

The 11th Hour Christian

A play by

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Characters

David: 22, An angry young man

Brent: 25, A cancer patient

Anne: 50, David and Brent's mother

Vikki: 60, A volunteer hospital visitor

Annabelle: 25, a prostitute

Scene 1

A private hospital room. BRENT is asleep in bed, his arm is attached to a morphine drip. One vase of flowers is in there.

There is a tapping at the door. DAVID enters quietly.

DAVID: Brent?

He sees that he is asleep. He moves closer to him and looks at him.

DAVID: Jesus.

He moves away, shocked.

BRENT stirs and opens his eyes.

BRENT: David?

DAVID turns around. BRENT sits up painfully.

BRENT: David?

DAVID: Yes.

BRENT: You came?

DAVID: Yes.

BRENT: Thank you.

DAVID: Don't thank me, thank Mum. She said she'd increase my board if I didn't.

BRENT chuckles.

BRENT: Good old Mum.

Silence.

BRENT: Well, you look well.

DAVID: Thanks. You look...

BRENT: Like death warmed up?

DAVID nods.

DAVID: I wouldn't have recognised you, to be honest.

BRENT: No.

DAVID: In fact, I felt sorry for you when I first saw you.

BRENT: Really?

DAVID: Yes.

BRENT: But you're over that now?

DAVID: Yes.

BRENT *gives a snort.*

BRENT: I don't blame you.

DAVID: Neither do I. I blame you.

Tense silence.

BRENT: I'm sorry.

DAVID: For what?

BRENT: For everything.

DAVID: Is that why you asked me here? To make peace with me before you die?

BRENT: Yes.

DAVID: What is this - a list-ditch effort to get into Heaven?

BRENT: No, no. I just want you to know that I'm...ashamed. That I'm sorry.

DAVID: *(pause)* Why did you do those things to me?

BRENT: *(pause)* Let's not make this any more painful than it already is.

DAVID: You couldn't make it any more painful than it already has been.

BRENT: But –

DAVID: You're seeking my forgiveness. But I can't give that until I understand why you did those things to me in the first place. Why you would bash me, why you would steal from me, why you would humiliate me. So, tell me, why?

BRENT: *(pause)* Well...I've given it a lot of thought. And it's because you were...

DAVID: What?

BRENT: ...weak.

DAVID: Weak?

BRENT: Yes. Ever since you were a little kid you cried over the most trivial things. Like if I borrowed one of your toys, instead of asking for it back you'd go crying to Mum and say that I stole it. Or if I made fun of you, like the time you dropped your ice cream and I said, "Ha ha", you went to Mum bawling as though I'd broken your arm. You never stood up for yourself. You always...you always looked afraid, and it just brought out the mean streak in me.

DAVID: *You* made me afraid.

BRENT: No, you were like that from the start. And you're still like that: living at home with Mum, working from home. You barely leave the place, except when I come round to visit. It's like you've retreated from the world. You've got to overcome that.

DAVID: You say you want forgiveness, but instead all you're doing is getting in a couple of final blows before you die!

BRENT: I don't want you to go on this way. You need to break out of your cocoon.

DAVID: I live at home because I'm saving up for a deposit for my own place, and I work from home because that's what I –

BRENT: You've deliberately organised your life so you can avoid the world because you're afraid of it.

DAVID: Well, is it any wonder after what you did to me?

Silence.

DAVID: Do you remember the time I borrowed your tennis racket without asking? If it wasn't for Mum standing between us you would've killed me. Then the next morning you came into my room and punched me in the nose when I was still asleep! I woke with blood pouring out of me!

BRENT: I'm -

DAVID: For the next six months I put a chair under my door handle to stop you getting in. I could barely sleep!

BRENT: I'm –

DAVID: And who do you think you are telling me how to live my life? You're riddled with cancer because of the way you lived yours. All the drugs you sold, the money you stole, the violence. You've been punished for it.

BRENT: I know.

DAVID: And look – only one vase of flowers. And I bet... *(he looks)* yes, they're from Mum! Where are the flowers from people who care about you? Where are all your visitors?

Silence.

BRENT: I have one visitor.

DAVID: Who? An old, gullible girlfriend?

BRENT: No. Vikki. She's a Christian. She –

DAVID: A Christian? How would you have become friends with a Christian?

BRENT: When I came here. She's a volunteer visitor.

DAVID: Of course. No-one who actually knows you would come.

BRENT: She knows me. I told her everything. All the things I've done. Just talking to her made me realise what an awful person I've been.

DAVID: About time.

BRENT: She prays for me. And...she's got me to pray.

DAVID: I knew it. Hedging your bets in case there is a God.

BRENT: No, no. For forgiveness from the people I hurt. From you.

DAVID: Well, you've wasted your time.

BRENT: But you must forgive me. Not for my benefit, but for your own. Carrying all this hatred in you will make you sick like me.

DAVID: I'm fine.

BRENT: Vikki got the hatred out of my heart. When I first got sick I couldn't believe it. I hated everyone, even her. When she came to see me I told her to fuck off. But she was patient, and eventually she got me to accept what had happened to me and what I'd done. And the hate just disappeared. You should meet her. She could help you.

DAVID: I don't need any help!

BRENT: She has this glow, like I've never seen before. If only you saw her.

DAVID: I've had enough of this. I only came because Mum blackmailed me. And instead of just saying sorry you keep saying that I need help! I don't need any help. I'm alive and I'm healthy. And the last person I'd take advice from would be you, unless I wanted to learn how to make someone live in fear.

Silence.

BRENT: For Mum's sake couldn't you –

DAVID: No!

BRENT: But it would mean so much to her.

DAVID: Too bad.

BRENT: But –

DAVID: And I don't believe you've changed. If you got well again tomorrow you'd be the same old person you always were.

BRENT: No.

DAVID: Yes!

Silence.

BRENT: Will you at least do one thing for me?

DAVID: No.

BRENT: Please?

DAVID: What?

BRENT raises his arms, wanting to hug him.

DAVID: You've got to be joking! There's only one way to end this relationship.

BRENT: What's that?

DAVID punches him in the stomach. BRENT cries out in pain and writhes on the bed.

DAVID: How'd you like that? It's no fun being weak and unable to defend yourself, is it?

BRENT groans in pain.

DAVID: Here. Have some morphine.

DAVID presses freely on the morphine release button.

DAVID: And if you say a word about this to Mum I'll come back. Got it?

BRENT nods furiously.

DAVID: I'm going to tell her that we reconciled and so are you. Right?

BRENT *nods again.*

DAVID: Good.

DAVID *exits.*

Blackout.

Scene 2

ANNE is sitting in the corridor waiting, looking nervous. DAVID enters and stands in front of her. ANNE stands and takes hold of his hands, looking at him hopefully.

ANNE: Well?

DAVID: We talked.

ANNE: And?

DAVID: *(pause)* We made it up.

ANNE: Oh, that's wonderful, David! You've made me so happy.

She hugs him.

ANNE: Let's go and see him together, as a family.

DAVID: No, he's not up to it at the moment.

ANNE: What's wrong? Is it the pain?

DAVID: No, just emotional. He said he needs some time alone.

ANNE: Did he cry?

DAVID: Yes.

ANNE: I told you he'd changed, didn't I?

DAVID *nods*.

ANNE: This make me so happy. So very very happy.

She bursts into tears.

DAVID: Come on, Mum I'll get you a coffee.

They exit.

Scene 3

DAVID *sits behind a desk working on a computer. He is drinking a glass of wine and singing “It’s A Wonderful world” by Louis Armstrong. He’s very happy.*

ANNE *suddenly comes in, looking shocked. DAVID sees her.*

DAVID: Mum? Are you okay?

She tries to speak, but can’t.

DAVID *stands.*

DAVID: Mum, what is it? Is it Brent?

She nods her head vigorously.

DAVID: I’m so sorry, Mum.

He hugs her.

DAVID: At least his pain is over now and – maybe - he’s gone to a better place. I’m just so glad I got to reconcile with him before he left.

ANNE: No! No!

ANNE breaks free of the hug.

ANNE: He’s not...

DAVID: What?

ANNE: He’s not...dead.

DAVID: Then, what’s wrong?

ANNE: Nothing. He’s...better.

DAVID: Better?

ANNE: The cancer...it’s gone.

DAVID: Remission?

ANNE: No, it’s gone. All that’s left is the scarring. He’s better. He’s not going to die!

DAVID: That can’t be right. It was throughout his body.

ANNE: I know. It’s a miracle!

DAVID: No, it must be a mistake.

ANNE: No, it's true. I just spoke to his doctor. He said he's never seen anything like it before.

DAVID: But how?

ANNE: He doesn't know. But I think it's because you reconciled with him.

DAVID: What?

ANNE: You got the last of the pain out of his heart and the cancer died.

DAVID: But we didn't –

ANNE: You saved him!

ANNE hugs him.

ANNE: Come on, let's go and see him.

ANNE hurries out, DAVID stands, shocked.

ANNE: *(off)* David, come on!

DAVID: There is no God.

Blackout.

Scene 4

The hospital room. The bed is made and the flowers are gone. BRENT is nowhere to be seen.

ANNE *hurries in.*

ANNE: Brent?

She looks around. DAVID enters, reluctantly.

DAVID: Where is he?

ANNE: I don't know.

DAVID: They've cleaned up the room.

ANNE: But he can't leave yet. He's won't be strong enough.

DAVID: Maybe you got the wrong news.

ANNE: No, I spoke to his doctor.

DAVID: Maybe it wasn't his doctor. Maybe someone was playing a cruel joke on you.

ANNE: No-one would do such a thing.

DAVID: I don't know. Brent made a lot of enemies in his life.

ANNE: No, it's not –

BRENT: Mum?

They turn and BRENT enters wearing pyjamas. He looks weak.

ANNE: Brent!

ANNE hurries to him and hugs him.

ANNE: I can't believe it! You're standing.

BRENT: Only just. I think I overdid it.

ANNE: Well, get back into bed.

She helps him back in and hugs him again.

ANNE: Don't just stand there, David. Come and hug your brother.

DAVID *hesitates.*

ANNE: It's all right, he's not going to break.

DAVID *hugs him reluctantly. He tries to escape quickly, but BRENT holds him tight.*

ANNE: I never thought I'd ever see you two hugging. It's wonderful.

DAVID *escapes.*

ANNE: I know that your reconciliation is what made you better again.

DAVID *and BRENT look at each other.*

Suddenly VIKKI, a colourfully dressed and overweight woman of fifty-five, dashes into the room and stops dead. She stares at BRENT.

VIKKI: Brent, is it true? Is it?

In response, BRENT slowly gets out of bed, walks to her, and stops in front of her. VIKKI watches him breathlessly. Finally...

VIKKI: It's the first miracle!

She hugs him.

VIKKI: Praise Father Elliot!

BRENT: Thank you, Vikki.

VIKKI: No, it's Father Elliot we must thank.

DAVID: Father Elliot?

VIKKI: We must pray to him.

She gets down on her knees, and BRENT follows suit.

VIKKI: Dear Father Elliot, thank you for interceding on Brent's behalf and saving his life. You have washed him of his sins and he is ready to do good work in the world.

BRENT: I am.

VIKKI: You will not regret what you have done for him.

BRENT: You won't.

VIKKI: Amen.

BRENT: Amen.

VIKKI stands. BRENT struggles to stand.

BRENT: Vikki, can you help me up?

VIKKI: What's wrong?

BRENT: I'm just a little tired.

VIKKI: Of course you are. So back into bed, quick smart.

She helps him into bed.

VIKKI: The more you rest, the sooner you'll be able to leave here.

She notices ANNE for the first time.

VIKKI: Anne!

She hugs her.

VIKKI: How are you feeling? You must be beside yourself with joy?

ANNE: I can't believe it. I just can't.

ANNE cries.

VIKKI: I can. I knew it would happen! I just did!

She notices DAVID.

VIKKI: And you must be David.

She hurries towards him. He stops her in her tracks by extending his hand.

DAVID: Hello.

VIKKI: Oh, David, I think we can do better than that.

She hugs him against his will and finally releases him.

VIKKI: Oh, Anne, what joy! To have your family together again. I bet you never thought that would happen?

ANNE: No. Never.

VIKKI: It's a miracle in more ways than one.

DAVID: Who's this Father Elliot you were praying to?

VIKKI: Oh, he was the holiest of men! A catholic priest who went to Sierra Leone on his own volition and money to set up a hospital in 1845 to treat the victims of war. He saved so many lives, but in the end he got so sick of the endless fighting that he pitched a tent of conciliation in the middle of a battle between the Oyibos and Yorubas, which stopped the fighting and led to both tribes calling their warriors home. It was the most peaceful time in that area's history. But when he died in 1860, the hospital fell apart and the tribes went to war again. He was irreplaceable.

DAVID: That's great, but why would anyone pray to him?

VIKKI: Because he led the most holy of lives, and helped the most wretched of people to find God. People just like Brent.

ANNE: Brent's not wretched!

VIKKI: Oh, Anne, he was a hell of a sinner: drug dealer, thief, and violent. Just Father Elliot's sort!

ANNE: No, that's not true.

BRENT: Mum, it's okay. I've faced the truth about myself. I'm not that person anymore.

DAVID *snorts*.

ANNE: Brent, you're tired. You're not seeing things in perspective. As soon as you've rested you'll realise that's not true.

DAVID: *(quietly)* Typical.

ANNE: What, David?

DAVID: Nothing.

VIKKI: Well, down to business.

She pulls out her pencil and notepad.

VIKKI: Brent, did anything special happen before the miracle?

DAVID: You can't honestly believe it's a miracle?

VIKKI: Of course I do! Don't you?

DAVID: I'm sure there's some rational scientific explanation.

ANNE: There isn't, David. The doctor said so. You should have heard him on the phone. He was in shock.

DAVID: They'll work it out.

VIKKI: The Church will investigate thoroughly and determine the cause.

DAVID: The Church?

VIKKI: The Vatican will send an investigator to determine if there is any other possible explanation for Brent's recovery. They will interview Brent, me, and the doctors. If none can be found, other than Brent's prayers to Father Elliot asking for intercession, then he will be nominated to be beatified. Then if a second miracle occurs – and I know it will, I can feel it coming – he can be nominated for canonisation!

DAVID: A Saint? For saving Brent!

VIKKI: And someone else. Someone yet to come.

DAVID: But I've never even heard of Father Elliot.

VIKKI: I know, it's criminal. But it's because he did all his wonderful work away from the gaze of the Vatican and Sydney and without their help. He was not a rule follower. I only heard of him because I spent two years at a mission in Sierra Leone and the locals told me all about him. He is my hero, and he deserves to be honoured and remembered. And thanks to Brent he will be! *(beat)* Now, Brent, did anything unusual, or striking happen just before the miracle?

Pause.

BRENT: Yes, it did actually.

VIKKI: I knew it!

BRENT: It was just after David had come to visit me.

ANNE: Of course! It was their reconciliation.

DAVID *looks at* ANNE.

BRENT: I was in the most pain I'd ever been in in my life. *(he looks at DAVID, and DAVID looks away)*. Not even the morphine would ease it. So I prayed to Father Elliot. Actually, it was more like begging.

VIKKI: Out loud or to yourself?

BRENT: Out loud. I was groaning away asking for forgiveness, for help, promising to lead a better life. Then after I finished I was still in agony, but now it was worse because I suddenly had the most ferocious thirst, like I'd been in the desert for days without water. So I reached out to get my glass – and it took ages to get to it because of the pain – and I started to drink. As soon as I did, a beautiful warmth began to flow down my body. Down my back and chest, stomach and legs, right to my toes. It was the most wonderful feeling. Like I was a...a mini-sun. And I was bursting with love. Not for anyone in particular, but...for everything. The world.

(Brent suddenly burst into tears. ANNE hugs him.)

ANNE: Oh sweetheart!

VIKKI: It's okay, Brent. Take your time.

BRENT: Then just as suddenly as it came, it disappeared. But before I had a chance to feel anything about it I was overwhelmed with tiredness, and fell straight to sleep. *(beat)* Then there was the nightmare. Me doing horrible things to people, but then someone stopped me and was going to kill me.

DAVID: Was it me?

BRENT: No. Someone I used to know. And I was apologising, begging him to spare me. But he didn't. He smashed me on the head with an iron bar. My skull cracked open and blood ran down my face and everything went black. Then I woke up in a sweat. I was terrified because I thought I was dead, and...and in Hell. But then I realised I wasn't. Not only that, I noticed that I was feeling good, strong. So I pulled out the morphine drip and got out of bed. I was wobbly, but I could stand. Then after I got my balance I walked out of the room. One of the nurses saw me and she screamed. She tried to take me back to bed, but I told her I was better. That the cancer had gone. But she wouldn't believe me. So I pushed her away, and then – I don't know why I thought of this – I did a jump. A little one. I barely got off the ground. Then I did another one, and another one, and she started to laugh. Then some other nurses came and watched me and they started to laugh too. Then when it was getting hysterical Doctor Hemmings put a stop to it and sent me down for some blood tests and x-rays. And they confirmed what I knew – the cancer was gone. Only the scarring was left.

Silence, then...

ANNE: Praise the Lord!

VIKKI: Praise Father Elliot!

DAVID: Yeah, good on you, Father Elliot, you dickhead!

ANNE: David!

DAVID: How could he save someone like Brent? How could he do it?

ANNE: But you've reconciled!

DAVID: That was a lie to stop you raising my board. I wouldn't reconcile with him for ten billion dollars.

BRENT: He punched me in the stomach.

ANNE: David! How could you?

DAVID: He deserved to die!

ANNE: Oh, David.

VIKKI: David, why don't we go and have a cup off coffee together?

DAVID: Why don't you get lost! Why didn't you help a decent person - a Christian – instead of this scumbag? You think he's changed, but he hasn't - he'll be back to his old self before you know it. He'll hurt more and more people, and it'll be on your head!

DAVID runs out of the room.

ANNE: I'll talk to him.

VIKKI takes her arm to stop him.

VIKKI: No, Anne, let him go. He's in no frame of mind for talking.

ANNE: We have to do something.

VIKKI: We'll pray for him.

ANNE: Of course.

BRENT: To God or Father Elliot?

VIKKI: *(thinks)* Father Elliot. It's connected to his miracle, so he would want to handle it. *(beat)* Dear Father Elliot...

They lower their heads.

Blackout.

Scene 5

DAVID *is typing away angrily at his computer. He stops and reads.*

DAVID: Oh come on, there must be something! No-one is that good.

VIKKI: *(off)* Knock Knock.

VIKKI *pops her head in.*

VIKKI: David.

DAVID: What are you doing here?

VIKKI: Just popped in to see if you were all right.

DAVID: I'm fine. So why don't you go hunt-down someone terminally ill and get them to pray to Father Elliot.

VIKKI: Father Elliot doesn't just help the terminally ill.

DAVID: You haven't come to pray for my soul have you?

VIKKI: I'm here to listen if you want to talk.

DAVID: Well, I'm busy.

VIKKI: I see. *(beat)* Brent said you work from home. Rewriting medical papers I believe?

DAVID: Yes, making them coherent for researchers who are literacy-challenged.

VIKKI: So what research are you writing about now?

DAVID: I'm not working on that at the moment. I'm doing my own research.

VIKKI: Oh. On what?

DAVID: On your beloved Father Elliot.

VIKKI: So he's peaked your interest, has he? I knew he would. Once people hear about him they want to know more.

DAVID: I'm not a fan. I'm looking for dirt on him to ruin any chance of him being canonised.

VIKKI: *(pause)* Well, you're wasting your time.

DAVID: I don't think so.

VIKKI: You won't find a thing.

DAVID: I already have.

VIKKI: Never.

DAVID: And the Vatican won't like it. Not one bit.

VIKKI: You're lying!

DAVID: Am I?

VIKKI: *(pause)* What is it then? Tell me!

DAVID: *(pause)* Father Elliot was the opening batsman for Parramatta cricket club, but averaged only fifteen. That's dreadful for an opening batsman.

VIKKI: *(slight pause)* Oh, you tinker! You had me going for a minute.

DAVID: And his bowling average wasn't too good either.

VIKKI: It's true. Father Elliot wasn't much of a cricketer. Third grade was as high as he got. But in his defence he developed an eye infection during his first mission in Africa and his sight was not much good after that.

DAVID: Clearly.

VIKKI: But I don't think the Vatican will turn its back on him due to that.

DAVID: No, but I'm sure there will be something. Let's see...I know! Let's Google, Father Elliot, paedophile.

He hits the button.

DAVID: Ah, no good. Let's try necrophilia.

VIKKI: You're in a great deal of pain, aren't you?

DAVID: *(pause)* Thanks for popping by, but I really am very busy.

VIKKI: To punch your terminally ill brother in the stomach would tell anyone that.

DAVID: I admit that was the wrong thing to do.

VIKKI: I'm glad to hear it.

DAVID: Because I think it might be what killed the cancer.

VIKKI: *(pause)* Did you know, we have something in common?

DAVID: Yeah right.

VIKKI: It's true. Like you, I'm the youngest in my family. I have an older sister and brother. And believe me, they were not always loving. I remember once my parents went out to a dinner party, leaving the two of them in charge of me. As soon as they left, my sister said we were going to play a special game called Houdini, named after the famous escape artist. So a few minutes later I found myself in my bedroom tied up in a chair. They said I had two hours to escape. They then left the room and closed the door. I couldn't escape and I screamed and screamed for them to come and untie me, but they wouldn't. Fortunately, Mum and Dad came home early because Mum was sick. Those two got the belting of their lives. They never did anything like that to me again

Silence.

DAVID: Why did they do it?

VIKKI: They wanted to play Monopoly and didn't want me to play because I always wrecked it. I was too young to understand it, but I always insisted on playing. *(pause)* It was lucky for me Mum and Dad found out, otherwise more things like that might have happened. *(beat)* Sometimes the parents don't find out.

DAVID: *(pause)* Mum knew.

VIKKI: Are you sure?

DAVID: I told her! Repeatedly!

VIKKI: She didn't do anything?

DAVID: She'd talk to him, tell him to stop. He said he would, but then a short while later it would start up again.

VIKKI: It can be hard for a working single mum to control a big strong boy.

DAVID: She could've if she'd tried harder. But he was always her favourite. He was the good-looking one, the good sportsman, the charming one. I was like the runt of the litter.

VIKKI: *(pause)* I didn't go through as much as you did, but I do understand how you feel. In fact, that's why I think I ended up working in charity organizations all my life. Looking back, I think I was unconsciously standing up for the persecuted. I hate injustice, I hate the strong hurting the weak.

DAVID: Then why would you help Brent of all people?

VIKKI: He had terminal cancer. He was the weak.

DAVID: Couldn't you have helped someone more deserving?

VIKKI: We don't discriminate.

DAVID: It's not just me he persecuted. He –

VIKKI: Believe me, I am under no illusions about the life Brent has lived. But he has changed. He is now committed to leading a good life, a useful life.

DAVID: No, he hasn't. You'll see.

VIKKI: No, you'll see. Tomorrow, in fact, if you come along to Church.

DAVID: What do you mean?

VIKKI: Brent is going to speak about the miracle and the life he led. And he's going to apologise to you publicly.

DAVID: What?

VIKKI: Brent wanted me to ask you to come. He's desperate to prove his sincerity.

DAVID: Brent is going to talk in a Catholic Church?

VIKKI: Yes.

DAVID: But he hates Christians! He used to say you were all bunch of losers.

VIKKI: And right he is! That's why so many of us go to church. We go for comfort, for companionship, for healing. Together we make each other stronger.

DAVID: I can't believe this.

VIKKI: David, don't let your hate blind you. You must open your heart to the possibility that Brent has changed and that he is sorry for what he did to you. If you don't you're in danger –

DAVID: Of getting sick myself. I know. Brent told me.

VIKKI: *(pause)* Will you come? It would mean so much to Brent and your mother, and maybe even to you.

DAVID: *(pause)* I'll see.

VIKKI: Okay. I'll leave you to your work. And stop your insidious investigation into Father Elliot. You won't find anything apart from poor sporting ability.

VIKKI starts to leave.

DAVID: Vikki?

VIKKI: Yes?

DAVID: Aside from Brent, how many dying people did you get to pray to Father Elliot?

VIKKI: Oh, dozens.

DAVID: And what happened to them?

VIKKI: *(pause)* They died.

DAVID: *(pause)* So if this miracle is real -

VIKKI: It is.

DAVID: Then why would he intercede for Brent but not them?

VIKKI: *(pause)* Perhaps because Brent still has much good work to do here. *(beat)*
See you tomorrow. I hope.

VIKKI exits. DAVID stands thinking.

Blackout.

Scene 6

VIKKI *addresses the audience directly.*

VIKKI: Hello there, you beautiful people. What wonderful news I have to bring you all today! Nothing short of a miracle! A week ago a man was dying of cancer in hospital with only a few days to live. Then he prayed to Father Elliot to intercede on his behalf. And his prayers were answered! The cancer was throughout his body, but now only the scars are left. Today he is here with us to tell us his story. Please welcome Brent.

We hear applause. BRENT comes out looking shy. VIKKI hugs and kisses him, and then stands to the side.

BRENT: Hi everyone. Three weeks ago my doctor said I had only a few weeks to live. As you can imagine, I had trouble accepting it. I was angry, full of hate, but then...then I met Vikki. She was a volunteer visitor at the hospital. And she listened to me, helped me get rid of my hate. Then she told me about Father Elliot. A man who lived a holy life and saved many people, and Vikki thought he might be able to save me too. To be honest, I didn't believe it, but I thought I might as well keep an open mind. So I prayed. Half-heartedly at first, but then, for some reason, I...I started to tell the truth about myself in my prayers. And I started to realise what...what an awful person I'd been. And I became ashamed of the life I'd led. I sold drugs, stole, worked as a bouncer in nightclubs where I often became violent, and I was promiscuous. Often sleeping with my friends' girlfriends. I just didn't care who I hurt.

But the person I hurt the most was my younger brother, David. All my life I picked on him. Bashing him, stealing from him, humiliating him in front of my friends. I should never have done it. I'm so ashamed. It's his forgiveness I'd like the most. I was hoping he would come here today so he could hear this, but he's not here. For that I can't blame him. But I'm going to work very hard to win his forgiveness. I will continue to pray to Father Elliot to help me with that. And I'm going to lead a good and useful life. A Christian life. And I have Vicki and Father Elliot to thank for that.

Enthusiastic applause.

Suddenly a hymn book comes flying from the side of the stage and hits BRENT in the head. He collapses, clutching his head.

BRENT: Shit!

VIKKI: Brent!

VIKKI goes to help him.

DAVID races on stage.

VIKKI: David, what are you doing?

BRENT *is stumbling around in the background. VIKKI tries to steady him.*

DAVID: Stop applauding him! He doesn't deserve it. I'm the brother he persecuted. And for no reason other than he regarded me as weak and enjoyed torturing me like a cat tortures a mouse. I cannot forgive that. After school when Mum was still at work he'd often bash me up for doing the slightest thing wrong. So in the end I'd just stay in my room to wait for Mum to get home, but he'd still come in sometimes and get me. And once he rang up my only ever girl friend and pretended he was me and broke up with her! I told her what happened but she wouldn't believe me and wouldn't go out with me again.

BRENT *lurches towards him with his arms outstretched.*

BRENT: David, I'm sorry. I so sorry.

DAVID *picks up the Bible and hits BRENT on the head with it. BRENT goes down again.*

VIKKI: David!

ANNE *runs on stage.*

ANNE: David, stop this!

DAVID: No!

VIKKI: Help me get him off, Anne.

They help BRENT up.

DAVID: That's my Mum. She's the one who let it happen.

ANNE: Stop it, David!

DAVID: And it's not a miracle! Vikki got dozens of people to pray to Father Elliot, but apart from Brent they all died. She's using the shotgun approach. Eventually someone is going to survive.

ANNE: David -

DAVID: And Brent doesn't even like Christians. He thinks you're a bunch of ugly losers!

ANNE: David, that is enough!

DAVID *stops.*

ANNE: Come on, Brent.

ANNE *and VIKKI walk BRENT off*

DAVID *looks around wildly, then...*

DAVID: And this is the first time he's ever been to Church!

He runs off stage still holding the hymn book

Scene 7

BRENT *is sitting in a chair with ANNE and VIKKI trying to keep him seated, as BRENT's trying to get up.*

BRENT: Let me up! I've got to get to the club soon. If I don't the losers will get in.

VIKKI: Brent, you've been hurt. We have to take you to hospital.

BRENT: Who are you?

VIKKI: I'm Vikki, remember?

BRENT: Oh, yeah. You're that old slut with the coke problem.

ANNE: Brent!

VIKKI: It's okay, Anne, he's concussed.

DAVID enters with the hymn book and watches.

BRENT: You're not bad for an old chook. You want to pay me the same way you did last time?

He puts his hand down VIKKI's top and starts feeling her breasts.

VIKKI: Brent, please!

ANNE: Brent! Stop it!

ANNE tries to pull his hand out.

BRENT: Pretty firm for a granny!

DAVID: See! I told you he's hasn't changed!

VIKKI: He's concussed!

DAVID: One whack on the head and he's back to his old self.

BRENT: What are you doing here, you little dickhead? Shouldn't you be at home hiding under your bed?

DAVID: Yep, back to normal.

ANNE: Brent, get your hands out of there!

BRENT: Mum, will you get lost! This is business.

VIKKI: Father Elliot, please help Brent! He doesn't know what he's doing!

BRENT: Don't pretend you're all religious, you little tart. You know you love it.

VIKKI: Father Elliot, please!

Suddenly ANNE grabs the hymn book from DAVID and hits BRENT on the head with it. BRENT collapses.

DAVID: Another miracle! Well done, Mum.

VIKKI stands.

ANNE: Vikki, are you all right?

VIKKI: Fine, just shaken.

ANNE: Let's get him to the hospital.

DAVID: Still think he's a changed man?

VIKKI: Get the hate out of your heart, David, or it will kill you.

ANNE: And your board's going up!

DAVID: But –

ANNE: No matter what you say. *(beat)* Come on, Brent.

VIKKI and ANNE walk him off stage. DAVID watches them go.

Scene 8

Darkness. We hear a monotonous droning sound similar to a car engine, but when the lights come up it reveals DAVID sitting at his desk taking his blood pressure. The cuff is around his arm, inflating.

DAVID: Ow!

The blood pressure monitor finally makes a beeping sound indicating the reading has been taken. DAVID reads it.

DAVID: Shit.

He sits there for a moment, wondering what to do, then...

DAVID: Dear God, I am filled with...

He suddenly stops and thinks for a moment, then...

DAVID: Dear Father Elliot...I am filled with hatred. Hatred towards my brother, Brent, because of the way he treated me when I was a kid. I always have adrenaline pumping through my body, and always have fantasies about killing him. My blood pressure is 180/120! That's really bad. Please don't let me have a heart attack. You helped Brent, yet compared to him I've lived like a saint. Not like you, even though you're not a saint yet, but will be soon if Vikki has her way. But I've led a good life. *(pause)* Actually, more a...gutless life. After the way Brent treated me I didn't have much confidence and I withdrew from the world. I didn't want to be...hurt...anymore. But I don't want to live like that any longer. I want to be brave, and I want to...forgive. Please help me get rid of my hate. I don't want to feel like this anymore. Amen.

He sits quietly for a moment, then turns on the blood pressure monitor again and waits as the cuff inflates.

DAVID: Ow!

The blood pressure monitor finally makes the beeping sound again. DAVID reads it.

DAVID: Fantastic!

As he takes off the cuff, ANNE enters with a newspaper tucked under her arm.

ANNE: Well, I hope you're proud of yourself?

DAVID: I'm not.

ANNE: Your brother is back in hospital because of you.

DAVID: Is it a serious concussion?

ANNE: He's keeps trying to get Vikki to get into bed with him.

DAVID: Praying up a storm is she?

ANNE: Like it's going out of fashion.

DAVID: Well, I'm sorry for Vikki, but Brent deserved it after what he...you're right.
I shouldn't have done it. I'm sorry.

ANNE: *(pause)* You are?

DAVID: Yes, I am.

ANNE: Well...good. Will you apologise to him?

DAVID: *(pause)* Yes. Yes I will.

ANNE: Oh, David, that's wonderful news! Your life will be so much happier when you forgive him.

DAVID: Yes. I don't want to live with hate in my heart.

ANNE: Of course you don't. *(pause)* And can you find it in your heart to...?

DAVID: To what?

ANNE: To...to forgive me, too?

DAVID: For what?

ANNE: For...for letting it happen.

DAVID: *(pause)* Of course I can.

ANNE: Thank you, David. I'm so sorry. I should've taken it more seriously. But without your father there, and working full time, I just didn't have the energy. I just couldn't face it. I wrote it off as just a normal phase between brothers, but I knew it was more serious than that, but I...I'm so sorry.

ANNE breaks down. DAVID hugs her.

DAVID: It's okay, Mum. It mostly happened after school before you got home anyway. And I didn't help the situation either. I was weak. I should've stood up for myself. But that's all in the past now. From now on I'm going to lead a braver life.

ANNE: You are?

DAVID: Yes. I'm going to move out of home and get a real job, and interact with real people.

ANNE: That's wonderful.

DAVID: I have to anyway, since you're putting up my board.

ANNE: I wasn't really going to put it up.

DAVID: I know.

ANNE: *(pause)* Well, I'm glad to hear you're going to be braver now, because I'm afraid you're going to need to be.

DAVID: What do you mean?

ANNE: *(pause)* There were journalists at the Church yesterday.

DAVID: Journalists? Why?

ANNE: Because Vikki is trying to get publicity for Father Elliot's miracle. She wants him to enter the public's consciousness so he can get the recognition he deserves, and develop momentum for his Sainthood. But unfortunately the journalists were less interested in him than they were in...

DAVID: What?

ANNE: You.

ANNE hands him the newspaper.

DAVID: *(reads out loud)* Miracle survivor attacked by vengeful brother! Oh my God!

ANNE: Remember, stay brave.

DAVID: "Miracle cancer survivor Brent Matthews spoke to a rapt congregation at St. Anthony's yesterday about beating terminal cancer by praying to long-dead Catholic missionary, Father Elliot. He also talked about the shame he felt for his pre-cancer life of drug dealing, violence and his persecution of his younger brother, David. He had just finished speaking very movingly about his desire to reconcile with his brother when a Bible was thrown at him and concussed him. It was thrown by David who, while Brent staggered around in the background, took to the pulpit and denounced his brother as a fraud who had never been to church before and hated Christians. He said Brent didn't deserve to be forgiven because he ruined his life. When Brent attempted to apologise with open arms, David again belted him over the head with the Bible! It was a shocking way to respond to a genuine, and moving attempt to reconcile. One can only hope that David Matthews finds the maturity to forgive his brother, and to no longer sabotage his attempts tell his inspirational story". A genuine and moving attempt to reconcile!

DAVID *rips up the paper.*

DAVID: I'll kill him!

ANNE: What about keeping the hate out of your heart?

DAVID: I'm over that now! I'm going to get him!

DAVID *starts to leave, but ANNE grabs him.*

ANNE: No, David! I won't let you.

DAVID: Let me go!

ANNE: Don't, David! It will only hurt you, too. Please!

This stops DAVID. After a moment he nods.

ANNE: Good, now let me make you a nice cup of tea. You'll be thinking far more clearly after that. Okay?

DAVID: Fine.

ANNE: Good. You just sit down and relax and I'll be right back.

ANNE *exits.*

DAVID: Genuine and moving attempt to reconcile!

DAVID *notices the blood pressure cuff still on his arm. He rips it off and throws it to the ground.*

Blackout.

Scene 9

DAVID is standing on stage alone, waiting. After a moment ANNABELLE, an attractive young woman, walks across the stage.

DAVID: Hello.

ANNABELLE: Hi.

She keeps walking.

DAVID: Are you...working?

ANNABELLE: No, finished for the night.

DAVID: Oh.

ANNABELLE: But there's plenty of girls still inside. Just go in, they'll look after you.

DAVID: I don't want to go in.

ANNABELLE stops.

ANNABELLE: Oh. First time, is it?

DAVID: Um, no. I mean –

ANNABELLE: It's all right. They won't bite. Unless you pay extra.

The woman heads off.

DAVID: Do you do any jobs away from here?

ANNABELLE: Look, I've had a long night and I just want to go home.

DAVID: I don't mean now. Tomorrow or the next day, maybe. Whenever you can fit me in.

ANNABELLE: I'll be here again from seven o'clock tomorrow night. Just come in then.

DAVID: Would you be willing to come to my house?

ANNABELLE: No, I don't do that anymore.

DAVID: But I'd pay extra.

ANNABELLE: It's not safe.

DAVID: But I can show you my ID or anything else you need. Then you can tell whoever you want who I am and where you are.

He gets out his wallet and holds up his license.

DAVID: See? That's me.

ANNABELLE: Look...David -

DAVID: It's not for me, anyway. It's for my brother.

ANNABELLE: Well, just get him to come in.

DAVID: But he can't. He's...how can I say this?

ANNABELLE: Is he disabled?

DAVID: No. I just want to surprise him.

ANNABELLE: Then surprise him with a gift voucher.

DAVID: He won't come in.

ANNABELLE: Then I can't help you.

She starts to leave.

DAVID: All right, I'll be straight with you. My brother is a horrible person who got cancer, but miraculously recovered, and claims to have done so by praying to a catholic missionary. Now they want to turn this missionary into a saint and my brother is acting like he's a big Christian now and a better person and I want to prove that he's not. With your help. Okay?

ANNABELLE: *(pause)* Jesus. What did he do to make you hate him so much?

DAVID: I don't want to go into that now, but it was a bad. Really bad.

ANNABELLE: So, he's acting all holier than thou, is he?

DAVID: Exactly.

ANNABELLE: I hate people like that.

DAVID: Me too.

ANNABELLE: Did you know the busiest weekend brothels ever had in Canberra was during the World Churches Conference in 1993?

DAVID: No, I didn't.

ANNABELLE: Yeah, they're full of it. One time a whole bunch of them came here and tried to save us. But all they managed to do was scare away the punters. Pricks.

DAVID: Well, here's a chance to get your own back.

ANNABELLE: *(pause)* All right. But it's going to cost you.

DAVID: Name your price.

Blackout.

Scene 10

DAVID's house. The room with the computer and desk.

BRENT is walking around looking nervous. He checks his watch. His mobile phone rings.

He answers it.

BRENT: David! Where are you? *(pause)* Oh, okay. Thanks for letting me know. And David...thanks for getting in touch. I'm really looking forward to seeing you. And there's no need to be nervous, I'm not mad at you. *(pause)*. Good. See you in an hour.

BRENT hangs up the phone. A moment later there is knock at the door. He gets up to answers it.

BRENT opens the door revealing ANNABELLE, dressed very sexily.

BRENT: Yes?

ANNABELLE: Hello. My name's Annabelle. I heard your talk the other day at St Anthony's and I just had to come and meet you.

BRENT: Oh. I don't remember seeing you there.

ANNABELLE: I was there. Hanging onto every word. It was so inspirational.

BRENT: Thank you.

ANNABELLE: May I come in?

BRENT: Um....

She enters.

ANNABELLE: I can't believe I'm talking to you.

BRENT: How did you know I was here?

ANNABELLE: I looked up your address in The White Pages. I only found your mother's so I thought I'd try my luck.

BRENT: Well, you did get lucky. I'm only here to catch up with my brother.

ANNABELLE: You're talking to him? After what he did to you?

BRENT: He had good reason.

ANNABELLE: So what he said was true?

BRENT: Yes, I'm ashamed to say.

ANNABELLE: But you've changed now?

BRENT: Yes, but I need to find some way to convince him of that.

ANNABELLE: I'm sure you can do it. *(beat)* How's your head feeling?

She looks at is closely, and she touches it gently. BRENT moves away, but not rudely.

BRENT: Much better, thanks.

ANNABELLE: I was so upset to see that happen to you. After all you've been through, and then to be hurt like that. I just wanted to make sure you're okay. Are you really okay?

BRENT: I was a little concussed, but I'm fine.

ANNABELLE: That's wonderful news! Because you're going to help so many people.

ANNABELLE hugs him, then, without letting him go, looks at his face intently.

ANNABELLE: You're so beautiful.

She kisses him on the mouth. BRENT pulls away from her.

BRENT: Please don't do that.

ANNABELLE: I can't help it. When I saw you at church and heard your story, I just fell for you.

BRENT: I understand, but I don't do this anymore.

ANNABELLE: But I want to make you feel good. You've had so much pain lately, you need some pleasure.

She comes towards him with her arms outstretched. He grabs her arms.

BRENT: Please, I don't want to...

He looks at the inside of one of her elbows.

BRENT: What's this?

She suddenly pulls her arm away.

BRENT: Are you using?

ANNABELLE: What? I don't know what you're talking about.

BRENT: I used to be a dealer. I know track marks when I see them.

ANNABELLE: I've had some blood tests recently, that's all.

BRENT: Is that why you came here? To get some help?

ANNABELLE: No, I...I have to go.

She starts to hurry away, but BRENT grabs her by the hands.

BRENT: You came for help, whether you know that or not. Let me help you.

ANNABELLE: Please, I have to go.

BRENT: You're still young and healthy. You still have a chance. But if you keep using it will kill you.

ANNABELLE: Let me go!

BRENT: The Church can help you. Get you into a clinic.

ANNABELLE: Let me go!

BRENT: No, I won't.

He holds her tight against his chest.

ANNABELLE: Let me go! Let me go! Let me...

Suddenly she stops struggling, and her head falls back against BRENT's chest.

ANNABELLE: ...Ohhhhh.

She passes out.

BRENT: Annabelle? Annabelle?

He carefully lies her on the floor. He checks her pulse and her breathing.

BRENT: Thank God.

Off stage we hear...

ANNE: *(off)* Vikki, thank you so much for lunch. It's the most fun I've had in ages.

VIKKI: *(off)* My pleasure. We'll have to do it again soon.

ANNE: *(off)* Absolutely. Come on in for a coffee.

VIKKI: *(off)* Love to.

ANNE and VIKKI enter and see BRENT and ANNABELLE.

ANNE: Brent, what's going on?

BRENT: She passed out.

VIKKI: Who is she?

BRENT: Annabelle. If think she might have overdosed.

ANNE: Brent, you didn't give her anything, did you?

BRENT: Of course not. She just turned up, said she was at the Church the other day and wanted to meet me.

VIKKI: I didn't see her. And she's not part of our congregation.

ANNE: I'll call an ambulance.

ANNE heads to the phone on the desk, and as she is about to dial ANNABELLE let's out a satisfied-sounding sigh.

BRENT: Annabelle, can you hear me? Annabelle?

ANNABELLE: Yes.

BRENT helps her sit up slowly.

BRENT: Are you okay?

ANNABELLE: Yes. I feel wonderful.

BRENT: You didn't OD?

ANNABELLE: No. I haven't used today. I was going to score after I left here.

BRENT: Then what happened?

ANNABELLE: When you held me...when I was trying to get away from you...I suddenly felt this incredible warmth throughout my body. It felt like sunshine was coming out of me. It was so beautiful. I've never felt like that before.

VIKKI: Oh my God!

ANNABELLE: Now I feel different. In fact...*I'm feeling*, for the first time in ages. I've been numb for so long...and now...I'm alive again. I'll never use again. The desire – it's gone! (*slight pause*) I'm so sorry!

ANNABELLE *starts to cry*.

VIKKI: (*in awe*) Brent, you've been given the gift. Father Elliot has given you the gift!

BRENT *stares at her for a moment, then looks back at ANNABELLE*.

BRENT: What are you sorry for?

ANNABELLE: For trying to seduce you. But I was paid to do it. I needed the money for the smack.

VIKKI: Paid?

ANNABELLE: I'm...I'm a prostitute. Was a prostitute. I'll never do that again either. Never.

BRENT: Who paid you?

ANNABELLE: (*pause*) Your brother.

ANNE: Oh, David.

BRENT: So that's why he really organised to meet me here.

ANNE: He got in touch with you?

BRENT: He said he wanted to talk, to make things right. But he was only setting me up.

ANNABELLE: He said that you haven't really changed. He wants to prove it to everyone by filming you with me – a prostitute - then putting it on the net.

BRENT: On film?

ANNABELLE: Yes.

BRENT: But there's no camera

ANNABELLE: Maybe he's hidden it somewhere or filmed through the window.

BRENT, ANNE *and* VIKKI *start to look around, out the window, etc.*

ANNE *looks under the desk*.

ANNE: David! Come out from under there.

DAVID *slowly stands up holding a digital video camera.*

DAVID: Thanks a lot, Annabelle! I'm not paying you a cent for this!

BRENT: David, what do I have to do to prove to you that I'm sorry?

DAVID: Nothing!

VIKKI: Brent, you can make him see. You have the gift. You can save him, just like you saved Annabelle.

DAVID: She's not saved! She just on a high from the heroin.

ANNABELLE: No, David. He's saved me. He can save you, too.

VIKKI: You can, Brent.

BRENT: How?

VIKKI: Hold him. Just like you held Annabelle.

DAVID: Don't you come near me!

BRENT *thinks for a moment, then starts to move towards DAVID.*

BRENT: Please, David, give me a chance.

DAVID: If you touch me, I'll kill you!

DAVID *moves away.*

VIKKI: Stop him, Everyone. Don't let him escape.

They all move towards him with their arms outstretched.

DAVID: Don't you come near me!

ANNE: Just give him a chance, David.

DAVID: If any of you touch me I'll hit you!

He raises the camera threateningly. ANNE approaches him, and she hugs him. He drops the camera. Then VIKKI and ANNABELLE hug him, too.

DAVID: No! No! Leave me alone!

VIKKI: Brent! Hug him. Quickly!

DAVID: No! No!

BRENT *hugs him.*

DAVID: Noooooooooo!

DAVID *collapses in BRENT's arms.*

ANNE: Oh no!

BRENT: It's okay. The same thing happened to Annabelle.

BRENT *lies him on the floor.*

ANNE: Are you sure?

BRENT: I'll check.

BRENT *checks his pulse and breathing.*

BRENT: Shit! He's not breathing.

ANNE: What'll we do!

BRENT: Call the ambulance. I'll do CPR.

BRENT *starts doing CPR.* ANNE *gets on the phone.*

VIKKI: Father Elliot, please help this poor, angry soul.

Blackout.

Scene 11

DAVID *is the hospital bed, on life support. A respirator is in his mouth.*

ANNE and VIKKI *sit either side of him, each holding a hand. They sit in silence for a moment. Then...*

VIKKI: His skin is a good colour.

ANNE *nods.*

VIKKI: He looks the picture of health.

Pause.

VIKKI: If it wasn't for the respirator you'd think he was asleep.

Pause.

VIKKI: Why don't we pray again?

ANNE: No, no, I'm all prayed out. I just want Brent to come back to tell me the news.
I can't wait anymore.

Pause.

VIKKI: Then I'll pray.

ANNE: Please don't, Vikki. I just want some silence for a moment. Okay?

VIKKI *nods. After a moment...*

ANNE: This is all my fault! If I'd only been a more protective mother. If only I'd –

VIKKI: No, no. You mustn't blame yourself.

ANNE: But it's true! It's true!

VIKKI *races over to her and hugs her.*

VIKKI: Shhh! Shhh!

BRENT *enters, looking grim.*

ANNE: Brent!

ANNE *hurries to him.*

ANNE: What did she say?

BRENT: *(pause)* It's not good.

ANNE: What is it?

BRENT: He had a brain aneurysm and it ruptured.

ANNE: What?

BRENT: There's, um...very little brain activity.

ANNE: Then...then what can they do?

BRENT: *(pause)* Nothing.

ANNE: Nothing?

BRENT: Other than wait and...pray for a miracle.

VIKKI looks at him.

BRENT: But if that doesn't happen...we'll have to make a decision.

Pause.

ANNE: I can't go through this again. I can't! I can't!

ANNE doubles up in agony.

BRENT: Mum!

BRENT hugs her.

BRENT: I'm so sorry, Mum. I'm so sorry.

BRENT hugs her, while ANNE sobs inconsolably.

VIKKI: Brent, you have a gift.

BRENT: Vikki, please.

VIKKI: But you –

BRENT: And look what it did to David!

Pause.

VIKKI: What about Annabelle?

BRENT: She's a junkie. She was just high.

VIKKI: No, no. She swears it's true.

BRENT: She'll be back using within days.

VIKKI: No, she won't. I know it.

BRENT: We'll see.

Pause.

VIKKI: Let me take Anne for a cup of tea, while you stay here with David.

BRENT: Vikki –

VIKKI: A cup of tea is just what she needs.

Pause.

VIKKI: Come on, Anne, let's have a cup of tea.

BRENT and VIKKI help up ANNE, and VIKKI leads her to the door.

VIKKI looks at BRENT significantly before she and ANNE exit.

BRENT stands in silence for a moment. Then turns and looks at DAVID. He slowly moves towards him, then stops.

BRENT: What am I doing? This is ridiculous. I can't do this.

He heads towards the door, but just before he gets there he stops. He turns back, and stands next to DAVID. After a moment...

BRENT: Dear Father Elliot, you've done so much for me already that I'm embarrassed to ask for more. But I promise this will be the last time. *(beat)* Lying in front of me is my brother David who has had a brain aneurism. The doctors give him no hope of recovering. And it's all my fault. I tortured him throughout his childhood and took away all his confidence and filled him with hate. Hate that he could not get rid of and was so overpowering that it did this to him. *(pause)* I beg of you to intercede on his behalf and make him well. Please take the love and health you gave to me and give it to him. He is more deserving. I will gladly take back the cancer for his sake. Please help him, Father Elliot. Amen.

After a moment BRENT sits DAVID up and takes the respirator out of his mouth. He then picks up the glass of water off the table, opens DAVID's mouth and pours some water in. He waits for a few moments, but DAVID does not respond at all. So he pours in some more.

After a moment DAVID starts to convulse.

BRENT: Oh shit!

The he starts to seriously choke.

BRENT: Nurse! Nurse!

DAVID is now gasping violently for breath, and it looks like it is all over...

BRENT: Father Elliot, please!

*BRENT whacks him on the back and DAVID starts to cough normally.
BRENT watches in shock.*

DAVID then starts to gasp.

BRENT: David?

DAVID: What the Hell's going on?

BRENT: David!

BRENT hugs him.

DAVID: Get off! I can't...breathe.

BRENT: Sorry. Sorry.

DAVID catches his breath. BRENT waits.

BRENT: Are you okay?

DAVID nods.

DAVID: What am I doing here?

ANNABELLE enters holding a some flowers.

DAVID: Annabelle?

ANNABELLE: Oh my God!

DAVID: What?

ANNABELLE: You're awake!

DAVID: So?

ANNABELLE: But the nurse told me that you were brain dead. And that they would have to turn off the life support soon.

DAVID: No, that's not... *(to BRENT)* Is this...is it true?

BRENT *nods.*

DAVID: Then how...?

ANNABELLE: Did you save him, Brent? Did you save him like you saved me?

Silence.

DAVID: What did you do?

BRENT: *(pause)*: I prayed for you then gave you some water.

DAVID: No wonder I was choking.

BRENT: Then I whacked you on the back and you...came back.

Stunned silence.

ANNABELLE *starts leaping up and down.*

ANNABELLE: You saved him! You saved him, Brent! God works through you. He works through you!

ANNABELLE *wildly hugs him.*

BRENT: Annabelle, clam down! Calm down!

ANNABELLE: I can't! I can't!

BRENT: Annabelle, please. Please!

BRENT *grabs her arms and ANNABELLE calms down.*

BRENT: Go and find my Mum and tell her what's happened. Okay?

ANNABELLE: Okay! Anything for you, Brent! Anything!

ANNABELLE *runs out. We hear her screaming...*

ANNABELLE: *(off)* He's awake! He's awake! Brent saved him!

Pause.

BRENT: I think I preferred when her she was on heroin.

Pause.

DAVID: I remember now. I hired her to seduce you.

BRENT: Yep.

DAVID: But you resisted.

BRENT: Yes.

DAVID: *(pause)* You really have changed.

BRENT *nods.*

DAVID: And now you've saved me.

BRENT: Well, Father Elliot.

DAVID: You and Father Elliot.

BRENT: No, just Father Elliot.

DAVID: I think you should take some...

Pause.

BRENT: David, what is it?

DAVID: I...

BRENT: What?

DAVID: I feel...

BRENT: Are you glowing like a mini-sun and bursting with love?

DAVID: No, but...the hate's gone. It's gone.

BRENT: So then...you love me?

DAVID: Steady on. One step at a time.

BRENT: That is fantastic, David. Your life is going to be so much better now.

DAVID: Yes it is. *(beat)* Thanks, David.

BRENT *hugs* DAVID.

ANNE *and* VIKKI *burst in and stare.*

ANNE: David?

BRENT *releases him.*

DAVID *gets out of bed and walks to her then stops. Suddenly he does a little jump, then another and then one more.*

ANNE: You're alive!

ANNE *hugs him.*

VIKKI: It's the second miracle! Sainthood here we come! *(to Brent)* I told you you could do it. You've been given the gift!

BRENT: So it seems.

VIKKI: You must work for the Church. You have found your vocation.

BRENT: Let's just give it time to sink in, okay?

VIKKI: Yes, we mustn't hurry it.

VIKKI *whips out her notebook and pen.*

VIKKI: Now tell me exactly what happened.

BRENT: Vikki, please. Later.

VIKKI: All right, I'll pray to Father Elliot for patience – I'm going to need it. *(to DAVID)* So how do you feel, David? Are you burning with love?

DAVID: No, I'm just calm.

BRENT: His hate's gone.

ANNE: Has it?

DAVID *nods.*

VIKKI: And you've forgiven, Brent?

DAVID: *(pause)* Yes. Yes I have.

VIKKI: This is too wonderful to be true. Wait until the world hears this story!

Suddenly we hear ANNABELLE yelling outside.

ANNABELLE: *(off, yelling)* I'll talk to him, okay? I said I'll talk to him! Just stay there. All of you!

ANNABELLE *lurches inside.*

BRENT: What's going on out there?

ANNABELLE: There's a whole bunch of sick people outside wanting you to heal them!

BRENT: You're joking?

ANNABELLE: I couldn't stop telling people and then it spread through the hospital like wildfire. There's going to be a riot if you don't go out there.

BRENT: But I can't.

VIKKI: You have to, Brent.

BRENT: But I promised Father Elliot not to ask for anything ever again.

VIKKI: You don't have to ask. He's given you the gift. You must use it.

Pause.

BRENT: Well, I guess I can have a go.

DAVID: What do you think you'll cure first, Brent – breast cancer?

ANNE: David!

BRENT: Actually that's not a bad idea. There should be some perks to the job.

He rubs his hands furiously warming them up.

ANNE: Brent!

VIKKI: Well, if you're going to do that, you'd better be gentler than you were with me. I'm still sore.

She pats her breasts.

BRENT: Oh yeah. Sorry about that, Vikki.

ANNABELLE: Brent, come on or they'll break down the door.

BRENT: Okay. Let's go.

ANNABELLE: Stay behind me. If there's any trouble, I'll deal with it.

BRENT: How?

ANNABELLE: I worked in a brothel for five years. I've dealt with some dangerous customers. Besides, this lot's sick, so they'll be easier to handle. Let's go.

ANNABELLE exits followed by BRENT. We hear screams of excitement.

ANNABELLE: *(off, shouting)* All of you just calm down or he won't even look at you let alone lay hands on you! Got it?

They all go quiet.

ANNABELLE: *(off)* Now line up. Terminal people up the front, people with minor ailments, like tinea, up the back. *(beat)* Eczema is not terminal, no matter how crusty you are. Now go to the back!

DAVID: Unbelievable.

VIKKI: I believe it. Anne, how are you feeling?

ANNE tries to speak, but finally shakes her head. The words won't come.

VIKKI: Of course. What else can be said? Let's just give thanks. Let us pray.

They all bow their heads.

Blackout.

The end.