

Our Father, Who Art in Hell, Curse Be Thy Name

written by

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INT. KITCHEN MORNING

A small New England house from the 1980s. Crucifix hanging in the doorway and a calendar that reads SAINT MICHAEL 1985.

MOM early 60s moves with care. She a cake in front of RICK with a crooked 4 and 0 candles. Rick is wary and fatigued, the look of someone who has endured many hardships. Tired eyes. He only smiles because she needs him to.

MOM
Make a wish, sweetheart.

Rick breathes in, blows out the candle. Smoke rises in a spiral. Something hits him as he does. Not a memory he can see. Just the feeling of pain.

A sudden, stabbing brightness behind his eyes--like someone flipped a switch in the back of his skull.

In his ears, a faint sound rises.. BELT SNAP (O.S.)

FATHER
Get up. Stop being such a p***y.

A child's scream overlaps it. Birthday candles. A tablecloth. A pushed face in cake. Then the belt again, sharper, closer. Rick jerks back from the table like something struck him in the ribs. His breath goes thin and sharp. Mom freezes, fork in hand, shocked to see this old terror return.

MOM
Rick--hey--Rick--look at me.

He grips the table. His body curls as if bracing for a blow. BELT SNAP (O.S.)

FATHER (O.S.)
Boys don't cry.

BELT SNAP (O.S.) Rick clamps his hands over his ears. Mom circles the table, kneels beside him, hands on his shoulders, firm but gentle.

MOM
Rick. Look at me. In for four. Come on, honey. In. One...two... three... four...

Rick tries. His breath catches.

MOM (CONT'D)
That's it. Come on. Come back to me.

The belt snap fades. The screams fade. The room returns. Rick blinks, shaking, sweat forming at his hairline. Mom strokes his hair.

MOM (CONT'D)
You haven't had one of these in so long. What happened?

Rick stares at the extinguished candle, terrified of it. He says nothing. Mom squeezes his arm once.

MOM (CONT'D)
Come on. Sit. Just sit with me a minute.

She helps him into the chair. He's breathing but unevenly. Mom picks up a small orange pill bottle, shakes two pills into her palm, then places them gently into Rick's hand with a glass of water. When she turns to the cake he pockets them. Rick after a few deep breaths rises and begins to leave.

MOM (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

RICK
Just... just need a minute.

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rick closes the door softly and kneels beside his bed. His hands tremble as he reaches underneath. He pulls out a shoebox. Inside—dozens of identical pills to the ones he just palmed. Something catches his eye: A photo and a manilla envelope. He stashes the manilla envelope and turns to the photo. It's old. Age-faded. Edges curled.

Him as a kid. Beside him, his father. And behind them, just barely in frame, a second boy. Rick stares, breath quickening again. He presses the photo to his forehead, eyes squeezed shut. Silence.

Then a low, distant memory-light sound:

FATHER (O.S.)
You little shit! Look what you did!

Rick flinches hard, collapsing backward against the dresser. His breath cuts out. He grips the photo like a lifeline he doesn't recognize. He stays there, shaking, alone with the picture and the ghosts that never fully left.

INT. LIVING ROOM AFTERNOON

Mom stacks parish bulletins, a spiral notebook of retreat names, and a casserole under foil. Getting her things ready as she gets ready to leave. She pauses and then asks her son a question.

MOM

Want to come with me this time?

RICK (LAUGHING)

I'll drive you but God is not even enough to help me with my shit.

The joke doesn't land. A beat of silence. Mom's eyes cool. She swings the door open.

MOM

Keys. Wallet. Let us go.

Rick shrugs like he meant to be funny.

EXT. PARISH LOT LATE AFTERNOON

A YOUNG PRIEST of the parish loads bags into the back. GABE, silver hair and gentle eyes, embraces Mom in a long hug. Mom jogs back toward Rick's car to say goodbye. Rick smiles as she walks away – the closest thing to peace he's had all day. He drives off, adjusting the radio until he finds a familiar song. For a moment, he looks like an average man.

INT. RICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

The house is quiet except for the hum of the refrigerator through the wall. Rick sits cross-legged on the floor, the photo of his father still in his hand. His hands tremble as he holds the manilla envelope from earlier.

He hesitates, then opens it. Inside are old photocopied forms: police reports, medical evaluations, intake summaries. His eyes track the printed words as if they might rearrange and much to his horror there was some evidence attached to his juvenile photo.

Multiple photos showed lacerations to the victims face including a large gash in the back of the head. The head of the report read:

"Subject: Richard Callahan, age 12. Offense: Aggravated Assault resulting in critical injuries to other child

Subject deemed criminally insane at the time of offense.
Plaintiff: Michael [REDACTED], age 7."

He doesn't move, only blinks. Someone was hurt. He remembers flash fragments: A shout, ambulance sirens, the belt snap, doors slamming, crying. Then nothing. He closes the file slowly but keeps staring at the redacted line.

INT. HALLWAY - NEXT MORNING

Rick wakes to the low murmur of his mother's voice down the hall. She's on the phone, tone soft but urgent.

MOM
Yes... I'll see him tomorrow. We'll take flowers first. (pause) I know. He's calmer now.

Rick stops. The floor creaks under his step, and she turns.

MOM (CONT'D)
Couldn't sleep?

RICK
You said you're seeing someone.

MOM
Just Gabe from church. He's helping me with the retreat forms.

He goes to his room and examines the report from the envelope. Then closes his fist around it.

INT. GARAGE - EVENING

Mom hums as she gets into her car. Rick waits in the trunk.

EXT. CITY STREET EVENING

A modest restaurant. Through the window Mom sits with Gabe from church. They talk with ease. She laughs and then hides her laugh with her hand like she forgot how to have one.

Rick barges into the restaurant.

INT. MODEST RESTAURANT CONTINUOUS

The clink of silverware. A soft 80s love song. Couples eating early dinners. Rick's breathing is ragged.

Sweat beads at his temples. Mom looks up, startled. Gabe rises a little from his seat.

GABE

Hey Rick... Come sit. Let's get you water—

Gabe raises a glass to which Rick SMACKS the glass from his hand. It shatters. The restaurant goes quiet. Rick's eyes burn into his mother.

RICK (VOICE TREMBLES)

Tell me what I did. Tell me what I did.

Mom stays seated. Steady. Terrified for him, not of him.

MOM

You were a child... you were sick...
You were not yourself.

RICK (FIGHTING TEARS)

Just say it. I could've killed a child. I'm a monster.

GABE

Rick, no one here—

RICK

(shouting)

How could you love me!? How could you sit here like everything's fine!? Why didn't you tell me!?

Restaurant patrons back away. A fork drops. Someone whispers, "Call someone." Mom's voice softens, a trembling stone of faith.

MOM

Listen to me. I am your mother. I love you. That will never change.

Rick's jaw rattles as he fights tears.

RICK

I've been off my meds. Weeks...
Everything's coming back wrong.

Rick steps back, dizzy. The hum of the restaurant warps into a low drone. His elbow bumps a table — a steak knife clatters loudly onto the floor. He looks down. The whole room tenses.

Rick picks up the knife.

MOM (SOFT, COMMANDING)
Rick. Put that down.

He tightens his grip, hands shaking violently. Gabe interposes himself between Rick and the tables, open palms, no sudden moves.

Rick gestures the knife toward Gabe.

RICK (VOICE CRACKING)
Don't come any closer.

Mom steps forward slowly as if approaching a wounded animal.

MOM
Rick... You are safe. You hear me?
You are safe. Now, give me the
knife.

Rick sobs. The knife trembles in his hand. He looks around at the terrified faces. He screams.

RICK
I'M SORRY!

THUNK — a FRYING PAN smashes into the back of Rick's head and his body slams into the ground.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL QUIET ROOM LATER

Rick sits upright in a chair. He is medicated enough to breathe without grabbing the air. Hands open on his knees.

NURSE
Mr. Alvarez you have a visitor

The Young Priest comes and sits beside Rick. For a long time, neither speaks.

RICK
I keep seeing things... hearing things. I can't even remember hurting someone... But I deserve every terrible thing that has happened to me.

Rick swallows hard, eyes on the floor.

RICK (CONT'D)
Just tell me. Please. Since no one else will. What did I do?

YOUNG PRIEST

...One day... you had an episode at a water park. A manic break no one understood then. Another child tried to calm you down. And in the chaos... you knocked him down concrete stairs.

YOUNG PRIEST (CONT'D)

He lived, Rick. With a long recovery that followed.

Rick's face collapses into his hands. He sobs.

YOUNG PRIEST (CONT'D)

Your father was not happy and...
(voice tightens)
he beat you so violently that you ended up in the hospital too.

Rick looks up - stunned, broken.

YOUNG PRIEST (CONT'D)

You were a sick child. Not a killer. You weren't and you're still not a monster.

Tears spill down Rick's face.

RICK

My father... Every memory I have of him is something awful. Things no kid should see. No kid should feel. Every time I try to remember anything good...
(voice breaking)
there's nothing there.

Tears slip down Rick's cheeks now, uncontrolled, soaking into the collar of his gown.

RICK (CONT'D)

How do you come back from that? How do you grow into anything decent when that's what made you?

The priest's jaw tightens. When he speaks, his voice cracks.

YOUNG PRIEST

It is a blessing... that you did not have to spend more years of your life with him.

Rick cries harder – but it's the cry of someone finally letting truth in.

RICK

The voices don't help. It's always so noisy I can never think for myself. I feel like I'm losing my mind without my meds.

He places a gentle hand on Rick's leg.

YOUNG PRIEST

Take the time to get better, Rick.
Please.

The priest concludes with some prayers. As he finishes, Rick blurts out.

RICK

If the boy I hurt could see me now-

YOUNG PRIEST (INTERJECTS)

-He would forgive you. You weren't yourself.

Rick lets go of a breath as if he has been holding it in for a year. He nods and swallows his tears.

The priest pats Rick's leg and rises. We stay on Rick. Outside at the nurse's desk a pen scratches some paper. (O.S.).

INT. HOSPITAL DESK

ZOOM SHOT INSERT on the visitor log "Visitor: Michael Callahan"

The hand then sets the pen down as a teardrop stains the page.

CUT TO BLACK