

Obedience

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. SPRIGG FARMHOUSE - MORNING

Rural Tennessee, 1983. A house on a hill top. Trees dot the front yard--sugar maples, oaks, eastern red cedars. To the right and behind the house is a red barn that looks recently constructed. The barn seems "too red" and the angles of the barn seem "off," "not right."

INT. SPRIGG FARMHOUSE. SHELDON SPRIGG'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sheldon Sprigg is a stocky, six-foot-five, 16-year-old farm boy. He stretches as morning sunlight streams through his bedroom window. There is a sound of rustling leaves. Sheldon glances out the window.

SHELDON  
(To himself)  
Crap.

EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD. GARDEN - MORNING

In the garden, two goats are chewing on some ripening ears of corn. One goat is a large, black billy with pointed, full-sized horns. The other is a smaller white female.

INT. SPRIGG FARMHOUSE. SHELDON SPRIGG'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sheldon shouts as he puts on a shirt, overalls, and work boots.

SHELDON  
Mama! Mama! Mr. Morton's goats are  
in the garden again!

Hannah appears at Sheldon's bedroom door. She is a middle-aged farm woman wearing a yellow dress. She puts her hands on her hips.

HANNAH  
Dad-gum Morton. How many times does  
your daddy have to go over there  
fussing about those goats? He keeps  
up with that we'll be eating goat  
stew for supper. Where's your daddy  
at?

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON  
Probably plowing.

HANNAH  
Get the .22. Don't shoot except to  
scare them unless that billy goat  
charges. If he does, pop him  
between the eyes.

SHELDON  
He runs out of the room. We hear him speak, out of view.  
Yes, ma'am.

EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - MORNING

Sheldon runs out the back door carrying the gun. He sprints toward the goats in the garden, waving his left arm and shouting. The goats run from the garden and approach the red barn. They stand on their back hooves by the barn door. The sound is like a fingernail scratching a chalkboard. At the barn, one of the goats paws up the crossbeam, allowing the barn door to open. Both goats trot inside. Sheldon picks up the gun, reaches the door, and walks inside. POV shifts to Sheldon's. Full sunlight streams into the barn, illuminating a body. On a frazzled rope hangs the body of Sheldon's father, the face swollen black, the eye sockets engorged with a mixture of blood and the blue-green, jelly-like remains of eyeballs.

EXT. SPRIGG FARMHOUSE - MORNING 2013

It is thirty years later. The house has a few loose boards, but the barn looks much the same, as if beyond change. A new tractor sits by the barn.

INT. SPRIGG KITCHEN - MORNING

The Sprigg kitchen is small, with an electric stove, an older model refrigerator, and a small plain wood table covered by a tablecloth. Sheldon Sprigg is tall, stocky but not obese. He's wearing overalls. He sits at the table. ELMA, Sheldon's wife and Ginny's mother, sits on the other side. GINNY, his daughter, sixteen, a slender brunette, sits between them. Before them is a breakfast of bacon, eggs, and milk. They bow their heads.

SHELDON  
Holy Father, we thank Thee for this  
food and all the blessings of this  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON (cont'd)  
life. Help us always to obey Thy  
holy will and not sin against Thee.  
In Jesus' name, A-men.

They begin to eat.

GINNY  
Susie invited me to dinner tonight.  
We're going to study together for  
Mrs. Markhard's algebra test. We'll  
probably be the only two that pass.  
Susie's so outgoing. I heard she  
has two dates for the school dance  
next Saturday.

SHELDON  
Just be sure you stay away from  
dances. Church wouldn't appreciate  
the preacher's daughter behaving  
like no harlot.

GINNY  
Ginny passes a plate of bacon to Sheldon.  
Don't worry so much, Daddy. I don't  
have time to go to dances.

SHELDON  
He reaches across the table, grabs Ginny's shoulders with  
his hands, and looks her in the eye.  
Not having time is not a good  
enough reason. You don't go to  
dances because you want to obey  
God, not because you don't have  
time. God demands absolute  
obedience. Anything less, and He'll  
send you straight to hell. And I  
love you too much to let you  
suffer.

ELMA  
(standing)  
Don't be so hard on Ginny, Sheldon.  
She said she's not goin'.

SHELDON  
He extends his arms, hands down, and moves them downward, as  
if quietening a crowd. He sighs, shrugs his shoulders.  
I'm sorry, Ginny. I'm worried about  
you. Old devil's after you. After  
us all.

(CONTINUED)

Elma gets up, starts putting dishes into the dishpan in the kitchen sink. Ginny gets up to help, but turns her head toward Sheldon.

GINNY  
(laughing)  
You worry too much about the devil.  
Like you're obsessed.

Elma stops doing the dishes and looks sharply at Ginny.

ELMA  
(in a scolding tone)  
Ginny.

SHELDON  
He stands up, speaks loudly.  
Don't call me obsessed, girl.  
You're gettin' an attitude, and I  
don't like it. It's my job to raise  
you to obey God's commandments.

GINNY  
Obey, obey! That's all you talk  
about. God wants us to OBEY! If  
God's so good, why'd he let  
Granddaddy kill himself?

ELMA  
Ginny, stop it now!

Sheldon walks rapidly toward Ginny, red-faced and furious.

ELMA  
Oh no, here we go....

SHELDON  
Stop blaspheming! Go to your room!  
Now! When you're ready to apologize  
for what you said about your Maker,  
I MAY let you visit your friend  
Susie tonight.

Ginny slowly walks out the kitchen. She turns around briefly, but Sheldon points his finger at the door. She leaves, her head hanging.

ELMA  
(placing her hands on her  
hips)  
I don't know what we're gonna do  
with that girl. You need to be  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELMA (cont'd)  
gentler. Being mean to her ain't  
gonna do her no good.

SHELDON  
Elma, you're weak. Like all women.  
Problem is, I ain't hard 'nough on  
that girl. You spoil her.

ELMA  
Now don't you get started.

SHELDON  
(walks toward the door, opens  
it)  
I'm gettin' out of here. Goin' to  
take a walk.

ELMA  
Go take it then!

Sheldon slams the door. Elma kicks the dust with her right  
foot.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Sheldon walks toward one of the gravestones that is set  
apart from the others. He collapses on his knees. A closeup  
of the gravestone reveals the following inscription: JACOB  
SPRIGG May 20, 1942-July 15, 1983. In the distance is a  
white church with a steeple. Sheldon entwines his fingers  
and begins to pray.

SHELDON  
Oh Lord, help me to be obedient to  
Your will. Don't let me go to hell  
like my father. Help Elma to be  
stronger, to stand up to Ginny's  
rebellion. Have mercy on Ginny--she  
doesn't really want to disobey You.  
I couldn't bear her burning.

Sheldon cries and struggles to finish the prayer.  
Lord, give me some sign, some  
vision. Let me know how to help  
Ginny.

Through sobs, he finishes his prayer.  
In Jesus' name, A-men.

EXT. COTTRELL HOUSE - EVENING

A paved driveway. A large red-brick house. Ginny walks to the front door, knocks. The door opens and MONICA appears. She is about forty-years old, attractive, and neatly dressed. She smiles, extends her arms to hug Ginny.

MONICA

(in a Brooklyn accent)

Ginny! Come in! Susie's in her room but I'm sure you can coax her into the den.

Ginny walks past the kitchen; a crucifix hangs on the wall. She moves down a hallway into Susie's room. SUSIE is sitting on her bed, but stands up and hugs Ginny. Susie is tall, slender, and beautiful. She speaks with a Brooklyn accent.

SUSIE

Have you been crying? I see the streaks on your face. Another fight with your Dad?

GINNY

I want to forget about it now. Your mama would like us to sit in the den.

SUSIE

Okay, but we're going out soon--and not to the library.

GINNY

Where?

SUSIE

Wait and see.

The girls walk down the hall into the living room, then open a door, go downstairs to an attractive den. Two bookcases line the wall to their left. An electric fireplace is at the back. On a round wood table on the right side sits several varieties of liquor and shot glasses. By the table is a small refrigerator. Monica walks in with glasses filled with ice.

MONICA

Cola and Diet Cola are in the fridge. Don't you girls even think about the other drinks.

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE

You just made us think about them by saying that. Come on, Mom. We could at least have a glass of wine.

GINNY

(sputtering)

But Daddy and Mama wouldn't....

MONICA

That makes it even more out of the question. I'm not going to offend Mr. and Mrs. Sprigg.

SUSIE

But they offend....

MONICA

That's out of line, Susie. I don't think Ginny appreciates your talking about her parents that way.

(Ginny blushes)

Chat here, and go to the library--that's what you promised me Susie. You want to do well on that big algebra test.

SUSIE

(sighs sarcastically, exhales hard)

Okay, okay.

Monica leaves. As soon as her footsteps are no longer heard, Susie laughs. Ginny half-smiles, as if she is uncomfortable and wants to laugh at the same time.

Now Ginny...

(conspiratorially)

I'll tell you I really have in mind... We can still study later, but those library study rooms are boring--and we would be so cramped there. We need to loosen up before we study. Have some fun.

GINNY

(coldly)

What kind of fun?

SUSIE

I know a bar outside of town. The owner doesn't care about how old you are if you want to drink. Hell,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



SUSIE (cont'd)  
he'd serve a whiskey to a  
two-year-old.

GINNY  
You know that's wrong. Daddy says  
alcohol kills brain cells. He says  
even one drink is the first drink  
on the road to hell.

SUSIE  
Hell, hell, hell--that's all your  
dad can talk about.

GINNY  
You know I've never liked you  
talking about Daddy that way. Just  
because your d....

Susie turns away. Her body shakes with sobs.  
I'm sorry Susie. It was terrible of  
me to bring that up.

SUSIE  
She pulls out a Kleenex from her purse and wipes her eyes.  
The bitch he ran off with was ugly  
as sin. Why would Dad leave Mom for  
*that?*

GINNY  
Let's go back.... What's so fun  
about a bar?

SUSIE  
There's great loud music, good  
looking guys, and that wonderful  
warm feeling from the drinks. You  
can try one drink. You'll see. Just  
because you have one drink doesn't  
mean you're an alcoholic.

GINNY  
I don't know.... if my folks ever  
found out. Especially Daddy.

SUSIE  
They won't. You'll come home in  
time for his silly curfew--10:30!  
God! By then he won't even smell  
any liquor on your breath. As far  
as he will know, you were being a  
sweet studious angel.

GINNY

(sighs, says halfheartedly)  
Okay, but only once. Because you're  
my friend.

Susie jumps up, shouts.

SUSIE

Yeah!

Ginny shakes her head, and the two girls get up to leave

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Susie drives her red sports car into the parking lot of a bar. The building is run down, with bright, colorful lights outside with the brand names of various beers stamped on them. Ginny and Susie walk around the building to the door. Several Harleys are parked next to each other in the lot. They reach the door. Above it is a sign: BUD'S PLACE. The door opens, and a swaying man holds the door, smiles leeringly, and Susie and Ginny walk in. Loud honky tonk music plays--Hank Williams, Jr. Susie takes Ginny's hand and walks her to the counter. The bartender, JACK, is a man in his 50s who is wearing overalls. His beard is rough stubble. Susie leans over the counter, kisses the bartender on the cheek.

SUSIE

Hi, Jack. How's my favorite  
bartender.

JACK

Pretty damn good after that kiss.  
Who's that nice young thang you  
come with tonight?

GINNY

(shyly)  
I'm Ginny.

JACK

Ginny you sure are perty. What you  
havin' tonight?

Ginny looks puzzled, and shrugs her shoulders as she turns toward Susie.

## INT. SHELDON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sheldon twists and turns in bed. Elma is on her side, sleeping soundly beside him. Sheldon gets up and moves to a small desk, flips a switch to a florescent desk lamp, which flickers to life. On the desk lies an open Bible. The window is open, and a breeze tousles Sheldon's hair. He folds his arms tightly and shivers. The breeze continues to blow, and the pages of the Bible flip. Sheldon gasps, stands up, stares at the Bible. The breeze stops, and the pages stop turning. A close up of the Bible reveals that it is turned to II Thessalonians chapter 1. A sharp red glow highlights part of the page, and Sheldon reads out loud.

## SHELDON

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Sheldon stumbles to a chair, hyperventilating.  
Lord, no! Not Ginny. Show me how to save her.

A bright, white light illuminates the room. Sheldon peeks out the window. The light seems to have its source in the barn. Sheldon laughs out loud.

Yes! A sign! Lord! Oh Lord! Tell me how to save my Ginny!

Sheldon runs out the door.

## EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Sheldon runs outside but is stopped when a large cloud of black moths surround him. They get in his face, and he tries to swat them away. Inside the cloud his vision of the world outside is blocked.

## SHELDON

Demons! You won't keep me away from my Lord.

Unseen by Sheldon, a larger cloud of black moths swarms by the barn. They coalesce and form a human shape. At first it

(CONTINUED)

is vague, but as their wings beat faster, the face and body solidify. The figure appears to be Jesus Christ. When the body is fully formed, a white glow surrounds it. The smaller cloud of moths disperses and Sheldon spins around to see the Jesus figure. He runs toward it and stops ten feet away, staring at it in wonder. Then he falls prone at its feet. The Jesus figure takes Sheldon's hand, helps him up, and smiles.

"JESUS"

Sheldon Sprigg.

SHELDON

Oh Lord, I tried to reach you, but those moths.

"JESUS"

Servants of the Evil One. They tried but failed to keep me from entering your world. So they attacked you, but I sent them back again to hell. How I can help you with...Ginny.

SHELDON

He extends his arms, as if pleading.

Thank you, Jesus. But Ginny doesn't want to obey you. My wife takes up for the girl.

"JESUS"

Then things are far worse with your daughter than you realize.

SHELDON

He puts his hands on his head.

What has she done?

"JESUS"

Last night when she was supposed to be studying, she went to a bar.

SHELDON

Ginny? Drinking?

"JESUS"

Do you doubt my word?

SHELDON

Lord! What can I do?

(CONTINUED)

"JESUS"

You must punish her so severely she will remember never to disobey me--or you--again. If Elma gets in the way, you must be a man and stand up to her. As for Ginny, you can use your best judgment--unless things get worse. You have been far too lenient.

SHELDON

She won't forget what I have in mind for her. Ever. I promise, Lord.

"JESUS"

Good. You may see me again. Go inside, and don't look back. Remember Lot's wife.

Sheldon turns around and half-stumbles, half walks, toward his back door. He is careful not to look behind him. As soon as the door shuts, the Jesus figure changes back into a human-shaped cloud of black moths.

INT. SPRIGG KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sheldon, Elma, and Ginny have just finished dinner. Elma and Ginny are washing dishes at the sink. Ginny is cheerful. She turns around, smiles, and looks at Sheldon.

GINNY

It sure was a surprise in Sunday School when you taught the high school class. You scared us half to death, though, with all your talk of hellfire and damnation.

SHELDON

Ginny... Tell us about last night. Weren't you doing homework with Susie?

ELMA

Why are you asking her that? You don't trust her?

GINNY

It's okay, Mama. Yes, sir. Algebra homework sure takes a long time to finish. Mrs. Markhard's the worst teacher ever.

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON

He stands up, gazes at Ginny with a hostile expression.  
Algebra class would be a lot easier  
if you'd really been studying your  
homework.

Elma glares at Sheldon. Ginny gasps, then quickly regains  
control.

GINNY

What?

SHELDON

He moves closer, takes her roughly by the shoulders, and  
twists her around.

I mean, young lady, that you went  
to a bar and had a shot of bourbon.

GINNY

She has a look of shock on her face.  
How... Who... told you this?

SHELDON

He speaks through gritted teeth.  
It doesn't matter who told me,  
Ginny. It matters that I know. It  
matters that you lied to me. It  
matters that you got drunk.

GINNY

I only had one sip from a beer! And  
I didn't actually lie. We really  
did study before we went to the  
bar. Susie bought me the drink.

Elma turns around, sighs hard, walks toward Ginny and  
Sheldon.

ELMA

You lied to us.

SHELDON

You're underage. You break the laws  
of God and man. I'll report the bar  
owner later. Next you'll have two,  
then three drinks. It won't stop.  
And you're the preacher's daughter.  
Did you even think of what this  
could do to me? If someone finds  
out...

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

I'm sorry, Daddy. You, too, Mama. I didn't think of that.

SHELDON

You don't think. You feel. And feeling will send you straight to hell. I've cried over your soul. Prayed that God would guide me on how to handle you. So far I've failed you. But I won't fail you again.

Sheldon rears his arm back and slaps Ginny hard. She falls to her knees, crying, looking at Sheldon with a pleading look. He reaches to slap her on the other side of her face. Elma stands between them, but Sheldon pushes her aside. She moves back between them.

GINNY

Daddy, stop!

ELMA

Calm down, Sheldon. You hit her way too hard. I'll give her a good talkin' too.

SHELDON

Talk won't work any more. Stop holding me back from what I have to do.

ELMA

We'll both talk to her when you calm down. Not until.

Elma holds Sheldon. He moves his head to the side until he can see Ginny. He shouts loudly She tries to cover her ears, but he pulls her hand away.

I'll hit again unless you decide to obey Jesus. You're grounded all week and next weekend. When you are not in school, you will not leave your room except to eat meals. Is that clear?

Ginny grits her teeth, looks angry. Sheldon reaches to pull her hair and is able to grab some of it. Elma and Sheldon struggle. Sheldon, breathless, continues to address Ginny loudly.

Don't ever look at me that way. Now I asked you a question.

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

Yes, sir. That's clear.

Sheldon pushes Elma out of the way and pushes Ginny out the door. Ginny slams it shut. Sheldon sits down by the kitchen table, slams his fists on it.

SHELDON

Why? Why? Why? O God, I didn't want to hurt her. But she'd hurt worse in hell fire.

ELMA

She'll go to hell for sure if you keep drivin' her away. Now get outside and calm yourself so we can talk about this in peace.

Sheldon holds his stomach and runs out the door.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

A large group of high school students are having lunch. Ginny and SUSIE sit down with their trays across from each other at a cafeteria table. Ginny's face shows the marks of Sheldon's slapping her. Susie is a well-dressed, upper middle class girl with a Brooklyn accent.

SUSIE

What happened to your face? Did somebody mug you?

GINNY

Round here rednecks don't waste time mugging you. They shoot you and save themselves trouble.

SUSIE

My, you're in some mood today. But seriously, who hit you?

GINNY

I can't talk about it.

SUSIE

Did your father hit you?

GINNY

She wipes away tears.  
He found out.

(CONTINUED)



SUSIE

Found out? About what? You're as much of a goody-goody as I've seen in my life.

GINNY

He knows I went to a bar with you. And he knows I had a drink.

SUSIE

Because you're underage? That's silly. Most of us drink here, the bar owner doesn't care, and you hardly had a sip.

GINNY

My daddy is a preacher. Hare's Corner Church of God Incarnate. He thinks dancing and drinking are evil and that I'm going to hell. And he and Mama both know I lied to them.

SUSIE

She lets out a long whistle.

Whoa! He needs to lighten up. I go to church, too--Catholic--couple of times a month. And my mom serves us wine with dinner.

GINNY

Daddy thinks Catholics aren't really Christians and are all going to hell. I think Mama may be more open minded, but I'd hate to see what would happen if she told him. She had to hold him back last night.

SUSIE

Damn. Well, the worst thing is that your father abused you. You need to report him.

GINNY

She stands up and puts her face close to Susie's.  
No way.

SUSIE

Why protect him? He's an asshole. You'd be better off without him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE (cont'd)

Get your mother out of that hell hole and leave. You both can stay with us. I know Mother wouldn't mind.

GINNY

I can't do that. Mama loves him, and I guess he loves her in some way. I hate him sometimes, but I know he loves me. He only hit me because he thinks it will keep me straight.

SUSIE

That's so fucked up.

GINNY

Promise me you won't say anything to anyone about this. Please.

SUSIE

Okay, but if it happens again and you don't call somebody, I will.

GINNY

It won't happen again. I'm going to lay low for a while.

SUSIE

What about the dance on Saturday? You were so excited about it.

GINNY

My daddy would like to kill me. He might really do it, too, if he thought it would save my soul. I don't know if Mama would be able to stop him next time.

SUSIE

She strokes her chin with her hand.  
Let's see... You babysit sometimes for one of your neighbors.

GINNY

Yes, for the Hackneys down the road.

SUSIE

Has your father ever talked to them on the phone?

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

He doesn't like phones. Land lines,  
cell phones--he hates them all.

SUSIE

(laughs)

Now I know why you don't have a  
cell phone. Your father probably  
thinks phones are instruments of  
Satan.

Ginny laughs.

GINNY

I bet he does, too.

SUSIE

I just figured we'd set a time I could call. Can you figure  
out a way to get your mother out of the house without  
dragging "Daddy" along?

GINNY

She usually goes shopping with her  
lady friends on Saturday. Stays all  
day in Nashville. They're not back  
until nine at night.

SUSIE

(mutters)

Bet they're raising hell.

GINNY

What?

SUSIE

Never mind. All you have to do is make sure your father's in  
the house and you're not around to answer the phone. I'm  
good at disguising my voice. I'll be Mrs. Hackney telling  
your father there's an emergency and "We'll need Ginny to  
babysit until we're back around midnight." Knowing your  
father's sense of duty, he won't keep you grounded.

GINNY

I can't do that! That would be a  
total lie. It's really wrong.

SUSIE

Your father slapping you around was  
wrong. I think you owe him a lie.  
I'll call at six o'clock sharp.  
Find an excuse to get your mother

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE (cont'd)  
out of the house. Your father will  
never find out.

GINNY  
I don't know how he found out about  
last Saturday. It was creepy.

SUSIE  
Leave it all to me. Come on! We'll  
have fun.

Two tables behind where Ginny and Susie are sitting, several students are playing chess. Some students have their trays pushed to the side and are eating as they play. Paul pays little attention to the board, and keeps turning around. His opponent moves his queen, and Paul looks back at the board and sighs.

PAUL  
I resign.

Paul gets up, walks by the table where Ginny is sitting.

INT. SPRIGG LIVING ROOM - SATURDAY EVENING

Sheldon sits in a chair reading a book. The phone rings.

SHELDON  
(shouting)  
Ginny! Can you get that upstairs?  
You know your mama's cavorting  
around with her friends in  
Nashville all day.

GINNY  
Can't. I'm in the bath.

SHELDON  
Okay, I'll get it.

He gets up and answers the phone.

Hello. Yes, Mrs. Hackney. I'm sorry  
we haven't met, either, and I feel  
bad about it, being a preacher and  
all. ....Goodness ....Sorry to hear  
that. Hope your dog's okay. ....She  
might need surgery? ....Well,  
Ginny's been grounded, but I reckon  
I can make an exception for this.  
....You're very welcome. Bye.

Sheldon hangs up the phone, walks halfway up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

Ginny! Mrs. Hackney called. Their dog swallowed a ball of twine and might need surgery. Anyway, they need somebody to babysit their kids tonight. I'll let your mama know.

GINNY

Be glad to, Daddy.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Susie and Ginny walk into the auditorium before the dance begins. We enter the middle of their conversation. Susie is wearing a low-cut blouse and mini-skirt. Ginny is more modest in a polka-dot dress that still manages to reveal her curves.

SUSIE

(laughing)

Your father sure bought into that dog-eats-twine story.

GINNY

I still don't like to deceive him.

SUSIE

Will you take it easy! Look over there. That's Paul. I never thought he'd show up at a dance. You know how he eyes you in class.

GINNY

(giggles)

He does not!

SUSIE

Yes, he does. Girl, the way he looks at you when he walks by in the cafeteria. And he's coming this way. I'll leave you two alone.

Susie waves at Paul as he passes her.

Ginny's right over there, Paul. I think she likes you.

Paul walks over to Ginny and extends his hand awkwardly. He is only slightly taller than Ginny and wears black, thick-rimmed glasses. He's shy and a bit of a nerd.

PAUL

Hi Ginny! It's good to see you again.

(CONTINUED)

Paul puts his hands in his pockets and shifts around. He looks to the side and doesn't see Ginny's face.

GINNY

But I see you in Chemistry every day.

PAUL

Yes, but you never talk much. Like me, I guess. But you seem nice and smart, always making good grades.

GINNY

I study, that's all. You're the one who's really smart. You make As without breaking a sweat.

He awkwardly turns his head to look at Ginny directly.

PAUL

I study, too. Too much, sometimes. Hey, what happened to your face? Did you fall or something?

GINNY

What do you mean?

PAUL

I didn't mean to offend. Your face looks black and blue.

GINNY

I'm a clutz. I fell down the stairs a couple of days ago and got bruised up. But I'm better now.

PAUL

Hey, the music's starting. Would.... would you....like to....dance?

Paul takes Ginny's hand and they go out to the dance floor. The music's fast at first, and Paul and Ginny look awkward and out of place. Then the music slows. Paul embraces Ginny, and they close dance.

GINNY

I guess we looked silly out there.

PAUL

Don't think anybody noticed. You want to get some air?

(CONTINUED)

GINNY  
(breathless)  
Sure.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Paul and Ginny walk outside in the parking lot, stop, and face each other.

PAUL  
I heard you like to read.

GINNY  
Yes, as much as I can. I love *The Lord of the Rings* and the Harry Potter books. I read some Stephen King, too. I hide most of those books from Daddy. He'd burn them if he found them. He's a preacher.

PAUL  
Sounds like he'd burn my books, too. Edgar Allen Poe, H. P. Lovecraft. Stephen King. Horror stuff. I have a cat skull in my room. Guess I'm weird.

GINNY  
Not to me.

Suddenly they embrace.

PAUL  
I wish I knew what made you tick.

GINNY  
I have this heart!

PAUL  
I can feel it. So fast.

Paul kisses Ginny, at first lightly on the lips, then passionately. They release the kiss and walk back inside, Paul's arm wrapped around her waist. Susie sees them just before the next number starts, smiles, and gives Ginny the thumbs up.

## INT. SPRIGG LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sheldon paces back and forth and looks at the clock on the wall. It's 12:15. Sheldon kneels by a coffee table on which sits a phone, and starts to retrieve a phone book. There is the sound of door opening.

GINNY

I'm back! The Hackney's got back late. They said their dog's staying overnight at the vet, but it looks like he'll be okay.

SHELDON

You know how late it is. Your mama's done gone to bed. Told me I should trust you more. Reckon she's right. I was just about to look up the number and call them. Ain't like you to be late, but guess it couldn't be helped. Hey, you're looking mighty happy.

GINNY

I like little children when they behave. Four and two and they were angels tonight. Guess they know me well enough by now.

SHELDON

Guess so. Well, get on to bed. I'm going to take a little walk outside to get me relaxed.

## EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - NIGHT

AS Sheldon walks out the back door, there's a strange sound in the air like the rush of thousands of wings. A bright light appears from the area of the barn. As Sheldon approaches the light, the Jesus figure is seen sitting on a tree stump.

"JESUS"

You failed to restrain your daughter. You've failed me.

SHELDON

Lord? I grounded her every afternoon and on the weekends. Last night she helped a couple in need by babysitting.

(CONTINUED)



"JESUS"

You fool. You have eyes, yet you do not see. Ginny was at the dance tonight, being fondled by a boy.

SHELDON

But Mrs. Hackney....

"JESUS"

...was Ginny's little friend Susie. Pagan. Worshiping my mother as if she were a goddess. Changing the truth of God into a lie.

SHELDON

Oh, Jesus.

"JESUS"

If that was a prayer, I have an answer. A difficult one. Ginny will soon be beyond redemption. But it's not too late. If she were to enter my kingdom now, her transgressions would be forgiven. But for her to abide with me forever, you must do now what's best for her soul.

SHELDON

Lord?

"JESUS"

Have you no ears to hear? I see her future. Soon nothing will halt her course of disobedience. Unless she is no longer in a position to disobey.

SHELDON

Lord, I cannot.

"JESUS"

Obey me. You know what must be done. Fail to save her and I will torture you both forever in hell. If your wife gets in the way, remember she is keeping Ginny's immortal soul hostage. That's worse than death. Any death. If you do not obey I will keep all of you separated from each other for all eternity. Now go before I change my mind.

Sheldon runs, holding his hands to his face. He stumbles in the dark and falls down. The soft glow from the light by "Jesus" fades, and it's pitch black except for the window at the back door. Sheldon crawls up the steps and lets himself inside.

INT. GINNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ginny tosses and turns. A night light by her bed goes black and the room is dark. Then a gray light permeates the room, and Ginny sits up, gasping. A light shaft appears in the shape of a door in front of her. She walks into the light.

EXT. ANCIENT JUDEA (GINNY'S DREAM WORLD) - DAY

Ginny stands on top of a craggy hill. In the distance is ancient Jerusalem. Ginny starts.

GINNY  
(whispering to herself)  
Just like the painting in my Bible.

A human figure appears in the distance, shimmering in summer Near Eastern sunlight. As he comes closer, he appears to be Jesus. Ginny falls on her knees, extends her arms toward the figure.

My Savior!

"Jesus" extends his hand, but suddenly the "Jesus" figure turns into Sheldon. Black moths hover over Sheldon. He opens his mouth unnaturally wide, and the moths fly inside his mouth. He closes his mouth. Ginny screams.

INT. GINNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ginny sits up in bed, breathing fast, putting her hand over her heart. She looks around the room. She sighs.

GINNY  
(to herself)  
Thank you Jesus. Just a dream.

INT. SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

A group of high school-age students, including Ginny, sit around a rectangular table. Sheldon enters, wearing a dark blue suit and matching dark blue tie.

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON

Today I want to talk more about what happens to those who disobey God. About hell. I want you to imagine, young people, a stove eye. Turn it on "high," wait for it to get bright red. Now press your right hand down and listen to it sizzle. Then turn the hand around and listen to the other side sizzle. The pain you feel is nothing compared to the pain of an eternity in hell.

The students squirm. Some have tears in their eyes; others appear eager to hear more. Sheldon looks Ginny straight in the eye, his face red.

Some of you may lie, even to your parents. Some of you may have gone to the dance last night. Christ sees all. And Jesus will not tolerate disobedience. Is hell the fate you want?

Ginny begins to shake. Then she cries out and runs out the door. Students look at each other in shock, begin to talk. Quiet! Class is dismissed.

INT. SHELDON'S CHURCH - DAY

Ginny sits alone on a pew near the front of the church, wiping tears from her eyes. Elma sits beside her, trying to comfort her. Elma speaks in a low voice.

ELMA

What's wrong, honey.

Ginny shakes her head, takes a tissue out of her purse, wipes her eyes. She looks at Elma and smiles.

GINNY

Nothing, really. Just girl stuff.

Elma pats Ginny on the shoulder. Sheldon walks to the pulpit, ready to present his sermon.

SHELDON

Today, my brothers and sisters, I have a special announcement for you. I saw the Lord.

Murmuring spreads through the congregation. A few "A-mens" ring out.

(CONTINUED)

You know our church has always taught that Christ can reveal himself to any of us at any time with a special message. His message to me is one of obedience. Christ calls us to absolutely obey his will. He has warned me of the penalty of hell for those who disobey. We must do what is best for our souls.

Unseen by Sheldon, a small group of black moths congregates near the ceiling of the church and begin to circle the church. Church members wave their arms and run into the aisles. They begin to writhe, almost seductively. Ginny puts her hands over her eyes.

INT. GINNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ginny lies on her bed, crying. Sheldon knocks on her door, then enters.

GINNY

I'm sorry, Daddy. I won't go to any dance again.

SHELDON

I don't believe you. Twice now you've shown me you can't be trusted.

GINNY

Are you going to hit me again? It's not right for you to hit me. Where's Mama?

SHELDON

Harlot! You dare tell me right from wrong! Jesus decides that for me. Your mama is out shopping--again--in that pagan city of Nashville. I never told her about your lie. Now we're all by ourselves, my disobedient daughter.

GINNY

Disobedient. To your Jesus, maybe. Not to mine.

Sheldon raises his hand to slap Ginny, but she is ready. She ducks under his blow. He reaches out to grab her, but she's too fast for him and runs out the door.

EXT. SPRIGG FRONT YARD - DAY

Ginny grabs her old bicycle and pedals down the driveway toward the road. Sheldon runs after her for a few yards, grabbing at the air. He stops and kneels down, panting with exhaustion.

EXT. COTTRELL HOUSE - DAY

Ginny rides up a concrete drive to a large, two-story brick house and knocks on the door. A woman answers.

MONICA

Ginny! Come in. I just baked some ginger cookies. Goodness! You're out of breath.

GINNY

Just been riding my bike. Thank you, Mrs. Cottrell--I'll have some cookies. Is Susie here?

MONICA

She's in her bedroom listening to CDs. How many times must I tell you to call me Monica?

Ginny walks inside.

GINNY

Thanks, Monica.

INT. COTTRELL HOUSE - DAY

As Ginny moves through the house, she notices a crucifix hanging on a living room wall. There is also a liquor cabinet with the bottles clearly in view.

INT. SUSIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

GINNY

My father found out about the dance.

SUSIE

How?

GINNY

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE

I'm surprised he let you come over.

GINNY

He didn't. Mama's in Nashville today, so Daddy had me by myself and cornered. He was about to hit me again so I ran away.

SUSIE

She claps her hands with glee.  
Rah, rah! Good for you!

GINNY

He's been acting real weird. Yesterday he told the church people he saw Jesus. And some of them started acting like their minds were controlled.

SUSIE

Oooh, sounds creepy! So what else has your crazy Dad been doing?

GINNY

He and Mama have been fighting a lot about him leaving the house so much. He sometimes goes out to our barn and sits there for hours. But he doesn't keep anything there. Nothing but a few old rusty tools. His father hung himself out there when my daddy was a boy.

SUSIE

Wow! A haunted barn!

GINNY

Well, I don't know about haunted. But I don't like to go there--I don't know why.

SUSIE

Why don't we investigate? And that boy you like, Paul--let's take him along. He likes that sort of thing.

GINNY

We'll have to hide so Daddy can't see us. He's so mad at me now I'm half afraid to go home.

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE

Oh, he'll get over it. Let him  
worry and stew.

Susie gets up, finds her cell phone, which she hands to  
Ginny.

Here. Do you know Paul's number?

EXT. SHELDON'S BARN - DAY

Ginny, Paul, and Susie hide behind some bushes in the back  
yard. There is the sound of a distant tractor, and the  
children crouch and sneak to the barn door. Ginny lifts the  
lever and cracks the door. Susie pulls a flashlight out of a  
bag, gives it to Ginny. She turns it on and walks inside.

INT. SHELDON'S BARN

Ginny leads the group into the dark barn, followed closely  
by Paul, then Susie. Ginny pulls the door shut.

SUSIE

Damn, it's cold in here!

PAUL

Give me the thermometer I put in  
the bag.

Paul takes the thermometer, a digital maximum-minimum, and  
sets it on the barn floor.

Temperature dropping.  
70...65...60...55...holding steady  
at 48. That's a thirty degree  
difference.

GINNY

How do you know how hot it is  
outside?

PAUL

The weatherman said it was going to  
be around 78 today.

SUSIE

Isn't that a sign of a ghost?

PAUL

Not necessarily, but it's certainly  
a sign of something. And I bet it's  
something bad. Hey, what's that?

(CONTINUED)

Paul slaps his face, and a black moth gets away just in time.

Ow! Moths! Look, there's more of them. Coming from...over there.

They look--there is a large, black hole in the dry clay floor of the barn. Moths, much more numerous now, swarm out of the hole. The teenagers scatter and run. Just as they reach the door, a dark, looming figure bars the way. He grabs at Susie and takes her by the shirt.

SHELDON

How dare you trespass!

He has Susie by the neck. Paul stands back, horrified and impotent.

SUSIE

(her voice a hoarse whisper)

Let me go! I'll report you for child abuse.

Sheldon releases her. He reaches for Ginny. She pulls away, but his hands hold on to her blouse, tearing it, exposing her bra. Sheldon stops and stares, his mouth open. Then he regains control. Ginny, red-faced, cries, and she runs into Paul's arms.

SHELDON

She's my daughter, and *this* is my property you're standing on. I'll sic the law on all you spoiled brats. Spewing disobedience like vomit.

Sheldon moves over to Paul and separates him from Ginny. Ginny struggles, and Sheldon pushes her to the ground. Paul tries to fight, but Sheldon slams him against the barn door and grabs his throat.

And you, boy, if I see you again around my daughter, you will have permanent damage to your ability to have children. Now, git!

Susie puts her arm around Ginny's shoulder. Paul runs to Ginny and puts his hand around her other shoulder.

PAUL

We all love you, Ginny. You'll get through this.

(CONTINUED)



Sheldon, his face redder than ever, runs straight toward Paul. Paul grabs one of Ginny's hands, and Susie takes her other hand. Sheldon then goes toward the barn door to shut it, but Paul and Ginny get through. The door partially closes on Susie.

SUSIE

Help! The door is crushing me.

Ginny grabs Susie's arm and Paul grabs her waist. They pull, but Sheldon pulls back.

Oh God! I'm being pulled apart!

SHELDON

(voice from inside barn)

I'll kill you, you little whore!

Hearing that, Ginny and Paul pull harder, and Susie pops out. Paul and Ginny help her up, and they run toward the house.

EXT. SHELDON FRONT YARD - DAY

Susie collapses, holds her stomach, and retches, though she does not vomit. Sheldon appears, running toward them with his fists clenched. Paul takes Ginny's hand.

PAUL

Run!

Sheldon chases them away from the road. Sheldon slows down, gasps for air. They cross a pasture and climb over a fence.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The teenagers run through woods, sometimes stumbling over bushes or thick brush. Ginny leads them; she obviously knows the woods well. They find a grassy area between some large oaks and stop there.

GINNY

(trying to catch her breath)

Are you okay? Susie?

SUSIE

She stumbles to the ground, lies on her back, breathing rapidly. She does not speak for a while but finally catches her breath. She turns toward Ginny and speaks.

I couldn't breathe. Crushed by the barn door. Ginny, your father is fucking coo-coo.

(CONTINUED)

Ginny looks as she is about to cry, then she laughs, and Paul joins in. She smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

Same scene, except all the teenagers are sitting up, looking rested. Paul surveys the edge of the woods around the grassy area, listening.

PAUL

Coast is clear. What do we do now?

SUSIE

Let's meet at my house and try to figure something out.

EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - DAY

Sheldon, gasping for air, crosses the fence and walks into the backyard. He turns toward the woods, looking frustrated. Behind him, the moths flock and settle. Jesus appears just as Sheldon turns around.

"JESUS"

You know what you must do?

SHELDON

Yes. I'll use my .22. To make it quick.

"JESUS"

That will not do, Sheldon. First, she must repent! Her evil must be driven out of her before she passes.

SHELDON

Tell me and I will obey. No matter how much it hurts her.

"JESUS"

First, there is one matter we must discuss. Did you not have a few extra "feelings" for your daughter when you saw her breasts in the barn? And did that not include a certain physical reaction?

Sheldon falls to his knees.

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON

I lost control. My daughter is such a....harlot.

"JESUS"

You lost control. Women are temptresses. That's still no excuse. Ginny's your daughter. That makes your sin grievous, a sin unto death. There is no redemption left for you. You will join your father in hell.

SHELDON

Fine. Take me to hell.

"JESUS"

Only when you finish your task. You must save Ginny!

SHELDON

Tell me how.

INT. SUSIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Paul and Ginny sit on the floor, lean against a wall. Susie sits on her bed. Their faces are clean, and near them there are 20 ounce bottles of Diet Cola (for Susie and Ginny) and a 20 ounce regular cola (for Paul).

SUSIE

Are you sure you want to go home? I saw the look on your father's face. He'll kill you.

GINNY

I can't believe that. Even if he tried, Mama wouldn't let him hurt me.

SUSIE

She shakes her head vigorously.

You told me he kept coming after you even when your mother tried to block his way. I'm afraid your father would kill your mother if you get in the way of whatever sick thing he's doing. If I were you, I'd talk to your mother. Ask her to get a restraining order against your father. Then both of you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE (cont'd)  
should get the hell out of that  
place.

GINNY  
But what about Daddy? We have to  
find out why he's so crazy. You saw  
those moths in the barn. That black  
hole in the floor. That wasn't  
natural. The place was evil. It  
could make my Daddy hurt a lot of  
people, or it could make other  
people crazy, too. If we hide, evil  
wins.

PAUL  
I think we're dealing with more  
than an evil barn and evil moths.  
Some evil spirit? Something from  
another dimension, maybe.

GINNY  
Whatever it was turned my daddy  
crazy.

SUSIE  
Your "daddy" was already crazy,  
Ginny. All that religious fanatic  
shit. Against drinking and dancing.  
Talking about hell all the time.  
Whatever is in that barn just made  
him crazier than ever.

PAUL  
He puts his hand on Ginny's shoulder, looks her in the eye.  
I agree with Susie. Your daddy was  
as crazy as a moth by a porch  
light--oops, I think that's the  
wrong image.

Ginny and Susie laugh.

GINNY  
Thing is, that's the right image.  
Those moths are controlling him,  
and I think they could kill him if  
they wanted to. God forgive me, but  
lately I've wondered if Daddy dying  
might be a good thing. Sometimes I  
want to kill him, and sometimes I  
love him despite the way he treats  
Mama and me. If we could stop these

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GINNY (cont'd)  
moths maybe he'd change for the  
better.

SUSIE  
(sarcastically)  
Maybe.

GINNY  
I don't know what to do.

PAUL  
(rubbing his chin)  
I have an idea. Let's burn down the  
barn.

GINNY  
After my granddaddy hung himself,  
my grandma tried to burn it down.  
It wouldn't burn. When she told me  
that, I thought she was turning  
senile. Guess I was wrong.

PAUL  
Well, what if we killed the moths?

SUSIE  
(sarcastically)  
Yeah! Kill those creepy bugs and  
all our troubles will fly away.

GINNY  
Susie, that's not helping.

PAUL  
She has a point. Something else is  
behind those moths. I have a  
feeling that even if we killed them  
all that more will come later. We  
can bring some gasoline -- even if  
the barn doesn't burn, gasoline  
will, and it might slow down the  
moths. Who knows? If we stop the  
moths maybe we can weaken the power  
behind them enough to burn down the  
barn. Are you in?

GINNY  
I'm in.

SUSIE  
You're full of shit, Paul, but I'll  
come along. But if this doesn't  
work....

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Relax. We'll be okay. I promise.

GINNY

What if Daddy's sealed up the barn  
to keep us out?

PAUL

Find some excuse to get your Daddy  
out there. Be careful. We'll follow  
you down the road until that last  
curve before your house. We'll give  
you time to get inside. Then we'll  
sneak up to the house. If anything  
happens, we'll be right there.

EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - EVENING

A cloud of moths forms the Jesus figure. It smiles, speaks  
to itself.

"JESUS"

Time to feed.

The figure begins to speak in a sing-song voice.  
Oh, Sheldon, come out.

INT. SHELDON AND ELMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sheldon and Elma are sleeping in bed, turned on their sides.  
Sheldon faces the window. Elma faces the opposite wall. The  
window is open, leaving only a screen window to block any  
moths. A single MOTH works its way through a crack in the  
screen and lands by Sheldon's ear. There is a metallic  
voice.

MOTH

Sheldon.

Sheldon stirs, opens his eyes. He sits up, rubs his eyes. He  
whispers.

SHELDON

Lord, did you call.

MOTH

By the barn.

Sheldon gets up, creeps out of the bedroom. A few seconds  
pass. Elma turns over, reaches her arm over for Sheldon. Her  
arm plops on the mattress. Elma opens her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

ELMA  
Sheldon? Gone again.

Elma stands up, looks out the window.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Sheldon is walking across the yard in a measured pace. His gaze is straight ahead, as if he is in a trance. He reaches the barn and faces the Jesus figure.

INT. SHELDON AND ELMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Elma walks to the foot of the bed, grabs a house coat off the bedpost, puts it on. She walks downstairs.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

Elma walks through the living room to a gun rack, pulls down a shotgun, and walks to the front door. Walking quietly, she slowly opens the wood door, then the screen door, and walks outside.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

The Jesus figure speaks to Sheldon.

"JESUS"  
Your daughter is trying to subvert  
me. Now Elma is involved.

SHELDON  
Elma?

"JESUS"  
She knows about your frequent walks  
outside at night. Tonight she is  
coming with a shotgun. She's hiding  
behind the honeysuckle bush next to  
the house.

Sheldon twists his head, marches like a soldier toward the honeysuckle bush. Elma jumps out from behind the bush and points the shotgun past Sheldon to "Jesus." Sheldon moves to the side to stop her, but she's too fast. She fires. The Jesus figure staggers, and a black hole appears in his middle. It fills in quickly. "Jesus" backs away behind the barn. Elma tries to follow, but Sheldon blocks her. Elma points the shotgun at Sheldon, commands him as if she is shouting a command to a dog.

(CONTINUED)

ELMA

Stay, Sheldon. That "thing" talkin' to you ain't Jesus.

SHELDON

Heathen! You lie, woman. You've always been a liar. You think I ain't seen how you look at the men at church. Slut! You'd do well to talk to Jesus yourself.

Elma fires the shotgun at Sheldon's feet. He jumps back.

ELMA

You're too stubborn to see what's in front of your face. Ain't you seen those black moths.

SHELDON

They're demons that try to stop Jesus.

ELMA

(shaking her head)

They are Jesus! You fool. Can't you see how those moths get together and form that shape. Why would Jesus look just like the paintings in your Bible. They were only painted a hundred years ago. You think somebody got a copy of a picture somebody took of Jesus?

SHELDON

(shaking his fist)

Don't call me fool, woman. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount that anyone who says "thou fool" is in danger of hellfire. That's where you're going after I....

ELMA

(raising the gun)

After you what?

SHELDON

I mean when you die you'll go to hell. I won't have anything to do with it.

ELMA

You're right. You won't. Because me and Ginny are leaving. Tonight.

(CONTINUED)



Sheldon takes a step toward Elma, who fires another shot. A few pellets hit Sheldon's feet and lower leg. He yelps, jumps back in pain.

If you lift one finger to stop us,  
I will shoot you. You ain't been  
right since you started  
disappearin' at night. Now I know  
why. You're so brainwashed by that  
fake Jesus you're blind. If you  
ever want to see Ginny and me again  
you'd better start seein'.

SHELDON

You spoil Ginny. Because of your  
weakness, she'll join you in the  
flames of hell. You will stop  
disobeying me now. I'm the lord of  
this house. You have no right to  
rebel against your husband.

ELMA

I do when my husband's crazy as a  
quail caught in a whirlwind.

Elma puts the gun between her legs. She turns toward the house, cups her hands, and shouts.

ELMA

Gin-ny.  
(with a strong accent on the  
last syllable)

Sheldon runs toward Elma, grabs the gun. They struggle. Sheldon hits Elma in the face, causing it to bleed. He lifts the gun, but Elma grabs it. They fall to the ground. Sheldon is on top of Elma. He tries to choke her with the gun. She gags, kicking. Just as she turns blue, she kicks hard enough to dislodge Sheldon. The gun falls to the ground. Sheldon reaches for it, but Elma gets there first. She hits Sheldon on the head with the butt of the gun. He passes out cold.

EXT. SPRIGG FRONT DOOR - EVENING

Ginny walks to the front door, puts her ear next to it, and listens. She takes her keys out of her jeans pocket and lifts the house key toward the lock, but before she can put it in the lock the door squeaks open on its own. She peers inside, listens, and slowly walks in.

## INT. SPRIGG LIVING ROOM

The door slams shut on its own. She quickly turns around, tries to turn the doorknob. Nothing happens. She turns to walk through the living room, and a single black moth flies in front of her face and hovers. Its eyes face her, as if it is staring at her. She startles and swats at the moth, which flies to the back of the house and disappears. Ginny runs to the stairs and climbs rapidly.

## INT. GINNY'S BEDROOM

Ginny runs inside her bedroom and closes the wood door. She locks it by placing hook in eye. She runs toward her window and looks outside.

## EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - EVENING

Ginny sees Sheldon walking toward the barn. He sits on a stump and faces away from the barn. He looks up to the sky as if watching for something. Behind him, a large swarm of black moths forms a human shape. It looks like Jesus -- robes and all.

## INT. GINNY'S BEDROOM

Ginny gasps, breathes rapidly, places her hand over her heart. Her eyes are wide as she continues to stare out the window.

## EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - EVENING

The Jesus figure places its right hand on Sheldon's head. Sheldon turns around, stands up, and begins a conversation with the figure. They walk toward the barn. Elma appears. Ginny hears the shouting, the gun going off, Elma calling her.

GINNY

Mama!

Ginny runs outside.

EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - EVENING

The Jesus figure has disappeared. Elma stands over Sheldon. He is still unconscious.

GINNY

What happened? Is he okay? What was that....monster who looked like Jesus?

ELMA

Just bring me some rope. Sheldon threatened me. Whatever that fake Jesus is, it's got Sheldon riled up like a nest of mad hornets.

Ginny runs inside. Sheldon stirs, tries to grab Elma's leg. She falls, and he grabs the gun. He raises it up to fire.

EXT. TALL GRASS BORDERING SPRIGG BACKYARD - EVENING

Paul and Susie crouch in the grass. Paul has a backpack on that seems too large for him. He is staring through a pair of binoculars.

SUSIE

(whispering)

What do you see?

PAUL

(also whispering)

Mr. Sprigg. He's sitting on a stump close to the barn. He's turned around.

SUSIE

(impatient; grabs the binoculars)

Will you let me look?

Paul opens his mouth, but shuts it. Susie looks through the binoculars again. They both gasp at the same time.

SUSIE

Those fucking moths are back!

PAUL

Thousands of them. And they're forming a shape.

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE  
Mother of God, it has arms and  
legs! It looks like a man!

PAUL  
It's looking more real, too. White  
robe, long black hair, beard.

SUSIE  
Jesus Christ!

PAUL  
I don't think so.

SUSIE  
I know that. But it sure looks like  
every Jesus picture I've seen. I'm  
calling the cops.

PAUL  
Would they believe us?

SUSIE  
They would if they saw Jesus -- and  
those moths.

Susie walks to the side, takes out her cellphone, and dials.  
Meanwhile, Paul and Susie continue to watch Sheldon and  
"Jesus."

PAUL  
Sheldon's turned around. Amazing he  
didn't even look at the moths.

SUSIE  
Uh oh. What's going on? I hope  
Ginny's okay? Look--there's Mrs.  
Sprigg.

There are sounds of an argument and the sound of a shotgun  
being cocked.

PAUL  
Let's go.

They jump out of the bushes, run toward the barn. Black  
moths attack them, slow them down. Paul waves his way  
through. By the time they reach Sheldon and Elma, Sheldon is  
about to fire at Elma with the shotgun. Paul grabs Sheldon,  
who knocks him down with the butt of the gun. Ginny, who has  
just walked outside with the rope, drops the rope and  
screams.

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

Oh God! Paul!

Susie is scratching and kicking at Sheldon, who tries to kick her away. Elma helps, and they tackle him. Ginny runs to Paul. Elma kicks Sheldon in the face, and he falls down, semi-conscious and groaning. Elma turns to Susie.

ELMA

Ginny dropped the rope.

Elma points at the rope.  
Over there.

Susie runs, retrieves the rope, reaches Elma. Together they weave the rope around Sheldon, securing his arms and legs, and tie the ends in a hard knot. They check on Paul, who starts to wake up, and Ginny.

PAUL

What...what happened.

Ginny kisses him on the lips.

PAUL

Is this Heaven? Are we both dead?

SUSIE

No, just your brain.

GINNY

Stop that!

SUSIE

I'm just kidding.

GINNY

Paul, you okay?

PAUL

(sits up, rubs his head)

I think so. Mama says I need to get my noggin knocked--guess it finally happened.

SUSIE

What are we going to tell the deputies?

ELMA

Oh no. Sheldon knows the sheriff and about every deputy in the county. Those guys are dumber than a barkin' cat.

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

What are we gonna do?

ELMA

(sighs)

Sheldon ain't gonna want any trouble with the law. He'll want to say it's a misunderstanding so he can do what that fake Jesus wants him to do. If we keep him tied up, his buddies won't believe anything we tell them even if we leave the moths and Jesus out. Go inside, Ginny, and hide all the guns and ammo.

Ginny runs inside. Blue lights flash as Elma unties Sheldon, grabs a hose by the barn, turns on the water, and pours it on his face.

ELMA

Deputies comin'

SHELDON

He staggers up.

Don't want no trouble. The Lord wants me to deal with you two in my own way, not let the law handle it.

ELMA

They're here. Tell them whatever fibs will make them leave.

EXT. FRONT YARD NEAR DRIVEWAY - EVENING

Paul and Susie stand, both with arms crossed, at the end of the driveway. A sheriff's car creeps up the driveway, and two deputies get out.

DEPUTY CARTER

I'm DEPUTY CARTER, and this is my partner DEPUTY WILLIAMS. We got a call about a trespasser on your property.

SUSIE

Just a misunderstanding, Deputy.

DEPUTY CARTER

Not according to what Sheld..., I mean, Mr. Sprigg said.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

(interrupting)

Mr. Sprigg fell and hit his head. He was confused for a while, and when we saw him lying down outside, we assumed he was in trouble and called you guys.

DEPUTY CARTER

Where is Mr. Sprigg now?

SUSIE

He's in the back yard with Mrs. Sprigg. He's still feeling dizzy.

DEPUTY CARTER

Let me talk to him.

Out of the shadows, seemingly from nowhere, a tall man wearing a dark suit and dark tie appears. It is Sheldon. He turns toward the officers, smiles.

SHELDON

I was getting dressed to visit a dying member of my church, and I heard commotion outside. Turns out it was a fight in the field between some wild dogs, and when I tried to chase them off, I fell. Head wasn't right for a while.

DEPUTY CARTER

I'm thinkin' you're right, Mr. Sprigg, but I'd like to look around your backyard just in case.

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING

Deputy Carter briefly walks around the yard and comes back to the group.

DEPUTY CARTER

Nothin' goin' on here. You hurt bad, Mr. Sprigg? Need to go to the doctor?

SHELDON

No, sir. I'm feeling a lot better now. Going to feel even better before I know it.

(CONTINUED)

DEPUTY CARTER

Well you take care, Mr. Sprigg.  
Miss Elma. Have a good night,  
children.

Paul whispers to Ginny.

PAUL

Children. Right.

Deputy Carter walks to the front yard. There is the sound of a car starting and crackling gravel. Elma turns to Sheldon.

ELMA

You're gonna get inside and I'll bandage your head. I don't care if you think that thing is Jesus. If you ever raise a hand to hurt me or Ginny again, I swear to God, I will kill you. Understand?

SHELDON

You'd be sinning against God if you killed me. Jesus would torture you forever in Hell.

ELMA

She points her fist at Sheldon.

Leave. I don't care if you take the car or walk. Just get out of here and don't come back. If you try, remember I'm good with that gun.

Sheldon approaches Elma, but she picks up a tree branch and slaps him across the face. He staggers back and raises his hand to give up.

SHELDON

Okay. I'm leaving. For now.

He starts to walk away.

You've made your choice, reprobate! You and Ginny, who defy Jesus and refuse to obey Him. But I love you too much to give up trying to save your souls. Jesus will tell me what I have to do.

Sheldon walks to the front yard. Elma follows him with the tree branch still in her hand.



EXT. FRONT YARD NEAR DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Sheldon walks past the car, reaches the road. He shouts,

SHELDON

You'll see me again, disobedient wife.

ELMA

If I do you'll have a bullet in your brain. You can have a little talk with the real Jesus then.

Sheldon walks down the road out of sight.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

ELMA

I'm sorry, Ginny. Your daddy is a sick man, but I'll be dog-gone if I know what to do. Get around the front, keep your eyes open, Ginny. You, too, Paul and Susie. I'll call Monica. Paul, let me know your parents' phone number and I'll have them pick you up.

SUSIE

I'll just text her.

PAUL

Mom and Dad don't like the latest technology. I'll give you the number, Mrs. Sprigg.

Paul writes a phone number on a piece of scrap paper and gives it to Elma. Paul, Ginny, and Susie walk around to the front yard.

EXT. SPRIGG FRONT STEPS - EVENING

Susie, Ginny and Paul sit side by side on the top step of three concrete steps.

SUSIE

What is that Jesus thing? And those moths?

GINNY

Couldn't that thing be a demon from hell?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Maybe.

SUSIE

Oh, God. Now I'm thinking of  
pea-soup vomit. Ugh.

GINNY

Huh?

SUSIE

Just an old movie about a demon  
inside a girl. Fact is, we don't  
know what the hell that thing is,  
other than that it's badassed in a  
bad way.

GINNY

(laughing)

Can someone be badassed in a good  
way?

PAUL

You talking about Susie?

SUSIE

Shut up, Paul!

GINNY

We have to focus on the barn. Mama  
doesn't know a lot of the early  
history of this place. There's an  
old man at church who I think might  
know.

SUSIE

How old?

GINNY

He's up in his mid-seventies.

SUSIE

Great. A senile old man.

GINNY

No he's not. He gets around like a  
man half his age. His name's Harold  
Miller and he lives a mile down the  
road.

PAUL

Sounds like a plan. Tomorrow's  
Saturday. Think you can get away  
from your mama, Ginny?

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

I'll sneak out if I have to.

SUSIE

I won't have any problem with Mom.  
I got her wrapped around....

GINNY

That's enough, Susie.

A car comes up the driveway. Just as it reaches the top,  
another car turns in.

PAUL

Our folks are here. See you guys  
tomorrow. Cover for me, Susie.

Susie stands in front of Paul and Ginny. Paul and Ginny  
kiss. When they release the kiss, Susie leaves.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE - DAY

A sunny day. Paul, Susie, and Ginny walk toward the Miller  
house, a modest, wood-frame house surrounded by an  
uncultivated field with tall grass and blooming thistles.  
Cows are eating grass and mooing. At the right side of the  
house near the driveway is a pear tree filled with small,  
unripe pears. The teenagers walk up creaky steps to the  
small wood porch, painted white like the rest of the house.  
Two metal chairs sit on each side of the porch. Ginny knocks  
on the door. No answer. She knocks again, but there is no  
answer.

GINNY

(shouting)

Mr. Miller, I'm Ginny from down the  
road.

A sound of rapid footsteps comes from inside the house.  
After a few seconds the door cracks, and a man who looks to  
be in his mid-fifties peeks through.

MR. MILLER

Thank you, Lord.

He opens the door wide and waves the teenagers in.  
Ginny, you've grown like a weed.  
And who are these young folks with  
you.

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

That's Susie who lives a couple miles east of here. This is Paul.

MR. MILLER

Your sweetheart, eh?

GINNY

(blushing)

Yes, sir.

MR. MILLER

(laughing)

I can always tell. Come on in. I'll get you some iced tea. What a day it's been.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - DAY

They step inside. The house is filled with old furniture, bookshelves, scattered papers. Mr. Miller takes piles of papers off a chair and a couch.

MR. MILLER

Sorry about the mess. I'm writing a history of these parts. Have a seat. I'll bring you some iced tea.

Paul and Ginny sit on the couch, Susie on the chair. Mr. Miller draws all the shades. The living room is dark. Susie starts to turn on an old-fashioned tall lamp.

Don't turn that light on.

SUSIE

Why not?

MR. MILLER

Tell you when I get back with the tea.

Mr. Miller goes through a door into a kitchen.

PAUL

Did you see the look on his face?

SUSIE

Looked like he was scared enough to wet his pants.

GINNY

(sighing loudly)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GINNY (cont'd)

Susie. You're right, though. I've never seen eyes so wide. I'm afraid he might have a heart attack.

Mr. Miller walks in with four glasses of tea on a tray, which he distributes. He sits down, takes his own glass, swallows, takes a deep breath.

MR. MILLER

Looks like you kids have news. Not good news either. I've lived long enough to read faces despite my eyesight not being as good. Ginny, has your father been acting strange?

GINNY

Wraps her arms together as if stifling a chill.  
Why do you ask?

MR. MILLER

Because he dropped by last night. Said you were rebelling and misbehaving and that you might stop here to hide. He told me to let him know if I saw you. Normally I'd do just that.

SUSIE

But now...

MR. MILLER

Now I won't. His eyes kept dancing. Like my Aunt Bessie when she went crazy. Man looked paranoid to me. When he told me he'd seen Jesus, I reckoned he'd gone as crazy as a junebug caught in a jug. Figured he'd gotten crazy from that barn like most folks in his family.

Paul perked up in his chair. Susie gasped. Ginny started. There was a moment of silence. Finally, Ginny spoke.

GINNY

You mean the barn's always made people crazy?

MR. MILLER

Not everyone. Some folks it helped. Others...I'll tell you later, but

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. MILLER (cont'd)

let me know what's going on now  
with this Jesus showing himself to  
Sheldon.

GINNY

We saw these black moths. They  
joined together to make a man that  
looked just like the painting of  
Jesus in Daddy's Bible. This thing  
tells him to do terrible things--to  
hurt me. To hurt Mama. And he still  
thinks it's Jesus.

MR. MILLER

Bet he focuses on you being  
obedient to everything Jesus said.

GINNY

Why yes, that's right. How....

MR. MILLER

(rubbing his chin)

The barn. Built by Sheldon's  
great-great granddaddy, Hosea  
Sprigg back in 1875. Said he had a  
feeling soon as he stepped on the  
land he'd bought to build a house  
that the barn had to go in that  
place.

EXT. FIELD BEHIND SPRIGG HOUSE--JULY 1877

A large tent is spread out in the middle of the field. Wooden benches are lined neatly inside, and they are filled with people--all ages, all social classes. Some have overalls, some wear suits, women wore the best they had from simple farm dresses to fancy city dresses. A large sign inside the tent says, "HOSEA SPRIGG, HEALER. COME ALL, YOUNG AND OLD, TO BE CURED OF YOUR DISEASES." At the front of the tent is a wood stage with a pulpit in the middle. To the cheers of the audience, a young man with a beard wearing a gray suit walks to the stage behind the pulpit. HOSEA SPRIGG eyes the cheering crowd, then waves his arms downward to quiet the crowd.

HOSEA

It is such a lovely Tennessee  
night. Welcome. My name is Hosea  
Sprigg, and I'm doing the Lord's  
work of healing. Those who have  
been here before know that I do not

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOSEA (cont'd)

demand money for what I do. Those who can afford an offering to help me pay expenses can do so if the need strikes your heart.

Hosea points out a person in the audience, and repeats this action when he gets an answer.

You, sir, where are you from?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

Cincinnati, Reverend.

HOSEA

And you, ma'am, from where did you come?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

New York City, Sir.

There is a murmur through the crowd, with some voices using the word "Yankee."

HOSEA

Brothers and sisters, now is not the time to reopen old wounds. We are all God's children here. Now is the time for healing. You, little girl, in the back. Have your mama and daddy carry you up to the stage.

A young black couple carry a girl of about four. She is pale, breathing heavily, and unconscious. There is another murmur in the audience, but Hosea pushes out his hand to silence them. The couple reach the stage.

HOSEA

What, good people, are your names?

MOSES begins to speak.

MOSES

My name's Moses; this is my wife MARY. Our daughter--her name's Rachel--is dying. Doctor said he can't do anything. She's just five-years old and she's all we have.

HOSEA

You have good names. Give me your daughter.

(CONTINUED)

Moses hands Rachel to Hosea, who takes her in his arms. He prays.

Oh God who canst heal all things by  
Thy power, place Thy healing hand  
on this child so that if it be Thy  
will, she shall be whole again.

Immediately after the prayer, Rachel opens her eyes and rubs them. She is no longer pale. Hosea puts her down, and though Mary tries to catch her, Rachel lands on the floor and runs back and forth across the stage. The audience cheers. A shot of the audience shows tears in their eyes.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - DAY

MR. MILLER

Hosea was for real. Healed lots of people before dying of old age in 1922.

SUSIE

If the barn is evil why would it  
make someone a healer?

PAUL

Ah--the barn's not evil. It's a  
power source.

MR. MILLER

I think that's right. But how the  
power shows itself depends on the  
character of the person who uses  
it. Too much power for folks to  
handle. Hosea did fine. You see how  
he healed sinful attitudes along  
with the little girl. His heart was  
pure. Some of his children didn't  
share his good character. Like your  
great-granddaddy Marshall Sprigg--I  
think I have a photo of him.

Mr. Miller gets up and opens a drawer on an antique desk. He looks through some envelopes, finds the one he wants, and thumbs through the contents. He takes out a photo and passes it to Ginny before returning to his seat. Ginny looks at it. A close up of the photo reveals a man wearing a black suit, a black tie, and a black fedora, posing by a tree. His face is thin, skull-like, his eyes dark like empty sockets. His mouth is slightly open in a frown. Ginny drops the photo and covers her eyes. Paul puts his hand on her shoulder. Susie picks the photo up but immediately turns it face-down on her lap.

(CONTINUED)



SUSIE

Mother of God, what a creep. He looks like he'd been dead thirty years when that photo was taken. You okay, Ginny.

GINNY

Ginny opens her eyes, stares at the photo turned face down, and sighs.

That freaked me out, that I descended from that...soulless thing.

MR. MILLER

He had a soul once, but turned greedy. The power in the barn took that flaw and made it into a hunger so that the more money he made, the thinner and hungrier he became. He didn't care how he got his money. Started a garment factory. Child labor. Half-starved workers dying from exhaustion. Employees forced to shop for shoddy items at inflated prices at the company store. He was also a murderer.

GINNY

Murder?

MR. MILLER

Oh, yes. Rumor has it, and I think it's true, that he didn't want to share his wealth with his wife Elizabeth.

MARSHALL AND ELIZABETH SPRIGG BEDROOM, OCTOBER 1894 - NIGHT

Moon shadows stream through the bedroom window, illuminating ELIZABETH SPRIGG. A shadow hovers over her. The shadow reveals himself as a human body with a hideous skull-like face--MARSHALL SPRIGG. He has a rope rigged into a loop that will tighten when placed around an object. He slips the rope around her head, gently lifting her head so as not to wake her. Then he pulls the rope tight. Elizabeth sits up, struggles, as Marshall holds the rest of the rope at a distance. The more Elizabeth moves, the tighter the noose. She gags terrible sounds. Her body twitches convulsively for some time, but then jerks into stillness. A loud, raspy gurgle escapes her lips.

INT. SPRIGG BARN, OCTOBER 1894 - NIGHT

Marshall pulls Elizabeth's body into the barn. He walks over to some farm tools stacked on the side of the barn, looks through them. He then looks up--there is an ax hanging on a nail. He takes the ax, walks over to the body, and chops off the head. Blood trickles from the headless body as we fade into the present.

INT. MILLER HOUSE-DAY

SUSIE

Oh my God! Is this inherited?  
Ginny, you haven't thought of....

GINNY

(interrupting)  
Of course not! You heard Mr.  
Miller. The barn only brings out  
the evil that is in a person.

PAUL

But we all do evil. I'm the one who  
took the test tubes out of the  
chemistry lab.

GINNY

(laughing)  
You didn't! At least you brought  
them back.

The room grows darker. There is thunder in the distance.

MR. MILLER

That's not the kind of evil we're  
talking about. We're talking about  
evil that grabs the soul like the  
claws of a rotted corpse. An evil  
that kills the man and leaves  
something demonic. Ginny, your  
grandpa, Jacob Sprigg. Do you know  
what happened to him and why?

GINNY

Daddy told me he dropped dead of a  
heart attack while harvesting corn.  
That was long before I was born.

Mr. Miller leans over, speaks in a low voice, as shadows move in the room, illuminated every few seconds by lightning flashes. Susie turns the lamp on. Mr. Miller yells

(CONTINUED)

MR. MILLER

No!

and flips the switch down.

Sheldon has been watching us. If he knows we're all in here Lord knows what he'll try to do.

SUSIE

(in tears)

I'm sorry.

Ginny goes over to Susie, hugs her.

GINNY

It's okay.

MR. MILLER

Don't worry, Susie. We'll make it out of this mess if we have to dig a hole to China with our fingernails.

SUSIE

Ewww!

They all laugh, and the room grows a little less dark.

MR. MILLER

About Jacob Sprigg. He was the spitting image of his pa--in more ways than one.

He takes a photo out of a drawer and shows it to Ginny. Susie cranes her neck down and Paul walks over for a look. The photo shows a man more skeletal than his father. Black eyes with unnaturally wide pupils stared straight ahead. Above his head a flock of starlings passes by. The trees that border the field in which his photo was taken are bare, with claw-branches clutching the sky. The effect is three-dimensional.

I always thought about getting rid of this picture even though Jacob was family, I'm ashamed to say. I knew him all too well. When I was twelve....

EXT. SPRIGG FIELD - SUMMER 1958

Jacob Sprigg walks beside the boy version of Mr. Miller. They have rods and reels, and Jacob carries a bucket. He stops.

JACOB

Want to see something really gross?

THE CHILD MR. MILLER

I... I don't know.

JACOB

Watch this!

Jacob takes a switchblade knife out of his pocket. He takes a fish which is still wriggling, slices it open. The fish's heart is beating even though the fish is wounded and writhing more than ever.

THE CHILD MR. MILLER

Stop it! That's mean! You can't hurt him like that.

JACOB

Are you a wimp? What's the difference between this and a hook. It's just a fish. Ain't worth anything more than eating.

Jacob continues to cut the fish into pieces. The heart still beats, though more slowly, and fish's movements have lessened.

THE CHILD MR. MILLER

Stop it or I'm going to tell Ma and Pa on you.

Jacob lifts the Miller child by the collar, lifts him up, tears his shirt off, and cuts him from sternum to bellybutton. The Miller child falls down, and Jacob runs away, singing to the tune of na na na na boo boo.

JACOB

I killed a chicken, I killed a chicken. Tonight I'll have chicken dinner, tonight I'll have chicken dinner.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

SUSIE

Shit! How did you live?

MR. MILLER

He didn't cut that deep. While Jacob was ranting I put my shirt over the wound and staggered into the woods. I fell, rolled down a hill, and Jacob never found me. Somehow I made my way back to the house. Jacob was sent to reform school in Nashville for two years. When he got out, all hell broke loose.

GINNY

I know Daddy said Granddaddy was wild when he was young.

MR. MILLER

Wild? How about child molester? Rapist. Triple murderer. Bribed the judge and jury, he did, and didn't spend any time in prison. He finally settled down with your grandma, but his guilt grew. You see, he'd never paid for his crimes and knew it. One day he came by my house to apologize for cutting me and for all the evil he'd done. He thought the devil was going to get him. Said he wanted to die now since there was no hope in this life anyway. I tried to talk some sense into him, called the authorities. Nobody paid attention in those days. Three days later he was dead, found hanging in his barn by Sheldon, his eyes gouged out by what Sheldon said were goats..

PAUL

Ah--the traditional symbol of the devil.

GINNY

So the devil did get him--but the devil was of his own making....

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE  
and given power by the barn.

Ginny starts to cry. Paul comes over and puts his hand on her shoulder. She gently brushes it away and stands up, putting her hands on her hips and remaining silent for a moment. Finally she speaks.

GINNY  
Why did Daddy go bad?

MR. MILLER  
Went too far to the other extreme.  
Tried to be too good. You know that  
Bible verse that says, "Be not  
righteous overmuch." Sheldon  
overdid the overmuch.

PAUL  
And it corrupted him, made him self  
righteous, legalistic. He found his  
reason only to lose his human  
feelings.

SUSIE  
So he's an inhuman robot.

MR. MILLER  
That's exactly what he is. Don't  
think of him as your father any  
more, Ginny. He died when that fake  
Jesus showed up, but he really died  
as a child when he saw that black  
and blue face and goat-eaten eyes  
on a body hanging in that barn. He  
thought his pa died because of  
disobedience to God. And by God,  
Sheldon was going to be different.  
He would obey God with dotted i's  
and crossed t's.

GINNY  
So God became....

MR. MILLER  
a demon. An evil being who  
surveryed the world with an  
all-seeing eye, waiting to catch  
someone doing wrong so He could  
torture them in hell.

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE  
That's all fucked!

GINNY  
Susie...

MR. MILLER  
In this case that's about the right  
phrase for it.

There is a flash of lightning and a crash of thunder. The room is bright as day for a split second. Ginny screams at a shadowy figure by the windowsill. The outline of a pitchfork is clearly seen in the shadow's hand. There are loud knocks on the door.

SHELDON  
Let me in, old man. Stop  
interfering with my daughter's  
discipline or I'll send you  
straight to hell.

MR. MILLER  
Get back, children. I'll take care  
of this.

Mr. Miller turns on a light and grabs a knife. Ginny, Paul, and Susie stand back but do not leave the room. A shotgun lies in a dusty corner and Paul grabs it, looks inside, sees that it is loaded. On the other side of the room the window crashes and the blinds fall, strewn aside by the rusty prongs of a pitchfork. Sheldon Sprigg steps into the room, turns around, bangs the wooden end of the pitchfork on the floor. Sheldon, his mouth twisted into a hideous scowl, towers over Mr. Miller. He lifts the pitchfork, aims it at Mr. Miller, and swings forward, but Mr. Miller falls to the side, extending his knife, which cuts Sheldon on the arm. Sheldon screams with an unnaturally high voice, the sound of a million crickets crying out at once. The teenagers cover their ears. A figure darts from behind Sheldon, a man who looks like Jesus.

MR. MILLER  
Sheldon, you fool! Can't you see  
that thing ain't Jesus! He's from  
that painting that's in so many  
King James Bibles.

"Jesus" quickly glides through the air around Sheldon and Mr. Miller and reaches Ginny. He grabs her by the throat with his right hand carries her toward Sheldon. She gags and grabs his hands, but they stay taut.

(CONTINUED)

"JESUS"

Now you will face the price of your disobedience, girl. Your father will administer the sentence.

"Jesus" holds Ginny high in the air. Sheldon raises the pitchfork, points it toward Ginny's chest. A shot rings out, and the legs of the Jesus figure collapse into black moths. Ginny falls to the ground, and Susie pulls her back. Paul comes into view, aims the gun toward the upper half of the Jesus figure, and fires. The figure disintegrates, and the moths fly out the broken window. A few rounds of shot hit Sheldon, and he staggers out of the house.

SHELDON

Wait and see, bitch child of Satan. I shall kill you, and God will resurrect you with a new body better able to feel....pain. Then Jesus will laugh as he tortures you. I shall laugh with him.

Sheldon laughs hysterically. Paul raises the gun. Ginny tries to stop him, but the gun fires--with a click.

PAUL

Oh shit! Out of ammo! Why did you try to stop me.

GINNY

I know my father's not himself, but he wasn't always this way.

PAUL

The evil was always inside him. It's come out. Those black moths are somehow an extension of him, and so is that Jesus-thing. It's not some kind of transdimensional monster--it's part of Sheldon come to life. As long as he's alive it will live.

GINNY

Maybe somehow I could open his eyes.

MR. MILLER

No. If he had shown any sign of mercy, any sign of getting better.... But he's worse than ever. He'd kill all of us here and your mother too, if he thought that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



MR. MILLER (cont'd)  
would help him get to you. Who  
knows? Maybe the real Jesus will be  
able to reach him after he's left  
this life. But right now, we have  
no choice but to kill Sheldon. I'll  
do what I can to help.

PAUL  
What about the law?

MR. MILLER  
Sometimes you have to do the right  
thing even if it breaks the law.  
Even if it means killing someone  
you love.

GINNY  
I don't know....

SUSIE  
I know it sounds harsh, Ginny, but  
Mr. Miller's right. Especially  
regarding your father.

GINNY  
I should be the one to do it.

PAUL  
He puts his arm around Ginny.  
You don't have to do this. You've  
been through enough. Besides, it's  
dangerous.

GINNY  
And it's not dangerous to you and  
Susie. Look, somehow I feel I was  
meant to be the person to kill my  
father. It's not some twisted  
Oedipus thing. It's more like  
providence.

There is silence for a moment. Mr. Miller gets out a box of  
12-gauge shotgun shells, opens it, gives a handful of shells  
to Paul. Paul turns back to Ginny.

PAUL  
Do you know how to use a shotgun?

EXT. SPRIGG FRONT STEPS - EVENING

Mr. Miller leads Ginny, Paul, and Susie to the front door. He knocks on the door, and Elma Sprigg answers.

ELMA

Mr. Miller! Oh goodness. Ginny, you and your friends look like you've been through a wringer washer. What happened?

MR. MILLER

Sheldon paid us a visit. With his pitchfork. He tried to kill Ginny. The false Christ came in and grabbed Ginny after I'd stabbed Sheldon in the arm. Paul saved us all. Took my shotgun and fired up that false Jesus.

ELMA

Her face turns red, she starts to cry, and she wrings her hands.

Why didn't I kill him when I had the chance? I am such a foolish old woman.

MR. MILLER

You're neither old nor foolish. You showed mercy, which means whatever power is in that barn won't twist your desires into evil. If you had killed him out of hatred or vengeance you would have destroyed yourself.

ELMA

That barn is evil.

PAUL

Not evil, just powerful. It brings out the heart of your character and gives you the power to use for good or evil. That's too much for people to handle. Maybe that's why arrowheads are found everywhere but here. The ancient Indians knew this place was too dangerous.

MR. MILLER

Mrs. Sprigg, when your husband's great-grandfather built the barn he

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. MILLER (cont'd)  
was under the spell of his own  
power that he used for good. Back  
in that time, in the 1800s, folks  
assumed people were good and would  
use power for the good. He didn't  
mean no harm. This place should be  
off-limits to everyone. Right now  
we have to find Sheldon.

ELMA

You'll have to kill him. Durn law  
round here won't do anything.

MR. MILLER

Yes, we know. He'll be hard to  
catch and harder to kill with those  
moths and that Jesus thing giving  
him such power. Right now, Mrs.  
Sprigg, we'd be obliged to you if  
we could spend the night here and  
get to looking for Sheldon in the  
morning. Sheldon did a number on my  
house.

ELMA

Of course. I'll fix you some  
supper. Susie and Paul, did you get  
permission from your parents to  
stay?

SUSIE

I'll call Mom now.

PAUL

I'll call my parents and tell them  
I'd been doing some hay work at Mr.  
Miller's and he needed me to stay  
so I could get up early to help.

GINNY

That's so clever. I love you.

Ginny kisses Paul on the lips. Elma blushes. Susie puts her  
hands on her hips, but smiles. Mr. Miller turns his head,  
looks up at the stars.

ELMA

Let's get inside.

INT. SPRIGG HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Paul and Mr. Miller are getting ready for bed. There is a knock at the door, and Elma passes a sleeping bag and pillow to Mr. Miller, who takes it, thanks her, and shuts the door.

MR. MILLER

You take the bed. I'm used to these sleeping bags. They were sure a lot better than sleeping on the ground when I was in the army.

PAUL

Were you in a war?

MR. MILLER

Vietnam. Never thought I'd make it through alive. When I was in the middle of that mess, I wasn't afraid. Was too busy trying to stay alive, to stay out of the way of Vietcong bullets. With this Sheldon thing, I'm scared shitless. Sheldon's really himself--that's the worst thing about it. His character was demonic as soon as he left that barn as a kid. The evil had to percolate, so to speak, and then it fed on looking down on others and being self-righteous. But now it is full grown, and the real image of Sheldon is in those moths and in that twisted false Christ.

PAUL

That means Sheldon was demonic when he married Elma. When he helped make Ginny.

MR. MILLER

Thank God Ginny took after her great-great grandfather. She's not faultless, I'm sure--who is--but she's full of mercy and love. We have to get her to do justice without destroying those other parts.

PAUL

You think we can?

(CONTINUED)

MR. MILLER  
I know you can, Paul.

PAUL  
I'll do my best.

Ginny and Susie giggle from the other bedroom.

PAUL  
Why do girls giggle so much?

MR. MILLER  
Why do men burp so much--and worse.  
It's in the nature of things. Now  
turn off the light. We both need  
some sleep.

Paul turns off the light. Within seconds, both Paul and Mr. Miller are snoring.

INT. GINNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ginny and Susie are sleeping. Some light gets in through the window, illuminated by an outside light. There is a slight crack in the window. Through that crack one black moth creeps in, begins to fly around Ginny's head. Another comes, then another. More come, and they fly near the heads of both girls.

INT. SPRIGG HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Paul opens his eyes. He puts his ear to the wall as if he has heard something. Suddenly he jumps out of bed, grabs Mr. Miller's shoulders, shakes him awake.

MR. MILLER  
What... Why did you wake me up? I  
was having the strangest dream.

PAUL  
Come over here. Listen to the wall.  
Ginny and Susie are on the other  
side.

Mr. Miller goes to the wall, puts his ear to it. A sound like a flock of birds is heard.

MR. MILLER  
Uh... sounds like wings flapping.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

It's the moths! They're in Ginny's  
bedroom. Grab a flashlight.

They both get flashlights and run into the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Black moths fill the hall, seemingly coming out of nowhere, and surround Paul and Mr. Miller. Paul and Mr. Miller swat and fight their way through to the room. The door won't open. Together they bang on the door, trying to break it in. There is the sound of screams.

PAUL

Ginny! Susie! What's happening?

There are more screams. The door will not budge. Elma runs toward Paul and Mr. Miller. She is wearing her night gown and her hair is in curlers. Black moths attack her.

ELMA

Oh God, they're biting me! Ginny!

Moths fill Elma's mouth and she starts to choke. Mr. Miller runs over to help her as Paul gets a running start, leads with his feet, and strikes the door full force. It swings open. Paul runs into the room as Elma and Mr. Miller look from the POV of the hallway. The Jesus figure holds both girls by their hair and escapes with them through the now open window. The moths follow. Elma points, then collapses. Mr. Miller opens her mouth, sweeps out the dead moths.

MR. MILLER

Paul, get over here and help me!

PAUL

But the Jesus thing's got Ginny and  
Susie.

MR. MILLER

Mrs. Sprigg will die if we don't  
help her. You know mouth-to-mouth.

PAUL

Paul reaches Elma and Mr. Miller. He freezes for a moment when he sees Elma lying still and blue. Mr. Miller has his head over her chest.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MILLER

Her heart's beating, but it's  
slowing down. Give her some rescue  
breaths.

Paul gives Elma four rescue breaths, one every five seconds. Mr. Miller, who is still listening to Elma's heart, gives Paul the thumbs-up. Elma coughs, wakes up, looking groggy. Mr. Miller sits up and smiles. Elma's color returns to normal. She lifts her arms, points to the door. She whispers with a raspy voice.

ELMA

Ginny....

MR. MILLER

Lie down Elma. There's nothing you  
can do now--it's up to these young  
people. I'll stay with you. Paul,  
get out there and find them.  
Shotgun's missing--that thing must  
have hidden it somehow. Get  
Sheldon's old rifle off the rack  
downstairs. Go to the barn--that's  
where that thing is, and I'll bet  
Sheldon is there, too. Run!

Paul runs down the hall and disappears down the stairs.

EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - NIGHT

It is still dark, but with a full moon, the house and barn cast long, gray shadows onto dewy grass. Paul runs toward the barn, but before he reaches it, a swarm of black moths blocks his way. He tries to get through, but the moths swarm around him in a circle.

PAUL

Ow! Stop biting me, you bastards!  
Darn. You sting too. I'm not giving  
up, Sheldon. Do you hear me. Or are  
you not man enough to face a  
sixteen-year-old boy. Yep. Thought  
you were a wimp.

The moths relent and fly back to the barn. Paul reaches the barn door which swings open on its own. Ginny and Susie lie on the ground, the Jesus figure standing above them. Ginny looks at its face. It looks down at her tenderly. Then it begins to sing in a little girl's voice, mocking her.

(CONTINUED)

"JESUS"

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong. They are weak but he is strong.

The Jesus figure strokes Ginny's hair, a sarcastic grin on its face.

GINNY

You're not Jesus! You're made of those black moths. You know what they are. They're you, Daddy! You thing that claims to be Jesus--you're Daddy, too.

"JESUS"

(laughing long and loudly)  
My beloved child, how far you are from understanding!

GINNY

I understand that you're evil.

"JESUS"

No. I'm good. I am the law of God that Sheldon worships. I am the Word of God expressed in the Holy Bible. As for Sheldon, you are right. What is the saying you have? "He already had it in him?" Your father does nothing to you he does not desire to do. He desired to do what I just did to your mother.

GINNY

(she gasps loudly, begins to shake)  
What do you mean?

"JESUS"

Surely, child, you know. Oh, you didn't see the moths enter your mother's mouth, you didn't hear her gagging, choking, didn't see her turn blue, fall to the floor, didn't hear her heart slow down and stop. Her body's cooling fast. Too bad you won't get to see all the fun.

Ginny stands frozen, still shaking.  
Correct, Sheldon? Your wife questioned my goodness. You heard  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



"JESUS" (cont'd)  
her curse me. She tried to prevent  
you from obeying my will.

SHELDON  
(head down)  
Yes. That's exactly right.

"JESUS"  
And you realized she had to die in  
a state of grace to see me in  
Heaven.

SHELDON  
Yes.

Ginny falls to the floor and puts her hands over her ears.  
"Jesus" grabs her hands and pulls them apart.

GINNY  
Let go of me, you lying bastard!

"JESUS"  
(in an unnaturally loud and  
deep voice)  
Silence! You will hear this! How  
your dear father found your mother  
praying, asking my Father for  
forgiveness. Unlike unfortunate  
Hamlet, good Sheldon wished for his  
wife to go to Heaven. He allowed me  
to do the honors--a few moths in  
her windpipe was more than enough  
to do the trick.

GINNY  
No! You're lying! Tell him, Daddy!

SHELDON  
It was for your Mama's own good.

The Jesus figure releases Ginny, and her eyes and face  
brighten with recognition. Her face turns bright red. She  
looks Sheldon in the eye.

GINNY  
That...  
(she points to the Jesus  
figure)  
...thing didn't make you evil. You  
were always evil. Sick! Twisted!

SHELDON

Jesus demands obedience! This is the true Lord.

GINNY

That is you, Daddy! Don't you see? You made him, you made the black moths, and the power in this barn allowed you do to it. If that Jesus *thing* is the true Lord, I'd rather worship idols!

Sheldon swings at Ginny with a clenched fist. She ducks, but he hits her squarely on her right shoulder. She cries out and begins to scream.

Paul! Help me!

"JESUS"

It's time, Sheldon. Ginny's harlot friend and her groping boyfriend have arrived.

Paul points the rifle at Sheldon, but moths swarm around his eyes and arms. He drops the rifle, which Sheldon picks up and aims at Susie.

GINNY

Paul! They're going....

"Jesus" clamps his hand over her mouth. With incredible strength, he lifts her off the floor. Ginny grunts and squeaks through "Jesus's" clasp, but cannot get any effective sounds out.

"JESUS"

It's time. Sheldon, close the doors and make sure no one can get in.

Sheldon, still holding the rifle in his left hand, takes a chain from the floor next to the doors and wraps it around the door handles.

That will be sufficient. The time has come for you to perform the task for which you have prepared. First, let's take care of the slut from New York. We'll make it quick for her. More mercy than I ought to offer. Even I have my weaknesses. Sheldon, grab the slut and tie her to a board.

Sheldon throws Paul against the barn door. He falls to the floor, stunned. Sheldon puts the gun against the barn door.

(CONTINUED)

He grabs some rope off a nail and moves toward Susie. Susie backs away, crawling backwards. Sheldon follows her. POV shifts to Susie's. Sheldon looms over her like a Frankenstein monster, his eyes red, his mouth open, sucking in air, his arms hovering like tentacles. He grabs her arms. She kicks, scratches, screams.

SUSIE

Get off of me, you perverted freak!

SHELDON

Quiet, Brooklyn slut. You corrupted my daughter. Haven't you heard what Jesus said? "It is better that someone have a millstone put around his neck if he allows one of my little ones to stumble."

SUSIE

I didn't lead Ginny astray. You tried to make her into a cold, unloving woman who condemns people instead of condemning the bad things they do and then showing mercy. You had no right to try to ruin her.

SHELDON

Evil child! You dare to tell me how to raise my daughter. Now you will die.

Sheldon struggles, but overpowers Susie and ties her to a board.

"JESUS"

With this child, I shall do the honors.

The Jesus figure approaches Susie, who starts to scream. His hands grasp her on each side of her face. He squeezes inward, forcing open Susie's mouth. Black moths fly out of the Jesus figure's mouth. They enter Susie's mouth. She starts to choke and gag. A gunshot sounds, and the head of the Jesus figure explodes in a cloud of black moths and parts of moth bodies. The rest of the figure disintegrates. Sheldon runs out the door. Paul runs over to Susie, opens her mouth, and the moths fly out. She gasps for air, gulping in deep breaths. A view of the front of the barn reveals Mr. Miller holding a shotgun and Elma, now wearing jeans and a western style shirt, standing beside him.

(CONTINUED)

SUSIE

Thank....God.

PAUL

That's great. I thought you were staying in the house.

MR. MILLER

I was waiting for Elma to get dressed--when she came out she said she had a feeling that you folks needed us. So I brought the shotgun.

Ginny stirs on the floor, sits up. Paul goes to her and kisses her.

PAUL

Are you all right?

GINNY

God, I had a terrible dream about Daddy turning into Jesus but Jesus was really a monster. Seemed to last for days. Hey, wait....

Ginny looks around the barn, sees moth corpses on the floor, and bangs her fists on the floor.

Damn it, when will this be over?  
God, why are you letting this happen? Please help us. Why aren't you helping us?

SUSIE

(sarcastically)

You're blaspheming. You're going to hell.

Ginny gets up, walks over to Susie, and slaps her across the face. Susie looks stunned, then holds Ginny, crying.

SUSIE

I'm sorry. I'm so scared that being a bitch helps me keep going. I have to keep going because I love you and Paul and can't let that thing get you.

GINNY

(wiping her eyes)

I'm sorry I hit you. If the only way you can make it is by being a bitch, I'd rather you be a bitch. I love you, too.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL  
(moves beside Susie and Ginny)  
I love you Susie. Not like I....

SUSIE  
(sharply)  
I know that, Paul. Let's figure out  
how to end this for good.

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Paul walks out the library door with a file filled with papers. Ginny and Susie are waiting for them. They get into Susie's Trans-Am.

PAUL  
That's one cool car. Why didn't you  
let us ride in it before.

SUSIE  
Because that's one cool car. I like  
it clean. Do you have any change  
for me, Paul?

PAUL  
Spent all but a nickle on copies.

SUSIE  
Oh Christ. I guess you had to.  
There's that much in old newspapers  
about the barn?

PAUL  
Not directly. Some are about the  
bad stuff that Sheldon's dad and  
granddad did.

GINNY  
Maybe we can figure out a way to  
end this for good.

INT. SPRIGG HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ginny, Paul, Susie, Mr. Miller, and Elma are sitting around the kitchen table. Papers lie scattered across the surface. Paul picks one up.

PAUL  
This is the third clipping--in  
addition to the ones from 1898 and  
1923, that mentions attempts to  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (cont'd)

destroy the barn. This one is from 1947. A local farmer poured gasoline onto the barn and lit it. The gasoline burned up, but the barn was unharmed. The fire department had to be called because of a grass fire that almost burned up Mr. Morton's daddy's place. I think it killed two of his goats. That's similar to the 1923 case. In 1898 a group of men tried to use tools to dismantle the barn. Nothing would budge. Saws broke and hammers flew off their handles.

GINNY

Didn't anyone in the community report this to outsiders.

MR. MILLER

No. They're afraid to. To them, the power in the barn is like a cancer that comes back every few years to eat part of the county. They think it's of the devil--and try not to think about it at all.

SUSIE

So we can't destroy the barn even if we can kill that Jesus-th..., I mean, Mr. Sprigg.

ELMA

'Fraid not. Best I can figure is to plant some fast growing bushes--honeysuckle--along with some thorny plants--around the barn. In a few years, the barn will be hidden. Then I'd put up barbed wire fences and and electric fences. Ginny, you're inheriting the land, so you'll have to keep up with this project and tell your children to do the same. God help us if the county rezones the land. I'll have this house moved to another lot and keep paying taxes on this land.

SUSIE

But that's no guarantee that someone won't find the barn.

(CONTINUED)

ELMA

No. We can only do what is in our power. Right now we have one more thing to do. Should we wait until Sheldon comes after us or should we wait for him to come while we're in the barn?

PAUL

Let's wait in the barn. Get inside during daylight. Everyone bring a weapon, but when the time comes, Ginny, you must be strong. You get the .22.

MR. MILLER

I have my old .20 gauge. Last shotgun I have so it had better last.

SUSIE

I have a hatchet.

GINNY

(smiling)

Wow--you are the hacking type.

SUSIE

Indeed. My last boyfriend almost got his....

GINNY

Let's go inside the barn. Mama, you got your kitchen knife?

ELMA

She pats her jeans.

Yep. And I know how to use it, too. It'll cut through flesh easier than it will cut carrots.

PAUL

Let's go--and hope the real Jesus is with us.

INT. SPRIGG BARN - LATE AFTERNOON

Paul, Ginny, Susie, Elma, and Mr. Miller and inside the barn. Paul checks out the hole that seems to be the source of the moths. Ginny approaches him.

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

Do you think this hole could be filled with rock and dirt? Would that make a difference?

PAUL

I'd recommend it. We have to think in terms of thousands of years, not just the near future. We don't want somebody two thousand years from now to destroy the world with the power he gets from this thing.

MR. MILLER

Could be some kind of geothermal vent with the magnetic forces carrying whatever is behind this power as a wave. Or it could be a link to another dimension.

SUSIE

What about the government? Don't they make shit like this?

MR. MILLER

I don't think even the government--even the military research groups--can make anything like this.

Mr. Miller looks around, then looks up at the sky.

It's starting to get dark. I'll turn on the light. Get your flashlights and weapons ready. Paul, you stand guard with me by the door. Ginny, station yourself behind those old wheelbarrows. Susie, stay with Ginny in case she gets in trouble. Elma, you stay between us to warn us in case Sheldon or that thing makes any sudden moves.

Everyone moves into position. Their weapons are near as are their flashlights.

GINNY

Now we wait.



EXT. SPRIGG BACKYARD - EVENING

Sheldon stands in the yard near the barn, staring. From behind the barn, the Jesus figure walks toward Sheldon. They stand facing one another.

"JESUS"

You must save Ginny. She is rebellious by nature. If she lives, she will eventually die in her sins.

SHELDON

I can't let that happen. How can she repent if she is so overwhelmed by evil?

"JESUS"

Remind her of her sins. Remind her that this is the day of her death and that she will burn in a devil's hell if she does not repent.

SHELDON

What if she refuses?

"JESUS"

There are other ways of persuading someone to repent.

INT. BARN - EVENING

Paul looks out one of the cracks in the barn.

PAUL

Sun's setting. Uh oh. There's Sheldon and the fake Jesus talking. Get ready. They're walking toward the barn.

The team readies their weapons. Elma holds her kitchen knife, her mouth a straight, determined line. Mr. Miller cocks his shotgun and readies it. Susie holds her hatchet, her fear obvious, her breathing rapid, her face flushed. Paul stands calm, occasionally looking around the barn as if planning the upcoming battle. The barn door is shut, but the hinges squeak as a great sound of rushing wings is heard. The doors fly open, and Paul and Mr. Miller barely avoid being crushed. Black moths fly in, darkening the barn. They go for the team's eyes, and a gun falls to the floor, then knives, as the sound of metal hitting solid ground is heard. The weapons rise as if carried by the moths or by the wind

(CONTINUED)

generated from their flapping, and fall into the deep hole in the floor. Susie screams. The moths coalesce into the Jesus figure, and Sheldon enters the barn. Sheldon grabs Ginny and tries to tie her to a bench. She screams and struggles, but Sheldon is too strong. Paul approaches to help, but the Jesus figure grabs him with one hand and throws him twenty feet to the barn wall, which he hits hard and collapses into a heap.

SUSIE

You bastard!

Susie runs toward the Jesus figure and swings at him with her fists. Every blow is a hit, but the moths disperse when her fist moves toward the figure and reform. The figure then ducks and feints as it laughs at Susie's ineptitude.

If you were really Jesus, you'd  
fight fair.

"JESUS"

Oh, my child.

SUSIE

I'm not your child, motherfucker.

The Jesus figure grabs Susie, turns her upside down, her head facing the floor, raises her above his head, and slams her to the floor. She collapses, and her eyes close, then open slightly but do not blink. A trickle of blood appears from underneath her head.

GINNY

Susie!

Ginny struggles harder, gets in two blows to Sheldon's jaw. He loosens his grip for a moment, and Ginny almost gets away. Then Sheldon, in a burst of strength, sits on Ginny's legs, grabs her right arm, and despite her left arm hitting the back of Sheldon's neck, ties her right hand to the bench. The left hand is much easier, and he quickly secures both legs. He carries the bench with Ginny attached, and deposits it near the hole. Mr. Miller hides behind a shelf, looking inside it for any possible weapon. Finally he finds the metal head of a mallet. He picks it up and slowly moves toward Sheldon, Ginny, and the Jesus figure, who surround Ginny. Sheldon stares at Ginny. She spits on him. Sheldon takes a handkerchief, wipes his eyes, and slaps Ginny on both sides of her face. Then he takes an old rag, stretches it out, and uses it as a gag on Ginny. Ginny tries to jerk her head to stop Sheldon, but his fist hits her jaw. She swoons, and he is able to gag her. She becomes more alert, blinks quickly a few times, and opens her eyes. Shift to Ginny's POV. Sheldon is bending over her. He does not appear to be angry. His look is more like pity.

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON

I love you, Ginny.

Shift to Sheldon's POV. Ginny turns her head to the side. Sheldon grabs it with both his hands and holds her face. She shuts her eyes, and he slaps her face. Her eyes open.

Shift to Ginny's POV. Sheldon's face is bright red.

Look at me and don't shut your eyes  
again if you don't want to feel  
things far worse than a slap. Is  
that clear?

Shift to Sheldon's POV. Ginny doesn't move. He slaps her, harder than before. Tears appear in her eyes.

I said, is that clear? Nod your  
head.

Ginny nods her head.

I want you to repent of your sins  
of drinking, dancing, being fondled  
by that boy, Paul, and blasphemy  
against the Lord Jesus. Please nod  
your head.

Ginny shakes her head vigorously. She wiggles her head back and forth. Her mouth moves underneath the gag and she tries to speak through the gag.

If you promise not to scream, I'll  
take off the gag. If you scream,  
you'll endure pain that will rival  
those of the souls in hell. Do you  
promise to be quiet?

Ginny nods her head. Sheldon takes off the gag.

GINNY

I haven't done anything wrong.

Sheldon grabs Ginny, and she struggles as he ties her feet. Then he puts his hand over her mouth and nose. She begins to writhe. He releases his hand.

GINNY

What are you doing, Daddy?

SHELDON

I'm going to give you water. Living  
water. To satisfy your thirst.  
Forever.

Sheldon laughs like a madman. Ginny screams, but Sheldon quickly reties the gag. Then the Jesus figure gives him a hose and the moths move outside the barn. Soon water flows fast from the hose. Sheldon holds Ginny's nose and pours water into her mouth.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Paul wakes up. There is the sound of coughing and gagging. From Paul's POV, Sheldon pours water down Ginny's throat. Paul tries to get up, but falls on his knees. He crawls toward Sheldon, speaks with a weak voice.

PAUL

What are you doing to her? You evil...

SHELDON

I'm trying to get Ginny to repent of her sins. Trying to save her soul. You love her, don't you, Paul? Don't you want your beloved's eternal soul to be saved? If you're obedient to Christ, you can see her forever in Heaven. That's much better than this short life on earth. Don't you see that I'm doing her a favor?

PAUL

(struggling to speak)  
You'll.... you'll kill her.  
You...sick fuck.

Sheldon stops pouring the water, waits for Ginny to catch her breath, and reties the gag.

SHELDON

You're the sick fuck, Paul. Twisted by my rebellious daughter and by her slut friend. My Lord has taken care of her slut friend for good. Take a look.

Paul sees Susie sprawled face-down on the barn floor. He half-crawls, half-runs toward her and gently turns her over. He feels for a pulse, listens for a heartbeat. He starts to cry.

PAUL

You murdered her. Son of a bitch.  
I'll stop you.

(CONTINUED)

Paul is able to stand and runs toward Ginny. A swarm of moths surrounds her, forming a wall. Sheldon unties the gag and takes the hose, still pouring water that streaks across the barn floor. With a crazed look on his face, he turns it toward toward Ginny as he removes the gag.

SHELDON

Repent, child. I say this out of love.

GINNY

(sarcastically)

Murdering bastard. Fuck you. Daddy. Isn't that what you always wanted? To fuck your own daughter. What would Jesus think about that, Daddy?

SHELDON

Maybe you wanted it, too.

Sheldon looks at Ginny a long time. His head approaches her mouth. Close up of their kiss. At first he kisses her lightly. Then he inserts his tongue--but Ginny's teeth clam down -- on his tongue. Sheldon tries to scream, pulls back. But he leaves behind part of his tongue in Ginny's mouth. He drops to the floor, spitting out blood. Ginny laughs hysterically.

GINNY

I hope you rot in hell!

More moths stream inside the barn. Several surround Sheldon's head, blinding him, as the Jesus figure re-forms behind him. They leave, and he spins around, still spitting blood. "Jesus" is laughing.

"JESUS"

You see what trouble your male organ can give you if you allow it to control your mind. Ginny is resourceful. I admire that. It's too bad that she's disobedient--I could use a servant like her. Now you're disobedient. That's a twist. I'll offer you a trade. Your tongue returned for the opportunity never to be tempted by Ginny--or by any other woman--again.

SHELDON

No.

(CONTINUED)

"JESUS"

You'd only be following your own law.

GINNY

I understand perfectly.

"JESUS"

Indeed. Sheldon, have you ever read the verse, "I and my Father are One."

SHELDON

Yes.

"JESUS"

Consider that verse. And consider your...theology...about...me.

SHELDON

No. You're the real Jesus.

"JESUS"

As far as you're concerned, I AM.

SHELDON

No--I AM. I am Christ!

"JESUS"

Congratulations. Knowledge is power.

"Jesus" and Sheldon both laugh hysterically.

Paul sits on the barn floor. He sees Sheldon and the Jesus figure through the moths. He mutters to himself.

PAUL

There has to be some other way.

Mr. Miller approaches behind Paul and puts his hand on Paul's shoulder. Paul jumps in the air, turns around with his fists drawn.

Mr. Miller, you scared the hell out of me.

MR. MILLER

I reckon that's a good thing, then.

PAUL

He wipes tears from his eyes.  
Susie's dead.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MILLER

I know. I'm sorry. She didn't believe she was brave, but she sure was.

PAUL

Yes she was. What is that in your left hand?

MR. MILLER

A weapon--an old mallet head. Very heavy.

PAUL

To crush your head with, Mr. Sprigg!

MR. MILLER

Try not to focus on vengeance or hate. You know what the power in this barn can do. Let's get Ginny out of that mess she's in.

Ginny's gagging grows weaker. Sheldon removes the hose from her mouth.

SHELDON

Repent, and you shall join Jesus.

Sheldon moves the hose toward Ginny's face. She gives a weak cry and turns her head away. Sheldon puts his hand on her forehead and forces her head into position.

GINNY

(through gasps)  
You're not.... Jesus.

SHELDON

(laughs hysterically)  
I AM. I AM. I AM Jesus! I demand obedience. You're hurting, but I was hurt a lot more on the cross for our sins.

GINNY

If you were, you would remember the pain. You would know not to inflict that on anyone else. Especially your own daughter. Wait a minute. Was Jesus married? Did Jesus have a child? Your Bible says no. Don't you want to obey the Bible?

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON

(now out of control)

There's no hope for you, harlot!  
You're pure evil! You're not  
capable of obeying God! Now you  
must die in your sins! You'll die  
for your own sins! I'm ashamed I  
even bred you!

Sheldon slaps her multiple times and laughs. The Jesus figure joins in the laugh, and the moths now swarming around Jesus make a sound like a laugh, forming a hideous mixture of voices. The Jesus figure turns into moths that enter Sheldon's mouth, nose, and ears. "Jesus" disappears, leaving only Sheldon, who still speaks with the hideous voice.

SHELDON

After I finish you off, you  
unrepentant bitch, your tit-groping  
boyfriend will suffer beyond  
anything you went through tonight.

GINNY

You would have groped my tits, you  
sick bastard! And I bet you got a  
hard-on when you tortured me! Did  
you! So when are YOU going to  
repent?

SHELDON

Evil daughter. I'm ashamed to be  
your daddy.

GINNY

Listen, preacher man! Do the laws  
of God apply to you? Don't you have  
to be obedient, too?

SHELDON

I'm beyond obedience. I make the  
rules for people to obey. I'm not  
subject to the rules I make. I'm  
beyond good and evil.

GINNY

Really original, genius. You know  
you weren't the first person to say  
that.

SHELDON

It doesn't matter. It is true.

(CONTINUED)



GINNY

You don't know what "true" means.

Sheldon cries out, a horrible scream of combined voices that seems to come from hell. He rams the hose down Ginny's throat, and she starts to gag. She passes out just as a flying object strikes Sheldon on the head. He crumbles to the ground. Paul and Mr. Miller run toward Ginny, but Sheldon gets up, throws Mr. Miller into the hole. There is a cry. Paul tries to pick up the mallet head, but Sheldon steps on his hand. Paul struggles, and Sheldon kicks him on the head, rolls him toward the hole. Paul falls down. Sheldon runs toward Ginny. He puts his fingers on her neck, feeling for a pulse. Then he takes the hose out of her mouth, throws it to the side.

SHELDON

Poor girl. My baby daughter. No time to repent.

Elma starts to stir, holds her head. Ginny's blue form is visible as is Susie's body. At the hole fingers grip the side. Elma sneaks toward the hole behind Sheldon, and pulls the hands up. Mr. Miller appears, his wrinkled hands bloody from the grip. They both struggle, and Mr. Miller motions her to keep pulling. Paul appears, holding on to Mr. Miller's legs. When they turn around, Sheldon is missing, but Ginny's body is still there.

MR. MILLER

Dear God. Pray it's not too late.

Mr. Miller feels for a pulse, listens for a heartbeat. He shakes his head.

I'll breathe for her. You start chest compressions. 100 a minute.

They start CPR. Elma cries, prays.

ELMA

Oh Jesus, help her. Please help.

After a few more compressions Ginny coughs and starts breathing on her own, but is still unconscious.

MR. MILLER

I'll call 911. There's nothing else we can do.

PAUL

The cops will think we tried to kill her. I think she's going to be okay, so we'll carry Ginny out to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (cont'd)  
the pond--make this look like an  
accidental near-drowning. Turn off  
that hose and roll it up. Lock the  
barn door.

ELMA  
What about Susie?

PAUL  
I'm sorry, but we'll have to leave  
her in the barn for now.

Ginny sobs as Paul and Mr. Miller put their arms around her.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

DR. LEWIS talks to Elma. Mr. Miller stands by her, closer  
than one would expect for friends, and Paul is standing  
beside them.

DR. LEWIS  
She's lucky. You said she was under  
five minutes.

PAUL  
Yes, sir.

DR. LEWIS  
The fact that she woke up an hour  
ago and seems coherent is a  
miracle. She's a tough young lady.  
We still need to watch her in ICU  
in case there are complications.  
You can visit her, but just for a  
few minutes.

ELMA  
Thank you, Dr. Lewis. Appreciate  
all you've done.

They enter the room. Ginny is lying on an ICU bed, hooked to  
IVs and a heart monitor that bleeps a regular rhythm. Her  
eyes are closed. Paul quickly walks over to her and kisses  
her on the lips. Elma moves to the other side of the bed.  
Mr. Miller stands up, watching. Ginny opens her eyes.

GINNY  
Oh Paul, I thought I'd never see  
you again. Mama. Mr. Miller. If  
Susie were here....

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

(points to the heart monitor)  
Looks good. I thought I'd lost  
you, too.

GINNY

Your touch made my heart beat. If  
Susie were here, she'd say with  
that saracastic voice, "How  
romantic"--and smile.

MR. MILLER

You take it easy, Ginny. We'll keep  
an eye on the place for you. We'll  
figure out what to do.

A NURSE enters.

NURSE

She needs her rest. You can visit  
again in a couple of hours.

Paul kisses Ginny on the lips, and they leave the room. The  
sunlight streaming through the window illuminates Ginny's  
face.

INT. GINNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ginny sleeps as her heart montior slowly blips its beat.  
Sheldon's face appears at the window. He rises up and down  
and appears to be floating. His fingernails, long and sharp,  
cut a large hole in the window, making little noise. He  
takes a deep breath and exhales black moths, which surround  
Ginny's mouth. She awakens, tries to scream, but cannot. The  
bleeps on the heart monitor increase in rate to 150 per  
minute.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION

A young TECHNICIAN sits, staring at heart monitor feeds from  
the ICU rooms. He yawns, then starts. He calls the same  
nurse who took care of Ginny earlier.

TECHNICIAN

Hey, Ginny Sprigg in 213 has some  
really fast Sinus Tach--rate's  
about 150.

NURSE

That's not right. Keep your eye on  
those monitors.

(CONTINUED)

The nurse runs into Ginny's room. Ginny is gone, but a breeze wafts the nurse's hair. She notices the hole in the window, looks down five stories below, but there is no one there. She grabs the phone and dials.

Security, Room 213, ICU, stat!

EXT. ICU WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul, Elma, and Mr. Miller sit in the waiting room. The TV is on the local news channel. There is a rustle down the ICU hall.

ELMA

Did you hear that?

MR. MILLER

Probably one of those really sick folks with pneumonia coded and they're trying to bring them back. Won't work, I reckon, but you never know.

PAUL

Ginny showed us that.

INT. ICU WAITING ROOM - A HALF HOUR LATER

The local news shifts to a breaking story. The NEWSCASTER, an attractive brunette, has a faux concerned look on her face.

NEWSCASTER

We are getting multiple reports that an ICU patient has disappeared from Randallville General Hospital. A female patient was apparently abducted a half hour ago. There are few clues on how a fifth floor patient could escape without anyone discovering the disappearance. Sources say that there is a large hole in the window of the patient's room. We have a crew that has just arrived. We are seeing video of that hole through our close-up lens.

ELMA

Oh God--that has to be Ginny.

They crane toward the TV as a REPORTER talks to a BOB WILLIAMS, an alleged witness.

(CONTINUED)

REPORTER

We have with us Bob Williams, the first person we know of to have seen what happened. Bob, tell us what you saw.

BOB

Yeah, I was walkin' from m'car to go see m'brother who's sick with the cancer. I saw two people up there,

(he points up)

'bout five floors up--a tall guy, looked like he had black hair, and someone he was carryin'. Have no idea how he got up there or was supportin' himself. Then it looked like he was floatin' down. Maybe he had some riggin'. The strangest thing, though--there were these black moths. They bit me. Chased me right through the hospital door.

REPORTER

(interrupting, sounding unenthusiastic)

Thank you, Bob, for that account.

MR. MILLER

(speaking in a low voice)

The barn. Now!

The group leaves gingerly but quickly.

INT. SUSIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Mr. Miller jumps into the driver's seat. Elma joins him on the passenger side. Paul sits in the back. Mr. Miller puts the car in gear, revs it, takes off with a screech of tires and a spray of gravel and dust. The car moves down the roads at high speed, tires screeching with every turn.

PAUL

(breathless)

You must have been a race car driver once.

MR. MILLER

You learn many things about maneuvers in war when somebody's trying to shoot your ass off.

They reach the Sprigg driveway, and the car screeches to a halt, making a half turn as it stops. The group quickly gets out of the car and runs toward the barn.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

The group reaches the barn door, which is closed. A light comes on from the inside and a scream in Ginny's voice is heard. Mr. Miller tries to push the door open. Paul and Elma help. It won't budge. Mr. Miller looks around, finds a large broken oak branch, and with difficulty Paul takes the back end, Mr. Miller the front end, and Elma the middle. They ram it against the barn door, but it does not budge. Inside there is loud conversation, then a cry that grows fainter with time, then silence. The lights go out. The air seems to go out of the group and the log lands on the ground, bouncing once before staying still. Elma cries.

ELMA

Oh, God, I've lost my daughter. HE did it and HE'S still alive. O Lord, life's not fair. You're not fair.

Mr. Miller puts his arm around Elma, kisses her on the cheek. The barn door opens. The group stands up, takes their flashlights, turns them on.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Ginny lies tied to a bench. Sheldon looms over her, his long shadow looking like a demonic being. She screams. Sheldon slaps her already red face.

SHELDON

I tried to be patient. I tried to have compassion on you, show you mercy. I gave you multiple chances to repent of your sins and obey me. Now I, Jesus Christ your Lord, am going to pronounce sentence. If you say one word before you're sentenced, you shall feel such torture such as man has never dreamed worse than the wonderful water torture my servants invented. Now I, as the Lord of Creation, of all People, and of You, my unfaithful daughter, for your drinking of alcohol, your dancing, your cavorting with that naughty

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SHELDON (cont'd)  
boy Paul, and for associating with a slut, whom I am sure is now roasting in hell, I sentence you to death--and after that, eternal fire. You will be wounded, screaming, but your sores will heal--painfully--and be burned again. It will only become more intense. And it will never end. Now I will stab your heart so that it will never start again.

GINNY  
Oh, Daddy. There's one thing you don't know.

SHELDON  
What, my rebellious child.

GINNY  
I have your knife!

Ginny stands up, and the ropes that she has cut are clearly seen. She screams, stabs into his chest area over his heart, and pulls out the knife. Sheldon rears back toward the hole. Ginny shoves him and he falls, his cries, no longer mixed with other voices, disappearing in the dark. Ginny starts to cry.

I'm sorry, Daddy. You were evil.  
Maybe one day in the next world you can change.

A light illuminates her face. It is from Paul's flashlight as he enters the barn first. He runs to Ginny, hugs her, and is joined by Elma. Mr. Miller walks over, puts his hand on Elma's shoulder.

MR. MILLER  
Is it done, Ginny?

GINNY  
Yes. Daddy's dead. I killed him. After Susie I had no choice. But I didn't do it with hatred. Only anger mixed with pity. He was messed up as a child and never recovered.

ELMA  
But he was guilty. He had free will.

(CONTINUED)

GINNY

I know. Oh, God, look at poor  
Susie.

They walk over to Susie's body. Ginny brushes away the flies  
surrounding her.

Those damned flies.

PAUL

I'm glad they're not black moths.

A light appears in the room. A bearded figure enters. Ginny  
raises her knife.

GINNY

Oh, God, not again!

She stabs at the being, but the knife goes through him. Paul  
and Mr. Miller hit him with their fists, but they fly as if  
through thin air. The being covers Susie. Ginny looks,  
motions the others back.

Wait! Watch!

There is a soft glow of light around Susie. The figure moves  
away toward the side of the barn, moves straight through as  
if nothing is there. Paul runs outside, then back inside.

PAUL

It's gone! Could that have been...

They look down at Susie. The flies are gone, and color has  
returned to her face. Her chest rises and falls. Paul puts  
his arm on Mr. Miller's shoulder and lets out a sob. Mr.  
Miller pats him on the head. Ginny kisses Susie on the  
cheek. Susie opens her eyes.

SUSIE

Ginny, my best friend. You won't  
believe where I've been.

GINNY

I think I would.

EPILOGUE:

EXT. SPRIGG PROPERTY - 2045 - DAY

Ginny and Paul, older but recognizable, have wedding rings  
on their hands. Their children, FAYE, MARK, and CATHY, stand  
beside them. The house is gone, and the entire property is  
covered by trees and bushes. The barn is no longer visible.  
Several layers of fencing--barbed wire, electric--form a  
border around the area of the barn.

(CONTINUED)



## GINNY

Ginny looks at each of her children individually as she says their names.

Faye, Mark, Cathy, when we've passed you will inherit this land. Remember the stories we told you about the barn and your granddaddy. The power in the barn is real and must remain hidden. When you receive this property, do not sell it. Do not allow anyone to enter. If some terrorist or other bad person took advantage of this power, he could destroy the world.

Faye, Mark and Cathy nod, as the group holds hands. Paul and Ginny kiss, and the group walks away.

FADE OUT