

WHAT IF GOD WAS ONE OF US?

By

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**"Whatsoever you do to the least of your
brothers and sisters, you do unto me."**

– Jesus

EXT. SKID ROW - DAY

The absolute bottom of the barrel. If you're here, you'd rather be anywhere else.

Garbage everywhere. Piss and shit. Rats scurrying to and fro, searching amid the refuse for food scraps.

Some old tattered tents, along with small, barely-habitable dwellings made from refrigerator boxes and discarded rugs.

HOMELESS MEN and WOMEN -- all ages, colors and creeds -- sleep, drink, smoke, shoot up, and shuffle about.

This is the living incarnation of HOPELESSNESS.

INT. SKID ROW ALLEY - DAY

JOHN -- 30s, tangled beard, long snarled hair unwashed in ages, tattered clothes, kind eyes -- urinates behind an overflowing trash dumpster when...

SMASH!

A BOTTLE shatters against the side of his head, knocking him to the ground.

Dazed, bleeding, he tries to get up...

CRACK!

Kick to the ribs drives the air from his lungs, puts him back down - hard!

TWO YOUNG MEN -- mid-20s, both also homeless -- fueled by hunger, begin rifling through John's pockets.

He tries to fight them off - feebly - but they punch and kick him, beating him to a pulp.

Eventually, one of the men finds a few crumpled bills in his pocket, holds them up in victory.

Through the blood and pain, John reaches up, begging...

JOHN
Please...that's all...I got.

The young man grabs John by his matted hair, pulls his head up, gets inches away from his face and snarls:

YOUNG MAN #1
Now it's all we got!

SLAMS! him back down...

KICK! to the face knocks John unconscious and the young men run off.

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

To establish --

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

They've tried to make it as cutesy and warm as possible, but there's no hiding the pain and suffering of this place.

Different groups of PARENTS and their CHILD scattered about, keeping to themselves - reading books, playing games on computer tablets, sleeping.

The one commonality - ALL THE KIDS LOOK DEATHLY ILL; some have no hair, an obvious sign of radiation/chemotherapy.

Sitting by himself on a chair in one corner...

BILLY DUNLOP -- 7, head devoid of hair, skin ghostly pale -- drawing a picture with colored markers on a sketch pad.

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

DAVID and MELISSA DUNLOP -- mid-30s, heartbroken -- sit across from...

DR. MALCOM PRICE -- 50s, learned, practical.

MELISSA

There has to be...

She can't finish the sentence, devolves into tears.

DAVID

There has to be something else we can try. An experimental treatment.

Dr. Price speaks with a measured tone. He's been down this road many times before - and it's never easy.

DR. PRICE

We've exhausted every possibility. There's nothing left we can do except--

DAVID
Except...?

DR. PRICE
To make him comfortable.

David's eyes well with tears.

DR. PRICE
Given the size of the tumor, and
the rate at which it's growing, he
doesn't have much time.

MELISSA
(barely a murmur)
No. No. No. No. No.

DR. PRICE
I'm truly sorry.

Melissa and David look at one another - *This isn't happening!
This can't be happening to our son!*

DR. PRICE
I can make arrangements for hospice
care if...

Dr. Price's words fall on deaf ears.

Numb to the world around them, David and Melissa stand and,
on trembling legs, walk out of the office.

EXT. BMW SUV - DAY

Driving through the city.

INT. BMW SUV - DAY

David at the wheel - angry at world, hands squeezing the
steering wheel in a white knuckle death grip.

Melissa riding shotgun, staring out the window, eyes
bloodshot from crying, wishing this bleak reality was a
nightmare she could wake up from.

Billy in the backseat, still working on his drawing -
creating a masterpiece. After a beat...

MELISSA
David, stop the car.

DAVID
Honey...?

MELISSA
Stop!

David brakes to a halt.

DAVID
What?

Melissa doesn't reply, just stares out the window at...

JOHN -- sitting on the curb, picking shards of glass out of his bloody mess of a face.

David's face says it all - there's clearly a history here.

DAVID
No.

MELISSA
He needs help.

DAVID
Not ours.

MELISSA
Then who?

DAVID
Mel, birds with broken wings are one thing. This--

MELISSA
Is a human being in need.

DAVID
We're not in the Peace Corps anymore.

MELISSA
So we just stop caring?

David breathes an exasperated sigh. Takes out his phone.

DAVID
We can call an ambulance.

MELISSA
And say what? There's an injured homeless man? They won't care.

DAVID
Dammit, Melissa.

MELISSA
The hospital is five minutes away.

DAVID
For all you know, he's a crazy
murderer.

MELISSA
Something about him. He has kind
eyes.

DAVID
Maybe if Billy wasn't with--

POP! Rear door OPENS and Billy is out of the SUV, walking
towards John.

DAVID MELISSA
Billy, no! Billy!

EXT. BMW SUV - CURB - DAY

John struggles to pick shards of glass from his ravaged
cheek, his hand trembling...

When he notices Billy standing there, looking at him.

BILLY
Does that hurt?

John nods.

BILLY
How'd it happen?

JOHN
God punished me.

BILLY
Why?

JOHN
I made a mistake.

BILLY
Is God mad at you?

JOHN
Seems that way.

David and Melissa arrive, create sort of a buffer between John and Billy.

BILLY
God's mad at him.

Awkward moment - everyone staring at one another.

MELISSA
(re: John's gruesome
injury)
That needs medical attention.

JOHN
Probably.

MELISSA
We'll take you to the hospital.

JOHN
Why would you do that?

MELISSA
Why wouldn't we?

JOHN
People don't care about each other.

MELISSA
You've obviously met the wrong
people.

INT. BMW SUV - DAY

David drives, Melissa sits shotgun, John and Billy in the back. Billy continues working on his elaborate drawing.

After a beat, Billy looks at John, wrinkles his nose.

BILLY
You're stinky.

Billy hits his window button, lowering the window.

MELISSA
(mortified)
Billy!
(to John)
I'm sorry. He--

JOHN
 He's right.
 (to Billy)
 I am.

BILLY
 How come?

JOHN
 That's a long story.

BILLY
 Does it have a happy ending?

JOHN
 I don't know yet.
 (beat)
 Most don't.

MELISSA
 You have to have faith.

John looks Melissa in the eyes, motions toward Billy.

JOHN
 Do you have faith?

Long, tortured beat before a few tears leak from Melissa's eyes.

MELISSA
 I used to.

John seems to accept this with a brief nod, then motions to Billy's drawing.

JOHN
 Whattya got there?

Billy shows John the drawing - we see it clearly for the first time...

A SELF-PORTRAIT of sorts - pretty close, actually - with a SCARY LOOKING CREATURE inside the head.

Billy points at his drawing...

BILLY
 That's me...
 (points to the creature)
 And that's the monster in my head.
 (touches his head)
 I have a tumor.

JOHN
Oh.

BILLY
I'm going to heaven soon.

Melissa gasps. David stiffens.

JOHN
How do you know?

BILLY
I've been good. That's where good
people go when they die.
(beat)
Are you gonna go to heaven someday?

JOHN
I hope so.

BILLY
We could be friends there.

JOHN
I'd like that.

The SUV brakes to a stop...

They've arrived at the EMERGENCY ROOM AMBULANCE BAY.

David reaches back, cash in his hand - a few \$10s and \$20s.

DAVID
Here.

JOHN
I don't want your money.

DAVID
(unrelenting)
Take it.

After a long beat, John does, stuffs the bills in his pocket.

JOHN
Thank you.

John looks at Billy.

JOHN
I hope you have a safe journey.

Billy grins, puts out his hand.

BILLY

I hope your face feels better.

John shakes Billy's hand - on the back of John's hand, we notice a LARGE RAGGED SCAR in the center.

BILLY

And you get a bath.

John smiles - the first smile we've seen from him, maybe his first smile in years - then exits the SUV, closes the door.

Billy waves. John waves back, ambles toward the emergency room. As he goes...

BILLY

He was nice. But he smelled really bad.

The BMW SUV drives off.

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Gated bedroom community featuring modern and elegant homes on large lots. Soon...

The BMW SUV turns down one block, pulls into the driveway of a nice home...

Garage door opening - BMW SUV pulls into the empty space beside a current model MERCEDES BENZ SEDAN.

INT. BMW SUV - DAY

David looks back at Billy, asleep.

DAVID

Billy, we're home.

No response - just the gentle rise and fall of Billy's chest.

DAVID

Billy.

MELISSA

Let him sleep.

David gets out, opens Billy's door, unbuckles the seatbelt and lifts his sleeping son from the car.

Hugging him against his body, his head on David's shoulder, Billy remains asleep.

David shuts the SUV's door and he, Melissa and sleeping Billy head inside.

CAMERA STAYS in the BMW SUV's interior...

As the dome light slowly starts to dim, we notice Billy's sketch pad on the seat...

Billy's self-portrait drawing...

The scary-looking creature image inside Billy's head is SLOWLY FADING AWAY.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END