

YOUR VERY OWN

TRAVELING

SAINT

BY

BENJAMIN JAMES

Benjamin James
Judetheobacene@aol.com
909-919-5750

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP - On a variety of stuffed animals; teddy bears, dinosaurs, and a Garfield with a bandage pinned to his head.

CLOSE UP - On 'Get well soon' cards, notes, flowers, and bags of candy.

Then - A MAN enters through the door. He is the FATHER, 40, handsome, in a smart suit.

FATHER
Alright, the car's loaded up.

The Father looks over to a BOY, his son, 10, sitting on the edge of the bed. Next to the Boy, is his MOTHER, 40, attractive, tired, dressed down.

FATHER (CONT'D)
(to the Boy)
Are you ready to go home?

The Boy NODS, excited yet a little apprehensive.

The boy SLIDES off the bed.

FATHER (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

The boy pauses.

The Father kneels down and turns his back to the Boy.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Get on my back.

The boy Smiles as she LEAPS on his Father's back. The Father straightens up.

The Mother grabs the toys, the cards, and places them in a big shopping bag.

She reaches down to take a small suitcase; retracts the handle, and begins to a roll out.

The door opens to reveal an older NURSE standing in front of the family.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Okay, we're going...

The Nurse has a serious look on her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE
You can't leave yet.

FATHER
(deflated)
What? Why not?

NURSE
I'm afraid you have to see your
Transitional Agent before we can
discharge you.

MOTHER
Who's that?

FATHER
More like, what's that?

The Nurse takes a moment to answer. She looks at the Mother.

FATHER (CONT'D)
(off the Nurses look)
We'll be outside, honey.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Mother, now sitting at the foot of the bed, while the nurse stands in front of her.

NURSE
The transitional agent is someone
the hospital hires to talk with
parents of terminally ill children
who are about to be discharged.

MOTHER
What's wrong with Dr. Shah?

A beat.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
He couldn't do anything more for my
son, so he has nothing more to say
to us?

The Nurse wriggles uncomfortably.

NURSE
Its not that-

The Mother catches herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER
I'm sorry...its not your fault,
(frustrated)
its no-ones fault.

The Mother RUBS her eyes.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I'm just tired. I don't think I can
listen to another pitch on
holistic, or alternative
treatments.

NURSE
Well this agent is more of a
chaperon between you and the
hospital. He'll explain what you
should expect now that you're no
longer in the care of the hospital.

The mother looks at the Nurse, bewildered, if not, slightly
amused.

MOTHER
Okay...It just sounds like hospital
politics to me.
(sighs)
But I'll talk to him, I guess.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - MOMENTS LATER

The Mother and Father stand in the middle of a quiet
children's ward. The Boy is standing besides them.

MOTHER
Why don't you two wait downstairs,
maybe get something to eat. I'll
talk to this guy. Humor him.
Shouldn't be too long.

FATHER
You sure?

MOTHER
Yeah.

The Mother kisses the Father on the cheek.

The Father looks down at the Boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER

Come on, sounds like your mother is full of good ideas today.

The Mother watches her family walk off.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

The Mother waits in a small, cluttered office. There are files on every available surface. She looks around, humored by the chaos.

THEN.

The AGENT, 50, walks in. He is a giant of a man. So much, that when the Mother sees him, she is taken back by his height.

AGENT

Hi, sorry to keep you waiting.

They SHAKE hands.

The Agent sits behind his desk, which now looks, comically small in his presence.

The Mother studies him quickly. He seems; JOLLY.

AGENT (CONT'D)

Right.

MOTHER

Are you a doctor?

AGENT

Do I look like one?

MOTHER

Your office doesn't...elude to that.

AGENT

Very observant. Most doctors are utterly anal about cleanliness and organization. Not me. No. I'm a-

MOTHER

Transitional agent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT

Yes.

(robotic)

And a transitional agent provide a service, on your behalf, as you segue from the care of the hospital to now caring for your son, full time.

(normal)

You've been used to twenty four assistance, for a long time. Now, we pass the baton to you.

The prospect hits the Mother hard. She reaches into her blouse and pulls out a Crucifix necklace. She starts to RUB it.

The agent notices this.

AGENT (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

A million miles away, the Mother SNAPS back to reality.

MOTHER

What? Yeah. I guess I never thought of it like that.

AGENT

Not many do. Most family members are just happy to have them in a familiar environment. But its a change, for everyone.

MOTHER

I suppose for the last year, all I've been, is...present.

AGENT

No, you've been here. You've been your sons biggest help. An unconditional support system.

The Mother starts to TEAR UP.

A beat.

MOTHER

You know, I tried everything to distract him from all the injections, the constant medicine he had to take;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MOTHER (CONT'D)

not forgetting and the countless operations he had to go through and recover from. I would read to him, sing to him. Played video games with him. I invited every person he's ever known to come visit. I, me, personally traveled hours to pick up grand parents, just so they could see him one last time.

(laughs)

I even hired a magician, just for him; anything to pick up his spirit

(a beat)

And then you realize; at some point, there's nothing doctors can do, nothing that love ones can do, nothing any sacrifice can do...there's just nothing left, to do.

The agent moves from his desk and walks over to the Mother. She kneels down. He opens his arms, which shocks the Mother. She gives in to his invitation to hug.

AGENT

So how much do you believe in that necklace of yours?

The Mother pulls away, stares down at her crucifix, still in her hand.

She looks up at the agent, confused.

MOTHER

You're not supposed to talk about that kind of thing, are you?

AGENT

Well...I'm technically not an employe of the hospital so I can give spiritual guidance if need be.

MOTHER

(smirks)

Do you have a pamphlet?

The agent smiles as the mother wipes away her tears.

The agent returns to his side of the desk.

AGENT

No, but I heard the bibles a good read.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The Mother laughs.

MOTHER

So are you a religious man, or are you offering spirituality as just another way of coping?

AGENT

I would say, I'm a believer...

The Mother stares at the Agent, nervous to hope again.

The Agent reaches into a desk drawer. He pulls out a small card and hands it over to the Mother.

AGENT (CONT'D)

First things first. A name.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The Father drives home as the Mother sits in the passenger seat. She is engrossed by a small CARD she holds in her hands.

INT. HOUSE - BOYS BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Boy is sound asleep in his bed. His bedroom, lit by a single night light, is visibly loaded with toys and gifts from friends and family.

INT. HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

The Mother and Father are preparing for bed; in the middle of an argument.

FATHER

So what did he say? You haven't said a word since we left the hospital.

MOTHER

Nothing. It was just someone to help with all the changes we're going through.

FATHER

That's it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER

(looses temper)

Yes! That's it! What else is there to say?!

They both calm down.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

We did talk about...faith.

FATHER

I knew it. I knew there was something else. And to shove religion down your throat...its kind of like insult to injury. Hey, science didn't work, why not try God!

MOTHER

What are you talking about? We're Catholic! I've been going to mass every chance I could!

The father, somehow looks guilty at this comment.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(off his look)

Haven't you?

FATHER

Look, I had to work, a lot-

MOTHER

Which you insist on reminding me-

FATHER

I didn't get as many chances to go and kneel before a God, that I'm not sure I believe anymore. I'm surprised you still believe after all this.

The Mother is taken back by the Father's comment.

MOTHER

You don't believe in God anymore?

The Father takes a moment before he answers. The weight of his answer would be something he couldn't take back.

FATHER

(calming down)

Ah....no.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The mother stands stunned, while the father pulls the sheets to the bed back, and crawls into bed.

He turns his back to the Mother while she stands, defenseless.

TITLE: TWO WEEKS LATER

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

We look out at a wall of bay windows that over look a large grassy garden. A dining room table sits in view too.

MOTHER (O.S.)

No...he had to go back to work. He took the first week off...

(excited)

Actually, he's doing really well.

The Mother steps over to the window. She is holding a phone up to her ear.

A dog RUNS past.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(into phone)

He's a different boy...well they gave us two months, but...god, he's doing really well.

Suddenly the Boy RUNS past the window too. He SPRINTS after the dog.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(still into phone)

He's running around, playing a lot. He even asked me if he could go back to school again...I know!

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The Mother is brushing her teeth, looking the mirror, in the en-suite bathroom.

BEDROOM -

The father walks in, PLANTS himself on the bed. He's dog-gone tired.

He starts to untie his shoe laces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We hear the sound of SPITTING and WATER RUNNING.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Hey.

FATHER

Hey.

The Mother walks in.

MOTHER

Why are you working so late?

FATHER

Because I have too.

Feeling an impending argument, the Mother moves slowly over to the Father and WRAPS her legs around his thighs.

He takes her in his arms. They start to KISS. Its been a while.

MOTHER

Well, thank you, for doing what you do.

She Kisses his neck.

FATHER

How is he today?

MOTHER

He's fine...

She starts to undo his shirt.

FATHER

He had a bad day?

The mother stops. She looks at the Father.

MOTHER

(defensive)

No. He had a good one. A good week in fact.

FATHER

Why are you being defensive?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MOTHER

I'm not. Besides, I'm trying to seduce you, do you remember how that goes?

FATHER

I'm so tired I can't even keep my eyes open. I had to pull over on the way home.

The Mother get's off him.

MOTHER

Whatever.

She walks back into the bathroom.

The Father regrets his words, continues to undress.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'm fine by the way.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

The Mother walks down the hallway. She pokes her head into the Boy's room.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - SAME

The Boy is laying in bed, but not sleeping.

MOTHER

Hey. Time to get up.

Nothing. No movement.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I thought we could go for a bike ride today.

She moves over to the boy. He looks Pale. The mother places her hand on his head.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Not today?

The boy SHAKES his head.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The Mother is at the kitchen table collecting paperwork off of the surface.

Suddenly, she becomes unmotivated and PLOPS herself down on a chair.

Her hands shift through the papers. She picks up a small business sized card.

CLOSE UP - On the Card. Its blank on one side, but then its flipped over and the card reads: ST. BART.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

The boy, still in bed, looks out of the window. Its raining. The light all around him is gloomy.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

The Mother POURS herself some Vodka and makes a mixed drink.

The Phone RINGS.

The Phone is just in reach, but the Mother let's it RING.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Father and Mother are getting into bed.

MOTHER
Martin called me today.

FATHER
Really?

MOTHER
Yeah. Left me a voice mail asking
about coming back to work...

The husband moves closer to his wife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I didn't answer it, but I thought to myself, hey, I should be angry that he asked me that, but I wasn't. The world is going to be the same the very next minute after our son dies. And I have a job to go back too.

FATHER

You shouldn't have to be thinking about going back to work-

MOTHER

Why? You go every day.

FATHER

I know, but...

A beat.

The wife turns to her husband.

MOTHER

Could you stay home tomorrow?

EXT. STREET - DAY

CLOSE UP - ON the WHEELS of a bike as they move slowly.

THEN.

The Mother and Father are behind their son, PUSHING the bike gently down the road.

The Son's face is elated. He rides care free as his parents do all the work.

The Father and Mother let go of the bike and watch their Son gain momentum.

FROM BEHIND - The Son PEDDLES the bike HARD.

He keeps going in a straight line before starting to VEER off to the side. He is heading for the sidewalk.

ON the Father, as he motions for him to TURN his handle bars.

The Son keeps going towards to the Sidewalk. He HITS it.

The Parents RUN after him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As they reach him the Son is on the floor. He is having a SEIZURE. Blood pours from his nose like a gushing stream.

He looks up at his parents before his eyes roll up into his skull.

FADE TO:

INT. MASTERBEDROOM - MORNING

CLOSE UP - On the Mother's face, laying on her side in bed. She is awake.

With all of her strength she pulls the covers off.

She sits up.

She reaches for the bedside table, and opens the drawer. She pulls out the Card with St. Bart on it.

She stares at it for a moment. She takes a deep breath.

CLOSE UP - On the card: ST. BART.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL ROOM - BANGLADESH INDIA - SAME

In a small room that resembles a mud hut, A MAN sleeps on a thin mattress on the floor. It is the only furniture in the room. The Man is covered by a thin blanket. He is asleep.

CLOSE UP - on his face, asleep.

INT. MASTERBEDROOM - SAME

CLOSE UP - On the Mother's LIPS as she mouths words. We can't HEAR her; but reading her lips she says; *ST. BART.*

INT. SMALL ROOM - BANGLADESH INDIA - SAME

CLOSE UP - On the MAN, an Indian Man. His eyes BURST OPEN.

FADE OUT.

YOUR VERY OWN TRAVELING SAINT - PART ONE - BY BENJAMIN JAMES

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: