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# **THE VASE**

**A modern farce adapted from Kleist's "The Broken Jug"**

**by  
Laura Lewis-Barr**

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# THE VASE

by Laura Lewis-Bar

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

**REVEREND ADAM APPLE;** 40-50, *leader of the Church of Generous Giving. Charismatic, sensual, ethically challenged.*

**DEACON WILEY;** *older than Reverend Adam. Long suffering, expert at the “slow burn.”*

**JOY;** 20’s. *Sexy secretary, not too bright.*

**FAITH;** 20’s *another secretary. Joy’s best friend, and frenemy. A worrywart.*

**REVEREND SAMMY HAMMY;** 40-50. *Bigger than life. Holier than thou.*

**MARTHA;** *Eve’s mother, 50-60.*

**TOM;** *Roger’s Father, 60’s. (Optional double cast as MAN FROM CONGREGATION)*

**EVE;** 20’s, *in love with Roger.*

**ROGER;** 20’s, *in love with Eve. (Optional double cast as PR MAN SWARMY)*

**BRIDGET;** *old woman in love with Reverend Sammy.*

**MR. SWARMY;** *PR MAN for the “Odysseys in Faith” tour*

**MAN FROM CONGREGATION**

**CAMERA CREW/CAMERA MAN**

## SETTING:

*A simple church sanctuary space; A few pews and stained glass windows*

## ETC:

*Ages in character descriptions are suggestions only.*

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by Laura Lewis-Barr

**THE PLAY**

*(AT RISE: inside the church, the charismatic REVEREND ADAM sits under an open stained glass window examining his torn clothing, cleaning a wound on his leg, and feeling some bumps on his head. The area is strewn with debris; blankets, sheets, empty cans, old food, etc. In one area is a table constructed on hymnals. DEACON WILEY enters looking through some papers. HE does not look up.)*

WILEY

Morning Reverend. I don't suppose you got around to looking at these expense reports as I asked you to. *(REVEREND ADAM moans)* No. Most certainly not. From the amount of....cleaning....that goes on here you could take a tax cut on an unseen Laundromat. *(REVEREND ADAM moans again)* Ok. So the metaphor was a bit— *(Looks up)* What happened?

REVEREND ADAM

What?

WILEY

You look...

REVEREND ADAM

Oh. I cut myself shaving...

WILEY

You look like you fell...

REVEREND ADAM

That too.

WILEY

...down a canyon?

REVEREND ADAM

I fell over myself. We each have a stumbling block within ourselves, Yes? I know you do.

*(REVEREND ADAM applies bandages.)*

WILEY

This was not a stumbling block—It was a boulder. *(Goes to touch a wound; REVEREND ADAM reacts)* Was it this morning?

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. Very early.

WILEY

It looks like someone punched you—Did you get punched? *(Aside)* You probably deserved it...

REVEREND ADAM

I had a bad dream. I was fighting the devil. I must have come out of my bed swinging because I found myself on the floor, next to the bed post. I must have banged into that.

WILEY

I'd go back to bed if I were you. You look terrible. *(Starts to leave)*

REVEREND ADAM

Did you come for any other purpose? Or just your usual spite?

WILEY

What?

REVEREND ADAM

Did you come in for something?

WILEY

Oh, yes! Yes! You scared me so—I forgot what I came in to say. The 6900 club is coming today.

REVEREND ADAM

Deacon Wiley...

WILEY

I'm not sure what time they are coming but it was on television today. You know Reverend Sammy never allows parishes to know when he is to visit... I heard them announce on the air that he is coming here today...

REVEREND ADAM

Wiley—

WILEY

I'm not kidding! The film crew. Reverend Sammy Hammy. Part of the "Odyssey" tour...

REVEREND ADAM

*(Distracted; with bandages)* Oh yes?...

WILEY

They are on their way. You better clean up

REVEREND ADAM

Why would the 6900 club want to film at our little church?

WILEY

Word has gotten around, I guess.

REVEREND ADAM

What word?

WILEY

*(Dry)* Word of your goodness?

REVEREND ADAM

Oh. That.

WILEY

Your wisdom.

REVEREND ADAM

Please. You embarrass me.

WILEY

Anyhow, I thought it only best that you should know.

REVEREND ADAM

Yes, thank you. I appreciate it.

WILEY

I'll try to clean up the church. The gun club always leaves such a mess... *(Going to leave)*  
Prime time coverage... *(To himself)* ...we'll have to provide lunch.

REVEREND ADAM

Are you joining us for poker later? Don't say no. You can't win and then refuse to play again.

WILEY

Hello???? Reverend...? Maybe you have a concussion?

REVEREND ADAM

I didn't get much sleep...

WILEY

What is supposed to be happening here today?

REVEREND ADAM

*(Shrugs)* Same old—Amway meeting, poker club, City Councilman's...discussion...

WILEY

Yesterday the tour stopped by the East Side Motor Lodge Church unexpectedly and there was quite a scandal.

REVEREND ADAM

Well...they obviously...they...must have deserved it.

WILEY

Undoubtedly... Well...I won't give you any more bad news. I'm sure you have plenty to do.

REVEREND ADAM

What. What news?

WILEY

Just about Reverend Bob...

REVEREND ADAM

Of the East Motor Lodge Church...?

WILEY

He tried to string himself up from the hydraulic lift.

REVEREND ADAM

While on the air?

WILEY

No. Afterwards. Fortunately a parishioner came in just in time to bring him down—Only minor lacerations...

REVEREND ADAM

What a scandal...tsk, tsk...

WILEY

HE didn't prepare for Hammy's visit.

REVEREND ADAM

Of course, I'm sure Bob played everything to his advantage. Hovering over the masses in the church? (*Preacher voice*) A miracle!

WILEY

He's in the hospital...

REVEREND ADAM

Good for him...

WILEY

His wife has been arrested for financial misdealings...

REVEREND ADAM

I never trusted that woman...

WILEY

Reverend Adam, do you understand the implications of what I am telling you...?

REVEREND ADAM

Have faith Wiley. Have faith... For those who trust in God, etc. etc... Who knows, while his church is in disarray, his parishioners may need another helping hand... We'll have to take out some print advertisements.

WILEY

His house is sealed up! His wife is in jail! They are auditing his books! And going through his mail!

REVEREND ADAM

You made a rhyme. Did you do that on purpose?

WILEY

He'll never preach again.

REVEREND ADAM

Well, to tell the truth, he never had the gift. His flock may be lost for the time being, but they are better off. Maybe some circulars in the area too. We could have a "Carnival Crusade" to get the ball rolling.

WILEY

If you want to be in denial about this, that's fine with me. It's your head. (*Again moving to leave*) But just for the record, Hammy is due here in an hour.

REVEREND ADAM

That's fine... (*Finished bandaging; limping toward the exit; beat*) An hour...What? An hour? An hour?

WILEY

Finally. You've woken up.

REVEREND ADAM

Well there is nothing to fear. It's just that... (*Grabbing WILEY*)... In an hour!!!! Network television???? Maybe we could postpone it. Just till next week. Or next year...

WILEY

I'm sure they're on their way.

REVEREND ADAM

They?

WILEY

The crew... The fervent followers...

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. Crew. Followers. Well Wiley. We have to help each other now. To make a good impression...

WILEY

*(Dry)* Of course.

REVEREND ADAM

I mean. I know you've wanted to be named a minister here for some years now.

WILEY

Seven years.

REVEREND ADAM

And as I've told you, your time is coming. But. Today. For today, I hope that we can put aside any minor frustrations we have had with each other. Any lingering anger you may have regarding that unfortunate incident with the cow...

WILEY

*(Dry)* You certainly don't believe I would be one to carry a grudge, do you Reverend?

REVEREND ADAM

Well, of course not but...well shucks...everybody is ambitious! That is one of God's great temptations to man. But you have been so patient. So very patient. And God will surely reward you. As I will. We just have to work together today, to make a good impression and to give the glory, all the glory to God. Yes! And then, afterward, we can happily plan for greater things. Yes?

WILEY

Of course Reverend Adam.

REVEREND ADAM

You can believe me, Wiley. I know that the world is a corrupt place and it is hard to allow ourselves to trust each other... But in our profession! In our profession! Surely, I don't need to explain to you.

WILEY

No, you don't.

REVEREND ADAM

And when the time comes, I won't forget your friendship. You'll have a parish of your own someday.

WILEY

A parish...?

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. Just as you always wanted. Your own little kingdom to run as you wish. Bingo extravaganzas. Tent meetings and even your own TV show if you want! But now. We must be silent. And in your modest silence, I learn silence too. (*WILEY looks bored, points to his watch and is about to walk away*) I could make great speeches about public monies and interest yields... Speeches regarding you that the authorities would surely be interested in... (*WILEY stops*) But why should I struggle with the stringing of such words?

WILEY

A waste of time.

REVEREND ADAM

Just so that we understand each other. Neither of us can be accused of the tiniest infidelity!

WILEY

Certainly not—

(*REVEREND ADAM and WILEY begin cleaning the church; folding sheets and blankets as well as throwing away food stuff, pop cans, and other debris from under or on pews.*)

REVEREND ADAM

Certainly not. Certainly not! This visit is a joke. A practical joke. Intended to unnerve me but it will do nothing of the kind. We have nothing to worry about. What can they accuse us of? If at times I've chosen to be a bit demonstrative of my love of others. What of that?

WILEY

I'm sure the ladies would never tell. At any rate no one can prove—

REVEREND ADAM

Anything—Yes! That is exactly right. And our books... I never was good at accounting. They will have to accept my shortcomings there. If I've been successful. What of that?

WILEY

There is nothing evil about wealth.

REVEREND ADAM

On the contrary, it shows—

TOGETHER

Blessings from God.

REVEREND ADAM

Blessings from God.

*(MR. SWARMY, The PR Man from the "Odysseys in Faith" tour enters.)*

SWARMY

God bless you, Reverend. *(REVEREND ADAM, startled, drops a bunch of aluminum cans)*  
Reverend Hammy is on his way.

WILEY

*(Helping REVEREND ADAM pick up cans)* Recycling drive... Is he finished in Rockford already?

SWARMY

Yes, his limo has just gotten off the freeway.

REVEREND ADAM

*(Yelling)* Joy! Faith!

WILEY

Easy, Reverend, Easy...

REVEREND ADAM

My dear fellow. Praise God for your coming. Joy! Faith!

WILEY

Yes, praise, God.

*(REVEREND ADAM repeats yelling and begins moving much faster with the clean-up; piling his arms full with papers, cans, a beach ball, etc.)*

REVEREND ADAM

Joy! Faith!

*(Two sexy secretaries, JOY and FAITH enter; JOY carries a bowl of water to give a manicure and FAITH massage oil and a bottle of champagne. FAITH begins to put a sheet on a table made up of hymnals.)*

WILEY

*(To SWARMY)* Reverend's private nurse. And his aide.

JOY

Couldn't we wait until my soaps are over! Jake is about to propose.

FAITH

He attacked her!

JOY

He didn't attack her. He has always loved her.

FAITH

You are so naive!

WILEY

Joy, we need your help.

JOY

Forget it. I'm not doing another fashion show!

WILEY

Ladies—

*(WILEY stops REVEREND ADAM from moving frantically around. HE does his best to restrain REVEREND ADAM although this is difficult.)*

JOY

I told you! This is my last day of work. I'm leaving today.

FAITH

She always says that!

JOY

I'm going to botany school and you can't talk me out of it!

WILEY

Ladies. We need your help to get Reverend Adam ready for the "Odysseys in Faith" tour. We are all going to be on television!

JOY

I don't want to be on television. I'm too fat (*SHE is not*) as it is.

WILEY

You are not fat, Joy.

FAITH

She just says that to get attention.

JOY

That is not true! If you knew the anguish of those of us who have slow metabolisms!

WILEY

*(Quietly, to FAITH)* We are going to need some makeup for the Reverend. Those television lights are fierce. Could you do that?

FAITH

I haven't been trained for that. I don't know what to do! Please. Ask Joy to do it. I'll do the filing. I like that. I'm good at filing.

WILEY

Just get some of your makeup and bring it here.

FAITH

I'm not sure what color.

WILEY

Just bring out everything you have.

FAITH

But what if he is allergic. He isn't used to—

WILEY

Just bring it out, Faith. It will be ok... (*FAITH exits; to JOY*) Joy dearest darling love, could you please—

JOY

You aren't my boss...

WILEY

Joy. Darling.

JOY

I can't hear you...

WILEY

Sweetheart, I don't have time to beg. If you have any feeling of kindness or compassion for Reverend Adam you will help us. (*No response; beat*) Alright, look at it this way, if you don't help us you could be out of a job by the end of the day. (*No response*) How bout twenty bucks for twenty minutes of your time? (*Offers bill; SHE takes it*) Alright, could you get Reverend Adam's good blue suit? Then you two can change into your choir robes.

JOY

(*Without enthusiasm*) Sure. Sure.

(*JOY grabs a nearby robe and starts to remove her dress*)

WILEY

Over your clothing, Joy.

JOY

Sure. Ok. It will be hot though.

WILEY

Please. For Reverend Adam...

JOY

Whatever...

*(JOY exits. REVEREND ADAM, recovering his voice, finally breaks away from WILEY and begins to limp around wildly.)*

REVEREND ADAM

Praise god. Praise god. Praise god. But really, Dear Mr...

SWARMY

Swarmy.

REVEREND ADAM

Mr. Swarmy. I'm truly not myself today. I think I have a fever, and God forbid that I should infect anyone, especially Reverend Hammy, today...

WILEY

Nonsense, you're fine.

REVEREND ADAM

I'm flush all over! I feel weak. Dizzy. Shaky.

WILEY

You're just excited... And who wouldn't be to have the 6900 club visit your humble congregation.

SWARMY

He should be here in 1/2 an hour.

*(FAITH and JOY have entered. While FAITH applies heavy, heavy makeup, including eyeliner and eye shadow, JOY dresses REVEREND ADAM in clean pants and shirt, a vest, jacket and nice shoes.)*

WILEY

Have you had breakfast, Swarmy?

SWARMY

No. Hammy keeps me on the run all day.

REVEREND ADAM

But, praise God, Mr. Swarmy. How long does Reverend Hammy intend to stay? Damnation and thorns! Joy—that hurts... easy with the shoe over my skinned foot! And I can get the zipper myself. Myself!

WILEY

There is a wonderful little diner...

## REVEREND ADAM

You should take Reverend Sammy there first... *(Under breath)* Perhaps we could get the cook to—

*(A MAN FROM THE CONGREGATION enters and addresses REVEREND ADAM who tries to stop him from speaking but JOY and FAITH have REVEREND ADAM within their grasp; one attempting to button his vest; the other applying makeup which HE keeps ruining with his flailing.)*

## MAN

Hey Reverend Adam, we're waiting for you! Are you joining us Wiley? And a new sucker, I mean, guest too? Great. I can feel that I'm hot hot hot. But what about the wine and chips? The tabernacle looks barren.

## WILEY

Clean up. We have no time for...the dramatization today.

## MAN

Clean up? I just set up...

## REVEREND ADAM

*(Hysterical)* Do you watch the 6900 club, man? They are coming here today! An impromptu filming...

## MAN

A documentary?

## SWARMY

"Travels in faith—An Odyssey across America."

## FAITH

Travels in Faith...that's me. I should be the spokesmodel—

## SWARMY

We could talk about that...

## JOY

Oh, give me a break...

## FAITH

Why are you so jealous of me? Live your own life! Leave me alone!

## REVEREND ADAM

Really, there is no odyssey here. Nothing is happening here. It is a very boring day. Mondays are very boring.

SWARMY

It's Sunday, Reverend.

REVEREND ADAM

Sundays are very boring here. And so are Mondays. I could have sworn it was Sunday.

SWARMY

It is Sunday, Reverend.

REVEREND ADAM

Very boring. Sundays, Mondays. Boring, boring...

*(SWARMY, with a sigh of exasperation, hurries out.)*

WILEY

Reverend Adam, get a hold of yourself.

REVEREND ADAM

I told you, I'm sick. Maybe you could stand in for me.

WILEY

That's enough ladies. Look what you've done; you've made him look like some stripper on 10th Avenue. *(Hands REVEREND ADAM a mirror; REVEREND ADAM screams)* Off, take it all off! *(JOY walks away laughing; FAITH looks helpless)* Cold cream, do you have cold cream? *(FAITH runs off to get it; WILEY turns away so HE doesn't laugh)* So. Everything must go as normal.

REVEREND ADAM

As normal?

WILEY

All right. As it is supposed to go. As they expect it to go. Before the service is the Rite of Healing and Reconciliation, yes?

REVEREND ADAM

I don't know.

JOY

It's listed on the marquee. As if that meant anything.

WILEY

*(To JOY)* Go change... *(SHE starts to take clothes off again)* OVER. Over, Joy.

JOY

*(Taking robe and leaving)* Too hot.

WILEY

Does anyone come?

*(Just offstage, JOY takes off her clothes, throwing parts back onto stage as REVEREND ADAM watches.)*

REVEREND ADAM

I imagine they must.

WILEY

To the Rite of Healing and Reconciliation!

REVEREND ADAM

What? Oh. No. It's turned into a city council meeting, they needed the space. And I appreciated them allowing me to...make suggestions. *(Resumes staring offstage at JOY)*

WILEY

Listen to me. Reverend Adam... No council meeting. Healing and Reconciliation.

*(FAITH enters with cold cream and starts lathering up REVEREND ADAM'S face. JOY comes in using a hymnal to hold grapes. SHE offers some to WILEY.)*

WILEY

Thank you Joy, but keep the hymnals dry please. We are going to use them later. Where are the Reverend's vestments?

JOY

He lost them. Somewhere.

REVEREND ADAM

I left them at home. Faith, go ask Reverend Larry down the road if he will lend me his gold brocade robe.

JOY

*(Laughing)* Reverend Larry, lend you...?

REVEREND ADAM

Go ask him. And give him this... *(Reaches in his pocket for bills)*

JOY

*(Reaching for the bills)* He'll ask about yours. What should I tell him?

REVEREND ADAM

It's at the cleaners.

JOY

Is it at home or at the cleaners?

REVEREND ADAM

What are you? An attorney?

FAITH

I myself am not a good liar. I need details to be convincing.

REVEREND ADAM

At the cleaners on Fourth.

*(WILEY begins dismantling the hymnal-table and placing hymnals in the pews.)*

FAITH

Wouldn't the one on Maple be closer? And you are friends with the woman there. It's what Reverend Larry would expect.

REVEREND ADAM

Whatever you think!

FAITH

And Joy can say that she is bringing it there after you returned with it last night, all black with earth. Which is the truth.

WILEY

What is the truth?

FAITH

I saw the vestments black with dirt.

JOY

Why not just say "dirty?" "Black with dirt." She thinks she is some kind of poet? "Black with dirt..."

FAITH

I am a poet.

WILEY

Ladies. Ladies. *(Pointing at REVEREND ADAM'S face)* Shouldn't you take off this cream? Now look, it's hardened on his face. *(To FAITH)* Get some water, please... And you, to Reverend Larry!

*(FAITH and JOY exit.)*

REVEREND ADAM

I have a bad feeling about this Wiley. Reverend Hammy never liked me. Not since we were in the seminary together. I played a few tricks on him. He's set to get me back.

WILEY

You worry too much. Have faith. (*REVEREND ADAM reacts*) This is quite an honor for you. Think of the exposure.

REVEREND ADAM

That's exactly what I'm thinking of. I had a dream last night. I was at a healing service but I couldn't get anyone to help me. I was the minister too but I withheld mercy from myself. And then, both minister and petitioner, both of them myself, joined together and ran out down the alley and hid among the trash cans.

WILEY

Sounds symbolic.

REVEREND ADAM

The devil take it.

WILEY

Treat this as just another day. You'll get through it. Without the dramas your subconscious dredges up.

*(The REVEREND SAMMY HAMMY enters with the CAMERA CREW.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

Reverend Adam. How gracious to see you again after so many years! (*Attempts to keep his back to him as HE tries to peel off the cold cream; REVEREND SAMMY moves to embrace him*) It has been too long!

REVEREND ADAM

Let me see if I can imagine your congenial face. Those piercing...yet gentle eyes. The thick blond hair.

REVEREND SAMMY

It was brown. Now it's red from the bottle. Turn around my friend, let me embrace you...

*(REVEREND SAMMY gestures to the CAMERA CREW to start filming.)*

REVEREND ADAM

No. I'm overcome with the sentiment of this meeting; I mean the emotion of seeing you again.

REVEREND SAMMY

But you haven't seen me yet. Only heard me.

REVEREND ADAM

Like the voice of god.

REVEREND SAMMY

Come come. That is too much. Only his lowly messenger. *(To CAMERA CREW)* How's the lighting in here?

*(REVEREND ADAM is about to run out when FAITH enters with the water.)*

FAITH

Sorry. I couldn't find a clean sponge anywhere. Oh my god. I mean. Sorry. I mean. I can't believe it. Is that really you Reverend Hammy?

REVEREND SAMMY

Oh my dear. What a dear child you are. Yes. It is me. Would you like to say something to the folks at home?

WILEY

*(Interrupting)* On behalf of the Church of Generous Giving, I want to welcome you Reverend Hammy and your Odyssey tour.

REVEREND SAMMY

Thank you. And you are?

WILEY

Frank Wiley. Reverend Adam's deacon. Faith just needed to freshen up his makeup a bit. How's he look Faith?

*(FAITH looks doubtful.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

Now Reverend Adam, dear minister of the people...I don't have all day... Let me see if you need any stage makeup. *(Gets a look at REVEREND ADAM)* What are you doing? This isn't the Rocky Horror Picture Show I'm producing here!

FAITH

Have you seen it? I heard that it was very naughty. But fun.

REVEREND SAMMY

Although I must say that this doesn't surprise me. I've heard rumors from your parishioners...

WILEY

Reverend Adam was just, getting a facial, and now a...conditioner. You know, honoring the temple of the spirit...

REVEREND SAMMY

But it is time for the service...

*(WILEY takes over removing REVEREND ADAM'S make-up, pushing FAITH offstage.)*

WILEY

Right you are. Right you are! We'll take this off, then add a little powder and we'll be ready to go.

REVEREND SAMMY

You know, it is the purpose of "Travels in Faith—An Odyssey across America" to show the best of this land's churches but if we have to expose scandalous practices we will! I'm as open minded as the next Reverend but from what I've already seen of the Church of Generous Giving—

REVEREND ADAM

Who are you to—

WILEY

*(Interjecting)* Nobody's perfect, God knows. And your goodness is so...good...I'm sure that many of our human frailties will disturb your enlightened soul...

REVEREND SAMMY

Well—

REVEREND ADAM

Listen. I've known this guy since—

WILEY

And we are sure that if you lend your wisdom to our practices we can continue to grow in holiness, in response to your good example...

REVEREND SAMMY

Thank you. Good to know at least one person on the staff watches my program. *(To WILEY, moving him to one side)* But tell me, I read your church bulletin and didn't understand a word. Perhaps you can explain to me what programs you are offering?

REVEREND ADAM

*(Stepping in, To REVEREND SAMMY)* By all means. By all means. *(Offering chair)* Sit?

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Sits reluctantly)* We need to set up for filming.

REVEREND ADAM

You've just come from the East Motor lodge church?

REVEREND SAMMY

Yes. How did you hear so fast?

WILEY

A vagrant told us.

REVEREND SAMMY

A vagrant?

REVEREND ADAM

*(Distracted)* At your service...

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Double take)* Yes. An unhappy scandal. It doesn't matter that the networks eat it up. I really have no stomach for such dramatics...

REVEREND ADAM

Bob tried to string himself up...?

REVEREND SAMMY

If we had any wonder about the truth of the embezzlement charges...his actions spoke his guilt. You won't mind showing us your books before we're through...? That kind of openness pleases the networks and sponsors very much.

REVEREND ADAM

We really don't—

WILEY

A privilege, an honor for us.

REVEREND SAMMY

We need to get started. Tell me, is this the day... *(Pulls out bulletin)*... is this the day of the... *(Reading it)*... it looks like "Gamblers Anonymous" meets— but they are taking a riverboat gambling trip?

REVEREND ADAM

To test their resolve...

WILEY

A joke, it is just a river cruise. Tomorrow. But today we have the Healing Rite of Reconciliation...

REVEREND SAMMY

Is that what the crowd outside is gathering for?

*(JOY enters.)*

JOY

I can't repeat what Larry told me to tell you— Oh! Reverend Sammy. *(Faints)*

## REVEREND SAMMY

Did you get that on camera, boys? No?! I've told you, keep the camera rolling no matter what! We can always edit later! Is she bleeding? We can always have her faint again. You ready? At least get me consoling her. Wait! Give me a minute. (*Cops a feel; kisses her*) Alright. Now. (*Gently taking her hand*) My dear...my dear...you sweet angel, it is Reverend Sammy Hammy and you are now part of the "Travels in Faith—An Odyssey across America" tour! (*Gently pulls her up, patting her head*) Say hello to the folks at home.

## JOY

(*Affecting a fake pleasant demeanor*) Hello. (*Mechanically*) Rev. Kirby sends his greetings but he cannot spare an extra vestment. He says you never returned the other one.

(*JOY faints once again, but this time more dramatically.*)

## REVEREND SAMMY

What—?

## REVEREND ADAM

Oh hell...hello. My only vestment is at the cleaners. I don't think we can have the service. Without a ritual garment...

## REVEREND SAMMY

We have to think of something. The "Travels in Faith" tour is moving ever forward. We cannot wait until you restock your liturgical wardrobe! Go find something!

(*REVEREND SAMMY pushes REVEREND ADAM out. HE goes to touch JOY again when MARTHA, TOM, EVE, and ROGER enter noisily.*)

## MARTHA

You vandals! You will pay!

## TOM

Calm down! Not here!

## REVEREND SAMMY

What is this? Penitents seeking absolution?

## MARTHA

Oh yes, calm down he says...He is so clever—

## TOM

Everything will be settled here.

## MARTHA

Settled, he says. Settled! Like this vase here? (*Holds up smashed ceramic vase*) You certainly settled this! My vase remains settled for good!

TOM

If you demonstrate—

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Looking for REVEREND ADAM)* Reverend REVEREND ADAM, what is this? Are you—

TOM

—that you've been damaged by me, I'll replace it.

MARTHA

You'll replace it? How will you replace the memories of when I made this vase? How can you replace all of the happy memories I've had using it! If I can prove you're right...such arrogance!

REVEREND SAMMY

Wiley, is this—

TOM

You heard me, you old fart!

MARTHA

Is that the best you can do, old man?— *(Moves to fight with him)*

TOM

*(Holding her back)* Why all of your venom? What else can I do? If one of us has broken your damn vase—

REVEREND SAMMY

*(To CAMERA CREW)* Are you getting this? This is better than Ricki Lake.

TOM

What do you want from me?

ROGER

Come, father, let her be. It's not the vase, but the smashed wedding plans that have her so broken up. She hopes that with her violence she'll convince me to change my mind. But I will never marry that slut!

REVEREND SAMMY

*(While directing the camera to get him in the shot)* My dear son. What is the problem? Surely in this house of prayer we can be reconciled with each other...

MARTHA

*(Speaking directly to the camera and REVEREND SAMMY)* He is a conceited little punk. I want to patch the wedding up?! Please! I am so relieved to not have him entering our family! *(To ROGER)* I'd like to break your head.

## REVEREND SAMMY

My dear—

EVE

Roger!

ROGER

Get away from me!

EVE

Dearest Roger...

ROGER

Get away, I can't stand the sight of you.

EVE

Please! This is killing me!

ROGER

You...you whore.

*(The OTHERS react to the reference.)*

EVE

If you would just give me a moment, I could explain—

ROGER

Go away!

EVE

I heard you are leaving for boot camp tonight! Is that true? What if I never see you alive again? They could ship you out at any time! We can't leave each other angry.

ROGER

*(Softened)* I'll pray for you. That's all I can do. But the only way you will get peace is if you admit your sins.

MARTHA

*(To EVE)* Why do you open yourself up to such abuse! There is a more worthy man for you, Mr. Starchy. He is a true military hero. *(To the camera)* She will be married next week. And then we will have a funeral, theirs or mine. Whoever survives the judgment of my vase!

EVE

Mother! Forget about the vase. If it can't be mended take all of my savings and buy yourself a better one.

MARTHA

You are so young! Don't you see that your own virtue was destroyed when this vase was smashed? Do you want to gain a certain reputation? *(To the camera)* And that is why we came here today. To seek the wisdom of the church.

*(REVEREND ADAM enters wearing a beautician's plastic smock.)*

REVEREND ADAM

This is the best...Eve!

EVE

*(Seeing REVEREND ADAM)* Let's go!

REVEREND SAMMY

Finally. You're back... *(Fingers the plastic smock in disgust)* So there is a case here, a circumstance in need of wisdom and absolution. It seems to concern a broken vase of some kind...

REVEREND ADAM

*(Too loud)* A vase. A vase? Who broke it?

*(REVEREND ADAM crosses towards EVE)*

REVEREND SAMMY

Sit down and listen and you can find out...

REVEREND ADAM

*(Confidentially)* Dearest Eve.

EVE

*(Also in confidence)* Go away!

REVEREND ADAM

But—

EVE

I will hear nothing.

REVEREND ADAM

Why are you here?

EVE

Get away from me.

REVEREND ADAM

What does all this mean?

EVE

I'm warning you!

REVEREND ADAM

(*To WILEY*) This seems like the perfect case for you to try your hand, deacon Wiley...

REVEREND SAMMY

What?

REVEREND ADAM

My wound here... (*Pointing to bandaged foot*) I'm growing a bit queasy.

WILEY

(*Confidentially*) This is your chance, the 6900 club! It is your chance to shine. Don't back away...

REVEREND ADAM

(*The same*) The hell with it. I'm going to throw up.

WILEY

Do you have a fear of success?

REVEREND ADAM

(*To EVE*) Are we talking about your mother's broken vase?

EVE

Yes.

REVEREND ADAM

And nothing else?

EVE

Nothing else.

REVEREND SAMMY

Shouldn't we start the service, or read a bible passage...

REVEREND ADAM

(*Soft to EVE*) Be wise! I know Roger's boot camp captain...

EVE

You slime.

REVEREND SAMMY

We need to see and HEAR your counsel, Reverend Adam. We need it to be loud enough for the cameras please!

REVEREND ADAM

What?

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Positioning REVEREND ADAM)* Please Reverend Adam, stand here, this is your more photogenic side...

REVEREND ADAM

*(To himself)* Something crashed just before I left...

WILEY

Reverend... Reverend...

REVEREND ADAM

No. It couldn't have! It must have been—

WILEY

What?

REVEREND ADAM

What?

WILEY

Reverend Sammy is waiting for you!

REVEREND ADAM

Did you ask something?

WILEY

Only if you were a piece of sludge— Hello, Reverend Adam, hello...Reverend Sammy ...network television...

REVEREND SAMMY

*(To REVEREND ADAM)* You seem bewildered. Are you—

WILEY

Just shy in front of the cameras...

REVEREND ADAM

You know, Reverend Sammy...this young girl here...

REVEREND SAMMY

Yes, you really shouldn't give her your exclusive attention. It doesn't look right...

REVEREND ADAM

She is studying to be a surgeon, and I have this pulled muscle...

## REVEREND SAMMY

We must get started. (*Moving everyone about*) You. Here. You.....here. Reverend Adam is here under the heavenly lights... Very nice. These seem to be the parties which need reconciliation. Now. Let us roll the cameras.

## CAMERAMAN

They ARE rolling...

## REVEREND SAMMY

(*Raises hand to strike man*) I told you!— (*Recovering*) Surely. Yes, of course. We can always edit later... (*Gives man the “death stare”*) Alright. Here we go. Reconciliation at the Church of Generous Giving. Show us your stuff, Reverend Adam...

## REVEREND ADAM

Deacon Wiley!

## WILEY

Here Reverend.

## REVEREND ADAM

Come here and hold my hand! (*WILEY takes his hand with some discomfort; beat*) And let us pray. Oh dear God! Help us! Amen. (*Beat*) Alright! (*Rubs his hands together; to MARTHA*) Would you state your name and tell us your problem?

## MARTHA

You know my name.

## REVEREND ADAM

(*Beat*) Yes. Alright... But for the cameras, here...

## MARTHA

My name is Martha, and this vase—

## REVEREND ADAM

Yes, that seems to be the entire problem. The entire situation... This vase...

## MARTHA

(*Pointing at ROGER*) That... “Man”—

## REVEREND ADAM

Yes. He needs forgiveness! (*Overly loud*) Oh GOD! Please forgive Roger for his thoughtless act!

## ROGER

But Reverend, it isn't true.

REVEREND ADAM

Don't talk back to me and God, young man! Or hell fire awaits!

REVEREND SAMMY

Stop the cameras! *(To REVEREND ADAM)* What are you doing? *(REVEREND ADAM looks to WILEY as if REVEREND SAMMY is talking to him.)*

WILEY

Healing Rite of Reconciliation?...

REVEREND ADAM

I'm...creating drama for the camera...

REVEREND SAMMY

I don't want you to create drama!

REVEREND ADAM

But I thought you said...?

REVEREND SAMMY

Random acts of violence and irrationality—These are good for the ratings. But well thought-out acts of abuse? I can hear the television sets turning off as we speak...

REVEREND ADAM

*(Rubbing hands together)* Alright then! I misunderstood! Can we start over?

REVEREND SAMMY

Yes. Yes. Roll the cameras...

CAMERAMAN

They are rolling.

*(Once again, REVEREND REVEREND SAMMY goes to strike the CAMERAMAN but stops himself.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

Right. We can always edit later!

REVEREND ADAM

*(To MARTHA)* Sweet sister. Would you tell us your burden?

MARTHA

Yes. Yes. You see this vase!

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. I see it.

*(Throughout the following speech, more and more attention is given to speaking to the camera.)*

MARTHA

But no! You cannot see it! It is a fragment of its former self! Here in this spot only two of the Beatles remain—Ringo and George! And near them, Jimi Hendrix—Without his Fender guitar! Which lies decimated in the bottom of my garbage can. Here, my favorite! “The Monkeys” pretending to sing in the studio, while Jim Morrison looks down from heaven! All of them cracked! This section, depicting the protests at the ‘68 convention... If you notice the coloring here, the pastels are supposed to represent the psychedelic movement. And if you notice here, behind Mick Jagger’s cracked face—

TOM

We are going to be here all day...

MARTHA

But the artwork is not the only value of this vase! It has a history! Celebrities loved this vase! After I created it, Jerry Garcia borrowed it. He used it to store his medicinal herbs.

TOM

*(Gestures for her to get MARTHA moving)* Would someone please...

MARTHA

And then Jerry gave it to Janis Joplin. Although she only had it for a short time. Because there was a fire in her home and one of her fans got into the wreckage and stole the vase, thinking it was hers—

TOM

Reverend Adam...??????

REVEREND ADAM

Brother Thomas. This is very interesting to me. The counter-cultural movement and its implications—

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Signaling boredom)* Reverend Adam...

REVEREND ADAM

Sister Martha, we really need to get back to your concerns...

MARTHA

Just understand this vase is...*was*...a work of art. I cannot be falsely modest here. The Guggenheim expressed interest in it! But it was also sentimental to me, after Eric Clapton returned it that blessed weekend we spent—

REVEREND SAMMY

Please!

MARTHA

(*Pointing to ROGER*) That “Man” that...Devil! He destroyed my most prized possession.

ROGER

That is a lie!

REVEREND ADAM

Wait your turn! You may get a chance to speak eventually. (*To MARTHA*) Tell us what happened.

MARTHA

It was yesterday at 11.

WILEY

In the morning?

MARTHA

No. At night. I was in bed when suddenly I heard a male voice coming from Eve’s room! I ran there to find the door broken in by force. I turn on the light and what do I find? What do I find Reverend? I find my beloved vase lying in pieces in her room. Glass shattered everywhere. Eve is wringing her hands, wringing her hands, while that one (*Indicating ROGER*) is standing in the middle of the room half-naked and in a choleric fit.

ROGER

But I didn’t—

MARTHA

And then, God forgive me, I was furious; I felt a rage come over me as I approached—that “Man.” I ask him to tell me why he has broken down the door! Ready to be in bed with my daughter!

ROGER

I never—

MARTHA

And do you know what he says? Such a lack of creativity! He says that it was another man. *Another* man? First he cannot be honest about his own crimes. Then he is going to spew libel upon my daughter!

REVEREND ADAM

A poor attempt at a diversion...

MARTHA

Yes. And so I look at Eve, standing there, still wringing her hands, wringing her hands, white as a ghost, and ask her, “Was there some other man?” And she begins to yell out, “I swear to you, I swear to you...” and “What are you thinking, Mother?” But she knew what I was thinking! And just to make sure, I ask her again. “Was there someone else here?” And she says, “Who else? Who else?” And then she swears to me that he had done it.

EVE

I never swore that!

MARTHA

Eve!

EVE

You are lying!

ROGER

You see—

REVEREND ADAM

Shut up!

WILEY

Reverend—?

MARTHA

You don’t remember...?

EVE

I never said that Roger did it.

REVEREND ADAM

Let us be cautious in our words...

MARTHA

You were saying “I swear to you...”

EVE

An expression. But I swear now to you, Roger didn’t do it.

REVEREND ADAM

No, now... I can see that the cameras have you quite shaken, dear. You must be calm, and then you will recall clearly all that happened— I say all that happened and all that still can happen. I am sure you will not contradict your mother so severely...

REVEREND SAMMY

She seems to know her own mind, Reverend. Your duty is to provide solace, wisdom, and healing. Invoke the scriptures, not your own doubtful psychology...

MARTHA

If my daughter is going to now say it was another person. Another man?

TOM

Shame on you!

REVEREND ADAM

Well, let us all be reconciled. Mistakes happen. Let us pray. The good Lord—

WILEY

Let us hear the other side, Reverend. There can be no healing without allowing the other party—

REVEREND ADAM

My muscle spasms. Weird sensations. I should be going to a doctor immediately.

WILEY

Brother Roger, we should hear from you...

ROGER

Thank you, Deacon. This woman's words are false.

REVEREND ADAM

Can you prove that?

ROGER

Yes.

REVEREND ADAM

Really? This good, honest woman, here? Let you try to prove her wrong...

ROGER

You see—

REVEREND ADAM

Because I've known this woman all my life. She is the epitome of honesty. If she says—

ROGER

She may be a good woman but—

REVEREND ADAM

She is the epitome of honesty. Epitome of honesty. Epitome of honesty—

REVEREND SAMMY

Could you conduct the service, or should I step in?

WILEY

You are kind, Reverend. I would be proud—

REVEREND ADAM

(*To ROGER*) Speak, would you? Tell your story!

ROGER

What story?

REVEREND ADAM

What happened?

ROGER

I'm trying to tell you... Last night around 10, it was a very balmy. The wind was so...it felt like the wrath of God. The cicadas were screeching. Almost screaming. My father said—

TOM

I told him he was a damn, sorry, silly fool to go out in weather like that.

ROGER

The weather—

TOM

I told him it was going to storm but would he listen, no, his mind is—

ROGER

—was filled with Eve. Mysterious. Unfathomable. Filled with a secret promise. The wind grew stronger. The trees were monsters shaking over me as I got on my bike to go see her. Storm or no storm...she was...so...it was like our hearts were...she was so— She was exactly...it was like...whatever I would say, she would finish my sentences for me. Before I got the chance.

TOM

If you talk like that I can see why...

ROGER

And beautiful... Beauty you could see. And beauty, you cannot see with your eyes alone. I thought— My heart! How could I have been so mistaken? Such ecstasy I had. Just to look into her eyes. To stare at her for hours. Nothing else. I didn't need anything else. Just to gaze at her beauty. But so much more than her outer beauty. Her kindness, her constant care of me. Her intelligence. She made me laugh. She made me proud. Going to medical school. First in her class. But all that—Her beauty, warmth, intelligence. All that was nothing. Because under all those things was a soul so good. So pure. And she loved me! Or so I thought. So I thought... I would have given her everything. We were getting married...

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. Yes. Yes...Less drama please.

ROGER

She was—

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. Yes...you liked her. Go on!

ROGER

I was only going to visit for a short time. It was late. We would stand near my bicycle, arm in arm, look up at the stars and kiss—

REVEREND ADAM

A pleasant dream. We don't have all day!

ROGER

So I started out but there were detours on the roads because of construction and the storm and I was running late. Eve keeps the gate open for me until 10:30 but it was 10:45 when I finally arrived. It was very dark. A moonless night. I parked the car and started to walk to the garden gate. I heard it open and I started to run. I thought it was Eve, waiting for me! But I saw no one. Until, almost at her door I saw her figure and someone else was with her.

REVEREND ADAM

Really? You saw someone else? Who, you smart-aleck, who?

ROGER

You're asking me who?

REVEREND ADAM

I—He doesn't know, so this is no help for us...

ROGER

It was quite dark and in the darkness everything looks the same. Gray. But it must have been Leo. He's been chasing Eve since last summer. And I told her to tell him to stay away, but she wants to be nice and she is always laughing at his stupid jokes so he thinks she is interested. I already chased him from her house more than once!

REVEREND ADAM

Ah. Finally, some hard evidence. Leo is his name? We must pray for this Leo. Now Roger, my son. You saw Leo...

ROGER

Yes, it was after 11, I used to leave before that time, so now I know what happens after hours! But I wasn't going to give up that easily! I heard them whispering, and then they were scuffling around—

EVE

How can you say these things?

MARTHA

You will pay for this slander.

ROGER

I hid near some bushes for about 15 minutes and they went inside to her bedroom—

EVE

Mother...

MARTHA

*(To ROGER)* God silence you!

ROGER

I started to pull off my shirts because I felt that I suddenly couldn't breathe, and I went to her door and tried to open it but it was locked! And so I braced myself and used all the anger that was building up in me and smashed against the door, to break it down.

MARTHA

The Devil.

ROGER

And just as it crashed in the vase tumbled from the mantle and then a man went jumping through the window! I saw his coat flying as he jumped away.

REVEREND ADAM

This was Leo...

ROGER

Who else could it be? And Eve is standing there, I push her to the side and rush to the window and he is stuck in the vines that climb along the trellis, so I took the metal door knob which was in my hand and I slammed it across the top of his head which I could still reach.

REVEREND ADAM

God forgive you. It was a door knob?

ROGER

Yes, the door knob.

REVEREND ADAM

I see...

WILEY

You thought it was something else?

REVEREND ADAM

I thought—what?

ROGER

A metal knob—

WILEY

Maybe you thought it was a dagger? You see, the other end of the doorknob would be like a dagger...

ROGER

It was the lump of lead of the door knob. It would cause a very nasty gash, I would think...

REVEREND ADAM

Yes...

WILEY

Yes. (*Looking at REVEREND ADAM*)

REVEREND ADAM

(*To WILEY*) It is time to pray.

ROGER

And so that villain falls down and I'm about to talk to Eve when I see him getting up and I think, "He's still alive, I must kill him." God forgive me. I was still possessed with jealousy. So I got up on the ledge and I'm about to leap on top of him when suddenly I'm hit by a gust of rocks and sand. Millions of sharp stones in my eyes—and I blindly fell.

REVEREND ADAM

That Leo. A crafty fellow.

ROGER

At first I did not know where I was, the fall seemed to last forever. And then I hit the floor hard. It was a miracle that I didn't break my neck or back, or hips. But I felt no relief because the coward was gone. And then Eve came to me crying "Oh my dear Roger..." But my eyes were still filled with sand—and water—and I couldn't see where I was kicking.

REVEREND ADAM

That Leo got you good.

ROGER

And as I was crying and screaming at Eve her mother walks in and turns on the light. And there is Eve, looking pathetic. So lost and alone. (*To her*) I pity you.

EVE

How can you even—?

MARTHA

Quiet!

ROGER

The rest you already know...

WILEY

Give us your version.

ROGER

Her mother comes in railing and roaring. And the neighbor Fritz comes in, and another named Ralph, and cousins Tom, Dick, and Harry. And everyone is shouting. And Mother Martha asks Eve who broke the vase, and she says I did it, which is true, although I never—

REVEREND SAMMY

Sister Martha, what do you say to this?

MARTHA

I'd like to beat him right now...

*(MARTHA tries to attach ROGER while WILEY and REVEREND SAMMY hold her back.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

We are praying for you sister...

*(REVEREND REVEREND SAMMY motions at CAMERA CREW to get a better shot.)*

WILEY

Eve. Now is the time for you to speak. The truth.

REVEREND ADAM

No. Certainly not.

REVEREND SAMMY

Reverend Adam...?

REVEREND ADAM

Well, Reverend...young girls...in cases like this...we have to shield them against...the emergence of false memories...

REVEREND SAMMY

Reverend, I have never seen such a mixture of piety and superstition, false beliefs and common sense... *(To EVE)* Come here, dear child and tell us your story...

REVEREND ADAM

*(Begins to cough violently)* Water...

*(REVEREND ADAM looks for someone to get him water but no one wants to move. REVEREND SAMMY motions a CAMERA MAN to get water as REVEREND ADAM continues coughing.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

And so, my dear...

*(REVEREND ADAM COUGHS even louder for an extended period while everyone watches. The CAMERA MAN brings two glasses of water. REVEREND ADAM motions to ask REVEREND SAMMY if he wants one. REVEREND SAMMY shakes his head. REVEREND ADAM drinks both glasses while everyone watches.)*

REVEREND SAMMY, *Continued*

*(Beat)* Now, my dear...

REVEREND ADAM

I feel ready to pray now. *(Loud)* DEAR GOD—

REVEREND SAMMY

In a moment, Reverend. I want to hear what this dear child needs to say.

WILEY

So do I.

REVEREND ADAM

*(Ignoring them)* —THANK YOU FOR YOUR MANY BLESSINGS, ESPECIALLY THE VISIT OF YOUR HOLY AMBASSADOR REVEREND SAMMY—

REVEREND SAMMY

Thank you very much. Eve—

REVEREND ADAM

—A MAN SO DEVOTED TO YOUR LAWS...

REVEREND SAMMY

Tell us—

REVEREND ADAM

And GOD, I PRAY FOR ROGER AND LEO. WHOEVER IT WAS THAT BROKE THAT BEAUTIFUL—

REVEREND SAMMY

Speak up. He can't pray forever...

REVEREND ADAM

*(Very fast)* Amen. Amen. Amen. Now Eve, you are at the judgment seat of God and you know that you must not babble silly words. You have good sense. And a Reverend such as I

REVEREND ADAM, *Continued*

will always be here to help you when you need it. So tell us Eve if it was Leo, very good. Or if it was Roger, very good. In either case, God and I will help you get through this period. But do not waste our time with other idle thoughts, mentioning other names with no regard to proof or what the repercussions may be...

REVEREND SAMMY

Are you through?

REVEREND ADAM

Shall I go on?

REVEREND SAMMY

NO!

REVEREND ADAM

I am helping this dear child. She knows that. She understands me.

MARTHA

Eve, say something!

EVE

Mother...I—

MARTHA

Do not trifle with us!

ROGER

It is hard to speak the truth when one has been ensnared in a web of lies.

MARTHA

That is enough! Who was it?

EVE

Oh my God...

MARTHA

It was Leo, wasn't it? You— I am so ashamed of you...

REVEREND SAMMY

Give her some room...

ROGER

She has all the room she needs, now.

EVE

Roger!

ROGER

That clerk, Leo...won't take up much space. He is pretty insubstantial...

MARTHA

I thought we would find some healing here, Eve. But if you won't confess...

ROGER

*(To EVE)* You...You— I am ashamed of you. And I wish I had broken the engagement instead of the vase on his—

EVE

You wish? You show your true colors Roger, and I am ashamed of you. How little faith you have in me. You don't know what you saw but you assume the worst! And even if you saw me in a compromising position. Leo and I having a drink, admiring the vase, any number of situations you cannot even imagine— Could you not give me the benefit of the doubt?

ROGER

This is clever!

EVE

Let us suppose, hypothetically that it was Leo. Just listen! Then why, if for some unknown reason I had to conceal this...why could you not trust me when I said it was you?

ROGER

Do not play such games with my heart! I don't care anymore.

EVE

This isn't easy for me. If you knew my reasons!

MARTHA

What are you talking about?

REVEREND SAMMY

If you want forgiveness my child, you must reveal what you know!

EVE

It was only for his sake that I kept my silence. My secret.

ROGER

My sake?

EVE

The vase was not destroyed by him. You can believe that.

MARTHA

And so—

EVE

I'm sorry I lied to you.

MARTHA

Was it Leo?

REVEREND ADAM

Why make her confess it? We know it was Leo, let us be reconciled now—

TOM

*(To REVEREND ADAM)* Didn't you yourself send Leo to New York, with a list of names for your friend in the military? I now remember that he has been out of town for a week.

REVEREND ADAM

Well. Well. Of course I forgot. Then this mystery gets more and more...mysterious...

ROGER

That's right! I saw Leo at the airport last week and he said he would be in New York for a time...

REVEREND SAMMY

Eve. Eve. Be healed. You seem to be falling into a deeper and deeper pit. Deceits fly all around you and God is losing patience.

EVE

Reverend Sammy. This situation I am in. It is strange. Unusual. Roger didn't break the vase. I swear to this. The rest of the details, I will tell my mother later. But this isn't the place for me—

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. She is quite right. This has become a kind of courthouse instead of a church. We shall all pray for forgiveness and then lunch for everyone!

TOM

Lunch?

MARTHA

*(To EVE)* You humiliate me!

REVEREND SAMMY

Calm. Calm, Sister Martha.

MARTHA

Such a simple question, deserves a simple answer. But you wish to hurt me in front of my neighbors. Is that it? You are punishing me for asking you to hold the wedding off. I want you out of my house! You can lie in the gutter where you belong. You can lie and lie and lie there in the gutter. But I will not have you lying in my house!

## REVEREND SAMMY

Sister Martha...

MARTHA

God forgive you, Eve. For what other crimes you may have committed last night. With Roger about to go into the service and this morning I cannot find my pearl necklace...

ROGER

What are you saying?

MARTHA

Perhaps you were going to steal away. With my daughter, and other things. And now she seeks to protect you...

ROGER

What an imagination!

MARTHA

I heard about your plans from Bridget!

ROGER

What?

MARTHA

She saw you with Eve outside...the loving talk and coaxing. Trying to talk her into something...

WILEY

We should bring in this woman. To help settle this hurtful episode. I'll go get her.

*(WILEY moves to leave.)*

REVEREND ADAM

I'll go too!

*(REVEREND ADAM moves to leave but REVEREND SAMMY and WILEY stop him.)*

ROGER

This is a complete fabrication!

MARTHA

Bridget will confirm this.

*(WILEY exits.)*

TOM

Son. I've never known you to lie—

ROGER

I'm not!

TOM

Don't make it worse upon yourself. I'm warning you! I'll beat you bloody.

ROGER

I'm leaving.

TOM

*(Stopping him)* Why did you pack your things last night? Where you planning to run away? Steal and then elope?

ROGER

I was packing because I'm off for Kentsborough and boot camp. You know that!

TOM

You were so eager to get to boot camp? I didn't even know you had been assigned a date!

REVEREND ADAM

*(Checking watch)* That's about all the time we have for the Rite of Reconciliation. We need to leave this space for the next event. Perhaps Reverend, you would like a tour of the church buildings?

REVEREND SAMMY

No, we need to finish this.

REVEREND ADAM

These families are obviously tired. I should send them home to get some rest. We can finish the service another time.

REVEREND SAMMY

After lunch we move on to Springfield. I'm sure—

REVEREND ADAM

Lunch. Lunch. Yes! Reverend...I am hungry. I am losing my strength. Oh, this makes me very happy. Joy! Faith! The rest of you, why don't you go home. Come back in several hours. Or tomorrow....

REVEREND SAMMY

Generosity...Reverend. Lunch for all of us?

REVEREND ADAM

*(With difficulty)* Of course... Faith, Joy!

JOY

Faith is hiding in the closet.

REVEREND ADAM

*(To REVEREND SAMMY)* What would you like? We have French wine, California Merlot, Pomeranian goose, some fresh Limburg cheese, fresh baguettes...

TOM

It sounds delightful.

REVEREND ADAM

*(Quiet to JOY)* Set up a table just for the two of us, and set the rest off to the side. No goose for them!

*(JOY doesn't move until REVEREND ADAM slips her some bills. SHE exits.)*

TOM

This is a wonderful idea. Reconciliation should always include food.

REVEREND SAMMY

Will it take Sister Bridget long?

REVEREND ADAM

For all we know, she may be out of town...

MARTHA

I saw her at home today.

REVEREND SAMMY

Is it nearby?

TOM

Very close.

REVEREND SAMMY

Wonderful.

TOM

Let us drink.

*(JOY enters carrying food and glasses then exits for wine.)*

REVEREND ADAM

*(Aside; moves away)* Oh hell!

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Following him to the side)* How did you ever get that wound, Reverend? There is a nasty hole in your head there.

REVEREND ADAM

...I fell.

REVEREND SAMMY

Incredible. Thank God you didn't bleed to death... Was this last night?

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. No. It was early this morning. As I was getting out of bed.

REVEREND SAMMY

You fell over something...?

REVEREND ADAM

I really don't know. I am such a klutz. I fell over myself I think. Into the stove.

REVEREND SAMMY

Fell backwards?

REVEREND ADAM

Backwards. Forwards. I really don't remember...

REVEREND SAMMY

Some brain damage perhaps... You have two wounds, one in front and one in back.

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. Yes. JOY! I hit the stove here, and then fell backwards on the ground. *(Calling)* Where is the wine?

*(JOY enters with bottles)*

REVEREND SAMMY

Now, if you had a wife, then I might understand some of your wounds...

REVEREND ADAM

*(Forced laugh)* What?

REVEREND SAMMY

You seem to be scraped and scratched everywhere.

REVEREND ADAM

No...these aren't from a woman's nails...no women for me... *(Forced laugh)* No. I have some branches, willow branches in my home, a decoration. Near the stove. I fell into them too. Here's to your health! *(Drinks)*

REVEREND SAMMY

And just today you lost your vestment so strangely. It would have at least covered up your wounds.

REVEREND ADAM

Misfortunes. What do they say? They come in threes? Have some of this cheese. It is exquisite.

REVEREND SAMMY

A bit. From Limburg, you say?

REVEREND ADAM

Straight...glad to share such delicacies with you, Reverend.

REVEREND SAMMY

How did it happen?

REVEREND ADAM

What?

REVEREND SAMMY

That you lost your vestment.

REVEREND ADAM

The laundry lost it.

REVEREND SAMMY

And your others?

REVEREND ADAM

At the tailors. So where is the tour off to next? I promise not to tell...

REVEREND SAMMY

I've always loved a good mystery. But I think we may soon solve this riddle of the vase. Marks on the criminal will give him away... *(Drinks)* Napa?

REVEREND ADAM

What?

REVEREND SAMMY

Or is it the Central Valley?

REVEREND ADAM

Napa. You know your wines...

*(REVEREND ADAM pours more wine into REVEREND SAMMY'S glass then fills those of the OTHERS.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

I'm observant. (*Calling*) Sister Martha! How high is your window?

MARTHA

Which window?

REVEREND SAMMY

Your daughter's...

MARTHA

It isn't the height which makes the window dangerous but all the branches that crawl along the trellis next to the window.

REVEREND SAMMY

Yes. Branches. And Roger, where did you say you hit the sinner?

REVEREND ADAM

(*Trying to pour more wine*) Here.

REVEREND SAMMY

Stop.

REVEREND ADAM

Give it here.

REVEREND SAMMY

It is still half full.

REVEREND ADAM

I want to keep your cup brimming. With all God's blessings.

REVEREND SAMMY

I cannot drink much more.

REVEREND ADAM

Humor me... (*Fills the glass to overflowing*)

REVEREND SAMMY

How often did you hit the sinner's head?

REVEREND ADAM

(*Filling ROGER'S glass*) One is for the first day, and chaos and God's voice over the water. Two is for the second day when God brought light (*Toasts*) and three is for the separating of earth and sky. Three glasses, that's my limit. By the third glass you better understand...everything! (*Toasts again*)

REVEREND SAMMY

How many times did you hit the sinner's head? Roger, I'm talking to you.

ROGER

*(Distracted by the food and drink)* With the knob?

*(REVEREND SAMMY looks to REVEREND ADAM.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

Yes with the knob.

ROGER

Two times.

*(BRIDGET, a very old woman, enters.)*

REVEREND ADAM

Sister Bridget. You are looking well.

BRIDGET

Screw you, Reverend. I know that you are all just waiting for me to die. Get all my money.

REVEREND ADAM

Now. Now... Bridget...

BRIDGET

*(Spying REVEREND SAMMY)* Reverend Sammy Hammy!

*(BRIDGET falls on her knees before REVEREND SAMMY and grasps his legs.)*

REVEREND SAMMY

Dear woman...dear...please get up... *(Smiling for the camera)* We do have wonderful viewers don't we? Ma'am. Dear sister. Please get up.

BRIDGET

Reverend Sammy. Heal me!

REVEREND SAMMY

What is ailing you my dear?

BRIDGET

My husband died 12 years ago. I haven't been with a man since.

REVEREND SAMMY

I will pray for you dear sister.

BRIDGET

*(Pulling on him)* I pray for you every night.

REVEREND SAMMY

Thank you for your kindness. *(Trying to get free of her grip; BRIDGET is slowly crawling up his body)* My dear...

BRIDGET

Reverend Sammy, my dear departed husband was a decent man but he never understood me the way you do. Was it a sin to love you more than him? I prayed and prayed every night that I would be freed from these feelings but it wasn't to be. Because you have always satisfied me in a way that Sidney never could. And now that I am freed of him, and you have come to visit us— Oh Reverend Sammy. How good it feels to finally surrender to your righteousness and the warmth...of your body.

REVEREND SAMMY

I—

BRIDGET

Let me come with you and serve you on your holy pilgrimage. I can cook. Chicken. Lamb. Beefsteak. I can sew. Clean. All of your needs I will provide while you do the sacred work of the Lord!

REVEREND SAMMY

*(To CAMERA CREW)* Would you please! *(THEY move in to film closer)* No! *(Motions them to pull her off of him)*

BRIDGET

*(While THEY struggle to pull her off)* Reverend Sammy, let me serve you!

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Finally freed)* The 6900 club moves ever forward. It's time to go. Good luck to all of you...

*(REVEREND SAMMY moves to leave.)*

MARTHA

But what about my vase?

WILEY

Sister Bridget, Reverend Sammy is in need of your counsel.

BRIDGET

My counsel?

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Motioning to CAMERA CREW to follow him)* God bless you all...

WILEY

(*To BRIDGET*) And didn't you want to make a small donation to help the Reverend finance his tour?

(*REVEREND SAMMY stops at the mention of "donation."*)

BRIDGET

(*Crossing toward REVEREND SAMMY*) Everything I have I give to the Reverend...

(*OTHERS gasp. WILEY steps in to shield REVEREND SAMMY from BRIDGET.*)

WILEY

That is quite a gift... I'm sure the Reverend is speechless with joy. But even more than your generous donation, the Reverend needs your help to aid your grieving neighbors who came here seeking reconciliation.

BRIDGET

What can I do?

MARTHA

Tell them what you saw last night, Bridget. Tell them what you told me.

BRIDGET

About your hussy slut of a daughter and that (*To ROGER*) good for nothing slackard there?

REVEREND SAMMY

(*Motioning for the cameras to begin rolling again*) What did you see?

REVEREND ADAM

Really...aren't we losing sight of healing and reconciliation here?

BRIDGET

(*Gesturing with a torn piece of vestment*) That boy (*ROGER*) comes too often for a visit and yesterday—

REVEREND SAMMY

What do you have in your hands, Sister?

BRIDGET

I found this—

(*REVEREND SAMMY gestures once again to the CAMERA CREW to stop filming and pulls REVEREND ADAM aside.*)

REVEREND SAMMY

Reverend Adam. You are an old, if not dear friend of mine. It is not my intention to—

REVEREND ADAM

What are you talking about?

REVEREND SAMMY

If you have been...involved...in some kind of...

REVEREND ADAM

Certainly not!

REVEREND SAMMY

If you would just tell me, I will find a way to end this filming with the least—

REVEREND ADAM

I am offended by your implication!

REVEREND SAMMY

*(Motions CREW to resume)* Well, good. I'm glad that's cleared up. *(Soft, to WILEY)* I wouldn't want his ruin on my conscience. *(To BRIDGET)* What is in your hand?

BRIDGET

I found this on the ground, underneath that hussy's window...

REVEREND SAMMY

Reminds me of a vestment. Isn't this much like your vestment Reverend Adam?

MARTHA

Yes. I saw you wear that one last Sunday...

REVEREND ADAM

Yes. It does look like my vestment. The one I gave to Roger to take to the cleaners...

*(REVEREND SAMMY smiles.)*

WILEY

*(Smug)* Roger...do you remember the Reverend giving...

ROGER

He did give me—

WILEY

What?

ROGER

—the vestment after the service.

REVEREND SAMMY

He did?

REVEREND ADAM

Why didn't you deliver it as I asked! I thought I could trust you in such a small thing Roger... What other misdeeds are you ready to confess...?

ROGER

I did deliver it!

REVEREND ADAM

Then how did it get over to Sister Martha's home? Walk? My dear boy, please no more stories...

REVEREND SAMMY

Roger...he gave you the vestment...?

REVEREND ADAM

Reverend. During last week's service, I had felt the power of God so strongly, and had been worked by His spirit to give a sermon of such—

WILEY

Grandiloquence.

REVEREND ADAM

Thank you. All God's doing. All God's.... So...after the service— Roger had stayed after to ask a few questions, and then he offered to take my vestment to the cleaners. I never expected him to use it as a disguise to make a midnight visit to this innocent girl!

REVEREND SAMMY

Well... Roger. Do you have anything to say?

BRIDGET

I have something to say.

REVEREND SAMMY

By all means, Sister. What can you add to the story?

BRIDGET

It is true that yesterday evening I heard Eve and some man quarreling. It sounded like a lover's quarrel and so I thought nothing of it. And then, at around midnight—

ROGER

Just like I said!

REVEREND ADAM

You said 11 o'clock!

BRIDGET

It was around midnight that I felt a shape move past me. All the hairs on my body stood on end. This spirit hobbled by, his legs ended in horses hooves, and he gave off a smell of...oh...I nearly fainted. The devil's smell of sulfur and of tar. My mother told me of his smell... I said a quick prayer of protection and turned around to see the rotting character disappear in a thick stench.

ROGER

That wasn't me!

REVEREND SAMMY

What are you saying, Sister?

BRIDGET

I know quite well what I have seen...and smelled. Lucifer himself. Don't be afraid Reverend Sammy. I said my prayer. I am quite safe.

REVEREND SAMMY

You are a soldier of the Lord. And so, you saw the Devil...

*(It is clear that REVEREND SAMMY doesn't believe this story but HE motions the CAMERA MAN to zoom in on BRIDGET.)*

BRIDGET

*(Getting close; touching REVEREND SAMMY)* Yes. Oh. Yes. Beelzebub. The sly conniver...visiting that one there!

EVE

What???

REVEREND ADAM

And so it was Lucifer himself who broke the sacred vase!

WILEY

So it would seem...

MARTHA

Bridget, you never said—

REVEREND ADAM

Let us pray: "Thank you God for protecting Sister Bridget—

WILEY

*(Over)* Sister Bridget, was the Devil wearing Reverend's vestment when you saw him?

BRIDGET

I don't know. He hid himself in darkness and fog. I found the vestment later under Eve's window. And then, I found some tracks. Satan's tracks.

REVEREND SAMMY

What did they look like?

BRIDGET

Nothing human. That is for sure. A mis-shapeden gait, with one foot hobbled, like a horse's hoof!

REVEREND SAMMY

And where—

BRIDGET

Where did the tracks go? My sweet Reverend Sammy! They have come to this very house of God! To the window there.

REVEREND ADAM

We had best pray! The devil has been in this area!

REVEREND SAMMY

You followed the tracks here?

BRIDGET

Yes. First I followed a swerving, curving path. Like that of a dog avoiding cats that seek to spit into his face. And then I found a monument of the devil, close by a tree. I nearly fainted.

REVEREND SAMMY

A monument?

BRIDGET

Yes. And the stench that came from—

REVEREND ADAM

*(Aside)* Damn my bowels...

WILEY

Best to skip this part, Bridget...

BRIDGET

Well, shortly after that the tracks stopped here.

REVEREND ADAM

Let us go to the other side of the building and find out where the Prince of Darkness fled...

*(REVEREND ADAM is about to exit but REVEREND SAMMY and WILEY stop him.)*

WILEY

Is there a track in the front?

BRIDGET

I couldn't tell, the earth was trampled down...

REVEREND ADAM

How unfortunate. And now we will never know what mischief that Archfiend has created. I'm sure he has meddled with my record books. I wouldn't be surprised if they are completely in disarray... *(Walking with his limp)*

WILEY

Still...we may search for someone who produces a staggered track...

REVEREND ADAM

A needle in a haystack. Mephistopheles is back in hell by now...

REVEREND SAMMY

Reverend Adam...do you know anyone in your congregation whose gait would produce an unusual track...?

REVEREND ADAM

*(Moving)* No one Reverend. Everyone in this parish is sound.

MARTHA

But the vestment. Would the Monarch of hell put on the clothes of one of God's ambassadors?

REVEREND ADAM

Who knows the fashions in hell? It would seem logical to me that that Fallen Angel would try to conceal his true identity by mingling with the most holy.

WILEY

Perhaps it only looks like your vestment, Reverend. Why don't you try it on?

REVEREND ADAM

Touch the article that touched the Fiend? No thank you.

REVEREND SAMMY

Please Reverend. Say a prayer. You have nothing to worry about. You will weaken his power with your own courage...

REVEREND ADAM

I— *(WILEY slips the vestment on him)* How monstrous Old Scratch must be... I am swimming in it.

WILEY

A remarkably perfect fit...

REVEREND SAMMY

Reverend Adam, if we did not believe the Devil visited Sister Martha's home yesterday, we may conclude that you yourself did.

REVEREND ADAM

*(Taking off vestment)* But we know it was the Devil. Let's finish lunch!

REVEREND SAMMY

Eve? Was it him? *(Refers to REVEREND ADAM)*

**This is Not the End of the Play**  
**Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes**