

# Cathedral Song

By Joe Woodward

**Imagine you had a dream where you were someone else  
caught in a massive drama that left you shaking when you woke up.  
You try to explain your dream. But it is fragmentary. You remember  
the walls and the darkness of a huge and ancient Cathedral where  
Angels were carved from the stone.**

**You remember having a revelation about your life  
and the lives of others who were in some way significant to you.  
Your whole being has been affected by this dream. You were shaken  
when you awoke. Now, you try to recall what you dreamt  
and you try to work out what it all meant ...**

**Dramatis Personae**

Jessie	Very talented but drug-addicted girl aged 17
Guy	Jessie's drug addicted boyfriend slightly older
Bishop David Kole	A Bishop; level headed man caught in a dilemma
Sister Agnes Brande	The Cathedral Administrator with strong political views
Mrs. Sandra Macullachy	The Bishop's House Keeper; been there a long time
Carley Anghurst	Young and brash negotiator for the Developers
Ben Ireland	Developer's Lawyer
Developers	A group of stylish people
Gargoyle 1	A grotesque figure carved in stone
3 Angels	Stone figures that reflect the events through movement and sculptured shapes
Auntie Mary	The Ghost of Jessie's Grand Aunt
Old Women 1&2	Woman who light candles for the Souls of the Dead
TV News Presenter	A TV presenter
Ding (Drug Dealer 1)	Head of a drug dealing gang
Coroner	Heading an investigation
Chorus of Old Ladies	Women who join Old Woman 1
Guy's Friend	A loyal but street wise thuggish friend of Guy
Drug Dealing Gang	A nasty group of very physical thugs
Protesters	People protesting against the Cathedral's destruction
Bar Staff	Bar Staff at the Rave Party
Stu	Guy's friend
Ravers	Dancers at the Rave Party
Demolition Crew	Workers in overalls
Father	Jessie's Father
Mother	Jessie's Mother

Most of the music may be composed by members of the production group. However, a CD of incidental music used in the original production is available on request. The song, *Life And A Stranger*, is also available on CD.

**The Setting:**

A Gothic space suggestive of an old Cathedral; symbolic of the casing for a personal and cultural soul.

# 1

*LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.*

**Statues (VO)**

Imagine you had a dream where you were someone else caught in a massive drama that left you shaking when you woke up. You try to explain your dream. But it is fragmentary. You remember the walls and the darkness of a huge and ancient Cathedral where Angels were carved from the stone.

*LIGHTS UP on STATUES/ANGELS and GARGOYLE.*

**Statues (VO)**

You remember having a revelation about your life and the lives of others who were in some way significant to you. Your whole being has been affected by this dream. You were shaken when you awoke. Now, you try to recall what you dreamt and you try to work out what it all meant ...”

*LIGHTS UP on JESSIE on an altar at near Centre Stage.*

*ENTER STATUES. One descends from the roof as if levitating.*

*We hear Jessie’s slow and distressed breathing. Her fingers move slightly as if trying to contact her body and her environment. Her eyes blink open. She tries to keep them open. Her arms slowly and jerkily move her hands to her face. We hear her breathing change as she becomes aware of her inability to move easily. Her hand then slowly moves down her body as she tries to lift her head to see herself. She sees blood on her torso through her tattered clothing. She touches her side and lifts her hand to see the blood.*

*LIVE VIDEO from above the stage catches Jessie’s minutest movement and this is PROJECTED on to the LARGE STAINED GLASS WINDOW Upstage Left.*

*CUT IN images of her HEART BEATING.*

**Jessie (VO)**

*A dream?*

*She tries to mouth words; to call out. But nothing comes.*

*Then she imagines hearing a vaguely familiar voice and tries to follow where it came from. It becomes audible as the voice of AUNTIE MARY who now floats across the stage as a GHOST.*

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**Auntie Mary (VO)**

Jessie! Jessie!

**Jessie (VO)**

Auntie Mary?

**Auntie Mary (VO)**

Get up Jessie. Stand up straight.

*Jessie tries to move.*

**Jessie (VO)**

I'm bleeding.

**Auntie Mary (VO)**

No excuses Jessie. Come on now. Your Nana will be over soon. You know what she will say if you're not up.

**Jessie (VO)**

I'm bleeding.

**Auntie Mary (VO)**

It's just a scratch.

**Auntie Mary (VO)**

Don't keep everyone waiting.

**Jessie (VO)**

Do I have to go?

**Auntie Mary (VO)**

You'll have a lovely time. You know you love the music. I'll be playing your favourite hymns.

**Auntie Mary (VO)**

Come on Jessie. Your sister's ready. Get up Jessie. Stand up straight.

**Jessie (VO)**

I'm hurt.

*CUT IN*

*quick moments from the DEVELOPERS, THE DRUG GANG, GUY, SISTER BRANDE, PROTESTORS and JESSIE'S FAMILY.*

*INTER-CUT*

*with glimpses of THE SACRED HEART.*

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**Jessie (VO)**

This is a dream. I'll wake up.

**Angel 1 (VO)**

You are awake Jessie.

**Jessie (VO)**

I dreamt I saw my Auntie Mary.

**Angel 2 (VO)**

And who do you think we are?

**Jessie (VO)**

I don't know.

**Angel 3 (VO)**

You don't know? But Jessie, you have always known us; listened to us; spoken to us ...

**Jessie (VO)**

I'm dying ... aren't I?

*ENTER Two Old Women CHANTING and moving as if in procession.*

*Jessie now slowly manages to sit up. The pain is still there but she gains her consciousness. The Statues are still and silent.*

**Jessie**

(Directly to the audience)

Ever since I was a little girl, I used to love the way those voices just drifted and floated around the air in the Cathedral. *(Pause)* It's not a religious thing you know. I'm not religious. My Aunt Mary was religious. She used to play the pipe organ. She's dead now. Died years ago when I was little. But she used to take me here. I hadn't been here for years. Then one day I just snuck in. A trap door's lock was broken. Still is! *(Pause)* It was the sound and the darkness! I could feel my soul as if it was as real as my arms or my legs ... My heart! I could really feel a kind of magic surrounding me amongst the beams of light through the Angels pictured in the windows. I could feel their emotions and their approval of me sculptured in stone. I heard their soft and gentle whispering from the darkness. And I liked it. I loved it. It was like ... like a mother. And I was a child. She offered me the one place where I didn't have to pretend; or act like I was stupid and ... She let me sing. ME. My crappy voice

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sounded so beautiful. I felt beautiful. I felt sensual.  
 Like I didn't have to put on a face and play games.  
 I heard my voice. And I saw myself in those windows  
 ... those beautiful windows of sorrow, kindness  
 and such pain. They know pain ... and fear. I  
 know fear every day now. But they know my  
 fear. (*Distracted*) Ah look, I know what you're  
 thinking. You're thinking I was high and tripping  
 out. You're thinking I was hallucinating and  
 doing drugs. Isn't that right? Well, I'll tell you  
 what, I never did that shit in here. Never. I could've  
 done. But I didn't. Never. That would have  
 contaminated everything. I was clean in here.  
 I wouldn't do that ... Guy, my boy friend, he  
 wanted me to. He couldn't see that it was my place.  
 My space ... Me! And yeah ... All right, he made  
 me shoot up with him once. I hated him for it. But  
 I never did. It wasn't me. You know ... It wasn't  
 me. (*Pause*) I'm sounding like a junkie. Aren't I!  
 Well that's what I am. I don't want to be. I never  
 wanted to be. But it's what I've become.  
 (*She shivers*)

The Old Women have moved around the Cathedral and are seen waiting for a bus.

*CROSS FADE*

## 2

*LIGHTS UP on a Rave Party. The Angels become ravers and dance. It is loud and chaotic. The Cathedral is now a GOTHIC STYLE WAREHOUSE for the party.*

*TECHNO MUSIC blares through the speakers.*

*OLD WOMEN remain on SR in front of the Cathedral waiting for a bus.*

*The ALTAR is moved slowly back into the UL corner.*

*LIGHTS FADE on ALTAR before it is transformed into a BAR.*

*LIGHTS UP on Bar. GUY and STU are leaning against the Bar. They take their drinks and move amongst the Ravers.*

### **Guy**

It's like I keep saying. It's all such crap! This is  
 all crap man! Just like it's creating the illusion  
 of hallucinating ... you know what I'm saying?  
 Our species, man, has become so bored with

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itself that it has to re-align its consciousness  
by fabricating the drug experience. And that's  
pretty sad, man!

**Stu**

'Never really thought about it! But yeah. It's sad.

**Guy**

No Stu! On second thoughts, it's not sad. It's  
true. But truth is not sad! It just IS. Look at all  
this, man! What we are experiencing is the illusion  
of an illusion.

**Stu**

That's pretty heavy. Is Jess coming?

**Guy**

She should be here. 'Said she was coming.

ENTER DING with some of his GANG

**Ding**

Hey Guy, you got something for me?

**Guy**

Ah woof woof! If it ain't the wild dog!

**Stu**

Careful!

**Guy**

No, it's cool! Woof!

**Ding**

You better have what I'm after. The man's out  
of patience.

**Guy**

It's cool.

**Ding**

No! What you don't understand is that it's not  
cool. You only got a couple of days left. Then  
it won't be at all cool. You know what I mean?  
I said, you know ...

**Guy**

I heard you Ding!

Ding

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Good. I'm glad you're not deaf! I wouldn't like to shout. (To his gang) Come on ...

*They move to the bar area.*

**Stu**

What are you doing? You owe Ding something?

**Guy**

Yeah.

**Stu**

Well you'd better pay.

**Guy**

I know.

**Stu**

No! You don't seem to "know". You better pay or they get nasty. You got it! Don't you?

**Guy**

Oh yeah ...

**Stu**

No! You got it?

**Guy**

I'm getting it.

**Stu**

Danger! Danger!

**Guy**

Don't worry!

**Stu**

Why should I worry!

**Guy**

You see Stu, problems are really opportunities in disguise.

**Stu**

Well these opportunities could get you killed.

*ENTER Jess.*

**Jess**

Who's dying?

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**Guy**

I am: waiting for you is killing me.

*MUSIC UP. Jess, Guy and Stu move to the bar. The dancers become more frenzied. It is a ballet of wild desire; sensuous and dangerous!*

*The Old Women are completely unaware of its existence. The sounds and movements from inside have become distorted and muffled. It is as if they are suspended in time and slowed down to glimpses from a memory.*

*Meanwhile Guy and Jessie are mingling and self absorbed in the dance.*

*Guy and Jessie are dancing wildly culminating in their falling amongst the crowd.*

*They are carried by the crowd and landed centre stage. Each is being lifted in turn and manipulated: to create a sense of floating experience: getting "high".*

**Jessie**

I'm a bird. I'm a bird. Look at me fly ...

*She laughs.*

**Guy**

If you're a bird. Then I'm a jet plane; flying  
into empty space above the sneering clouds ...

**Jessie**

Fly away ... Flyyyyyyyyyy ...

**Guy**

Flyyyyy ... high into ethereal skies ...

**Jessie**

Shut up Guy ...

*All goes still.*

**Guy**

What's up Jess? It's just fun.

**Jessie**

I feel so ...

**Guy**

I love it when you feel that way.

They continue to interact with each other.

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**Old Women**

I hear a pounding heart with its deafening beats  
of desire. I can hear it driving a body into that  
same repeating spring. That same deceptive  
spring. We remember it. Don't we! And some of us  
live long enough have to live with its memory; haunted  
with its accompanying guilt; haunted and seeking  
atonement for the daring of our remembered youth ...

**Jessie**

I never want to sleep again. Don't let me sleep.

**Guy**

Don't worry. I won't let you sleep.

**Jessie**

*(Laughing)* You're funny Guy! You make me  
laugh. I don't laugh much. I used to laugh. Did  
you know I used to be a real giggler when I was little.

**Guy**

It's a release. Laughing is good. Here, this'll get  
you splitting your sides.

*He slowly places a tablet up to her lips.*

**Jessie**

Don't think I should.

**Guy**

Open wide.

**Jessie**

Dr. Guy!

*She deliberately opens her mouth and he places the tablet on her tongue. She closes  
her mouth and she smiles.*

**Old Woman 1**

Skin bristles; appeasing the unseen thorns injecting  
the numbing senses while the soul cries. But listen!  
She cries with laughter.

**Old Woman 2**

I could do with a little bristling skin.

**Old Woman 1**

I could do with a little laughter ...

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**Jessie**

What do people talk about? I mean there are so many people. They all say something to each other. But after you say a few things, what's left to say?

**Guy**

Come on Jess. Don't!

**Jessie**

What do we talk about? When you think about it: Nothing!

**Guy**

Crap!

**Jessie**

Yeah. Crap. Maybe we shouldn't talk! Actions speak louder etc. Guy ...

*She reaches out to Guy and draws him into her. She kisses him. They embrace passionately.*

**Old Woman 2**

It's a real shame. And you know, I hear the architect is a Protestant.

**Old Woman 1**

What would he know?

**Old Woman 2**

And it won't be as handy. Will the bus stop right out front?

**Old Woman 1**

This bus takes me all the way to my place. As good as a taxi really!

**Old Woman 2**

There's no way they'll save it. All boarded up to be pulled down ... just like that hospital ... you know the one! The one they blew up!

**Old Woman 1**

You'd think they'd learn! But I hear they will leave the little Grotto as part of the Development.

**Old Woman 2**

Well that's something. We can still come here and light a candle.

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**Old Woman 1**

Our lives will soon be past. No one will be bothered lighting candles after we're gone. The little Grotto will become just another kitschy decoration like us ...

**Old Woman 1**

And gone forever the music, the respect, the occasion of the Cathedral. Those voices that produced the tones of eternity will never sound the same.

**Old Woman 2**

Now now! Life goes on. It'll just be different. We can't live in the past. Look, there's our bus.

*Old Woman 1 looks up at the exterior of the Cathedral. They EXIT.*

*While the Old Women spoke, Jessie and Guy have had an argument. Jessie has become irritable. Guy steps away from her.*

*Jessie is seated and in obvious distress.*

**Guy**

Hey Baby, it's all right. It's all right. It's right ...  
There, it's right. It's all right ...

**Jessie**

I'm so afraid. I'm frightened.

**Guy**

No! No! It's all right!

**Jessie**

It's not all right. *(She thrashes out and hits him)*  
You bastard. You ... *(She keeps hitting him)*

**Guy**

Hey! Stop it. Stop it.

**Jessie**

Bastard!

**Guy**

People are watching. They'll hear you.

**Jessie**

I don't care.

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**Guy**

Jessie! Jessie! What are you doing? Jessie ... Stop!

**Jessie**

*(Screaming)* How could you? How?

**Guy**

What?

**Stu**

*(Interrupting)* Hey what's up?

**Jessie**

Stay out of it, you little ...

**Stu**

Hey ... I'm out of here. Nothing to do with me ...

**Guy**

Don't go man! She's *(shaking his head)* She's ...

**Stu**

Psycho!

**Guy**

No! We mixed a few things ... You know?! It ..  
um ... didn't agree with her. You know what I  
mean?

**Jessie**

Bastard. How could you?

**Stu**

That's all?

**Jessie**

No! He was screwing around with that slut  
Melanie ... There's nothing wrong with me! It's  
him.

**Guy**

No baby. It wasn't like that ... We just ... You  
know ... We sorted all that out. Forgiven; forgotten  
and all that.

**Jessie**

I know exactly what you did. And THEY all know!

**Guy**

I'm sorry! I'm sorry Baby. It wasn't really me! You

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know that. Come on. You're the only one for me!  
How could you honestly think I'd be interested in  
someone else?

**Jessie**

You're a bastard, Guy!

**Jessie**

You could have told me yourself. Instead I heard it  
from them. They'll be laughing at me.

**Guy**

No one's laughing. Honestly Jess, it's all right.  
Everything's ok. I love you. Come on Baby.  
Why bring all this up again? It's time to party. I  
love you.

**Jessie**

You got a funny way of showing it ...

**Guy**

I'll show you. Come outside and we'll share some  
... Ok? I got all the stuff.

**Jessie**

You need it to sell ... so that creep doesn't kill  
you.

**Guy**

No! I got more.

**Jessie**

Since when?

**Guy**

Look it'll be all right. Come on Jess. Come outside  
and ... Look I'm sorry baby. I'm so sorry.

**Jessie**

You're a bastard Guy.

*SPOT UP on Guy and Jessie. They are transported to a different state of mind. They are shooting up. We see their reactions to the injection and ritualised movement of strapping and injecting and receiving a "hit".*

*VIDEO SCREEN depicts distorted images from their experience INTERCUT with the open heart beating.*

*The Statues (as Ravers) now depict the reactions to Guy and Jessie's drug taking.*

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*There is something poignant and sad in what is taking place. They are beautiful and yet tragic figures moving from pain to ecstasy in a dance of self destruction.*

*Jessie's giggling and overtly sexual experience leaves them in an induced state on the floor and disconnected from each other.*

*FADE OUT.*

### 3

*LIGHTS UP on the ADMINISTRATION AREA. BISHOP KOLE, SISTER AGNES BRANDE, CARLEY ANGHURST and the LAWYER are in the middle of a serious meeting.*

#### **Carley**

First of all, let me congratulate you My Lord for your wisdom on this issue. We at *Western Developments* pride ourselves on our creating “win-win” partnerships. We seek to provide the best possible solutions to your needs and the needs of our potential clients of the Construction Company. *Western Developments* engages the very best architects on the globe to create and facilitate developments that enhance the environment and the communal aspects of our locations. So in re-locating the Cathedral, we take very seriously the needs and aspirations of your constituency. My people from the top down are sensitive to your political situation. We have the best Impression Management team; the best press relations; and the most efficient contractors in the Western World. So rest assured you have made the best decision. We only need your signature and we can start tomorrow.

*She produces the contract and places it before the Bishop. He hesitates and then silently touches it.*

#### **Lawyer**

Our legal team have had extensive consultation with yours and every phrase has been gone over and, as you would have been informed already, it's water tight.

#### **Carley**

Win-Win My Lord! The new Cathedral will have everything: touches of tradition, digital

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recording and screens for better vision for the constituents, even the on-line facilities for a more truly anonymous confessional service. The museum section will have its own specially designed security system to protect all those ancient icons that tour the country. There won't be any problems with vandals desecrating the bones of saints. The new designs represent the changing needs of the Church. God's home will make Him proud ...

**Bishop Kole**

I don't need your patronizing.

**Carley**

I didn't mean to ...

**Bishop Kole**

Ms. Anghurst ...

**Carley**

Carley ...

**Bishop Kole**

Ms. Anghurst, I have already studied these documents. I am aware of everything. Your naivety astounds me. I am not inspired with confidence.

**Lawyer**

There is a problem?

**Bishop Kole**

A problem?

**Carley**

I'm sorry My Lord. I get overly enthusiastic.

**Sister Agnes**

*(To Bishop Kole)* Could we have a word?

**Bishop Kole**

*(Ignoring her)* None of these documents reveal the truth of our situation. You want to bulldoze my Cathedral to clear the way for a giant monstrosity that will leach the life blood from the surrounding local businesses and ...

**Sister Agnes**

My Lord *(more determined)* I think we should ...

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**Carley**

With due respects, it's not "your" Cathedral.

**Bishop Kole**

No! My superiors have determined yours is the way of the future.

**Carley**

But we need your signature My Lord.

**Sister Agnes**

My Lord ...

**Bishop Kole**

Yes! You do need my signature. Sign, and I save the diocese from bankruptcy.

**Carley**

And move into the twenty-first century; relieving your parishioners of debt; allowing them to focus on their spiritual well-being and not on fund-raising. My Lord, I am aware it is not the perfect solution for you. But it is the best ...

*Sister Agnes takes Bishop Kole by the arm.*

**Sister Agnes**

Would you excuse us for a minute.

*She speaks quietly into his ear. Bishop Kole steps outside with Sister Agnes.*

**Sister Agnes**

David, getting terse isn't going to solve anything. Nothing is set in stone. The minority report opens up other possibilities. I know how you feel. And you can still do something about it.

**Bishop Kole**

It's a done deal, Sister. You know it too. They know it.

**Sister Agnes**

Only once you sign! No matter what has been recommended, you're still the final decision maker. I don't think you have considered in enough detail the alternative suggestion.

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**Bishop Kole**

Agnes, do you really think I haven't thought about this every hour for the past few months? Do you think I would make such a decision lightly. You run the books for the Diocese. You more than anyone know the state of our finances ...

**Sister Agnes**

Yes! But don't rush in now. I haven't had a chance to fully develop the alternative plan. There is a huge groundswell of support to keep the building and even to have it refurbished ... There's no reason the "museum" couldn't be added. It alone could generate an extra quarter million dollars in the first twelve months.

**Bishop Kole**

But the outlay? We can't do it. We've already refinanced five times in the past decade. We can't do it.

**Sister Agnes**

And give them another victory? Is this all we are? A bargaining tool mediating between remnants of the past and big money?

**Bishop Kole**

Sister!

**Sister Agnes**

No! David, you have the power. This isn't about stone and wood or even about real estate. This is about letting the Church be used to further advance the bank accounts of big business and its share holders. It's about abandoning heritage, tradition and integrity in favour of opportunism, exploitation and expediency. It is saying our space and place of worship is irrelevant and of no significance. It is saying the people have no sacred place; no symbol in time of hardship to turn to ... Listen to the voice inside you. David the finances can be turned around.

**Bishop Kole**

Forget voices. These aren't the issues. Sorry Agnes. For too long the Church has fought to maintain its treasures under the guise of "heritage" and "tradition". You of all people

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must realize this. You rejected the traditional Orders in favour of involvement in the “real world” as an activist ... Your words Sister. You campaign for women priests. Hardly an argument in favour of tradition. Now you suggest we hold on to a stone construction because of tradition! You even suggest making money in the temple of God!

**Sister Agnes**

But what do we replace it with? A siphon for the multi-nationals? You don't like them. You were patronized. They mock us with their smiles and jargon. And now you are being compromised. This is a symbol of our faith. The Cathedral is a symbolic presence in a material world. While it is there, it can be utilized. Destroy it and you remove a vital thread in an already weakening fabric.

**Bishop Kole**

Is this all Sister? I have a meeting to attend.

**Sister Agnes**

It's not too late. At least ask for twenty-four hours before you make any decision.

**Bishop Kole**

The decision is made.

**Sister Agnes**

David, what has to happen before you'll realize this is a mistake?

*Bishop Kole looks at her and walks back into the room.*

**Sister Agnes**

My Lord, do you believe in what you are doing anymore? Do you believe in yourself? Do you believe in God? Or is everything negotiable?

**Bishop Kole**

*(Answering back)* These are your questions Sister. Not mine. Ask yourself. Not me!

*He goes still.*

*EXIT Sister Agnes*

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## 4

Carley and the Lawyer burst into song. As they sing, their lap tops merge as if “making love”. It is very nonsensical and absurd.

### **SONG: Look at My Lap Top**

#### **Carley and Lawyer**

Look at my lap top  
look at my figures  
seen my portfolio  
off to the gym?  
I done my time  
paid my dues  
crunch time reality  
time to enthuse  
a win win situation  
buy buy buy  
sell sell sell  
deals being done  
money being won  
look at my lap top  
look at my figures  
seen my portfolio  
off to the gym?  
Global economy  
for a positive universe  
the market is booming  
send me an email  
the deal's been done  
buy buy buy  
sell sell sell  
deal's been done  
money being won ...  
Look at my lap top  
look at my figures  
seen my portfolio  
off to the gym?

*Bishop Kole returns; examines the papers to be signed; takes a pen from Carley and signs .*

*Carley takes it in her hand; waving above her as if it is a trophy.*

#### **Carley**

YES! To the Gym?

#### **Lawyer**

Right on.

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**Carley**

YES! Yes! Yes!

THEY EXIT.

CROSS FADE.

## 5.

*Jessie sings a lament with no words. It is her song of solitude and emptiness. She sings to hear her voice echo off the walls. The stained glass window becomes a screen reflecting her state of mind: her coming down from the drugs. She is content and even comforted by the space.*

*Jessie performs her LAMENT. It is interrupted by Guy's entrance.*

*ENTER GUY.*

*He is silent and watches her from the shadows.*

**Jessie**

You heard me; didn't you! You know, I'd prefer it if you didn't come in here. In fact I said to you I didn't want you here. I don't want anyone to know this is where I go.

*Guy remains silent.*

**Jessie**

Funny isn't it! My parents wanted me to go to Mass with them. I wouldn't do it. Now I hide in here. That's ironic isn't it!

*Silence*

**Jessie**

They're so nice and understanding. Even when I was practically expelled for putting my hair in dreadlocks and colouring it bright pink and green, they were understanding. Huh! I was so stoned, I don't even remember doing it. I think they thought it was just a rebellious phase I was going through. They knew I smoked dope. That was just a "phase she is going through"! Huh! "Don't all young people?" They became so "liberal" and understanding ... They even stopped going to Mass. My mother was, still is,

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a teacher. When I was three she had me on a reading program. I was going to be so bright. I looked good when I started school and I could read all the books from day one! Huh ... I must be such a disappointment. After all they've done! Maybe they're used to me not going home! Maybe they think I'm at a friend's place. But they keep my room for me.

**Guy**

Aren't you cold?

**Jessie**

No! I don't feel the cold.

*Guy steps forward.*

**Jessie**

You know them. What do you think of them?

**Guy**

Your folks? They accepted me right up. That's pretty cool.

**Jessie**

Yeah! They're cool. Their problem is that they don't want to be ordinary. They don't feel ordinary like everyone else living in their street. But the trouble is, and they realize it now, they are. They are so ...

**Guy**

Hey! My parents split long time past. Does it matter?

**Jessie**

A few years ago, my mother was having an affair. She used to go to Sydney and stay with this "friend". It was driving my dad crazy. He changed so much! Still so nice. But he stopped going to church; started really drinking; and nearly walked. I remember the long discussions that went all night. The silences. The overly polite cover up in the mornings as I raced to catch the bus. They were still so nice to me.

**Guy**

Look ... there's something I need to talk about.

**Jessie**

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*(Ignoring him)* Sometimes being “nice” is the worst thing you can do to someone!

**Guy**

What? You’re hooked because your folks were nice to you?

**Jessie**

Don’t scoff at me Guy!

**Guy**

I ain’t scoffing at nothing! Most of society is in denial about what goes on; how people feel; and you know ... they see only a Disneyland version of their own lives ... and they’re too frightened to take a peek outside their neatly kept lounge rooms and nicely kept lawns. And when they get a little hit of reality they start crying and screaming about “why should this happen to them?” when it was obvious all along ... only they chose not to see!

**Jessie**

I’m not blaming my parents for anything.

**Guy**

Yeah well! Look baby, this is really a tight situation.

**Jessie**

Tight?

**Guy**

I’m in trouble here Jess. I really need your help on this.

**Jessie**

It’s Ding and his gang! Isn’t it?

**Guy**

I need cash quick. Your folks are pretty well off ...

**Jessie**

You want me to steal from my parents?

**Guy**

Do you know the PIN on their credit cards?

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**Jessie**

Guy, I won't do it.

**Guy**

I've seen your mum's jewellery. She never wears her engagement ring. It must be ...

**Jessie**

Do you know what you're saying?

**Guy**

I know baby ...

**Jessie**

Do you know what you're asking?

**Guy**

I'm sorry ... But they'll kill me. And they know you are with me.

**Jessie**

Guy!

**Guy**

Jess, you have to help me here. You're in danger too. If you don't do it for me, they'll make you do it for them. They know where you live. Remember how they returned the diary to your letter box?

**Jessie**

No!

**Guy**

Look Jess, I know this is a really stuffed up situation. Like it's bad! It's awful. But you and I are in real trouble if we don't do something really soon! You hear what I'm saying? Jess, do you understand?

**Jessie**

This is your mess. I been selling to keep alive. What have YOU been doing? Guy what have you been doing?

**Guy**

Little extras just add up. You know how it is? You weren't complaining before.

**Jessie**

---



*(Still adamant)* No.

*He grabs her.*

**Guy**

What do you mean? Jess, haven't I been clear? They'll kill me. Now with or without your help, I'm going in. Now you have a choice.

**Jessie**

You bastard Guy! I can't do that to my mother.

**Guy**

*(Hugging her)* We'll get it back. We'll ... and hey ... We don't want to be ordinary like them. This'll wake em up ... You know what I'm saying! It'll be a signal to change and ...

**Jessie**

You want me to rip off my mother.

**Guy**

No! It's just an advance. Jessie, we are dead if we don't do this.

**Jessie**

You want me to rip off my mother! My Mother ... How could you?

*Jessie shakes her head. Her breathing becomes heavy and rapid as her fists unleash a torrent of punches on to Guy. She wails and speaks incoherently.*

*Guy defends himself then STRIKES to the ground.*

**Guy**

I'm sick of this shit you give me. Don't you ever hit me again. Ever!

*EXIT Guy. Jessie is stunned and tries to lever herself from the ground.*

*ENTER Sister Agnes.*

**Sister Agnes**

How did you get in here? What are you doing?

**Sister Agnes**

Are you alright?

---

*She is suspicious and cautious. Jessie scampers away from her.*

**Jessie**

It's ok! It's alright ...

*ENTER MRS. MACULLACHY carrying a BASEBALL BAT.*

**Mrs. Macullachy**

What was it Sister? Intruders? They'll answer to me. I'll give them what-for!

**Sister Agnes**

It's a young girl.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

Well praise be! In the middle of the night and all. Wonder what today's parents are thinking of ...

**Jessie**

I'll go ...

**Mrs. Macullachy**

I'd turf her out now. She's probably on drugs.

**Sister Agnes**

No. Wait a minute.

**Jessie**

You don't have to turf anything. I'm going.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

I'll call the police.

**Sister Agnes**

I don't think that is necessary.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

And how did she get in here? I thought all that horrible wire was supposed to keep out riff-raff. How did you get in here? (*Studying Jessie*) Wait a minute! You're very familiar.

**Jessie**

Look! I didn't mean any harm.

**Sister Agnes**

You know her.

---

**Mrs. Macullachy**

You're Jessie, aren't you? You're the little girl who used come with Mary ... Mary what's her name, now?

**Jessie**

My Auntie Mary.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

She was the Organist here for years. What was her surname?

**Sister Agnes**

Come over to the office, I'll get you something to drink.

**Jessie**

Mrs. Macullachy ...

**Mrs. Macullachy**

That's my name. You *are* Jessie ...

**Jessie**

I used to step into Mrs. Macullachy's world when I was little. Mrs. Macullachy and lamingtons! Always trying to raise funds for the new pulpit ... or something.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

It's been my job for twenty years to look after the Bishop. No matter who he was.

**Jessie**

Mrs. Macullachy's world!

**Mrs. Macullachy**

But it's a different world now. The poor man doesn't always get the support or respect he deserves.

**Sister Agnes**

It's cold in here. Come over to the Office.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

It's scary at night with the lights off and all. I've lived in the house on these grounds for twenty years, and I still find it scary in here at night. So tell me young Lady, and no lies, what are you doing in here?

---

**Jessie**

I sing.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

Sing? You break into the Cathedral at night to sing! Pardon me for being sceptical. Is there anyone with you?

*Jessie shakes her head.*

**Mrs. Macullachy**

I might just check. Will you take care of her?  
I think I'd better take a look around.

*EXIT Mrs. Macullachy.*

**Jessie**

What are you?

**Sister Agnes**

*(Hesitant)* I administer this building among other things. I've been working late on something important.

**Jessie**

Do you have a name?

**Sister Agnes**

Agnes.

**Jessie**

Are you a Nun? I heard her call you "Sister".

**Sister Agnes**

Yes.

**Jessie**

But you seem too young. I've never seen a young Nun before.

**Sister Agnes**

Are you coming or going?

**Jessie**

There are ghosts in here Sister. Did you know that?

*For a moment, Sister Agnes is aware of the darkness and the shadows. The statues that weren't so evident earlier now seem to have a life of their own. It is only the*

---

*darkness playing tricks, of course, but there does seem to be slow movement from the stone figures.*

*Sister Agnes considers Jessie for a moment before deciding to dismiss the issue.*

**Sister Agnes**

I've got work to do. Are you leaving? Or do I call the police?

**Jessie**

Oh! I'm sorry. I only came here to hear my voice and to hide. It's so empty in here, my voice speaks back to me.

**Sister Agnes**

Can you show me how you got in here?

**Jessie**

I turned into a cockroach and snuck in between the rotting boards.

**Sister Agnes**

Have you been in here before?

**Jessie**

Lots of times.

*Sister Agnes looks around to see the statues more clearly defined. They seem closer than she imagined.*

**Sister Agnes**

Look, I'm sorry. I really do have work I must attend to.

**Jessie**

Is it true they're pulling it down?

**Sister Agnes**

Maybe!

**Jessie**

And the statues and windows? Will they be kept?

**Sister Agnes**

I don't know. Probably. Why?

**Jessie**

Because they're beautiful! Because I know them and they're like ... Oh I can't explain it!

---

**Sister Agnes**

Go on. Try.

**Jessie**

No! It sounds silly ...

**Sister Agnes**

I think you should go.

**Jessie**

Home?

**Sister Agnes**

Do you have a home?

*Jessie nods.*

**Sister Agnes**

Are you OK? (*Jessie nods*) Next time, if you need help, knock at the house. Mrs. Macullachy isn't as bad as she seems. Or (she reaches into her pockets) or call me. Here's my number.

*She gives Jessie a CARD.*

**Jessie**

Nuns carry business cards? Huh. Cool ...

**Sister Agnes**

(Smiling) Leave by the door.

*EXIT Jessie. Sister Agnes holds the moment, aware of Jessie's ghosts.*

*ENTER Mrs. Macullachy.*

**Mrs. Macullachy**

So, your little friend has gone! We're so kind hearted aren't we! The little twerp will probably come back with her friends and trash the place.

**Sister Agnes**

That's if we don't destroy it first.

**Mrs. Macullachy**

Sad times Sister! You'll lock the door behind you when you leave? I'm off to bed.

*EXIT Mrs. Macullachy.*

---

**Sister Agnes**

Ghosts!

*She places her right hand inside her left and raises them to her chin as she bows her head.*

*LIGHTING CHANGE.*

**6**

*ENTER GARGOYLE UPON STAGE MADE FROM THE ALTAR. He is accompanied by honky-tonk style music as if a performer in a side show.*

*EXIT Sister Agnes.*

*The Statues break from character and join him.*

**Gargoyle**

Hell's frozen over. It's not hot anymore. The fires that kept the tempers raging and the temporal blood a pumping with draconian fears have been extinguished. Now the mood is rational as ice. Still, the tired angels sing their positive spin on a difficult situation. It seems the Temple is obsolete to be traded for a new model. So where does that leave us?

*They all slide down behind the MAKE-SHIFT STAGE (the Altar).*

**7**

*ENTER Bishop to Administration Office. He sits.*

*PROJECT VIDEO IMAGERY of NEWS BROADCAST:*

*PLACARD WAVING PROTESTORS demonstrate.*

*CUT IN CU of Placards with slogans calling for SAVING OF THE CATHEDRAL.*

*CUT IN Interviews with Bishop Kole, Carley Anghurst, miscellaneous protestors.*

*The honky-tonk music plays over the scene.*

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