

LOVE AND EMBALMING FLUID

written by

Sarah Knapp

323.978.3308
sarahknapp@hotmail.com

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

BETH TRUDA (40), in a black dress that makes her appear older than her years, stands next to KOSTAS THORNE (early 30s), in a shirt and tie, sleeves rolled up, looking much younger than his years, at the kitchen sink. He washes dishes, she dries.

BETH

She would have loved that we didn't have to wear snow boots or break out the hand warmers.

(beat)

You don't need to do this, Kostas, really.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD (80s) pours Crown Royal into a glass at the island behind them. He takes an extra slug straight from the bottle before screwing the cap back on.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

The amount the boy charges for his services, you should let him! Your mother's embalming alone cost more than--

BETH

Leonard!

Leonard winks at Beth and leaves the room.

BETH

I'm sorry, my uncle has lost anything resembling a filter he ever had.

Kostas smiles a smile that could melt the Antarctic ice shelf.

KOSTAS

Leonard attends nearly every viewing I host at the funeral home. I'm well acquainted with his opinions on my price points, among other things.

They work in SILENCE for a moment.

KOSTAS

How are you doing? Really doing?

BETH

Me? I'm fine. Fine.

Kostas turns off the water and rolls down his shirt sleeves.

KOSTAS
 You buried your mother this
 morning. Today is the one day you
 don't have to be fine, Mrs. Truda.

BETH
 Please, call me Beth.

KOSTAS
 (definitively)
 Beth.

He picks up a tray of clean glasses and carries them out of the room.

Beth picks up a tray of cookies and turns to JESSICA TRUDA (20), also in black, who is engrossed in her phone at the kitchen table.

BETH
 Can you please take these out to
 the guests?

Jessica makes no indication she hears her mother.

BETH
 (louder)
 Jessica.

JESSICA
 What?

BETH
 Take these out. And bring back any
 dirty dishes you see.

JESSICA
 She was my grandma, don't I get a
 few minutes to--

The look Beth gives her daughter shuts her up and Jessica takes the cookies as BARRY TRUDA (45), quarterback handsome in his youth but not anymore, hurries into the room.

BARRY
 (to Jessica)
 Hi, baby. Thank you for helping
 today.

He kisses her forehead. She smiles a little too sweetly at her mother and leaves with the cookies.

Beth slides into Barry's arms as she has a million times before. For a moment, they are content. And then--

BARRY

You need to be out there. People want to give you their condolences.

BETH

I just need--

BARRY

And smile a little, it wouldn't kill you.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth pulls a pack of cigarettes from behind a garden gnome in the backyard. She lights one and takes a long draw. She stares at an abandoned basketball hoop and sorry flower beds.

Leonard joins her. Beth passes him a cigarette and lights it.

BETH

What did she do all day? She never had a job after I moved out.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

She kept the house, fed your father and me for our whole lives, ran circles around her pinochle club--

BETH

I guess I should learn to play.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

You could go back to social work.

BETH

That was a long time ago, I never finished college--

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

There's one big-ass difference between your mother and you, Bethie.

He drops his cigarette and stamps it out.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

She's dead. You're not.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth sprays Leonard and herself with Febreze in the kitchen. He COUGHS.

Kostas and ROXANNE HALL (40), dressed to kill, which isn't entirely appropriate for a funeral, enter the kitchen pulling on winter coats and hats.

Beth shoves the Febreze out of sight.

KOSTAS

Tomorrow I'll pick up the photo boards and take any flowers you don't want to keep to the hospital.

BETH

Thank you, for everything, Kostas.

He heads out. Leonard grabs the Crown Royal bottle and follows him.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

I've got a few thoughts on your cookie selection for the afternoon viewings, boy. Let's talk oatmeal versus molasses.

Kostas smiles back at Beth and Roxanne.

Roxanne licks her lips after Kostas.

BETH

Do you want to take leftovers?

ROXANNE

I'll just eat when I'm over tomorrow. Save a Ziploc. Are you going to be okay alone tonight?

BETH

I've got Barry.

ROXANNE

Like I said, will you be okay alone tonight?

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth lies in her bed, awake. She rolls over and she's alone. She looks at a framed photo of her and Barry.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Beth, in a negligee, enters the guest room, where it's evident Barry spends every night. A miniature bottle of alcohol, a Bible and spent notepads litter the bedside table. A box of trophies and certificates sits in the corner.

Barry is awake, facing the wall.

BETH

Barry?

Barry FAKE SNORES. Beth sits down on the bed.

BETH

We've been married twenty years. I know you don't snore when you're really asleep.

There's a long moment before Barry turns around and faces Beth.

BARRY

What do you need?

BETH

I don't need anything. But I want...

She puts a hand on his chest and moves in for a kiss. They kiss like they used to...and then he pushes away from her and sits up.

BARRY

I've got a busy day tomorrow, Beth. A sermon to write, visits to two different hospitals...

There's a moment between them. Barry moves over. Beth lays down next to him. He pulls the covers over her. He leaves his arm around her. Her eyes close.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth opens her eyes in the kitchen. She slides a cake in the oven to bake and pours herself a glass of wine. Roxanne drinks wine and scrolls through her phone.

Jessica enters in a hurry. She has a pile of dresses over her arm, still on hangers.

JESSICA

Tommy's taking me out to celebrate acing my oral bio midterm--

BETH
An A? Awesome!

JESSICA
I lost a point because even though living organisms increase in complexity as they grow--

BETH
You don't have to explain--

JESSICA
--resulting in a decrease in the entropy of an organism, the second law of thermodynamics.

BETH
Okay.

JESSICA
You're sure it's okay I bail on dinner?

BETH
Go. Have fun with Tommy, Goose.

Jessica kisses Beth's cheek then Roxanne's and leaves.

ROXANNE
She's back to pre-med?

BETH
For the moment. She may be a Mensa member but she's a twenty-year-old in every other way.

Roxanne takes a selfie against a blank wall.

ROXANNE
Aren't we all.

BETH
She called him her fiancé the other day.

ROXANNE
They've gotten--

BETH
No! She's just...she truly believes she can have it all. The fairytale, the career, the world--

ROXANNE
(proudly)
You did that.

BETH
Don't remind me.

Beth crosses out Dinner with Jessica in her day planner. Other than that her week is empty. She flips back through the past few months, the days are filled, mostly with appointments and reminders for her mom.

BETH
There were so many appointments.
She was sick for so long... But I
still wasn't prepared for it. I
mean, my days have certainly freed
up...

Roxanne scrolls through her phone. Beth drops the day planner into the trash can. Roxanne holds up her wine glass in salute.

ROXANNE
To a fresh start!
(off her phone)
With him.

BETH
I thought you were googling
classifieds for me.

ROXANNE
You don't need a job. You need a
passion. You need him.

Beth looks over at Roxanne's phone.

BETH
He matched with you?

ROXANNE
He will.

Beth finishes her wine.

BETH
I need a job.

She gets up and pours half a glass. Then tops it off.

BETH
Fred literally pushed me out of
the flower shop. There's a help
wanted sign in the window.
(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

It's been there for months. To quote, "Women like Eileen Thompson have to work, not you, Mrs. Truda. You have a good man."

ROXANNE

It's odd that as a florist he's never met Barry...

BETH

Phil tried to sell me vitamins when I handed him my application at the pharmacy. And I quote, to pep you up, young lady.

ROXANNE

I might need some vitamins to keep up with him.

She holds her phone up to Beth.

BETH

I wish finding your life's purpose was as easy as finding a guy to have dinner with--

ROXANNE

Who said anything about dinner?

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Beth sits at a desk in the office, Kostas sits across from her.

BETH

...but that's enough about my boring life. You came by to talk to Barry, not listen to me go on and on.

KOSTAS

You are about as far from boring as a woman could get, Beth Truda.

Beth soaks that in for a moment.

BETH

How are you? How is the remodel going?

KOSTAS

Slower than I anticipated. The contractor thinks that--

Beth's attention is drawn to the hallway where DIANE ASHLAND (40s) and another WOMAN (40s) stand in the hallway and WHISPER to one another.

KOSTAS

I should go, I'm keeping you--

BETH

I'm just here to answer the phones during the staff meeting. It's fine.

(quietly)

Diane is not a fan of mine. We'll be the talk of her knitting club tonight.

Kostas raises an eyebrow.

BETH

It's a cover. They just drink and gossip.

KOSTAS

(with a wink)

We should have our own knitting club.

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Beth unpacks grocery sacks. Jessica types on her phone.

JESSICA

I saw him slipping something into his drawer the other day. It looked like a ring box.

BETH

Since when does he have a drawer?

TOMMY (21), clad in low-slung pajama pants, joins them. He YAWNS and kisses Jessica.

TOMMY

Mrs. T., what's up?

Jessica runs her hand over Tommy's bare chest.

BETH

Do you like waffles, Tommy?

TOMMY

Awesome. I'll hop in the shower.

Tommy leaves. Beth ties on an apron and gets to work. Jessica waits until she's sure Tommy can't hear. She unties her mother's apron.

JESSICA

I'm not going to be proposed to in front of my mother!

BETH

You asked me to help you learn some of grandma's recipes.

JESSICA

I thought I'd have it by now. The ring. And until I do--

Jessica repacks Beth's bags as she unpacks them.

BETH

Jessica.

JESSICA

You have to go. This is a big deal. Don't you remember the day Daddy asked you to marry him? It must have been so romantic.

BETH

If you call standing in the parking lot of Matthew's Pharmacy and him announcing we were going to get married romantic then yes. But this isn't about your father and me.

JESSICA

It never is.

BETH

(resigned)

We were buying a third pregnancy test. I didn't want to believe the first two.

Jessica stops repacking the grocery bags.

BETH

Tommy may love you but he's not ready to marry you, Goose. And you're not ready to marry him. Don't do that to yourself.

Tommy bounds back into the room in board shorts and still no shirt.

TOMMY
No waffles?

Beth takes off the apron.

BETH
Be careful with each other.

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - A MOMENT LATER

Beth, in the entry way, puts on a coat and hat. She ties her scarf.

JESSICA
Mommy?

Beth turns to Jessica and sees her face.

BETH
I wanted you. So much. I just didn't know it then. I wanted you and my life and everything I got.

JESSICA
But you didn't want him.

BETH
I did, Goose. I did. It's just, we grow up so much every day. We change. We turn into other people. You will too. You and Tommy will not be the same people in ten years, or even ten days.

Beth wipes at the tears that roll down Jessica's face.

BETH
Tommy's a good boy. And he's been good for you. But he's not your happy ending. He's not even your beginning.

INT. BETH'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Beth boxes up framed photographs in her mother's bedroom.

Roxanne drinks a beer and pokes around.

BETH
Fifty-seven years in the same house.

Roxanne opens a closet and dozens of phone books tumble out.

ROXANNE

And she has every Yellow Pages to prove it.

BETH

I tried to get her to go through some of it years ago. She just kept saying, I don't want to remember.

Roxanne digs herself out, beer still safe in her hand.

ROXANNE

You are not your dead mother.

BETH

I just, I want, I don't know. I need to do something. Jessica doesn't want me around, my plans to visit Amish country with my mother this spring have obviously fallen through, Barry hated his muffins this morning.

ROXANNE

It's been a bad month.

BETH

It's been a bad decade.

Beth scrolls through her phone and then shows one to Roxanne.

BETH

Here's the family photo you took after Mom's funeral.

ROXANNE

I should have noticed you weren't in it.

Beth opens a drawer in her mother's dresser.

BETH

I can't be missing from my own life anymore.

There's a BUZZ.

BETH

And it just keeps getting better.

ROXANNE

Mice?

BETH
My dead mother's vibrator.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth and Roxanne unload boxes from Beth's car in the driveway. Beth tries to carry as many as possible.

BETH
Can we postpone tonight--

ROXANNE
You don't postpone your fortieth birthday.

BETH
I have Barry's award ceremony and then I just want to come home and--

Roxanne adds another box to Beth's stack.

ROXANNE
Unacceptable. Stupid award thingy then heavy drinking and steaks at The Emerald Lounge. They have that garlic butter that you just want to spread on your entire body.

BETH
(beat)
Will there be cake?

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

A banner announces the 'Hopswell Helper - Volunteer of the Year' Ceremony in Lawson Hall. There are twenty or so PEOPLE in the room mingling.

CATALINA WALLSWORTH (15) records on her phone.

Beth refills her glass at the punch bowl. Roxanne adds to Beth's glass from a flask.

ROXANNE
Who drinks pineapple juice without vodka?

Diane Ashland helps herself to precisely half of a glass of punch.

DIANE
Lutherans, and pastors' wives I'd
guess.

Diane moves on.

ROXANNE
Remind me not to give the
Lutherans a tryout during pledge
week.

Roxanne drains her glass and refills it straight from the
flask. She refills Beth's from the flask as well.

BETH
What right does she have to judge
me? Remember when she protested
outside of Sefa's grocery store?

ROXANNE
The donuts! She was pissed they
stopped making their own donuts!

BETH
The first truck bringing donuts in
from wherever, she walked around
and around it carrying a sign
saying something about eat local,
our sprinkles will save our
community.

Beth takes a drink. It's strong. She takes another drink.

ROXANNE
Chocolate sprinkles...on a
chocolate cake donut. Jesus
fucking Christ those were so
good...

BETH
It has been a really long month.
And I bet she doesn't even know
it's my birthday. No one cares.

Roxanne CLEARS HER THROAT.

BETH
You know. I know. But Jessica
didn't remember. Barry doesn't
care. And I'm--

Beth's phone BUZZES.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Barry sets his phone down on his desk and refocuses his attention on a spreadsheet.

DAVID CHARLES (50s), sits across from him, with his own spreadsheet, and watches Barry for a moment.

DAVID
We have to trust that God's way
will prevail.

BARRY
(without looking up)
Does His will come with a cash
advance?

DAVID
You're right where He wants you to
be--

BARRY
I'm a middle-aged pastor who's
church is crumbling around him.
There aren't enough hours in the
day to fundraise and serve my
flock.

DAVID
Being angry won't help you do
either.

BARRY
And talking about my feelings
won't help us balance the books.
Drop it, David.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Beth reads her phone then turns back to Roxanne in the middle of the hall.

BETH
Barry's still meeting with his
boss. He wants me to accept the
award for him.

ROXANNE
Shocker.

Catalina approaches them, phone up.

CATALINA
Miss Beth? Miss Roxanne?

They smash together in a pose for Catalina who snaps a few shots.

CATALINA
Thanks, Misses!

The girl leaves. Roxanne drains her glass. Beth matches her.

ROXANNE
Okay, we got this. Quick speech
then cake. All the cake. Your
husband is not about to ruin your
fortieth birthday, not on my
watch.

Roxanne straightens Beth's clothes and they both stand up a bit straighter. But drunk straighter.

BETH
(teary)
I don't deserve you.

ROXANNE
Yes. You fucking do.

The lights go down and a PowerPoint presentation begins: Hopswell Helper of the Year. Barry's photo flashes with the title: Reverend Barry Truda, First Church of Hopswell. Then photos from various charity events. Barry appears in some, Beth in more. She's painting, hauling trash, reading to children.

ROXANNE
(whispers)
Your husband's an ass.

The lights come back up and Diane taps the microphone. Beth snatches the flask from Roxanne and drains it.

DIANE
Even though he can't be with us
tonight, we can still celebrate
him!

Diane APPLAUDS and gets the crowd to APPLAUD with her.

DIANE
Reverend Truda just does so much,
doesn't he? So without further
ado, to accept this year's
'Hopswell Helper' award on his
behalf, his wife, Mrs. Barry
Truda!

The crowd APPLAUDS. Beth pulls Roxanne up on stage with her. Beth accepts a large plaque. Diane pushes the microphone toward Beth.

BETH

Barry, ah Reverend Truda, he's ah, really appreciative. He always talks about how important it is to give back. Yep.

She looks around the room.

BETH

Like, when he was at the weekend cleanup--

She looks up at the photos but he's not hauling trash, she is.

BETH

Or that time we helped the youth group wash cars to raise--

Nope.

BETH

No. You know what? Just no. He couldn't even be bothered to show up tonight, much less any other time. He's not the Hopswell Helper. I am! And I don't get paid. Or get any awards! I try to help my daughter to make smart choices but she still insists on sleeping with that idiot. And don't get me started on my mother. I helped her constantly and all she ever did was criticize. As if a little dust on her buffet might kill her.

Beth stops, eyes wide.

BETH

Maybe it did...

Roxanne reaches for the microphone. Beth pulls it away.

ROXANNE

Honey, let's wrap it up.

They wrestle over the microphone.

BETH
I think I need to make a change,
do something, before I snap.

Beth holds up the plaque and pretends to snap it in half. It really does snap in half.

ROXANNE
Fuck me--

BETH
Barry wouldn't mind.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Beth and Roxanne stumble into the church office. They are very drunk. She holds up the broken plaque.

BETH
(to Roxanne)
Just a really quick apology. I
think he'll have super glue.

TRACY (25), a total hipster, sits at her desk. Beth WHISPER YELLS.

BETH
Tracy! You're working late! Wait,
it's late right?

TRACY
My Ebay auction's got another half
hour...the stuffed cat they used
on Sabrina, the Teenage Witch. My
husband prefers Bewitched but we
compromise.

Roxanne and Beth mull this information over.

TRACY
Looks like you had fun at the
awards ceremony! I'll tell
Reverend Truda you're here.

INT. CHURCH - A MOMENT LATER

Certificates, trophies and medals fill Barry's office. And Barry, sleeves rolled up, runs full out on the treadmill in the corner. He stares at an old framed photograph of a high school track team.

Tracy CLEARS HER THROAT.

BARRY

What?

TRACY

Your wife's here.

BARRY

I'm busy.

TRACY

I think it's important.

BARRY

She's not. I mean, it's not.

Tracy turns to face Beth in the outer office. Beth drops the plaque on the counter, tears in her eyes. Roxanne's eyes are on fire. She pushes into Barry's office.

ROXANNE

Nope.

BETH

Roxanne, please, let's just--

Barry locks eyes with Roxanne. He slows down the treadmill.

ROXANNE

Your wife turned forty today. And she did your bidding. And this is how you end her evening?!

Tracy has gone back to her desk but she's totally listening. Beth has left. Roxanne looks wildly around the room.

ROXANNE

You sit here, in your church, and you preach love. Unconditional fucking love. And then you go home and you...you...

Barry stops. They stare at each other for a moment. Then she leaves. He gets off the treadmill and slams the door so hard it falls off the hinges. Because of course it does.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth is asleep. Barry stands outside of her bedroom and watches her through the open door. He closes his eyes. Prays.

He KNOCKS on Beth's open bedroom door. He KNOCKS again, louder. Beth opens her eyes.

BETH
What?

BARRY
I'm...I'm...

He takes a deep breath. And another.

BETH
Go to bed, Barry.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Barry sits behind his desk. GREG (30s) and GEORGE PAUL (30s), sit in front of him.

BARRY
So Greg, you'll walk down the aisle with your mother, and George Paul, have you confirmed who'll be accompanying you down the aisle?

GEORGE PAUL
My mother, my stepmother, and my ex-father-in-law. It's messy but it--

BARRY
--works. It all works. I think we're set for tomorrow.

Kostas and SHERIFF SUSAN SHAFFER (50s) knock on Barry's open, broken door.

GREG
Oh God, Sheriff Shaffer.

GEORGE PAUL
And the undertaker? What's wrong?

SHERIFF SHAFFER
(a nod)
Boys.

BARRY
Will you excuse me for a moment?

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Barry turns to Kostas and Sheriff Shaffer in the outer office.

BARRY
 Sheriff, Kostas, what can I help
 you with?

KOSTAS
 I need to host a viewing here--

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 We had to close him down,
 Reverend. New construction
 inspectors found asbestos.

KOSTAS
 --Mrs. Kinney from Flowerville.
 She was a hundred and four, no
 friends left. A couple of great
 grandchildren. It'll be a small
 viewing, small funeral.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 I need to make sure we get this DB
 taken care of, bad for PR if we
 don't handle it a-sap.

Sheriff Shaffer picks up a bagged wedding favor and unties the
 ribbon.

BARRY
 George Paul and Greg's wedding is
 tomorrow. You can hold the funeral
 here Sunday afternoon.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 (brightens)
 A-Okay. Problem solved, good deal.

She eats the favor from the bag.

KOSTAS
 Nope. That's why I'm here. It
 needs to be tomorrow. The great
 grandkids have non-refundable
 flights booked. I promised them a
 viewing tonight and a service in
 the morning.

BARRY
 We've been planning this wedding
 for eighteen months.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 Well, shit. Sorry Reverend. We got
 us a real health emergency here.

Barry looks at Sheriff Shaffer, eating the wedding favor.

BARRY
That's birdseed.

Sheriff Shaffer nods, continuing to chew.

KOSTAS
If I can't follow through Chadwick
has already told them he can.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
Chadwick?

Barry and Kostas speak at the same time.

BARRY
Flowerville Funerals.

KOSTAS
Flowerville Funerals.

KOSTAS
Reverend, if I lose business, you
lose business. You know that.

BARRY
What about the chapel? It's--

KOSTAS
--a glorified storage room.

BARRY
How about Lawson Hall? We could
move the volleyball equipment to
the side and--

KOSTAS
Reverend.

BARRY
Fine. Have it...have it...have
it...

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth stares at a casket in her living room just...angry. And
dumbfounded.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Beth stands in front of Barry's treadmill in his office. He
walks.

BETH
--in our house.

BARRY
Quiet down. Someone'll hear you.

BETH
But the person in my living room
won't because she's dead!

BARRY
It's twenty-four hours then Kostas
has the carpets cleaned and it's
over.

BETH
I don't care about the carpets.

BARRY
I can't do this with you again,
another fight neither of us will
win. I have a wedding tomorrow. A
funeral. Another sermon to write.
And another and another--

BETH
This isn't something to win. This
is something to talk about. To
figure out, together.

He turns the treadmill speed up and runs. She leaves.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Kostas and Beth stare at the casket in the living room.

KOSTAS
The family loved the cookies.

Beth touches the casket.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth tosses and turns in bed. She finally gets up, turns on the light, and wraps herself in a robe. She sits on the edge of the bed and stares at the open bedroom door.

She closes the bedroom door.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth opens the lid of the casket in her living room. She straightens the pillow and finally looks at Mrs. Kinney's BODY.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Barry, ready to leave for the day, loosens his belt a notch and exhales. He yells into the kitchen from the hall.

BARRY

Did you make different muffins?

He pokes his head in and sees the kitchen is empty. He turns to the living room and notices Beth sitting on the floor with her back against the casket, sound asleep.

He goes to a basket in the corner, pulls out a blanket, and spreads it over Beth. He watches her for a moment, looks at the casket, shivers, then leaves.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - A MOMENT LATER

Beth looks at the casket and then moves on and sets cookies down on the hall table as a mourner, GRETCHEN (20s), approaches Beth. Kostas is just behind her.

GRETCHEN

Do you have a wooden chair Grandma could use?

BETH

Of course--

Kostas indicates he'll get one.

GRETCHEN

She's actually my great grandmother. My grandmother passed away several years ago. It's weird that the youngest grandma I had died first.

Gretchen tears up.

GRETCHEN

I hadn't seen Grandma Kinney in a few years. She always wanted me to come visit but never pushed. She even sent money...

BETH

What kept you away?

GRETCHEN

First it was school, then lacrosse, even in the off-season there was training and I had to work and--

She CRIES. Beth hugs her.

BETH

Did she like that you played?

GRETCHEN

The neighbor ladies could probably recite my stats by heart.

BETH

You made her happy.

Kostas gives Gretchen a chair and she heads back.

KOSTAS

You're good with people.

BETH

Coat check is not a hard job.

KOSTAS

That was a little more than coat check.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - A MOMENT LATER

Roxanne eats cookies in the kitchen.

ROXANNE

Is he going to build a new funeral home? Or rent?

BETH

What if...

ROXANNE

I've heard asbestos can be a real bitch to get out.

BETH

This really is the perfect house for a funeral home...

ROXANNE

(catching on)

You are good with people.

BETH

People who aren't my family.

ROXANNE

Luckily that's most of the world.

BETH

The bank denied our second mortgage. Barry's car needs new tires. And I just put a seventeen hundred dollar deposit down on my own funeral.

ROXANNE

Kostas is worse than Jimmy down at the Lemon Lot. I reserved a red velvet cushion and string quartet. Boy's got moves.

BETH

He does.

ROXANNE

It's not a bad idea. Earn a little extra scratch.

BETH

And I like having him around.

Roxanne nods like, I bet you do.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

The mourners and casket are gone. Beth and Kostas rearrange living room furniture.

KOSTAS

Mrs. Kinney would have approved. I think she made it to every service I held last year. She loved a good twenty-third psalm.

BETH

Did you know her great great granddaughter plays professional lacrosse? She made four goals in her last game. She's an attackman which means her stick is shorter than other players'.

They work in SILENCE for a moment.

BETH

This worked, here... Right?

KOSTAS

Yeah...

BETH

I was thinking, I could rent you part of the house, and work for you.

KOSTAS

I could pay for some upgrades. New paint, carpet, a little landscaping...

(so hesitant)

And you could work with me...

Beth throws her arms around Kostas.

BETH

This is going to be great!

Barry enters. Beth and Kostas break apart.

BETH

Barry, I got a job!

BARRY

(realizing what's happened)

No.

BETH

Yes! Just while Kostas deals with his remodel.

BARRY

Dead people, here--

BETH

You were fine with it yesterday.

BARRY

And you weren't. In fact, you were vehemently opposed to it. And said we needed to discuss things like this--

BETH

And you didn't care about discussing anything. You made a unilateral decision without considering my feelings or--

BARRY

It was an emergency.

KOSTAS
I'll let you two talk.

Kostas slips out. Neither Beth nor Barry notice.

BETH
This is happening.

BARRY
Over my dead body.

BETH
Don't tempt me.

Barry's phone BUZZES. He checks it: a text from Tracy.

TRACY (TEXT)
Aaron Lee is back in the hospital.
Told family you'd be by tonight
when they called the office.

Barry shoves his phone in his pocket.

BARRY
The church has to have a friendly
relationship with the only
mortuary in town. Yesterday was a
one-time favor to maintain that--

BETH
Then consider this a favor as
well. He needs a place to run his
business from, I need a job. It'll
be good for the church, for
Kostas--

BARRY
So this is about Kostas!

BETH
No, I mean, yes, I mean--

BARRY
A man's house should be his
refuge. A place where he can go
and think, work, be alone.

BETH
Alone? Really.

BARRY
This isn't over.

BETH
It never is.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Barry sits behind his desk, office phone to his ear.

BARRY
 (into phone)
 ...maybe your anger comes from something else. Maybe it's more about the heirloom's ownership and less about your cousin's aggressive expression of his opinion about--

BEAT.

BARRY
 (into phone)
 Yes, yes. I understand. But the clock isn't yours anymore.

BEAT.

BARRY
 (Into phone)
 No. I don't know if Jesus would have given you the clock. Yes, certainly. On Sunday. I'm putting it in my calendar right now.

He does not put it in his calendar. He hangs up the phone and enjoys the quiet for a moment before--

David Charles enters the office with a KNOCK on the broken door.

DAVID
 Hi, Barry. Can we chat?

BARRY
 (so unimpressed)
 Of course, David.

David sits.

DAVID
 The numbers aren't as high as the district office would like them to be.

BARRY
 Membership or financial pledges?

DAVID
 Both.
 (MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

You keep telling us you're working on it but we haven't seen increases.

BARRY

We were at capacity on Christmas Eve.

DAVID

It was Christmas, Barry.

(beat)

The idea of combining this church with Flowerville is officially on the table. The district just can't continue to support two struggling congregations in this area. It's time to start praying about restructuring.

BARRY

(angry)

All I do is pray. All. Day. Long.

Barry stands.

DAVID

This isn't your fault, Barry. You have to know that.

BARRY

Explain to me how the failure of my church, of my congregation, isn't about me.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth and Kostas unpack boxes in a room that's becoming the funeral home office.

BETH

...it always is!

KOSTAS

Always?

BETH

You don't believe me.

KOSTAS

That your horoscope is always spot on? Well...I believe you believe that.

BETH
Do you read yours every day?

KOSTAS
Maybe I should start.

Beth's hand brushes against his as she hands him a stack of files. They share a sweet moment.

SHERIFF SHAFFER (O.S.)
(loudly)
Hello? Mrs. Truda? Anyone?

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth and Kostas enter the front hall. Sheriff Shaffer stands next to Barry, in handcuffs. Barry locks eyes with Kostas.

BARRY
(off the cuffs)
Let's leave them on a while longer, Sheriff.

The sheriff eyes a bowl of potpourri on the table.

BETH
Barry?! Sheriff?!

SHERIFF SHAFFER
Ma'am, Undertaker. We had a fist-fight with David Charles down at the church, well the reverend here socked the other reverend. Not pressin' charges, long as he keeps his hands to himself from now on.

She unlocks Barry's cuffs and sneaks a bite of potpourri.

BETH
(to Barry)
What happened?

Barry seethes in SILENCE.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
Two words: shootin' range. Great way to blow off steam.

She takes a handful of potpourri.

KOSTAS
That's potpourri, Sheriff.

The sheriff takes another handful.

SHERIFF SHAFFER

Well your pot-pour-ree ain't half bad.

She tosses the handful in her mouth and leaves. Kostas hurries back to the office. Beth stares incredulously at Barry.

BARRY

He's been looking for a reason to fire me.

BETH

So you went ahead and gave him one?

BARRY

I blew my top. It happens.

BETH

No, it doesn't. You punched one of your oldest and dearest friends. Your boss.

BARRY

The church is in trouble. I'm in trouble. We're in trouble. Big freakin' deal.

BETH

It is a big deal. Will you please talk to someone? The district has services--

BARRY

I'm the services, Beth.

He heads into the kitchen.

BARRY

(under his breath)
At least for now.

The front door opens. Jessica and Leonard enter.

JESSICA

Uncle Leonard says he hasn't seen you make a cake in over a week.

BETH

Did you and Tommy talk?

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

Kids these days text and twit, old girl.

Leonard heads into the kitchen.

JESSICA

He broke his finger in a soccer game so we've mostly been focusing on his recovery. But I want to get a head start on the wedding planning. I'm thinking spring. With gardenias.

BETH

You know I'm allergic to gardenias.

JESSICA

You have medicine, right?

Jessica kisses Beth's cheek and heads into the kitchen. Beth takes a moment. Then she grabs her coat and bag.

INT. BETH'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth sits on the floor in the living room amidst packing boxes and types on a laptop. An open beer bottle in front of her. Roxanne files her nails next to her.

BETH

(she reads off the laptop screen)

Listen to the parts of the program:
funeral service administration,
being a funeral service professional.

ROXANNE

You'd make 'Barry the Pastor' obsolete? Excellent.

Roxanne swigs her beer. Beth's phone RINGS. It's Barry. She has ten missed calls from him. She ignores this call too. She clicks on her laptop.

BETH

Ethics, sociology, and grief counseling.

ROXANNE

You counsel me all the time, maybe they'll transfer your credits.

BETH
 Managing the funeral home and
 lastly, an overview of the theory
 of embalming.

ROXANNE
 Like blood and stuff?

BETH
 There are sessions on drainage
 techniques, moisture
 considerations, preparation of
 autopsied bodies, and mortuary
 cosmetology.

ROXANNE
 You'll be a hair dresser for dead
 people? Ooh, do you think blue eye
 shadow's appropriate for a corpse?

BETH
 If not, someone should let Theresa
 Jones know. And that's just the
 beginning. There are seventeen
 sessions on embalming alone.

ROXANNE
 You're going to cut up dead
 people.

BETH
 Prepare them for burial. And it's
 not like I'd be performing
 autopsies or anything. Or even
 getting to do this for a long
 time, I'd have to be licensed,
 this program is just a theory-
 based overview.

ROXANNE
 Are you signing up?

Beth types and clicks.

BETH
 Done.

ROXANNE
 Mazel.

Beth and Roxanne clink bottles and drink. Barry enters the
 house. He waves his phone around.

BARRY

You aren't answering your phone!
We're supposed to be at the
Hendersons for dinner in thirty
minutes, Beth. They're considering
upping their donation to the--

BETH

Come celebrate with us. I just
applied for an online funeral
service education program. Plus,
with the afternoon you've had I
figured you'd want to reschedule.

BARRY

Nope.

BETH

If I'm accepted--

There's a DING. She looks at the laptop screen.

BETH

I've been accepted!

ROXANNE

You're sure they're accredited,
Joe College?

BARRY

Who's paying for this? The
undertaker you're suddenly
enamored with?

BETH

I'm selling Mom's house--

BARRY

We have a financial
responsibility--

BETH

This will be good for you. For us.

BARRY

There is no us in this.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth places a box in the corner of the basement. Jessica bounds
down the stairs.

JESSICA

So it's all the rage to have live bands at receptions but they get tired, right? I mean, they need breaks. So we'll need a DJ too.

Jessica types on her phone.

JESSICA

Can a wedding cake be chocolate?

BETH

How is it that you have an IQ that rivals the entire town combined but you don't realize that planning a wedding before you're engaged is crazy?

Jessica gives Beth a look that could kill and runs back up the stairs, passing Kostas.

KOSTAS

Hey, Jess--alright.

(to Beth)

Hi. I wasn't sure if you needed today to figure things out with Barry.

Beth looks confused.

KOSTAS

The fight? The arrest or near arrest? Or whatever that was...

BETH

Oh, he doesn't want to talk about that.

KOSTAS

But he has to, right? I mean it must be affecting him, you, Jessica--

BETH

You're not married. You're not a parent. These things--

KOSTAS

That's not fair.

BETH

But it's the truth.

KOSTAS

No. It isn't.

There's a really long PAUSE.

KOSTAS
(so quietly)
Her name was Isabel.

Beth's heart stops beating.

BETH
Your wife?

KOSTAS
My daughter.

Beth reaches out to touch him but stops herself. He's gone somewhere else.

KOSTAS
She was four months old. She
smiled at me early, earlier than
the books said she would. She was
so...

Tears fill his eyes. And then... He's back. Beth can't bear to ask him more. He shakes it off.

KOSTAS
Anyway, I came down here to ask
you if you're still alright with
all of this? Or if you need more
time. You don't have to take the
classes--

BETH
I'm good. It's all great. Though,
I should make extra cookies and
freeze them. Has anyone died yet?

KOSTAS
Could be today, tomorrow, could be
three weeks from now.

BETH
We should talk about the space.
This can be the embalming station
and we should really finish
setting up your office.

KOSTAS
Our office, for both of us.

Another shared moment. A different kind this time.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Beth and Kostas organize office supplies in the office. Kostas looks from his watch to the phone to the door.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Beth reads while Kostas plays solitaire on his phone.

KOSTAS

Chadwick's already had two this week.

BETH

His hair is ridiculously shiny.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Kostas and Beth organize the basement. They've pushed an old couch into the corner and made room for Kostas' workspace.

KOSTAS

My turn. Favorite movie.

BETH

Easy. Seven.

KOSTAS

Seriously?!

BETH

It's the only movie I ever got asked out to in high school. And I dumped my popcorn on the people in front of me halfway through it.

KOSTAS

I would have asked you out if I'd have known you in high school.

Beth hides a smile. Kostas' phone BUZZES. He reads.

KOSTAS

Someone died!

Beth does a little victory dance. Kostas joins in.

BETH

We should not be this happy! Who?

KOSTAS

Joey Spagnolo.

Beth stops.

BETH
He was in my class.

KOSTAS
Shit. I'm sorry. Were you close?

BETH
He was a horrible man, told racist
jokes, hated women. But we were
the same age.
(beat)
How?

KOSTAS
Heart attack.

There's a split second where Kostas watches Beth and then he goes to her. He wraps her in a hug.

KOSTAS
Your heart's fine.

Beth kisses him. He kisses her back.

KOSTAS
Are you sure?

BETH
No. Not at all.

She kisses him again.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Barry enters his office. David follows him in. They sit.

DAVID
...and the marketing push the
district already had in the works
goes forward as planned. But if we
don't see something drastic in the
next few weeks, we shutter the
building and combine with
Flowerville.

BARRY
And why not combine here?

DAVID
Their building's smaller, less
expensive to operate. It's all
about the numbers, Barry.

BARRY

Exactly what a church should focus on.

DAVID

The photographer will expect you at the studio tomorrow at eleven. For the billboard photographs. We're looking at several options for the marketing campaign but you're definitely in the mix.

There's SILENCE for a moment.

BARRY

David, I'm sorry, for my behavior, for hitting you and--

DAVID

I know. And I accept your apology, Barry.

David stands up, shakes Barry's hand, and leaves. Barry gets on the treadmill in the corner of the room and starts to run.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

There's a viewing in progress. MOURNERS mingle about as Beth takes coats and directs them where to go. Catalina and her MOTHER enter. Beth watches Kostas from across the room. MRS. TURNER (90s), dressed to the nines, approaches.

MRS. TURNER

You're out of Q-Tips in the bathroom.

BETH

Excuse me?

MRS. TURNER

(yelling)
Q-Tips, you're out!

She wanders off and Beth watches as a MAN picks up a candy bowl and pours the contents into his pocket. Catalina records him on her phone. Beth CHUCKLES. Kostas appears at her side.

BETH

While we have a moment...Yesterday was...

KOSTAS

Nice? Needs to happen again?

Kostas puts his hand on the small of Beth's back. Leonard joins them. Kostas removes his hand and his phone BUZZES.

KOSTAS
(to Beth)
Delivery.

BETH
Let me get it.

She leaves.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
This place is hoppin', boy. Well done. And those cookies? Much improved.

KOSTAS
That's all your niece. She's something special.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth signs papers out back with a paramedic, PATTI (30s).

BETH
Who is it?

PATTI
Mister Bancroft. We visited his place weekly.

Paramedic George Paul joins them with a body bag on a gurney.

GEORGE PAUL
This time he came with us.

PATTI
Only been cold a few hours. He called us himself but by the time we got there...

GEORGE PAUL
No need for an autopsy.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth and Kostas stand over the body bag in the basement.

KOSTAS
They're gone.

BETH
Everyone?

KOSTAS
I kick them out at nine o'clock on
the dot.

BETH
Mister Bancroft's dead.

Kostas reviews the paperwork. Beth's eyes are transfixed on the
body bag.

KOSTAS
Did you know him?

BETH
He was my high school chemistry
teacher. And basketball coach.

KOSTAS
He's not even five foot tall.

BETH
He'd stand on the bench to yell at
us. He'd get so angry.

KOSTAS
What position did you play?

BETH
Shooting guard. I averaged fifteen
points a game my senior year.

KOSTAS
Beth Truda, you just went up a
notch on my coolest person list.

She finally looks away from the body.

BETH
How many notches to go?

KOSTAS
Give me a second to take care of
things down here and then I want
to buy you a drink to celebrate
our first official viewing.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Barry is at the refrigerator in the kitchen when Beth and
Kostas enter.

BARRY
Where's dinner?

BETH
You had a finance committee meeting.

BARRY
And a missions meeting and the Girl Scouts broke a window during their meeting. Is there at least cake?

Beth's look of nope sends him over the edge. He storms out.

BETH
I might need a couple of drinks.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Barry sets a bag of fast food down on his desk without turning on the lights. He notices something in the chair in the corner.

BARRY
Jessica?

She stirs.

JESSICA
Hi, Dad.

BARRY
Baby, what are you doing here?

JESSICA
Thinking...praying...napping.

He picks up the food and sits down next to her.

JESSICA
I'm afraid Tommy's going to breakup with me.

BARRY
Why do you think that?

They eat. There's a long SILENCE.

JESSICA
It wasn't a ring box. I thought it was. In his drawer. But it wasn't.

BARRY
Why do you want to marry Tommy?

JESSICA

I love him.

BARRY

We can love people and not need to be married to them. Or live with them. Or even talk to them.

JESSICA

Then how would you share that love?

BARRY

Sometimes love just existing is enough.

JESSICA

But it's not. I love Tommy. I want to show him. And I want him to show me he loves me.

BARRY

That's a superficial ideal. You can love someone and not scream it from the rooftops.

JESSICA

But we should. We should scream it. We should whisper it. We should be it. We should want it. We should expect it. We should demand it. And we should certainly show it. God did. God does. Every day. You taught me that.

There is SILENCE again. Barry wipes his eyes.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Kostas and Beth occupy a table near the back, empty glasses in front of them.

KOSTAS

I did his father's funeral two years ago. You really know everyone in this town, don't you.

Beth finishes another drink. She's had a few...

BETH

Growing up here. Being a minister's wife. Having a kid in public school.

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)
Dealing with Leonard...Yeah, I
know everyone.

KOSTAS
And everyone knows you.

PATRONS glance at them and WHISPER.

KOSTAS
In fact, I think you've been made.

BETH
It's a restaurant.

KOSTAS
But you aren't...eating.

Beth pops a fried something in her mouth.

BETH
I'm so tired of the expectations.

KOSTAS
You do a pretty great job of
exceeding them.

BETH
Can we go?

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Beth looks around the parking lot and sees no one. She takes
cigarettes out of her purse and lights up as she and Kostas
walk toward the car.

KOSTAS
You're a smoker!

BETH
No. I smoke. Sometimes. I'm not a
smoker.

KOSTAS
I love it!

BETH
No, you don't, because I'm not
doing it.

KOSTAS
Another notch higher on the list,
Beth Truda.

BETH

What happens when I get to the top?

KOSTAS

Guess you'll just have to find out.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Paramedic Patti hands Beth paperwork. She looks at the body bags on gurneys in front of her.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Beth watches as a COUPLE and several CHILDREN mourn as a tiny casket is carried down the front steps.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

A viewing is in full swing. Beth is in the back of the living room when a WOMAN completely loses it.

Kostas helps the woman to a chair and motions for Beth to help but she's immobilized.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

A young MAN stands in the corner of the front hall, catatonic.

BETH

Thomas needs you now more than ever.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Roxanne finds Beth staring at a large box marked Champlain Career Institute.

ROXANNE

Randy Tanner's out there. He hasn't changed a bit since junior high, still drunk.

BETH

His third wife's ex-stepmother passed away so he brought their kids over. He's on his sixth.

ROXANNE
Wife?

BETH
Beer. Brought his own cooler.

ROXANNE
(off the box)
So...

Beth continues to stare at it. Then turns away from it.

BETH
I need to start dinner. I'm making spaghetti tonight and I need to get the sauce going. Barry likes it thick. I should have made it yesterday.

ROXANNE
Beth?

BETH
And I'm going to put a chocolate cake in to bake. Should I make German chocolate or double fudge?

ROXANNE
Whatever you want, sweetie.

BETH
And I have a meeting tonight for the Valentine's Project and I've got to make Barry a dentist appointment. He thinks his crown is cracked.

ROXANNE
(to herself)
Something's cracked.

Roxanne follows Beth out of the room.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth enters the kitchen and gathers ingredients. Roxanne watches.

ROXANNE
What's going on?

BETH
Can you peel the garlic?

Beth cuts onions.

ROXANNE

Beth.

BETH

There are dead people in my house.

ROXANNE

Yes.

BETH

In the basement, in the living room. There's so much crying and hurting and I can only do so much.

She SOBS, still cutting onions.

ROXANNE

Sweetie, you're doing great.

BETH

I'm the one who wanted this, me. I pushed and now...

She puts the onions in a pan. She's still SOBBING.

ROXANNE

It's okay to be freaked out. I'd be more worried if you weren't.

BETH

It's not just the funeral home.

ROXANNE

I know.

BETH

He used to be happy. I used to be happy with him. But I'm not now.

Kostas rushes in.

KOSTAS

I've got a body in Oak Grove and I just got a call for one at the hospital. But I was supposed to have the Townsends come in for their preplanning meeting so I need you to--

BETH

I don't think I can pick up a body by myself.

KOSTAS

No, no, I need you here, to meet with the Townsends. The brochures and price lists are on the iPads.

Beth steels herself, wipes her eyes.

BETH

Go, don't be late picking up--

KOSTAS

(distracted)

Franklin Cavanaugh.

Beth closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. When she opens them again Kostas is watching her. Then he turns and leaves.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth sits across from JAMES and ABIGAIL TOWNSEND (80s) in the office.

JAMES

A pine box is fine with me.

ABIGAIL

James! Never mind him, he doesn't know what he wants.

JAMES

You're going to spend all our money on a gold casket and I ain't even done livin' yet? We got a casino trip next month!

BETH

There are some that are more economical--

JAMES

I like the blue one. Order me up one of those. Do we get a discount if we order in bulk?

ABIGAIL

It's just so, I don't know, it's just a lot right now.

Abigail gets up and walks to the window.

BETH

Abigail, maybe this is something you need to think about some more.

JAMES

We've been talkin' 'bout it for years! When I turned eighty she said we had to do it. Now look who's chicken!

ABIGAIL

Oh, hush James.

He joins her at the window.

JAMES

I love you.

ABIGAIL

I don't want to--

JAMES

I know. But that's why we're here. Miss Beth is going to fix us up and we'll go home.

He leads her back to their seats. They sit and Abigail reaches for James's hand.

JAMES

Blue one for me, gold one for her.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth takes the spoon from Roxanne and tastes the spaghetti sauce.

ROXANNE

Did you sell 'em one of those silk-lined dealies that's been marked up four hundred percent?

BETH

Two.

ROXANNE

Rock it, sister.

Roxanne attempts to put salt in the sauce, Beth stops her.

BETH

(resolute)

I'm going to need some notebooks, folders, and highlighters. Lots of different colored highlighters.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth studies, leaning against a casket in the living room.

BETH
 (to herself)
 Arterial, cavity, hypodermic,
 surface. Arterial, cavity,
 hypodermic, surface.

Kostas enters.

KOSTAS
 Embalming techniques never sounded
 so sexy.

BETH
 I bet you say that to all the
 girls.

KOSTAS
 Viewing in twenty minutes, Truda.

Beth gathers her things. Kostas leaves. She opens the casket and smooths out the blouse on the WOMAN's body.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Barry bangs around the kitchen, in his pajamas. He pulls out a box of cereal. Then he opens the refrigerator and sees a small cooler marked with a skull and crossbones. It says 'DO NOT TOUCH' on the front. He takes out the milk. He shuts the refrigerator, pauses, then opens it again. He looks in the cooler, makes a horrible face--

BARRY
 Good God!

Kostas enters, Barry slams the cooler, and the refrigerator, shut.

KOSTAS
 Can I help you with something,
 Reverend?

Barry closes his eyes, trying to control his anger.

Kostas gets the message and leaves, passing Beth as she comes in. Barry smells the milk before pouring it. It's gone bad.

Beth takes the milk and tosses it. She goes to the refrigerator for yogurt and fruit. She makes breakfast.

BARRY
Doesn't he ever go home?

BETH
He has to meet a family in ten minutes.
(beat)
How's your sermon coming along?

BARRY
Fine.

Beth sets breakfast down on the table for both of them.

BARRY
(softened)
Thank you.

They eat.

BETH
It's supposed to rain today. Maybe spring is on its way.

BARRY
You should do some laundry--

Beth stops. Then she remembers. They share a moment.

BETH
I should. I'd forgotten that Mom loved hanging her clothes out on the line after a storm.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The sanctuary is three-quarters full of ATTENDEES. Barry preaches.

BARRY
In the course of my week I meet with couples, families, older people, younger people, people grieving, people struggling, angry people, sad people. People who are in need. And I counsel them. But I sometimes lack the strength, the emotional bandwidth, to pray for them when they're not seated directly in front of me.

Looking around, Beth WHISPERS to Roxanne.

BETH

I don't like these empty seats.

Roxanne motions at Kostas who slips in across the aisle from them and WHISPERS to Beth.

ROXANNE

He looks even better when he's not surrounded by stiff.

BETH

Shhh.

BARRY

And when I don't pray for people, I sometimes forget that they're in pain. That they're in need. I go about my day, just putting one foot in front of the other, hoping I make it to my bed in one piece by the end of the night.

ROXANNE

I think I might ask him out for a drink.

Beth stares straight ahead.

BARRY

How many of you prayed this morning for someone who has hurt you? Anyone? Me neither, don't worry. It's something we all have to work on.

Roxanne leans over to Beth and WHISPERS.

ROXANNE

Is he reading from his diary?

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth lies inside a casket and stares up at the ceiling. Kostas enters the basement. He peeks in at her.

BETH

I'm trying to imagine what it's like for them.

KOSTAS

Peaceful. At least I hope so.

Beth sits up.

KOSTAS

The paramedics delivered Vickie Noblick last night, want to help me embalm her? We'll consider it your first lab.

Kostas hands her a smock and gloves. He dons the same outfit and gets to work. Beth frees herself from the casket and moves next to the embalming table.

KOSTAS

There are a couple of things you might not find in the textbooks.

She watches as he undresses Vickie and washes her.

KOSTAS

For instance, I don't set my tools on the body, at any time.

He closes Vickie's mouth and straightens her head.

KOSTAS

And I like to talk to the person.

He mixes fluids and turns on the embalming machine.

BETH

What do you talk about?

KOSTAS

Depends. Maybe their family or their profession. Current events. Sports.

He selects an artery and a vein in the neck and using a scalpel, inserts the injection and clamps it off with a ligature string.

BETH

Vickie was a soprano. She sang a solo on Christmas Eve every year.

KOSTAS

She helped me open my business account at the credit union.

BETH

She was only thirty-nine. No kids, no husband.

He turns on the embalming machine and they watch the body. Beth touches Vickie's arm.

BETH
Her fiancé was killed in
Afghanistan.

Kostas puts his hand over Beth's.

KOSTAS
You have to massage the limbs to
make sure the blood's going out
and the embalming solution's going
in. Like this.

He caresses Beth's hand.

BETH
She gave the eulogy and I remember
thinking how brave that was. She
said when she met him she felt
alive for the first time ever.

Beth looks at Kostas. He looks back at her. The machine BEEPS.
Kostas turns it off. He removes the tubing, clamps the veins
and arteries.

KOSTAS
I usually clean the machine now, I
think she needs some time to rest
before I finish.

Beth watches Vickie as Kostas places a white sheet over her
body.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Barry pops into the kitchen where Beth studies.

BARRY
Turkey on rye. I'll be in my
study.

Beth goes to get up but stops short.

BETH
No. I'm not a deli delivery girl.
But we could have lunch together.

BARRY
Things need to change around here.
Including the funeral home.
Asbestos, my ass.

BETH
I'm not letting you decide one more part of my life, Barry. It makes me happy.

BARRY
Yes, you seem undeniably happy. So happy, in fact, that you don't need me. Is that what you want? Because I'll leave. Don't tempt me.

BETH
Please!

Barry leaves the kitchen. Beth follows him.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Barry has his hand on the front door knob.

BETH
On second thought--

Beth stops him.

BETH
I'm not going to let you make this decision either.

She opens the front door.

BETH
Get out!

He walks out. She SLAMS the door behind him. She takes a moment and seems to relax. Then there's a KNOCK on the door.

BETH
Too easy...

She opens the door. Leonard holds two suitcases.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
Preacher boy is in a mood.

BETH
Do not tell me you've been kicked out of yet another nursing home, Leonard.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
 They can point fingers and hurl
 accusations all they want but I
 didn't do it. I did not spike the
 jello. Like I'd waste a perfectly
 good bottle of Stoli.

He walks in and sets down his suitcases.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
 Where should I sleep?

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

There's an open casket in the front room. Leonard lays in it, arms crossed over his chest. Chairs are set up in rows, as if for a funeral.

Mrs. Turner stuffs cookies from a plate in the back of the room into her purse. Patti and George Paul, both still in uniform, play blackjack on an empty chair between them and drink beer. Tracy stares intently down at Leonard.

Leonard peeks out through one eye. Notices the card game.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
 Deal me in next hand.

Mrs. Turner shuffles to the front row and sits down, munching a cookie. Tracy sits down next to her and pops open a beer.

MRS. TURNER
 Here we go! A fake wake! Things
 are way more interesting here than
 at the home! Thanks for the
 invite, Leonard!

BETH
 Technically it's a mock non-
 religious funeral service so I can
 practice my technique. Thank you
 all for agreeing to help.

TRACY
 We can do this every night if
 there's free beer.

She bumps beer cans with George Paul and Patti. Beth checks her notes. Leonard SNORES.

BETH
 Alright, from the top like I
 explained.

Roxanne enters, glass of wine in her hand.

BETH
Family and friends, we are
gathered here today to celebrate
the life of Leonard Guthrie.

Roxanne drinks her wine and scrolls through her phone. Mrs. Turner nods off. Tracy BURPS. The card game continues.

BETH
Okay! People! This is a funeral!
Look alive!

Everyone snaps to attention. Including Leonard who struggles to sit up in the casket.

BETH
Not you, Leonard!

He flops back down, arms crossed, eyes closed.

BETH
Would anyone like to share a story
about how Leonard touched your
life?

After a few moments of SILENCE Roxanne speaks up.

ROXANNE
I loved how he always grabbed my
ass and gave it a good pinch. That
does a lot for a girl's self
esteem.

Leonard speaks, eyes still closed.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
Make sure that memory gets listed
on my Facebookie.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Jessica and Barry enter the kitchen through the back door. She reads her phone. Barry heads out the kitchen door.

JESSICA
I'll tell mom--

She stops dead in her tracks.

Her phone is open to Facebook and on the screen is Tommy's page: *Relationship status - single.*

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Jessica enters the front room and looks around at the practice funeral. Beth at the front of the room, Mrs. Turner SNORING in her chair, Roxanne, Patti, George Paul, and Tracy all facing ahead looking at Leonard in the casket.

Jessica bursts into SOBS. Beth rushes to her.

BETH

He's not...he's fine. I'm doing
a...practicum for school.

The casket lid BANGS closed.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

(from inside the casket)

What the devil? Where am I?
Somebody turned out the goddamn
lights!

Leonard POUNDS on the casket lid. Roxanne opens it.

ROXANNE

Fake funeral, Leonard. You just
fell asleep.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

I'm gonna need a kick in my coffee
to get over this. Double kick most
likely.

Roxanne drains her wine glass.

ROXANNE

(to Jessica)

Sorry sweetie, just saw Facebook.

Jessica SOBS even more and leaves the room. Barry enters.

BARRY

Where's my green overnight bag?

BETH

(beat)

Jessica took it when she moved
last summer.

BARRY

I need a bag. Now.

BETH

(through clenched teeth)

Try. The. Attic.

Barry storms off. Beth turns to find Mrs. Turner right behind her, munching a cookie.

MRS. TURNER
They're rarely worth it, honey. I
had five of 'em. I know.

BETH
Kids?

MRS. TURNER
Husbands.

Beth watches as Barry throws trash bag after trash bag down the steps. Then she heads back to the living room.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth stands in front of the room again and CLEARS HER THROAT. Leonard settles back into his casket. Mrs. Turner nibbles on her cookies. Roxanne drinks her wine. Patti and George Paul drink their beer. Tracy accepts a cookie from Mrs. Turner.

BETH
Anyone have any other stories?
About Leonard?

Jessica steps into the room and pulls herself together.

JESSICA
He never forgot my birthday. Not
once. He sent a card with some
money in it. I saved every one.

Leonard smiles but keeps his eyes shut.

Barry enters, stops in front of a lamp, tries to unplug it. He fumbles. Beth takes a deep breath, yanks the cord from the wall and hands it to Barry. He leaves.

BETH
Obviously Leonard meant a lot to
us all.
(beat)
I think we'll wrap it up for
tonight. Roxanne?

Roxanne joins Beth in front of the room.

ROXANNE
Leonard thought it would be
appropriate if we ended his
service with a toast.

She takes a small bottle of Crown Royal from a side table.

ROXANNE

If you would all stand, in a circle.

It takes a moment but everyone moves to form something resembling a circle near the casket. Then...

ROXANNE

To Leonard. May he know how much he was tolerated. And loved.

She takes a swig from the Crown and passes it. Mrs. Turner takes a long swig. Tracy wipes the mouth of the bottle before taking a sip. Patti and George Paul take swigs. Jessica takes a long pull. Beth takes a swig. Leonard reaches up for the bottle but Beth passes it back to Roxanne who takes another swig for good measure.

BETH

If the pallbearers would please come forward.

Tracy, Patti, George Paul, and Roxanne approach the casket. They wait a beat and then head back to their seats.

BETH

Thank you everyone, really. Your help tonight is going to help me as I further my education. Take some cookies for the road.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

That's it? I was just gettin' comfy!

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth sits across from Jessica at the table in the kitchen.

BETH

I'm sorry about Tommy, Goose. I really am.

JESSICA

(eyes cast downward)
I'm smart. I'm the best girlfriend anyone's ever had. I know I can't cook very well but...

Beth pulls Jessica's hands into her own and waits until Jessica is looking at her.

BETH

Your worth is not determined by Tommy. You have so much to offer this world. I know you can't see that today but it's true.

JESSICA

He told me he loved me. And I believed him.

BETH

He did. He loved you. And that's part of you now. That will always be a part of who you are. But you're so much more than that. This is your beginning, Goose. This, right now.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Roxanne lies on the stainless steel embalming table in the basement. Beth washes Roxanne's hair with dry shampoo.

BETH

Jessica says he's fine but three days and he hasn't called.

ROXANNE

Do you really want him to?

BETH

I don't know what I want. I mean I do. I know exactly what I want but it's not what I can have. I want Barry to be the way he used to be, before...I want Kostas...

Beth brushes the shampoo out of Roxanne's hair and refers to her textbook.

ROXANNE

You like him, don't you?

They share a smile. Beth works. Roxanne lays quietly until--

ROXANNE

And you were just gonna let me ask him out.

BETH

(a long beat)
We kissed. More than once...

ROXANNE

Fuck yeah.

Beth styles her hair with a curling iron. Roxanne fidgets.

BETH

I'm going to burn your ears.

ROXANNE

Call him and he'll come home. Or become a divorcée like me. It's not so bad. You already have Kostas.

BETH

I have a hard time imagining Barry anywhere but here.

Beth sprays Roxanne's hair with aerosol hair spray. They both COUGH. Beth helps her up and Roxanne follows her to a casket. Beth helps her in.

ROXANNE

I like knowing Michael's out there. If he were dead, I'd feel really guilty hating him.

(beat)

You'd make a much better widow than divorcée.

Roxanne folds her arms across her chest and closes her eyes. Beth reaches over and moves Roxanne's arms to her sides.

BETH

You're too pale.

ROXANNE

I'm dead.

BETH

A little more mascara.

She sorts through her supplies.

ROXANNE

Being a widow would take a lot of emotional effort. Divorce is quick, dirty, done.

BETH

Your divorce from Michael took three years and ninety-two cases of wine.

ROXANNE

I'm not saying widows don't drink.
Besides, I didn't say yes to
dinner.

Beth fixes Roxanne's eyelashes then picks up her phone. Roxanne smiles with her eyes closed.

BETH

A smile on a corpse is creepy.

Roxanne stops smiling. Beth takes several pictures. Roxanne grins and Beth takes one final photo. She turns around and sees Kostas come down the stairs.

KOSTAS

I got a job offer.

BETH

You have a job.

KOSTAS

To run a mortuary in Chicago.

She leans against the casket.

KOSTAS

I'm thinking of taking it. Just
thinking. It's a good career
opportunity. Really good. A brand-
new facility with a large staff.
And the salary is--

SILENCE.

KOSTAS

Give me an indication I should
stay. Something. Anything.

BETH

It's not my life, not my decision.

He looks at her for a beat and then nods and leaves. From inside the casket Roxanne speaks.

ROXANNE (O.S.)

He totally likes you.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

The garden gnome is knocked over in the backyard. Beth smokes. Kostas walks around the corner.

KOSTAS

I wanted to say goodbye.

Beth avoids eye contact and stomps out her cigarette.

BETH

Goodbye for just today or for good?

KOSTAS

I like our arrangement.

BETH

Like I said, it's your life, your choice.

He picks up the basketball lying next to the garage. She still avoids eye contact.

KOSTAS

You can have your opinions, feelings.

He dribbles the ball and shoots. He misses.

BETH

Leave, stay, it doesn't matter.

She picks up the ball, shoots, and makes it. He grabs the ball and dribbles.

KOSTAS

You're a bad liar.

He attempts another shot but she blocks him and makes the shot.

BETH

You're a bad basketball player.

KOSTAS

We both know it matters.

She picks up the ball and makes eye contact.

BETH

So what if it does? What am I supposed to do about it? Leave my husband? Abandon my family? How does a person do that?

He grabs the ball, she grabs his arm. He drops the ball and pulls her close.

BETH

I want to kiss you.

KOSTAS
So kiss me.

BETH
I really want to kiss you.

He kisses her and she kisses him back.

KOSTAS
That's how a person does it.

BETH
I think--

KOSTAS
Don't think.

Beth kisses him. They don't notice Catalina as she rounds the corner of the house, recording on her phone.

CATALINA
Mr. Leonard told me--

She sees Beth and Kostas kissing.

CATALINA
Oh. Sorry, Miss Beth.

Beth and Kostas break apart.

BETH
Catalina! I didn't hear you. I'll meet you out front, just one second.

Catalina heads back around the house.

BETH
I totally forgot she was stopping by. She wanted an interview for school, about my classes and--

Kostas kisses her again.

KOSTAS
She's a kid, she doesn't care.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Jessica reads about med school on her phone when a text from Tommy pops up.

TOMMY (TEXT)
Tell Mrs T good for gettin hers

Attached to the text is a link. It's Catalina's Instagram and the first photo is of Beth and Kostas kissing from the backyard the night before.

JESSICA

Mom! MOM!

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Patti and George Paul, in uniform, sit outside and play cards.

PATTI

Martha said Shelley heard that the mayor caught them doin' it on one of those traffic cameras. No idea how she got access--

George Paul sits up and looks around.

GEORGE PAUL

Those things work?!

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Tracy sits behind her desk and WHISPERS into the office phone.

TRACY

At least he's cute. I mean, she could have done worse.

She looks at Catalina's Instagram photo of Beth and Kostas kissing.

TRACY

(looks towards Barry's office)

I wonder if they'll fire him? It's not like he got caught kissing the undertaker but--

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Roxanne stands in the back of a viewing with just a handful of MOURNERS. Beth passes cookies but no one takes one. She moves toward Roxanne who examines her. The mourners WHISPER and look pointedly at Beth.

ROXANNE

What am I missing? Spinach in your teeth? Toilet paper coming out of your ass? What?

Mrs. Turner enters the house and wiggles her eyebrows at Beth.

BETH
Good afternoon, Mrs.--

MRS. TURNER
(quietly)
We'll just pretend we're not
talking, to protect my street
cred, alrighty dear?

Beth nods sadly. Mrs. Turner moves on.

ROXANNE
Spill it.

BETH
I've gone viral.

ROXANNE
What?

BETH
You know how everyone and their
brother follows Catalina
Wallsworth's Instagram feed?

ROXANNE
No!

BETH
I kissed Kostas in public. Well,
where Catalina could see. And
record...And yes, I've called her
mother. But...I'm a scandal. A
viral scandal.

ROXANNE
I take a few hours off of social
media and--

Roxanne scrolls through her Instagram feed and SNICKERS.

ROXANNE
Well you're the one who wanted to
be something.
(that comment doesn't go over
well)
Have you talked with Barry?

BETH
I don't even know where to start.

ROXANNE
Pray.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Barry walks on the treadmill, Beth watches.

BARRY

I don't care what you do as long as you don't get caught again. I have an image to maintain.

BETH

This is more than just a kiss--

Barry turns up the speed on the treadmill.

BARRY

Like I said, keep it to yourself. It's bad for business. Sleeping in my office is a big enough gamble at the moment.

BETH

Bad for business. Got it.

Barry turns up the treadmill and runs full out.

BETH

You're always running, Barry. But you're never getting anywhere.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Kostas plants flowers in the front yard. Beth gets on the ground to help him.

KOSTAS

You really don't need to help, I'm almost finished.

BETH

It'll keep my mind off things.

KOSTAS

What things?

BETH

My daughter. My husband. Those terrible lemon cookies.

KOSTAS

They weren't very good, were they?

BETH

No, they weren't. And then there's Instagram.

Kostas moves in for a kiss when Leonard appears on the porch.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

Where are you putting the croakboard, boy? I need to keep up with the comings and goings 'round here.

KOSTAS

Croakboard?

BETH

Announcement board.

KOSTAS

Oh, right. Going up end of the week, Leonard! Though you could always check the website. Then you wouldn't have to come all the way outside, in the cold and all.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD

Doesn't seem cold out here at all.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Barry and Tracy sit at Tracy's desk watching her monitor. Barry clicks the mouse to refresh the page every five seconds. Tracy snacks on popcorn.

BARRY

Did you put calls in to the papers?

TRACY

Local and college. Catalina is considering an interview for her Instagram Stories.

David enters the office.

DAVID

Did I miss it?

BARRY

Things are looking up, David. This will be good for all of us. An internet and billboard marketing campaign--

TRACY

It's just one billboard on M-fifty nine.

DAVID
 And it's just for two weeks.
 Billboards are pricey. But the
 internet's free. And our research
 shows Christians love the
 internet.

Tracy offers David popcorn. He munches.

Barry clicks the mouse every five seconds. And then--

BARRY
 Seriously?!

He pushes his chair away from the desk, the popcorn flies, and he storms toward his office.

Tracy and David look at the screen. A happy congregation is being lead by a very young female pastor who is not Barry.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Roxanne enters the kitchen through the back door while scrolling through her phone. She sees the billboard photo on Facebook and likes it.

Beth pours herself a cup of coffee.

BETH
 What are you doing?

ROXANNE
 Nothing. I just, I parked on
 Riddle and came through the back
 gate.

She knocks some dirt from her boots, brushes them off.

BETH
 You parked on Riddle.

Roxanne helps herself to a cup of coffee.

ROXANNE
 (resigned)
 I didn't want anyone to see me
 coming here.

BETH
 To my house?

ROXANNE

I just didn't want to get caught up in all that business out front. I need a haircut and Catalina is out there Instagramming the shit out of all this.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Through the window: Diane Ashland carries a sign and pushes a stroller with signs taped to the sides. One reads 'No morals? No business!' The other reads 'Show the dead some respect!'

Beth moves away from the window and turns to Roxanne.

BETH

Is this for real?

ROXANNE

(unsuccessfully keeping a straight face)
She's dead serious.

A bullhorn BEEPS once.

Through the window: Sheriff Shaffer puts the kickstand down on her bicycle and BEEPS her bullhorn again. Catalina records on her phone.

Beth heads outside. Roxanne watches from the window.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Sheriff Shaffer approaches Diane. Catalina records on her phone.

SHERIFF SHAFFER

(through bullhorn)
Catalina, if you're going to--

CATALINA

Freedom of the press!

The Sheriff moves on with a shake of her head.

SHERIFF SHAFFER

(through bullhorn)
Do you all have a permit to protest, Mrs. Ashland?

DIANE

There are sinners in there! Did they need a permit to sin?

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 (through bullhorn)
 Not required, yet, ma'am. I've got
 the paperwork right here. It'll
 take just a minute. You'll be back
 to carrying your sign a-sap.

She hands Diane a clipboard. She sets down her sign. Beth approaches them.

BETH
 Seriously?!

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 (through bullhorn)
 Oh, Mrs. Truda. I was just helping
 Mrs. Ashland with some forms for
 holding a public protest.

Beth moves the bullhorn from her mouth.

BETH
 You're going to help her organize
 a protest, against me.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 Just doin' my job, ma'am. New
 customer service program we put in
 place. We carry all sorts of forms
 on the bikes now.

Diane signs the paperwork and hands the clipboard back to Sheriff Shaffer.

DIANE
 I'll send in a check for the ten
 dollars.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 Much appreciated, ma'am.

She heads back to her bike and leaves. Diane picks her sign back up.

BETH
 (to herself)
 So help me god...

She turns to Catalina who is still recording.

BETH
 Catalina. Go. Home.

The girl takes stock of Beth's tone and hurries off. Beth faces Diane.

BETH

Before you throw too many stones
at my house you should shore up
your own, Diane.

Beth takes a deep breath. Diane's sign gets just a little lower.

BETH

You and Derek had three years of
marriage counseling and met with
lawyers before Damien was born.

And lower.

BETH

My guess is that the rumors about
Derek aren't just rumors.

And lower.

DIANE

How dare you--

BETH

You are literally standing in my
front yard protesting my life,
Diane.

They stare each other down for a long moment before Diane blinks. She grabs the stroller and pushes it down the sidewalk.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth holds a tray of cookies. Kostas searches through file folders as they stand at the back of the living room not far from the MOURNERS.

BETH

Why is the Bernstein viewing off
the board?

KOSTAS

They went with Chadwick.

People point and WHISPER.

KOSTAS

And we lost Mrs. Turner's
preplanned package and the Mack
memorial for Saturday.

BETH

Because...

KOSTAS

There's no other reason.

He shuffles through file folders.

KOSTAS

The Mack memorial is Barry's. He's still presiding.

BETH

What are you looking for?

KOSTAS

The Vandervane contract. They want to cancel their headstone and I can't remember if I get to keep their deposit.

BETH

Why would they get a headstone if they're both still alive? That's creepy--

KOSTAS

It's a thing, pre-pay packages include stones with birth dates engraved but no death dates. I have several of my own. Pretty soon you'll get one from a company as a sample.

Beth shudders and tries to shake it off.

BETH

Barry wouldn't take business away from us.

Kostas looks at Beth like he does not believe that at all.

BETH

I'll handle Mrs. Turner.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Beth waits in the hallway. Mrs. Turner comes out of the bathroom.

MRS. TURNER

Your melatonin bottle's almost empty.

BETH

I'll add it to my grocery list.

Mrs. Turner heads on down the hall.

BETH

I make mistakes. Lots of them.

MRS. TURNER

Did I mention my five husbands?

BETH

You don't want to go with Chadwick.

MRS. TURNER

The man's offering some deep discounts--

BETH

So it's just about the money?

MRS. TURNER

I want my funeral to be about my drama, dearie, not yours.

BETH

When Barry and I were first married I made a whole batch of chili with cinnamon instead of chili powder. And Barry ate every last bowl of it.

MRS. TURNER

Your point?

BETH

He ate the chili because we're family. And family sticks together no matter what. And you, and Kostas, and me, and all of us--

MRS. TURNER

Can you match that man's discount?

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Barry sits behind his desk, head in his hands. ALICIA ADAMS (25) enters. She notices the broken door.

ALICIA

Well, we're gonna have to fix that.

Barry doesn't get up. She goes around the desk and hugs him.

ALICIA
 Reverend Truda! I'm so pleased to finally meet you! I'm Alicia Adams, the new pastor at Flowerville First Church. This is just so exciting.

She pulls up a chair.

BARRY
 No, no, no. What happened to Tom?

ALICIA
 Reverend Richards put in his retirement papers this morning so they sent me, I've been the college coordinator. Now I'm a senior pastor, can you imagine? My own church? Well, our own church. This is exciting.

Alicia whips a binder from her bag.

ALICIA
 I'm thinking we can split up the counseling duties and maybe write sermons together. Tag team, you know. I think the interpersonal dynamic will be so--

BARRY
 Exciting. Yep, yeah, got it.

Tracy appears in the doorway and grins at Barry.

TRACY
 Can I get you two anything?
 Coffee? Water? Kombucha?

BARRY
 Get David on the phone. Now.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Roxanne sits at a table. She downs a shot.

ROXANNE
 She says I self-sabotage. But frankly I just like to have fun.

REVEAL: Roxanne sits across from Tommy.

TOMMY
Self-sabotage, is that one of
those women problems?

ROXANNE
Shhhh.

She leans across the table and kisses him on the mouth. He
kisses her back. She does another shot. She sees Barry at the
bar. He's drunk.

ROXANNE
Dammit.

She takes Tommy's phone and types then gives it back.

ROXANNE
Text before you come over.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth, Jessica and Leonard sit in the backyard. Jessica stares
at her phone. Leonard drinks from a flask.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
(to Jessica)
A watched pot never boils.

JESSICA
He Snapped that he was going out
but he didn't say where. Maybe one
of his friends will post
something.

BETH
It might be something you don't
want to know.

Roxanne pulls Barry around the corner. Barry stumbles and
slumps down into a chair next to Leonard. Leonard passes him
his flask. Roxanne sits next to Beth.

ROXANNE
I'm trying to earn my very own
Hopswell Helper award.

BETH
Then you should have taken him to
your house.

ROXANNE
(quietly, to Beth)
He resigned from the church.

Barry slugs back the flask.

JESSICA
 (off her phone)
 Kristin said he just left Wayside.
 Alone. Thank god.

ROXANNE
 (to Jessica)
 Honey, you need to let go.

Beth stands.

BETH
 I have pie. Two kinds. Who wants
 lemon and who wants butterscotch?

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth pulls out her phone and clicks on the Lyft app as she walks into the hallway and flips on the lights.

REVEAL: Kostas embracing a WOMAN (early 30s).

Beth flips the lights back off and turns around.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth steps back into the backyard. Kostas follows her.

BETH
 Barry, be out front in three
 minutes.

Roxanne helps Barry up and heads toward where they came from.

BETH
 They'll take him wherever he wants
 to go. A motel, a friend's...

Roxanne kisses Beth on the cheek and pulls Barry away.

KOSTAS
 Let me explain--

Beth silences him with a look. Jessica picks up on the tension and stands. She holds her hand out to Leonard.

JESSICA
 Walk me to my car, Uncle Leonard?

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
 I thought there was cake?

JESSICA

Pie. And you can have it for
breakfast.

Jessica heads inside. Leonard follows. Beth follows and shuts the door behind her with Kostas standing outside.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Barry, drunk, looks around his office. He looks at the certificates. The photos. The trophies. The crosses. The bibles. The treadmill. That fucking treadmill.

He grabs it and pushes it right over. Then he starts throwing things. He overturns his desk. He tears things off the wall. He empties bookshelves. He finds a putter in the corner and uses it to crack a window.

An ALARM sounds. The broken window...

He crumples into the middle of the mess and SOBS.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Tracy, Patti and George Paul, Mrs. Turner, Leonard, and a few other MEN and WOMEN are in the living room having just finished a memorial service. Kostas slices a large submarine sandwich. Beth passes trays of desserts.

KOSTAS

(to Beth)

Payment won't even begin to cover
this sandwich.

BETH

She's my friend.

Beth glances at the front of the room where Tracy caresses a large framed picture of a cat, next to a tiny urn.

BETH

Plus, we need to keep busy. I'll
cover the sandwich.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth, in the hallway, hands a wrapped plate of sandwich slices to Tracy. The other mourners are gone.

BETH

You going to be okay?

TRACY

Oh, I already got another cat at the shelter. I mean, I'll miss Troy, he was special. But Mr. Lancelot and I are becoming best friends. Even if my husband says he has weird ears.

Tracy leaves. Kostas pours a glass of wine and offers it to Beth. She declines and begins to clean up.

KOSTAS

We need to talk.

BETH

Not about last night.

KOSTAS

Fine. Let's talk about how I need to relocate the business.

BETH

I can't keep up, I thought you were moving to Chicago.

KOSTAS

I don't know about that yet. I just know we've done one funeral, for a cat, and three people died in town this week. I'm also considering renting the Strong house across the tracks--

BETH

It'll blow over.

Kostas drains the glass and fills it up again. He drinks it down.

KOSTAS

And I'm thinking of branching into more pet funerals. With a little organization this could be a gold mine. I mean, Tracy was more broken up about Troy than half the people we see in here.

BETH

Kostas.

KOSTAS

I hear the Cages have a lab who's on his last leg. And Tracy said that Mr.

(MORE)

KOSTAS (CONT'D)
Falcon's cat barely survived his
last chemo treatment.

BETH
Mr. Falcon has cancer?

KOSTAS
The cat does. I might stop in and
check on them all tomorrow.

BETH
This is what we've been reduced
to? A pet cemetery? Poaching
clients from death beds?

KOSTAS
(drunk)
Money talks, or in this case,
meows.

He finishes off the wine.

BETH
This isn't what you want. It'll
turn around, I got Mrs. Turner
back, that has to mean--

KOSTAS
Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth scrolls through her iPad on the living room floor and jots
down notes. Her phone is on speakerphone next to her.

BETH
He has me googling vets, pet
psychics, anything having to do
with animals. He's insistent on
this pet funeral idea.

ROXANNE (O.S.)
(over phone, filtered)
Wanna get pedis?

BETH
I have to box up my books. If I
return them by the thirtieth I can
get a partial refund. That might
help Barry's mood.

ROXANNE (O.S.)
 (over phone, filtered)
 Fuck Barry. It makes you happy.
 And I like you happy.
 (beat)
 Kostas makes you happy too, honey.

Sheriff Shaffer knocks on the window pane. All business. She nods to the door.

BETH
 I'll call you later.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Beth opens the front door. Barry stands next to Sheriff Shaffer but this time no handcuffs. He's still in last night's clothing, hungover, the shame dripping from him like sweat.

BETH
 Sheriff?

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 I didn't want to make it official
 this time, Mrs. Truda, but--

BARRY
 I was arrested. And it was
 suggested I come here, not the
 motel.

He looks sideways at the Sheriff.

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 Misdemeanor willful and malicious
 destruction of property. Had to
 book him. Mr. Charles doesn't want
 to press charges on behalf of the
 church but it's outta his hands--

BARRY
 Can I shower here?

Beth nods, of course. Barry moves past her and disappears.

Beth looks at the Sheriff.

BETH
 Will he go to jail?

SHERIFF SHAFFER
 Hearing later this week.

She turns to go. Then--

SHERIFF SHAFFER

He wouldn't call anyone. I finally contacted Leonard. He posted his bail.

BETH

Thank you.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth sits on the bed in her room, Bible open on her lap. Barry enters in a robe, fresh from the shower.

BARRY

I just need some clean clothes, I thought you'd be working.

BETH

The funeral home's essentially out of business.

Barry goes to the dresser and digs through clothes. He attempts to put on a shirt but it's too small. He finds a bigger one.

BARRY

I'm not the one who kissed the undertaker.

BETH

Because I couldn't kiss you.

He picks up a pillowcase-clad pillow, dumps out the pillow, and uses the pillowcase as a bag. He shoves some items in it.

BETH

You used to like me. Talking to me, kissing me, making love to me...

BARRY

People change.

Beth watches him haphazardly pack the pillowcase.

BETH

Where are you going to go?

BARRY

Why do you care?

BETH

So I fell for Kostas. Who has the right to judge me for the that?

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

You and your Holy Book? I've been reading this thing for days, trying to figure out what I did wrong, where I messed up. And guess what?

He pulls on a pair of pants.

BETH

I did mess up. But you did too, you're supposed to honor our marriage.

BARRY

I'm supposed to honor an adulteress?

He pulls a shoe box off the shelf and smashes it into his pillowcase.

BETH

I fell in love. And it didn't happen ten years ago when you checked out.

BARRY

So now you're in love with him.

BETH

But I took our vows seriously. And I'll stand next to you until death, if that's what you want.

BARRY

Don't do me any favors.

BETH

No because God-forbid the pastor takes help from anyone. Is that why you quit? Is that why you wouldn't even consider a joint congregation? You're so afraid--

He leaves the room, slamming the door behind him.

She throws the bible at the door.

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jessica opens her apartment door to Barry and his pillowcase. He adjusts his mood accordingly, takes a big breath.

BARRY

Hi, baby.

She bursts into tears. He moves her inside and takes her into his arms.

JESSICA

I got a five-nineteen on the M-CAT, ninety-seventh percentile.

BARRY

That's amazing, Jessica. I'm so proud of you, of your hard work.

(beat)

Did you talk to your mother?

Jessica shakes her head no through snotty tears. He hands her his handkerchief.

JESSICA

I tried to talk to Tommy but we ended up just having another fight.

BARRY

Life is hard sometimes.

JESSICA

All the time.

BARRY

Do you want to talk about it?

Beat.

JESSICA

Can we get pancakes?

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Beth enters the basement and watches Kostas. She goes to him and kisses him.

BETH

It matters to me. You matter to me.

KOSTAS

I had my suspicions.

She kisses him again.

KOSTAS

You're sure?

BETH
For once in my life I'm doing
something just because I want to.

She unbuttons his shirt. He stops her. She moves him toward the couch.

KOSTAS
Can we talk about what you saw?
She's not--

BETH
I don't give a shit.

She pulls him down onto the couch. He CLAPS the lights off. She LAUGHS.

BETH
You installed a Clapper?!

KOSTAS
Just one of the many things I
bring to this relationship.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth gets out of bed, happy. So happy. She opens her bedroom door.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Beth exits her bedroom and runs into Leonard in the hall.

LEONARD
The boy left pretty late last
night.

BETH
Are you keeping tabs on me?

LEONARD
Damn prostate keeps me running to
the bathroom all night.

He shuffles down the hall and then turns back toward her.

LEONARD
You deserve it, Bethie. You
deserve happy.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Beth enters the kitchen and heads to the refrigerator.

And then she notices...Barry. At the kitchen table. Because of course he is.

BETH
Are you hungry?

BARRY
I don't think you're a terrible person.

BETH
Thanks?

BARRY
Do you remember the night after we got married?

Beth sits down across from him.

BARRY
I made pancakes. In that little studio I had over on Maple Street.

BETH
And we ate them outside, watching the sunrise. And then we slept until five o'clock.

BARRY
And then I made more pancakes.

Beth smiles.

BARRY
That was such a good day.

BETH
It was. There were a lot of good days.

He gets up from the table and heads to the back door.

BETH
I've found a great psychologist who could recommend someone for you. It might help with the legal troubles--

BARRY
You're in therapy?

BETH

I have my second appointment this week.

(beat)

We all have stuff.

He opens the back door.

BETH

There are better days ahead,
Barry.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

ORGAN MUSIC plays, the pews are less than half full of ATTENDEES and as BETH enters loud WHISPERS and looks greet her. She sits near the front.

CHURCH ATTENDEE

I've heard rumors he's an alcoholic...

CHURCH ATTENDEE 2

I'm very doubtful he was at the jail just visiting someone...

CHURCH ATTENDEE 3

We're moving our arrangements to Oakley, it's a drive but I don't want to give our business to anyone who'd flaunt her...

CHURCH ATTENDEE 1

His daughter's been living with her boyfriend, my daughter said...

Beth stands up and turns to face everyone.

BETH

Don't you dare throw stones.
Don't. You. Dare.

She sits back down. There is SILENCE. Then the WHISPERS begin. Again.

CHURCH ATTENDEE 4

Well I never...

CHURCH ATTENDEE 5

I always thought she was a bit pretentious...

CHURCH ATTENDEE 6

So self-righteous...

Beth stands back up.

BETH
 Have a little respect for Barry!
 And if not for him at least then
 for this place!

Beth's phone RINGS. FUCK.

BETH
 The way you treat him, I'm amazed
 anyone would ever want this job.
 He puts his heart, his soul, his
 everything, literally his whole
 life, into this job. Into all of
 you. Trying to save this church,
 trying to save all of you--

She catches herself. She gets it now. She heads out of the pew,
 up the aisle toward the exit and finally looks at her phone.

BETH
 (into phone)
 Hold on.

As Beth walks out several people fall into step behind her:
 Leonard, who shoots a look at Tracy who jumps up quickly.
 Roxanne enters, late to the party.

ROXANNE
 What'd I miss?!

Leonard gets to the end of the aisle and turns back around to a
 group of CHURCH ATTENDEES around him including two OLDER MEN
 and an OLDER WOMAN.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
 Joseph, didn't you sleep with your
 secretary for years before you got
 promoted? Gerald, seems to me your
 third kid looked a lot like the
 mailman. And Virginia, you ever
 tell Ruben what we did that night
 at the church picnic?

Tracy rushes back down the aisle and takes Leonard by the arm.
 As she pulls him away he SHOUTS.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
 Bunch of Philistines, all of you!
 Goddamn Philistines!

Beth stops cold. Roxanne grabs her arm.

BETH
(into the phone)
I'm on my way.

EXT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth and Kostas stand side by side out back, waiting.

BETH
Does she live in Chicago?

KOSTAS
Who?

BETH
The woman you were...

KOSTAS
My wife?

Beth looks at him. Is he fucking kidding?

KOSTAS
My ex-wife. Ex. Divorced.
For...three years now.

BETH
Does your ex-wife live in Chicago?

KOSTAS
Yes.

BETH
That makes sense.

KOSTAS
We can talk about this later.

Patti and George Paul round the corner with a body bag on a gurney.

BETH
Did you get divorced because
of...Isabel?

KOSTAS
She, my ex, slept with a casket
salesman.

BETH
You're making that up.

KOSTAS
 (a smile)
 I wish I was.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Beth and Kostas stand over the body bag in the basement.

BETH
 Is she a funeral director too?
 Your ex-wife?

KOSTAS
 No.

Another long silence.

BETH
 Why was she here?

KOSTAS
 She was literally just passing
 through town. I hadn't seen her
 since we'd signed the papers.
 She's--

BETH
 Not important? Barry said the same
 thing about me.

KOSTAS
 --getting married again.

They look at each other. Then Kostas unzips the body bag.

BETH
 She outlived all five of her ex-
 husbands.

It's Mrs. Turner.

KOSTAS
 I was sure she'd outlive all of
 us.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth sits and stares at the food in front of her at the kitchen table. Leonard pushes his plate away, gets up and rests a hand on her shoulder.

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
 You did your best.

Beth doesn't look up. They are quiet for a beat. Then--

OLD UNCLE LEONARD
Coffee went right through me.

He heads out and Roxanne enters. He does a hand jive with her as they pass. Roxanne picks at all of the food on the counter.

ROXANNE
Where's all this from?

BETH
Mrs. Turner didn't have any other family. Not one child in all those marriages. So people are bringing the food here.

ROXANNE
Seems right.

BETH
He needed so much more.

ROXANNE
Who?
(beat)
Barry? Oh yeah.

Beth looks stricken.

ROXANNE
You tried. God knows you tried. Every fucking day. He didn't want help. He was super man, super pastor, super Barry.

Beth LAUGHS through tears.

ROXANNE
But he wasn't. Real life caught up with him like it catches up with all of us.

Jessica enters. She picks at food on the counter next to Roxanne.

BETH
(to Roxanne, suddenly over concerned)
Are you happy? Are you okay? I feel like I need to do more--

JESSICA
She's fine, Mom. She's got Tommy.

The world stops. Beth and Roxanne look at each other.

JESSICA

(to Roxanne)

Oh come on, he posts on social media more than I do. You were in four Snaps this morning.

(beat)

And I'm fine with it. Or I will be, whatever. I'm just glad I didn't end up marrying him.

She gives Roxanne side eye and then smiles. Beth joins them at the counter.

BETH

I'm glad you're both okay. Or going to be.

Jessica wraps her arms around Beth.

JESSICA

When I do get married, and I will, someday, it'll be the right time. And no gardenias.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Kostas watches Beth from afar. She smokes. He moves closer.

KOSTAS

I didn't take the job in Chicago.

She continues to smoke.

KOSTAS

I tried to tell you the other day in the basement, when we, well anyway--

He sees Febreze behind a pile of rakes next to her cigarettes. He picks it up and holds it out to her. She doesn't take it. He waits a moment, puts the Febreze back, and heads inside. Beth continues to smoke.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Beth stands next to a casket in the sanctuary. She speaks to the CONGREGATION which includes Roxanne, Jessica, Patti, George Paul, Tracy, and Diane among other MOURNERS.

Leonard SNORES in a pew. Catalina records him on her phone. Her mother elbows her in the ribs and Catalina puts the phone down. But not before posting.

BETH

I didn't know until I got a call from the coroner's office that I was Mrs. Turner's next of kin. I knew there were no children or living husbands. However, I did know that there were friends, so many of you here, myself included, that made up her family, our family. And she knew that, that she was loved. That we all are. That this town, this church, the people in it, mean something.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Beth shakes hands with several CONGREGATION MEMBERS as they leave the church. Kostas approaches her.

KOSTAS

What you said was lovely.

There's a long moment of SILENCE.

BETH

I love you. I love Barry. I love Jessica. I love Roxanne and Leonard and Tracy and--

She looks around, they're alone in the room.

BETH

I have to figure out how to love all of you, and love myself. If that makes sense.

She's psyching herself up. Kostas opens his arms. She moves into his embrace. It goes on for a beat. She pulls away.

BETH

I should get home, people will be arriving...

She's losing her nerve. He pulls her back in. She lets him.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth pours coffee for Roxanne in the kitchen.

ROXANNE
 (off the coffee)
 I'm gonna need a kick in there.

BETH
 Okay, Leonard.

ROXANNE
 I didn't sleep much last night.
 Tommy was over.

BETH
 Again?

ROXANNE
 (with a slow smile)
 He's just so...easy.

Beth smiles and heads out into the front hall with the coffee pot.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Barry closes the front door behind him. Beth stops when she sees him.

BETH
 You weren't at the service--

BARRY
 I would have been a distraction.
 But I wanted to toast Mrs. Turner.
 With all of you.

BETH
 What did the lawyer say?

BARRY
 We meet tomorrow. On the phone she
 seemed sure we'd figure it out.
 And David said the church will
 help, with everything. Especially
 now that I'm seeing a counselor...

Barry takes the coffee pot from her and moves toward the living room.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Beth preps more food. Roxanne snacks.

BETH

Did I tell you I'm finishing my
classes next week?

ROXANNE

Already?

BETH

And I'm going to apply to a four-
year university to become
licensed. Maybe State.

Jessica enters with an armload of dirty dishes and sets them
near the sink.

JESSICA

People are hungry. The cookies are
the most popular but the lemon
bars are a close second.

ROXANNE

(to Jessica)

A little birdie told me you got
into Harvard.

JESSICA

That little birdie can't stop
screaming 'Harvard Medical School'
from the rooftops.

Jessica gives Beth a look. A look that says she's proud of
herself and pleased that her mother is too.

Leonard throws open the kitchen door.

LEONARD

You're out of snickerdoodles. And
you know snickerdoodles go best
with Crown.

He lifts his glass toward Roxanne. Roxanne lifts her coffee cup
toward him.

BETH

I've got a batch in the freezer.

Jessica picks up a tray of sandwiches and kisses Leonard on the
cheek as she heads back out of the kitchen. He follows her.

LEONARD

I always wanted to see Boston.
Maybe I'll come stay with you
next, Harvard girl.

Beth heads out the back door. Roxanne finds the bottle of Crown Royal and pours a little into her coffee cup. Then a little more.

INT. TRUDA HOUSE - DAY

Beth pulls a bag of cookies from a chest freezer in the garage. She notices the headstone leaning against the wall. It's engraved with her name and her birth year and a dash but not a death year. There's an identical headstone next to it except it's engraved with Kostas' name and birth year.

She smiles to herself and turns to leave. Kostas stands in the garage doorway.

KOSTAS

Can you figure out how to love
yourself while I'm loving you?

There's a long beat. And then--

Beth goes to him and kisses him. And keeps kissing him as we...

FADE OUT.