

ON A PAIR OF DICE

Written by

Jon Swift's Long Lost Love Child

*Based on an original poem by Jonathan Swift.*

OVER A BLACK SCREEN:

*"We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another." Jonathan Swift*

FADE IN:

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A soaring steeple, its stately cross against blue sky.

A VISITOR approaches from a distance.

He stops before the doors. We do not see his face.

CLOSE UP: HE SHAKES HIS DIRTY HAND THEN OPENS HIS DIRTY PALM TO REVEAL A PAIR OF DICE.

The Visitor puts the dice in his pocket. Enters the church.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The sound of the door closing breaks the silence.

The CONGREGATION turns. Gawks at the visitor who is stained in dirt from head to toe. Holes in his pants and shoes. Stringy hair covers most of his gaunt face.

The Visitor walks over. Takes a seat on the back pew.

A scan of the congregation reveals a pristine people accessorized in their crucifix jewelry and Sunday hats.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We are little brethren twain,  
Arbiters of loss and gain.

All eyes on the PREACHER, as pressed as his suit. He strolls down the aisle shaking hands in jolly fashion.

A WOMAN IN RED LIPSTICK whispers into the Preacher's ear.

WOMAN IN RED LIPSTICK

Better lock up the communion wine.

She tilts her head towards the Visitor.

Preacher glances to the rear of the church, then turns and nods at the woman in red lipstick.

Congregational eyes dart over shoulders at the Visitor.

## WHISPERS FROM CONGREGATION (V.O.)

I think I can smell him. Poor soul.  
He just wants money. They all want  
money. Or whiskey.

The Preacher makes his way towards the podium, continues greeting along the way.

Another of the pristine people, an ELDER, pulls the Preacher in close during the handshake.

Words are exchanged that we cannot hear.

The Preacher takes a twenty dollar bill from his coat pocket and hands it to the Elder.

## NARRATOR (V.O.)

Many to our counters run,  
Some are made, and some undone.

An offering plate is passed across laps. They divvy up.

The offering plate is at the next to the last pew, a YOUNG GUY looks around at the Visitor. Hesitates.

The Visitor stands and takes the offering plate.

An USHER looms over the pew. Waits as if untrusting.

The Visitor drops an envelope onto the plate. Hands it to the nosy Usher.

The Preacher headed to the podium passes two ELDERS heading toward the Visitor. They stop behind him.

Words are exchanged between Elders and the Visitor.

They offer him the twenty but the Man refuses the handout. It isn't money he's here for.

They push the money at him again. He pushes the money away.

This commotion attracts rubberneckers and oglers.

The Elders motion the Visitor to the aisle. He complies.

One on each side they walk him towards the doors. All the way, the Visitor looks back over his shoulder at the congregation and the Preacher.

## NARRATOR (V.O.)

But men find it to their cost,  
Few are made, but numbers lost.

The double doors make a click as they shut behind the Man.

The Elders turn. Receive a nod of appreciation from the Preacher and praise from the people as they walk down the aisle to their pew and take seats.

PREACHER

Let us bow our heads to pray.

The congregation bows in unison. Almost robotic.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Though we play them tricks forever,  
Yet they always hope our favour.

JESUS HANGS ON A CROSS AT THE HEAD OF THE CHAPEL. AS IF THROUGH HIS EYES, WE SEE THE CONGREGATION BOWED IN PRAYER. A TEAR RUNS OUT OF THE STATUES EYES, DOWN HIS CHEEK.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Visitor walks away from the church.

As he pushes the hair from his face, we realize this is not the face of a homeless bum, this is the face of JESUS.

DRONE SHOT: CRUCIFIX IN FOCUS; VISITOR JUST A BLUR, HE SHRINKS IN SIZE AS HE MAKES DISTANCE FROM THE CHURCH.

From the stately cross against the blue sky, we travel down the steeple and stop on the CLOSED doors of the church.

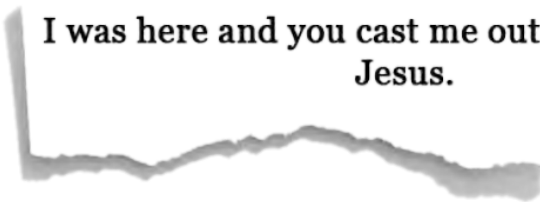
FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

Hands comb the offerings. Stop on the dirty envelope. They open it up:

INSERT:

**I was here and you cast me out.  
Jesus.**



FADE OUT.