable nor uncomfortable with this. He keeps playing the
guitar.

It's soothing, peaceful. She eventually calms down.

GRACE
I think I'm high now.

SAGE
...

GRACE
I feel so much better.

SAGE
Good.

GRACE
Do I seem high?

SAGE
Oh, definitely--

She kisses him. He completely freezes.

She draws back for a moment to meet his eyes. He is hard to read.

She moves his guitar to the side, climbs on top of him, and keeps kissing him, harsh and almost vengeful--not towards him, but expressed through him.

He stays still and lets her use him to do whatever it is she's trying to do.

She puts her hands up under his shirt and scratches his back.

He shivers. He tentatively holds onto her shoulders to steady himself.

She pauses by the button of his pants.

He grabs her hand to stop her, and to hold her hand.

SAGE (CONT'D)
I think you're gonna regret this--

She kisses him again to shut him up. She moves his hand to the back of her head. He likes this but is also thinking about Evan.

SAGE (CONT'D)
(concedes)
Okay...

She undoes his fly and touches him through his underwear.

It registers on her face that something is off.

She fully pulls out a piece of purple foam from his underwear.

She looks at it in her hand.

She sits down a foot away and looks at it in her hand.

They sit there, shivering in the cold.

SAGE (CONT'D)
...You didn't know?

GRACE
No!

SAGE
I thought everyone could tell--

GRACE
How would I know when you look-- I mean you sound like--

SAGE
Well I AM--

GRACE
I'm sorry, I just, I'm not gay or anything.

SAGE
Yeah.

GRACE
What do you mean "yeah"--?

SAGE
I mean yeah--!

GRACE
You don't know anything about me, so--!

SAGE
I know the only half-real relationship in your life is with a queer person--

GRACE
I barely know you--

SAGE
No not me, I'm straight. Don't tell anyone, it's embarrassing.

(MORE)

SAGE (CONT'D)
You must be able to sense how your
friend is hurting--

GRACE
My friend the most godly Catholic
who ever hailed Mary? My best
friend whose best friend is my
priest?

SAGE
Yes...!

GRACE
Have you tried talking to him about
anything ever?

SAGE
(sympathizes)
Yes...

More awkward silence as Grace thinks about it.

SAGE (CONT'D)
Would you give me my dick back or
do you plan to keep it?

She gives it to him. He puts it back in place.

SAGE (CONT'D)
Ask next time before you just go
and castrate a dude. And after
being provided with some good shit
at a reasonable price too...

He straightens out his clothes and stands.

GRACE
Wait where are you going? Can I
come?

SAGE
No.

GRACE
Can I stay here then??

SAGE
No!

Grace is hurt.

SAGE (CONT'D)
No you can't! Literally just wait
until you graduate and get a normal
white girl job away from whoever's
making you feel this way. Fuck you
for making me say something so
reasonable.

He leaves. Grace stays.

Sage pokes his head back in.

SAGE (CONT'D)
GET OUT.

Scared, Grace runs off.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Evan is curled up sitting on the floor by the sink with his
hair covering his face. Two knocks.

SAGE (O.S.)
Andromeda?

Evan stands and opens the door for him.

EVAN
Is she gone?

Sage nods. He stands near Evan. The concern and admonishment
are both clear on Sage's face.

EVAN (CONT'D)
He was gonna hurt you.

SAGE
So?

Sage pushes Evan's hair back--Evan flinches at the sudden
movement. Evan got a bloody nose.

SAGE (CONT'D)
(panicky)
Shit.

Sage gets a paper towel. He wipes off some of the blood.

SAGE (CONT'D)
You're, um, you're gonna be okay
Evangeline--

EVAN
Don't call me that.

Evan pushes him off. Sage is RELIEVED to be pushed off.

SAGE
Evangeline! Didn't you ask me to?

EVAN
(serious)
Shut up.

SAGE
Ohhh that's not very God-honoring
of you to say that to me--

EVAN
I'm not in the mood right now--

Sage steps closer to him--

SAGE
Evangeline--!

--and Evan pushes him off again.

EVAN
Shut up--!

SAGE
About the holiest girl in the
priesthood? Never--

Evan pushes him again.

EVAN
Don't you think I feel pathetic
enough?

Sage shoves Evan back three times for emphasis:

SAGE
Rub what in, your beauty? Your
effervescent charm? Your boundless
intellect--?

Evan grabs Sage's shirt, tense with heartbreak.

Beat.

EVAN
You don't have to be cruel.

He releases Sage, drags himself to the sink, and washes his mouth out with water and hand soap.

SAGE

SHIT.

Sage leaves Evan there, slamming the door behind himself.

INT. CHURCH SIDE ROOM - DAY

Evan takes a deep breath and sits in the chair across from Father Andrew, who is doing something with paperwork at his desk. He doesn't look up from his work.

FATHER ANDREW

Evan, I was just thinking about you, have you gotten around to Tertullian? What do you think of--?

He looks up and sees that Evan clearly got punched in the face last night.

EVAN

I think I'm a woman sometimes.

FATHER ANDREW

...Well. Uh.
(several beats)
That is your cross, then.

Evan sits there.

FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)

(several beats)
That's between you and God.
(several beats)
Is there anything else I can help you with?

EVAN

It's not okay. I'm not okay.

FATHER ANDREW

...We're all disordered towards different things, towards greed or vanity or-- That doesn't make us bad, no matter what people tell you, I want you to understand that God loves you so much, you were created in the image of God, he has a beautiful plan for you--

From here on everything overlaps and comes out at once:

EVAN

A God who put the apple tree there
because he wanted us to have
choices--

FATHER ANDREW

Right choices and wrong choices--

EVAN

A God who became a human, who
traversed the most untraversable
boundary to teach us about a
kingdom of love--

FATHER ANDREW

You know where the Church stands.
Why would you tell me--?

EVAN

I know where the U.S. Conference of
Catholic Bishops stands and I know
that in the West the majority of
Catholics support the right to gay
marriage for example--

FATHER ANDREW

What do you need from me right now?

EVAN

--and we Catholics are the Body of
Christ and for something to be
considered infallible we need to be
in agreement with the Bishops and
the Pope--

FATHER ANDREW

Are you confessing or--?

EVAN

I'm TELLING you that I love you and
God and I belong to you and God
whether anybody wants me to or not--
I just wish you would want me to,
like actually me, and if that makes
me a heretic, so were all the best
saints.

Several beats.

EVAN (CONT'D)

I'd like my penance now.

(beat)

I just want my penance.

(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Please can I have my penance--?

FATHER ANDREW

(shaken)

Yes of course--

EVAN

Please--

FATHER ANDREW

Of course. Um. Ten Hail Marys.

Evan is disappointed with the easiness of this. Evan moves to leave before being dismissed.

EVAN

Thank you, Father.

FATHER ANDREW

Evan?

Evan stops.

FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)

I'll give you your absolution too.

Evan pauses for a while.

FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)

I'm going to give you your
absolution.

Evan shuffles over. He starts to kneel.

FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)

Please just sit.

He sits.

Father Andrew hovers his palm by Evan's forehead and absolves him of sin.

INT. WORKER HOUSE BATHROOM - DAY

Evan clutches the sink and stares at himself in the mirror. He looks pale and exhausted.

He wraps his long, beautiful hair around his fist.

Safety scissors sit on the counter.

He grabs them.

EVAN

(whispers at lightning
speed throughout)

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is
with thee blessed art thou among
women and blessed is the fruit of
thy womb Jesus Holy Mary mother of
God pray for us sinners now and at
the hour of our death amen.

He cuts his hair off. It's thick enough and the scissors are
blunt enough that not much comes off.

He gasps and looks at it having fallen on the floor.

He takes heaving breaths. He shakes his hair out. He could
hide the random snip and it still wouldn't look that bad.

He slaps his cheeks a few times. He continues breathing hard.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is
with thee blessed art thou among
women and blessed is the fruit of
thy womb Jesus Holy Mary mother of
God pray for us sinners now and at
the hour of our death amen.

He haves at it with the safety scissors again.

More hair on the floor.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is
with thee blessed art thou among
women and blessed is the fruit of
thy womb Jesus Holy Mary mother of
God pray for us sinners now and at
the hour of our death amen.

More Hail Marys, more hair on the floor, again and again.

The repetition burns Evan out of emotion.

EVAN (CONT'D)

(numb)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord
is with thee. Blessed art thou
among women and blessed is the
fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy
Mary, mother of God, pray for us
sinners now and at the hour of our
death. Amen.

He looks at himself in the mirror.

He looks like a boy in a Catholic school uniform.

INT. CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSE FRONT DESK - MORNING

Evan takes Grace's trash. Grace is not here though.

Evan sits on her desk chair and waits for her.

He waits and waits and waits.

Grace eventually shuffles in.

She sees Evan waiting for her. This fills her with something like relief.

She sees that he is also going through it and the relief turns to sadness and then rage.

EXT. OHIO RIVER - DAY

Grace and Evan go for a hike along a trail by the river. It's icy and slippery, not all that scenic with the highways and the leafless trees. Grace is quietly fuming. Evan is oblivious.

GRACE

It is not his job to dictate our
fucking hairstyles.

EVAN

You mean Father? No of course not--

GRACE

So what then, you just woke up and
decided to chop it all off?

EVAN

Yeah. Um. Sorry. I didn't know you
cared about it. It'll grow back.

(a few beats)

It was vain anyway--

GRACE

It was like Jesus'.

(beat)

Why'd I say that--

EVAN

Thanks.

She looks out at the water for some time.

GRACE
You can't tell anybody what I'm
about to tell you.

He looks up at her a bit hopefully.

EVAN
I'm good with secrets.

GRACE
Not even Father Andrew.

EVAN
.....Okay--

GRACE
Or any other priest in the states
of Ohio or Kentucky or--

EVAN
West Virginia--?

GRACE
Or West Virginia or the Vatican or
anywhere. Swear.

EVAN
(uncomfortable)
...Okay--

GRACE
On Jesus' name.

EVAN
On Jesus' name...

GRACE
Promise.

EVAN
I promise.

Grace stalls as long as she can.

GRACE
I don't want to go to church
anymore.

Evan looks confused and devastated.

EVAN
Of course you do.

GRACE

No, I don't.

EVAN

But-- but you were my sponsor.

GRACE

I'm sorry I wasn't paying attention.

EVAN

Attention to what? I love it here--

GRACE

I know that you have accepted the official stance on-- the expression that you gravitate towards but have you even thought to have a crisis about how the Church treats anyone else?

EVAN

Is this about, like, the... abusive situations?

GRACE

That's one part of it.

EVAN

...How does you leaving help--?

GRACE

By showing that their suffering isn't going unnoticed, that there are consequences for--

EVAN

If every institution that sheltered abusers dissolved there would be literally nothing in society--

GRACE

But some are particularly-- hypocritical, Evan, we pretend to be perfect but we're disgusting--

EVAN

We acknowledge our sinfulness every day--

GRACE

I don't want to wait until I die for the chance to feel safe.

EVAN
...Don't you love God--?

GRACE
You're not listening to me--

EVAN
I'm listening--

GRACE
This has nothing to do with Christ
and everything to do with
Christians.

EVAN
Well I can minister to you
privately when I'm ordained and you
won't have to talk to them.

Grace hugs him and puts a hand on the back of his head,
petting the short hair.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Would that be okay? We could do
Mass every Sunday just us, you'd
meet all your obligations.

GRACE
God does not deserve you.

She draws back.

Evan notices that she put her rosary around his neck.

He looks down at it, touched and sad. He tries to give it
back--

GRACE (CONT'D)
No. Use it right, okay? Understand?

He stays frozen for several beats, not sure what to do.

He slips it under his shirt, accepting it. He wears it from
here on out underneath his shirt.

GRACE (CONT'D)
(the trail)
...It's okay if you want to go back
now--

EVAN
I want to finish this hike with
you.

She is grateful for it. They keep going.

[Seminary stuff is the second half of act two through all is lost. I think Evan does graduate but chooses not to get ordained.]

[Seminary stuff: he loses access to Andrew, Grace, Sage, he must practice a much more punitive Catholicism than he is used to. One detail of this style of Catholicism is that they don't bless those not baptized Catholic who join the Communion line, including pre-First Communion Catholic kids. Another detail is that they are suspicious of Grace's rosary. He has to do a month-long silence which makes him confront his own desires.]

[Act 3:]

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

Mass as usual. Father Andrew comes over to the altar.

FATHER ANDREW
The Lord be with you.

CONGREGATION
And with your spirit.

Father Andrew clocks Evan in the pews. Evan's hair has grown back out to chin length.

FATHER ANDREW
...Brothers and sisters, let us
acknowledge our sins and so prepare
ourselves to celebrate the sacred
mysteries.

Longer than usual moment of silence. The camera stays close on Father Andrew this time around:

CONGREGATION, ESPECIALLY FATHER ANDREW
I confess to almighty God and to
you, my brothers and sisters, that
I have greatly sinned in my
thoughts and in my words, in what I
have done and in what I have failed
to do.

Everyone hits their chests in time with this part:

CONGREGATION, ESPECIALLY FATHER ANDREW (CONT'D)
Through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault.
Therefore I asked blessed Mary ever-
Virgin, all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters to
pray for me to the Lord our God.

[Is he apologizing for not accepting Evan as trans more, or
for not making Evan be cis better?]

[Evan runs back to Sage despite Sage's best efforts.]

EXT. 24 HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Evan runs over to the diner, out of breath.

He sees Sage through the window, by himself.

A profound, relieved joy spreads over Evan's face.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Evan comes in and sits across from Sage.

SAGE
...Do you want, like, drugs?

EVAN
I want to hang out with you.

Sage laughs, distrusting and numb.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Is that okay?

SAGE
You tell me, Father.

INT. SAGE'S TENT - NIGHT

Evan follows Sage in. Sage turns on the light. Evan finds a
place to sit.

They stare at each other.

SAGE
I got weed, I got booze...

EVAN
Maybe we could talk.

SAGE
Sober?
(suspicious)
Okay...

They stare at each other for some time.

SAGE (CONT'D)
...I don't understand--

EVAN
Okay, what would you do if I wasn't
here?

Sage glances at the Dionysus shrine.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Let's do that then.

Sage is confused. Evan scoots over to the shrine.

He bows deeply as if at the altar and then picks up a play:
The Bacchae.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Read it to me?

SAGE
I can do that.

Evan passes the play to Sage.

Sage opens it to a spot and passes it back to Evan.

SAGE (CONT'D)
You read Pentheus.

Evan clears his throat and looks it over. He reads as if for
an English class:

EVAN
"When you dance these rites, is it
at night or during daylight?"

Sage acts as if for the most discerning theatrical critic:

SAGE

"Mainly at night. Shadows confer solemnity."

EVAN

"And deceive the women."

SAGE

"One can do shameful things in daylight, too."

EVAN

"You must--"

(breaks character,
resumes)

"You must be punished for these evil games."

SAGE

"What punishment am I to suffer?
What harsh penalties will you
inflict?"

EVAN

"First I'll cut off this pretty
hair of yours. We'll lock your body
up inside, in prison"--

SAGE

The god will personally set me free
whenever I so choose. He sees my
suffering now and from nearby.

EVAN

Where is he then? My eyes don't see
him.

SAGE

He's where I am. He's the one you
put in chains.

Evan puts the book down for a bit.

EVAN

You should be on stage.

Sage is flattered. He knows it though.

Evan yawns a bit and rubs his hands together to try to warm
up.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Sorry--

SAGE

Here.

Sage drapes his sleeping bag over Evan. Evan is pleased by this.

SAGE (CONT'D)

It's too damn cold.

Evan lays down and rests his head on Sage's thigh, with a hand over Sage's knee.

EVAN

Thank you.

A few long, charged, uncomfy beats.

SAGE

What do you want? Would you just tell me what you want?

Evan props himself up on his elbow, feeling like the contact was wrong of him.

SAGE (CONT'D)

We can have sex, let's just do it.

EVAN

Uhhh--

SAGE

Is this a Catholic guilt thing--? I don't--

EVAN

Can I hold you?

Evan bites his tongue to make himself not apologize.

SAGE

(emotional outburst)

...I can't. I can't do it again. I can't take it. There are so many trans people, I'm just the first one you happened to get to know and that's all this feeling is, okay? I promise--

EVAN

(steady)

Your god loves you. And my god loves you.

SAGE

I know.

EVAN

I don't think you--

SAGE

I know!

Sage leans into Evan. Evan holds him.

SAGE (CONT'D)

I know...

Sage holds Evan back.

SAGE (CONT'D)

I know...

INT. SAGE'S TENT - MORNING

Sage wakes up next to Evan.

Sage eyes the shiny gold rosary around Evan's neck. He touches the expensive looking medal, the cross. He holds onto it like he's about to pull it off of Evan.

He shouldn't do this...

He REALLY shouldn't do this...

He gently sets his palm over it and against Evan's skin.

[Here is a possible ending in a context of Sage running off, Sage coming back years later.]

EXT. SAGE'S TENT - DAY

Sage turns back up by his old shelter.

His tent is in rough shape, tattered by the wind.

INT. SAGE'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Sage comes in.

Clearly somebody else has taken over this spot since he left it: there are glassine envelopes littered across the ground. His box of discarded testosterone needles is empty.

He mourns for this stranger.

He sits there and mourns for himself.

There's nothing here for him to take and he doesn't want to fight for the spot. He goes.

EXT. OHIO RIVER - DAY

Sage picks his way along the bank of the Ohio river, looking for a new spot to settle down in.

It's damp and overcast. The ground is mushy from rain.

He hears voices a ways away.

Nervously, he crouches behind some bushes.

It sounds like a group of about four young people. He's too far away to hear their exact words.

He peeks out at them. They're all visibly, proudly gender non-conforming.

Some fifty feet away, they strip and then wade into the Ohio river. They scream playfully from the cold water. They splash each other, laughing.

They all eventually settle down into a peaceful quiet, looking out across the river, the highway bridges criss-crossing above. They have their backs to Sage.

One of them looks a lot like Evan--Sage doesn't believe it.

Evan grasps one of her friends' hand and braces an arm around the friend's back.

She lowers her friend into the water then lifts them back out of it.

Friend comes up. A short moment of processing, then the two hug.

Evan goes around and baptizes the rest of the group.

She takes a breath and plunges herself under the water. Friends join her in swimming for a bit.

Eventually they get out and wrap themselves in towels and blankets. They have a little picnic: bread and wine and other stuff.

They watch the sun set and they talk and laugh with each other.

When the sky turns dusky, the group packs up and heads on their way.

Evan lingers behind everyone.

She looks out into the trees but her eyes scan right past Sage.

Sage stands up a bit, but is too shocked to act.

Evan takes out a rose from her things and lays it on the ground.

Evan continues looking out into the trees.

After a moment, she turns away and runs to catch up with her friends.

Sage starts picking his way down to the bank.

There are hundreds of dead and decaying roses in a pile on the bank of the river.

Sage picks up the new rose. He smells it.

He contemplates the water. He wades in.