

A Prophet

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. JONAH'S CAMPSITE - DAY

Sunlight filters softly through a thin canopy of leaves. A small blue tent opens onto a tidy campsite. A log provides a seat in front of a stone-ringed fire pit. An oasis away from the city and its vortex of stimulation.

JONAH - 30, hard-bitten, bearded - lifts a snared rabbit, limp body stained with crimson. He unsheathes a hunting knife and skins the animal with a practiced hand.

He spears the rabbit with a sharp stick and places it over the flames to cook. The knife he wipes clean with an already blood-stained rag.

Jonah leans to pick up firewood. A chain tumbles from his collar.

Light glints off a pair of dog tags and small silver cross.

Jonah tosses the wood into the pit, sits and stares into the fire. He absentmindedly twists the dog tags in his hand.

GRACIE (O.S.)

Daddy, daddy!

GRACIE - 4 in brightly colored dress and pink boots - bounds into the camp, straight for Jonah.

Behind Gracie, CATHRYN - 30, tight ponytail, meticulously put together outfit - rushes to catch up. She grabs Gracie's shoulder and stops her short.

CATHRYN

Wait, Gracie. We need to be  
careful around the fire, baby.

Jonah stands and takes a step toward Cathryn and Gracie. Cathryn takes a step back and shakes her head.

They pause, silence forming a wall between them.

CATHRYN

Here.

She pulls out an envelope from her jacket pocket.

Addressed to Jonah, the return address reads:

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OKEECHOBEE

CATHRYN  
He knows you don't live in the  
house anymore, right?

JONAH  
No idea.

Jonah takes the letter.

CATHRYN  
You should talk to him. Maybe  
your father could help with...

She gestures expansively to the campsite.

CATHRYN  
...whatever this is.

JONAH  
How's school going, Gracie?

GRACIE  
I made a new friend and we  
painted and they're going to come  
over this weekend and we're going  
to play with my new toys.

Cathryn pats Gracie's shoulder.

CATHRYN  
That's enough, honey.  
(to Jonah)  
You'd know more about her if you  
lived in town.

JONAH  
It's just not a good time. I...  
I'll get there.

CATHRYN  
Gracie, sweetie, can you go back  
a bit toward the car for mommy?

GRACIE  
Uh huh.

Gracie skips a few feet away, then pirouettes and waves at  
Jonah. He smiles and gives a little wave back.

Gracie kicks sticks and small rocks as she meanders toward  
the car.

CATHRYN  
We can't keep coming here.  
It's... It's not good for Gracie.

JONAH  
Not good to see her dad?

CATHRYN  
What dad?  
(beat)  
This isn't what...You just... We  
won't be back.

JONAH  
Please...

CATHRYN  
Get help, Jonah.

Cathryn walks away and takes Gracie's hand.

Jonah stands alone.

INT. JONAH'S TENT - NIGHT

Wind gusts past the tent. Tree shadows cast eerie silhouettes on the tent walls.

Jonah tosses fitfully in a thick sleeping bag.

WIND  
(whispers)  
Jonah... Jonah... Jonah...

ANGEL (O.S)  
(unison chorus of  
women's voices)  
SON OF MAN, REJOICE!

Jonah's eyes snap open. He bolts upright, eyes darting around in terror.

A shadow like a large body.

Jonah frantically feels around the floor.

The hunting knife!

He swings it wildly at the shadows.

ANGEL (O.S.)  
YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED BY THE  
ALMIGHTY TO DO GREAT THINGS.  
REJOICE! REJOICE IN THE LORD,  
YOUR GOD!

Hands pressed to his ears, he cannot block the sound.

ANGEL (O.S.)  
RISE, RISE WITH THE DAWN! YOU  
WILL SPEAK THE WORDS OF GOD AND  
THE WORLD SHALL OBEY! REJOICE!

Jonah picks up his phone and frantically tries to turn on the flashlight.

The time reads 3:00 AM.

He scrambles to unzip the tent flap, then bursts outside.

EXT. JONAH'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Jonah tears through the moonlit camp. The cell phone light traces a frenetic zig-zag over the bare ground.

His bloodshot eyes look for any sign of a person.

No footprints but his own.

WIND  
(whispers)  
Jonah... Jonah... Jonah...

He turns over a rock.

A large white feather.

Jonah picks it up, hand trembling.

JONAH  
No. No, no, no.

He crouches and hugs his knees. His knuckles turn white as he desperately clutches the feather.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

A small neutral room with a desk and two chairs. Boxes of office supplies sit half emptied on the floor and desktop.

DOCTOR VERNON - 25, glasses, pantsuit - rests a clipboard on her lap and impatiently taps a pencil. She glances at her watch and at a calendar of appointments on her desk.

Jonah shifts uncomfortably in the chair opposite.

DOCTOR VERNON

What do you feel is keeping you from regular contact with your daughter?

JONAH

Other than Cathryn? Probably depression. And the PTSD. It's been hard... harder lately than usual.

DOCTOR VERNON

Can you elaborate?

JONAH

Since I got back-

DOCTOR VERNON

From deployment.

Jonah nods.

JONAH

The city sets me off. People set me off. It's not so bad when I'm alone. But I don't want to... I miss them.

Doctor Vernon flips through a chart on her clipboard.

DOCTOR VERNON

It appears that past medications had limited effect. Was that from inconsistent use or the prescriptions themselves?

JONAH

Was taking them regular for a while. Don't think the pills helped much.

Doctor Vernon jots some notes down. She pulls a laptop from the desk and types.

DOCTOR VERNON  
Have you experienced difficulty  
distinguishing your own thoughts  
from voices you may hear?

JONAH  
Uh, no.

DOCTOR VERNON  
Have you ever felt that strangers  
are watching or following you?

JONAH  
Nope

DOCTOR VERNON  
Have you experienced sudden,  
unexplained feelings of intense  
fear or paranoia?

Jonah hesitates. Doctor Vernon looks up.

JONAH  
No. No. No I haven't.

DOCTOR VERNON  
Have you ever had an experience  
where you heard voices that no  
one else seems to hear?

Jonah squirms. Eyes the door.... Blinks rapidly... Feels a  
chance slipping away....

Docter Vernon clears her throat.

JONAH  
Uh... No. No voices.

DOCTOR VERNON  
I think you may be a candidate  
for a new V.A. program to treat  
persistent depression. I'll refer  
you to the clinic and get you set  
with the earliest appointment.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CLINIC - DAY

A green bench takes up most of an examination room. A chair  
and counter take up the rest.

HENRY - 40, a nurse practitioner in green scrubs - stands by the counter. Jonah sits stiffly on the bench.

HENRY

Relax, Jonah. I've seen probably a dozen guys come through this program and come out better on the other side.

JONAH

Even ones as fucked up as me?

HENRY

Hell yeah, man. There are a lot of vets that need a boost beyond those off the shelf meds.

JONAH

How far beyond...

HENRY

We use the stuff that will actually rewire your brain instead of slap a bandaid on it.

He takes out a jar of brown pills.

HENRY

These are psilocybin. We've found that psychedelics are pretty effective at treating depression and working through PTSD symptoms like yours.

JONAH

So these are like magic mushrooms, or something. Like, am I going to trip out on these?

HENRY

Generally no. But we keep you here under observation for the first dose, just to be sure.

JONAH

I guess it's worth a shot...

HENRY

Here. Take this and I'll set you up with a bunk.

Henry hands Jonah a pill and a small cup of water.

INT. BUNK ROOM - CLINIC - DAY

Weak light peeks through the blinds of a small room with a small dresser and modular bed. Jonah lays on the bottom bunk and stares vaguely upward.

JONAH

This is taking a while to kick  
in...

He blinks a few times.

The world loses definition... edges blur... colors shift...

JONAH

Oh... Shit...

He holds up his hands, waves them in front of his face. Sits up, head swimming.

ANGEL (O.S.)

(faintly)

Jonah... Jonah...

Jonah's head snaps up.

The ANGEL towers over him in the form of Doctor Vernon. She glows softly, edges hazy.

ANGEL

SON OF MAN! WHY DO YOU HIDE FROM  
THE CALL? RISE! RISE!

JONAH

No. No... Go away... Please go  
away...

He curls into a ball on the bed, hands pressed to his ears.

The door opens and Henry enters. Only Jonah visible.

HENRY

Is everything OK in here?

Jonah sits upright, eyes wide, staring at the towering Angel in front of him.

ANGEL

BEHOLD! THE WORLD OPENS TO THE  
WORD! RISE! GO OUT! SPEAK WITH  
THE VOICE OF THE LORD!

Jonah whimpers, pounds his head with his fists.

JONAH  
Go away. GO AWAY!

HENRY  
Hey, bud. Let's take a look at-

Jonah flies off the bed, pushes Henry aside and escapes.

EXT. CATHRYN'S HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT

The Angel leads Jonah toward a one-story suburban house. A TV flashes images through the large front window.

ANGEL  
BEHOLD! THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN  
SHINES FORTH TO GUIDE YOUR STEPS!

Jonah steps into the light from the living room, face almost serene in the glow of the lamps.

Cathryn snuggles with Gracie on a couch. They snack on popcorn as they watch toddler YouTube videos and follow the dance movements.

ANGEL  
SPEAK HEAVENLY WORDS TO THE  
UNBELIEVERS

Jonah stumbles around toward the back of the house, fights for each step as his brain struggles to connect to the motion.

EXT. CATHRYN'S HOUSE - BACK - CONTINUOUS

With jilted steps, he moves to the back door.

He tries the knob. Locked.

The hunting knife.

He jams it into the door latch. Punches it in with a fist.

It swings slowly open.

INT. CATHRYN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonah stumbles into the room and Cathryn looks up from the TV.

CATHRYN

Jonah? What the fuck are you-

JONAH

(with Angel voice)

FALLEN, FALLEN IS BABYLON THE  
GREAT, THAT MADE ALL THE NATIONS  
DRINK THE WINE OF HER LICENTIOUS  
PASSION!

CATHRYN

Oh my God. Gracie, Gracie come  
on!

Cathryn seizes Gracie off the couch and sprints for the bathroom.

Jonah chases haltingly.

INT. CATHRYN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cathryn slams the door shut, presses her back against it. Gracie screams and starts to cry.

CATHRYN

It'll be OK, baby. Don't cry.

GRACIE

Why is daddy yelling?

CATHRYN

Quiet, honey, stay back from the door. OK? Just stay back.

She scrambles for her cell phone and pushes Gracie farther in.

Cathryn pounds the emergency call button.

ON JONAH

Jonah pummels the door with his fist. He grabs the handle and shakes the door violently.

JONAH  
(with Angel voice)  
FALLEN, FALLEN IS BABYLON THE  
GREAT!

## ON CATHRYN

Cathryn frantically pushes against the door while Gracie looks around afraid and confused.

CATHRYN	GRACIE
(on phone)	Mommy! What's daddy
Hello? Hello? Please send	doing? I'm scared mommy.
help. Please-	Mommy...

## ON JONAH

He pulls the knife, plunges it into the door jam by the lock.

JONAH  
(with Angel voice)  
SHE HAS BECOME A HAUNT FOR  
DEMONS. SHE IS A CAGE FOR EVERY  
UNCLEAN SPIRIT-

JONAH  
(with normal voice)  
-a cage for every unclean bird...

Gracie's cries and Cathryn's frantic voice seep out into the suddenly silent hallway.

Jonah looks around... the bathroom door... the living room... the knife in his hand...

CATHRYN (O.S.)  
It's my husband. He's gone crazy.  
Hurry! Please!

A faint siren on the street outside.

Jonah bolts.

## EXT. JONAH'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Jonah paces restlessly around the cold fire pit.

JONAH  
Fuck. Fuck... What do I do?

His phone lights up. A dozen missed calls.

A message from the clinic.

HENRY (O.S.)

(on phone)

Hey, Jonah. This is Henry. When you get this, please call back. I've been trying to find you and get you help. Please return to the clinic as soon as you can safely do so. I'll keep trying to reach you.

Henry opens photos and scrolls to a picture of him and Gracie. They make a funny pose at a playground in bright sunlight.

He sits on the log and stares at the picture.

Red and blue light pulses through the trees. Faint shouts from police penetrate the oasis.

POLICE (O.S.)

Jonah! Mr. Spencer! Jonah! Come out peacefully! Unarmed!

Deeper into the forest... the only escape.

Jonah stands, glances around camp.

No time to pack.

ANGEL

ATTEND ME, PROPHET! FOLLOW!

The Angel beckons to him from deeper in the forest.

Jonah drops the phone.

He turns to the police lights... his tent... the Angel...

He enters the forest, trees dark pillars of a star roofed cathedral.

The picture of Jonah and Gracie shines for a moment on the phone, then goes dark.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END