Wool and Linen
By Luther Hahn

Introduction

This is a story of a gay boy from the south. While writing this story and for over a year now, my mind has been dedicated to the challenges and traumas we have experienced as a global community. With an understanding of the fatigue that comes from the never-ending circulation of Coronavirus news and that you may not want to hear about it again, I could not properly introduce this work without mentioning it. I have been consumed by my own mind and soul while writing this project. I have felt trapped and alone for so long that I don’t know how to feel anything else, becoming close friends with the fear that sinks into the smallest of cells in my body and this project is a product of that new relationship. I have come to realize that our minds are formidable enemies – the strongest of foes who we can never truly escape from. There is no running from my mind. There is no escaping my own body. That is and has been my lived experience as I have created this story. Within the last few months, I have starved myself from fear of leaving my room. I have isolated myself away from everything I love and care about out of a never-ending sense of doom pulling down on my shoulders. Some days I’m too exhausted to cry. I have watched while it seemed like everyone else was stronger than me for being able to handle it better than me. I have scrubbed my hands raw from trying to kill the germs on my hands left behind after I had just washed them three, four, or five times in the five minutes before then. I have wondered if it would be easier to be dead than to keep fighting myself. When I go outside, I feel the anxiety fill my body and leak out of me in fear-soaked sweat. Where everyone else simply walks through a door and lets it close behind them, I have stayed staring at the back of the door checking if the lock closed like the automatic door should or if the door frame and the door are close enough together. I have exhausted my mind and every resource I can think of. Even with the help of modern medicine, I feel like the war against my mind continues to have victories and losses in equal proportions, leaving me at a stalemate – only able to hope for a better day tomorrow.

Fortunately, my mind has been here before. When I was younger, I checked the doors over and over again every night thinking somehow if I didn’t check the door that I was responsible if something sinister were to occur. This battle in my mind is just the newest assault in the war against myself. I thought about drowning myself every time I went near water because I hated myself. I wanted to be dead more than anything. I fought every day to stay alive and that is how I know I will get through what I deal with today. This is my long way of saying that this play is written by someone who has struggled with their own mental health for so long that they have learned to befriend the fear. A perfect metaphor to describe how I have felt these last few months is being in the middle of a vast ocean, swimming for hours – no land in sight – and simply trying to keep your head afloat.

I tell you this for two reasons: because this play was created in the same mind that I have been fighting as long as I can remember and because it feels so damn good to finally write it out. This play is inspired by how I felt as a child and that child is who comes back whenever I am in a challenging situation. That child is a fighter. That child is so much stronger than me. That child comes to protect me. That child, in more ways than one, is Lucas, the protagonist of this story.
Lucas is a gay boy from the south who grapples with their own mental health in ways very similar to my own. Lucas has to battle off the violent language that is targeted at him by his family, church, and community as he realizes, he is gay, but the only conflict of this story is not in the homophobia drenched community Lucas lives in, but also with his mother and the brain that Lucas has to share with his worst enemy - himself. A formidable character in this work is Lucas’ mother, Mama. Writing this play, Mama’s role became a central part of the plot and a figure with complexity that I struggle to explain. Mama is important to Lucas, so she is important to this story.

This play draws on work before it, like:

- *Hand to God* by Robert Askins
- The first act of *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner
- *Sure Thing* by David Ives
- *Bake Off* by Sheri Wilner
- *Poof* by Lynn Nottage
- *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams
- *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen

In a way, I think that I am trying to save myself by telling Lucas’ story. Through this writing process, I have processed my own reality, my childhood experiences, and the life Lucas carries outside of me now. I secretly hope that by instilling all of this onto paper, something that scares the hell out of me, I will let go of some of the fear that lives in my own mind. That is where this play comes from. This play is for me. I am the creator and the audience, but I also want to share it. For every person I give this story too, a story I cannot verbalize is told; and maybe the feeling of despair won’t pull down on my shoulders as much as it did before. This is a story about a boy named Lucas and his Mama that discusses complex issues like: homophobia, mental health, religion, parenting, and so much more.
Cast of Characters

Lucas, a young boy from the south somewhere (10-12 years of age).

Mama, a woman with a slight drawl who has seen too much to be as young as she is, but too little to be a mother already.

Pastor, an older person with wise southern wisdom in their voice.

Sister Maredda, played by the same actor that plays the father, an older woman with a thick southern accent and a voice even louder than Mama’s.

Lucas’ Father, a middle-aged man with a beer belly and a slight southern drawl.

Congregation, the cast of the play that is not taken in other roles at that moment. For the purposes of this play, the audience of the play is also part of the congregation and are encouraged to join in anytime they feel like during the church scene with an “amen.”

Voices
Scene 1

Lucas is in the dining room. It’s a large room, so large there isn’t enough furniture to fill it, making the stage almost naked – but not too naked. Lucas is playing with his pet; it could also be his imaginary friend in the form of a mop. Lucas is simply doing what kids do. The scene opens with Lucas laughing and running around the stage.

LUCAS
(Laughter) So you think you can out dance me? I’ll show you what I really can do.

(Lucas is dancing around the kitchen with his mop)

What long hair you have, sir. You really know how to dance too. It’s like you were a famous backup dancer or something. Were you a backup dancer?

(Pause)

I knew it! Which tour?

(Pause)

Omg, that’s my favorite one! Can you show me the choreography?

(Pause)

Of course I can dance, you’ve never seen someone dance like me.

(Pause)

I’m sorry to tell you this, but you don’t even have hips. You’re flat – like really flat.

(Pause)

Well don’t get mad at me, I’m just telling you –

MAMA’S VOICE
Stop all that noise! You better not be running around in my kitchen again!
LUCAS
Yes ma’am.
(Whispering to his mop and laughing quietly) We’re just dancing, aren’t we Prince Mopsalot. We just have to be quiet, so Mama doesn’t hear us. You can dance quietly, can’t you?

(Pause)

Oh, you once did an all silent performance in New York? Well, aren’t I so lucky to have such a talented dance partner?

(Continuing to dance around the room) Where are you working right now?

(Pause)

Oh, really? Then what’s her favorite color?

(Pause)

No way, she definitely likes blue more, but if you say so. I would love to go with you to New York one day. We could go see that big statue lady thingy.

(Pause)

Yep, that one. And we could go to the Eifel tower.

(Pause)

What do you mean that’s not in New York? Is it at least close?

(Pause)

Well, maybe we could drive to Paris after New York. I’ll have to learn to drive first.

(Pause)

Well, one day. Do you want to try that new dance move? The one where you hold me in the air.

(Pause)

I knew you’d say that. Okay, here I come!

(Lucas tries to put all his weight on the mop, but it breaks and Lucas crashes to the floor)

(Pause)

Prince Mopsalot? Are you okay?

(Pause)
I’m sorry. I didn’t-

MAMA
(Entering the dining room)
What the hell is going on in here? What is this mess?

LUCAS
I-

MAMA
I don’t have time for whatever tale you’re trying to spin today.

LUCAS
Yes ma’am.

MAMA
And you broke the mop? I hope you know that means you’ll be washing the floor with a bucket and water because I’m not about to go buy a new mop because you want to act a fool. I am sick and tired of having to watch after you every second of the day. Why can’t you just behave for one day? Just one day Lucas! Can we go one day without you ruining something?

LUCAS
(Quietly with his head bowed) Yes ma’am.

MAMA
Now clean this mess up. And you better not make me late for church.

(Looks at Lucas)

Look, I-

(Pause)

You have got to toughen up. This world doesn’t treat soft people kindly. Now pick your chin up off the ground.

(Still looking at Lucas) Don’t act all sad all of a sudden. You think I like having to fuss at you? In case you didn’t know I don’t! I don’t like to yell at all, but you always have to go do something that I have to yell at you for. That’s what good mothers do. Do you want me to be a bad mother?

(Pause)

Huh?

(Pause)
Answer me!

LUCAS
No ma’am.

MAMA
That’s what I thought. Now fix your face before I fix it for you. And stop whining like a little girl. I don’t have a daughter so stop acting like I do.

(Mama exits)

(Pause)

LUCAS
Prince Mopsalot, Can I tell you a secret?

(Pause)

Sometimes I want to die. Something wrong with me and I don’t really know why, but I don’t want to be here anymore. I don’t want to be like this. I don’t want to do things wrong. I want to do what I am supposed to. I don’t want to break mops or make noise or make mom angry, but I can’t stop it. I can’t control myself. I tried to not notice it, but something is wrong with me – something isn’t normal about me.

(Pause)

You don’t have anything to say? You’re not mad at me too are you? I promise I didn’t mean to do it. I was just trying to have fun for a second.

(Pause)

Can I tell you something else? Sometimes I hear things. I hear things other people don’t. Like you. Who even are you?

(Pause)

This is what I get. This is what happens when you don’t listen. I just wish I could stop it or fix it, but I don’t even know what to fix. I can’t take this anymore. Everyone would be better off if I were dead. I would do it, I swear I would, but I heard pastor say that killing yourself is an abominable nation and that you go to H-E-Hockey sticks for that.

(Putting is head into his hands) I just wish I could control it. Everyone seems to know something is wrong with me, but they won’t say it. Something is different about me. I don’t want to be like this anymore.
MAMA
You better be cleaning up that kitchen.

LUCAS
I think it’s time Prince Mopsalot. I have to go get ready for church. I’m sorry for hurting you too.

Lights go out.

I’m so sorry.

PRINCE MOPSALOT
(In an accent, maybe British) It’s okay kid, you’re special don’t forget that, promise.

LUCAS
I promise. Bye, Prince Mopsalot. Maybe I’ll see you perform in New York one day.
**Scene 2**

It’s Sunday and we’re at church. The scene is brightly lit with two pews on the stage and a podium centered at the back of the stage. It looks like every other southern Baptist church trying to prove they are blessed by God with the brightly colored carpet and fake gold doorknobs. Everyone in the pews is facing away from the audience as if the audience is part of the congregation too—sitting in the pew behind the characters on stage. The podium and the pastor who will mount it are facing the audience. Lucas and Mama are in attendance. The scene opens with a scripture

**VOICE**

Let us stand for the reading of God’s word. We will have our youth scripture today.

(Pastor walks on stage as Lucas walks to the front of the church, standing in front of the holy man on his holy podium. The lights gradually light up the whole stage to where the small congregation can be seen facing the man up front.)

**LUCAS**

Good morning y’all. I’ll be reading from Psalms (Pronounces it wrong)

**PASTOR**

Psalms.

**LUCAS**

Sorry.

**PASTOR**

Continue.

**LUCAS**

Today I will be reading from Psalms, chapter 139, verses 13 and 14. “For though hast possessed my reigns: though hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

**PASTOR**

Okay, you can sit down now.

**LUCAS**

Yes sir.
(The congregation remains on their feet.)

PASTOR

Now we call on Sister Maredda to lead us in holy prayer

SISTER MAREDDA

Wasn’t that scripture just sweet y’all. I love seeing the youth of our world being raised right. Now let us all bow our heads.

(Pause)

Father God, oh mighty father who blesseth us and who delivereth us from sin, let your word pour through our holy pastor like your holy gravy at the most sacred table at the picnic in heaven. You say we can do all things through you, who strengthens us, so give us the strength to live through another week of this clown in the white house. We know you make no mistakes God and we’re not doubting you, but lord oh lord it’s a mess out here. He wants to build a wall God. A wall! If he builds that wall we pray that you bring it down with all your strength in heaven. Send your angels to whisper in his ears because you know the clowns surrounding him can’t be giving him good advice if they let him walk out the house looking like that every day. And then to put him on camara too! That Washington is filled with clowns! Clowns I say! Lord. And also, hold back that satanic heat outside. Let this church be the only ice cube in hell. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

PASTOR

(While raising hands to the sky and bringing them down) You may now be seated.

I come to you today with a message from God.

(a few claps from a single person)

I said, I come to you today with a message from God.

(The audience cheers and chants)

The lord sent me here with a message today.

The lord sent me this message through his holy divinity.

Ain’t he good y’all?
I said, Ain’t he good y’all?

(The crowd cheers with him, together this time)

Because god is good.

CONGREGATION
All the time.

PASTOR
and all the time.

CONGREGATION
God is good.

PASTOR
Amen. My word today comes from the book of First Corinthians, sixth chapter, ninth and tenth verse. And so I begin: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, not abusers of themselves with mankind. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God”. Our God’s message here is clear. If we look to the book of Leviticus, eighteenth chapter, twenty second verse, we see God’s message is even more clear. It states: “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind:” it is an abomination.

The lord gave us many gifts, one of those many gifts is the gift of life – a life in a temple of his creation. We are not to defile his temple through sin and yet -

(Amens interspersed)

(Pastor looks over to Sister Maredda, who is fanning herself.) You hot sister?

SISTER MAREDDA
I’m sweating like a sinner in church.

PASTOR
You know what that is don’t ya? That’s the devil trying to take away your word. Don’t let him have it y’all.

AMENS

The lord gave us life and he sure didn’t say it would be a good one. The lord said he would never give us more than we can handle.
AMENS

So, we can handle a little heat, can’t we y’all?

AMENS

You know where it’s really hot? - - - Hell, Hell is real hot. And there ain’t no air conditioning in hell either Sister Maredda.

(Laughter in the audience)

The lord brought me with a message today – a message of purity and divinity. The lord brought me here today to serve at his mighty feet. Today we reject all things unholy in this secular world. They want us to take prayers out of schools. They want us to take god off our money. They want to make it so churches don’t exist anymore. Shame! Shame on them all. For they will all burn in hell for their sins as his holy word tells us. And you know the worst of all? Now they’re trying to tell us that we have to accept their sexual perversions. You know what I say.

(Pause)

Let them all burn!

AMENS

Homosexuality is not godly and anyone who tells you it is is a servant of Satan himself. God sent that AIDS to cleanse us of our sins and remove the sexual perversions like he did with Noah and the ark. If you have sex with a man you will receive mighty vengeance form our lord on high. Adam was given Eve, not a man. We must stand strong in our beliefs as the end is near y’all – The end is near. Look around at this world – take a look at the sin – a new Sodom and Gomorrah.

(Pause)

So, I close today with a message from the lord: Be careful because He is always watching – especially when you think he’s not. Don’t get left here to burn with the rest of the sinners. Repent – or burn for eternity.

(In a not screaming tone, almost too sweet) Please remain seated for the reading of our announcements.

SISTER MAREDDA
(Walking up to the podium)
Won’t that a good sermon y’all? Pastor really outdid himself this time. Y’all know what time it is.
(At the podium) First giving honor to God, I come to you with the announcements today. Please remember to bring your dish for the cook-out after service next week where brother James will be bringing his signature steamed crawfish and crabs. Mhhhm, y’all know y’all hungry, and if you don’t bring a dish – say it with me – you ain’t eatin’ none of my food. – I’m just pullin’ y’alls legs, y’all know we feed everybody, but bring a dish, y’all think Jesus brought all the food to the last super – no, he brought the wine. I heard Sister Syllvester is bringing her famous pigs’ feet too.

(Pausing to read notes)

In other news, after service today the mission will be selling all sorts of fabrics and blankets. They’re made from the finest mixed linens and combined fabrics – real cozy. We got wool and cotton, wool and polyester blend, wool and linen sheets, we got all the best fabrics and y’all know winter is round the corner, so you better go ahead and get them before they gone. Plus, all proceeds go to the TV fund so we can get new fancy TVs. Ain’t god good?

CONGREGATION
All the time.

SISTER MAREDDA
And all the time

CONGREGATION
God is good

SISTER MAREDDA
Service is over, you are all dismissed.

MAMA
(To Lucas) Are you ready to go?

LUCAS
Sure am!

MAMA
Let’s get home to eat some dinner.
Scene 3

The same day, Mama and Lucas are sitting at a table with two seats, still wearing their church clothes and Mama’s hat is on the back of her chair. They sit in silence with the edges of the stage dark from an absence of light. After a period of silence Mama begins to talk.

MAMA
You’re sure quiet today.

LUCAS
MMMhhmmm.

MAMA
Did you like service today? It was good, wasn’t it?

LUCAS
Yes ma’am.

MAMA
But?

LUCAS
But?

MAMA
Don’t play dumb with me. I know when something is wrong with you. I am your mother after all.

LUCAS
It’s nothing.

MAMA
What?

LUCAS
Nothing.

MAMA
I’m not playing games, Lucas. Tell me what’s wrong.
LUCAS
It’s nothing Ma.

MAMA
Fine, eat your dinner.

(They sit in silence again. Neither making eye contact.)

LUCAS
Mama?

MAMA
Oh, now you want to talk? What is it?

LUCAS
Is it true what pastor said today?

MAMA
Which part?

LUCAS
The part about gay people going to hell.

MAMA
Sure was.

(Silence)

LUCAS
And what is eternity?

MAMA
Eternity?

LUCAS
Yes ma’am.

MAMA
It means forever. Why are you asking all these questions?

LUCAS
No reason.

(They sit in silence again)
LUCAS
And it’s hot there?

MAMA
Where?

LUCAS
H-E-Double Hockey sticks.

MAMA
Yes, Lucas, that’s the whole point.

LUCAS
So, they burn in hell forever?”

MAMA
Yes, Lucas, that’s what happens to sinners.

(Pause)
Stop talking, just eat your dinner.

LUCAS
Does it hurt?

MAMA
Didn’t I say eat your dinner?

LUCAS
Yes ma’am, but-

MAMA
(Interrupting Lucas and raising her voice a little)
There’s no buts in this house. Eat your dinner.

LUCAS
(Bowing his head and speaking softly) Yes, ma’am.

MAMA
(Noticing Lucas’ clear sadness and looks down at her own plate but begins to talk just before putting the next bite of food in her mouth) I’m not sure, but I would think yes- yes that it would hurt. Fire usually does that.

(They both return to their plates and eat in silence. Time passes in silence for so long that the room is uncomfortable.)
LUCAS
Mama?

MAMA
(Jokingly) I’ve changed my name, my name’s not mama anymore.

LUCAS
(Looking up from his plate and at mama) Mama?

MAMA
(Still jokingly) Mama’s not home right now.

(Pause)

LUCAS
(Still staring at Mama) Mama?

(Pause)

MAMA
What Lucas?

LUCAS
(Dragging it out like each letter is more painful than the next) I think I’m (pause) gay.

(Silence. Painful Silence. Minutes seem to pass by while Lucas stares at his mother.)

LUCAS
Mama, did you hear me? I said I’m gay.

Mama: Do you know what that means?

LUCAS
Yes ma’am.

MAMA
(With her voice raised) Then tell me what it is?

LUCAS
Mama, please.

Mama
(Screaming now) Say it!

LUCAS
(Starting to cry) I can’t mama.

MAMA
(Standing up at the table now) Say it goddam it!

LUCAS
I’m gay! I have superpowers! That’s what it means!

(Mama smacks Lucas across the face, knocking dishes to the floor. Lucas holds back his tears and bows his head down to the table while mama wipes her forehead and sits back down.)

MAMA
How dare you play games with me?

LUCAS
I’m not playing.

MAMA
I knew I should have just stayed with your father. I should have listened to my mother. She told me that I shouldn’t leave him for hitting me from time to time. A boy needs his father – A boy needs a father figure. And now look – I’ve failed. I’ve failed!” (Mama puts her head down into her crossed arms on the table and begins to sob)

(Lucas gets up and goes to hug his mother while she cries, leaning over her body and trying to reach around her.)

LUCAS
It’s going to be okay Mama. It’s going to be all right.”

(Mama stops crying and gets up from the table.)

MAMA
I’m going to go take a bath.

(Pause)

It’s not true Lucas. It can’t be. I can’t have that in my house.

(Lucas watches his mother walk out the room and begins to pick up the dishes thrown onto the floor. We can hear mama humming as she begins to run the bathwater. The lights go out.)
Scene 4

Lucas is at the door in the back of the kitchen before he heads to bed. The lights are all out except for one focused on the child and the door. Lucas begins checking if the door is locked, turning the knob back and forth with relative slowness and a pause between each jiggle of the doorknob. Lucas is counting how many times he turns the doorknob. He always counts to five and then back down again as he checks. We wouldn’t know the door is locked if he didn’t. And if he gets distracted - he starts over again. If we don’t check this door, we do not get to go to sleep. And maybe we will check the windows after this. We hope we get to bed earlier tonight. We hope mama doesn’t hear us.

LUCAS
One.

(Pause)

LUCAS
Two.

(Pause)

LUCAS
Three.

(Pause)

LUCAS
Four.

(Pause)

LUCAS
Five.

(Pause)
LUCAS
Five.

(Pause)

LUCAS
Four.

(Pause)

LUCAS
Three.

(Pause)

LUCAS
Two.

(Pause)

LUCAS
One.

LUCAS
One.

VOICE
Stop whining like a little girl.

LUCAS
Two.

VOICE
Why do you play with girls?

LUCAS
Three.

VOICE
Why do you talk like a girl?

LUCAS
Four.

VOICE
Why do you walk like that?

LUCAS
Five.

VOICE
You’re an abomination.

LUCAS
Five.

VOICE
He doesn’t want you.

LUCAS
Four.

VOICE
You’re broken.

LUCAS
Three.

VOICE
No one loves you.

LUCAS
Three.

VOICE
You’d be better off dead.

LUCAS
Two.

VOICE
Why don’t you kill yourself?

LUCAS
One.

(Lucas looks at the door and begins to walk away but - very shortly after - turns back to look at the door. Lucas pivots and continues to walk away from the door, but just a few steps later, his gaze returns to the door.)

LUCAS
Please. Please. No not again. Please. Why can’t I stop. Why can’t I stop it. I can’t stop it. There’s nothing I can do. Please, please, please. Why? Why me? Please. I don’t want to be like this.
What is wrong with me?

(Lucas begins to cry as he reluctantly returns to the door, each step looking just as hard as the last. As he reaches the door, he slowly places his hand upon the knob as he has done many nights before.)

LUCAS
One.

(The lights dim out as we hear the jiggle of the doorknob in the dark - interspersed with Lucas’ tears this time.)

LUCAS
(Sniffling in a sob with his voice shaking) Two.

(Pause)

LUCAS
I don’t want to be here anymore.

(We do not hear another sound after that, and the lights remain off for the audience to sit in silence.)
Scene 5

Mama is at the same dining room table alone when someone knocks on the door.

MAMA
Who is it!?

PASTOR
It’s Pastor.

MAMA
(A little nervous and attempting to rub the wrinkles out of the tablecloth)
Come on in!

PASTOR
(Walks up to the table and reaches for a chair)
May I?

MAMA
Oh, of course! Please forgive me, it has been a stressful few days and I am a little (pause) disheveled.

PASTOR
Oh no problem. It’s all good in God’s neighborhood. (Pause) That was supposed to be a joke (pause) or at least lighten the mood a bit.

MAMA
I’m sorry, I don’t have the energy to laugh today, I hope that’s okay, Pastor.

PASTOR
Of course. What can I help you with my sister?

MAMA
I – I don’t know exactly how to put this, as it is a (pause) delicate situation, which is why I did not want to discuss it over the phone. I hope you weren’t too upset about the secrecy.

PASTOR
No not at all, but what is the problem?

MAMA
Well, Lucas has been having a hard time lately.
(looks down to the table)

PASTOR
Okay, but what type of problem?
MAMA
(either ashamed or scared, maybe both) The type of problem that plays around with your mind.

PASTOR
I see. And how bad are these problems?

MAMA
Pretty severe. Lucas has not gotten out of bed for two full days. Not at all – for anything. He was just lying in front of the kitchen door the other morning. He looked so tired, but he just laid there silently. I tried to get him to go to his bed by himself, but he wouldn’t get up. So, I moved him myself – I carried him to his bed. That was two days ago. He was crying at first, but after the sobs went quiet on the first day, he’s been nothing but silent. He hasn’t eaten in days and I am starting to be scared for him, but I didn’t know who to call. Who do you even call for things like this? So that’s why I called you.

PASTOR
So he doesn’t move at all?

MAMA
No, not a flinch, but he doesn’t seem to be asleep either – just turned to stone in his bed.

PASTOR
What about using the restroom?

MAMA
He has only gone once in the last two days. I guess from not eating or drinking at all.

(Pausing and looking up)

I had to change the sheets when he –

PASTOR
That’s alright, I see. This does sound serious.

MAMA
Do you think you can help him?

PASTOR
We can do anything through Christ if we simply invoke his name. I will pray over him for his wellness and reprieve.

MAMA
Are you sure it will help?

PASTOR
Do you lack faith my sister? Do you not trust the word of God himself? -
MAMA
I’m sorry I-

PASTOR
Do not interrupt.

MAMA
I’m sorry, go ahead.

PASTOR
This home is clearly not blessed by God. I will make sure to fix that before I leave. Your son is a troubled child and we both know that. We all have our struggles and inner demons, but your son has more than his fair share. This is not to say it is beyond repair because God tells us that he will never give us more than we can handle. You and your son must choose the path of Christ and start your journey to the great kingdom of God – that’s the only way to fix this.

MAMA
I Understand.

PASTOR
Where is his father?

MAMA
(Pausing with hesitancy) He’s not with us anymore?

PASTOR
And why is that?

MAMA
Me and his father separated for the best.

PASTOR
For the best of whom?

MAMA
Both of us, I guess.

PASTOR
And your son?

MAMA
I don’t understand

PASTOR
Let me rephrase it. Was your husband and your separation the best thing for your child?
MAMA
I think so.

PASTOR
You think? This is not something to be unsure of. Do you know how the lord sees divorce?

MAMA
Yes, of course, but he had become a different person – a much more aggressive person.

PASTOR
And at your wedding did you say your vows?

MAMA
Yes.

PASTOR
Including the part about until death do you part?

MAMA
Yes, but –

PASTOR
There are no buts with sin. All sin is equal, and you have broken a pact with God. Thankfully, our God is a gracious God. Have you repented for your sins?

MAMA
No.

PASTOR
I recommend you start with that. Your home cannot be in order if there is sin in the home. Your son is what he sees and without a father, he cannot succeed. A boy needs his father. A woman needs a husband. It’s the natural order of things. Do you understand?

MAMA
Yes.

PASTOR
Let me put it this way. God created Adam and Adam needed a wife, so God gave him Eve. Life could not continue without Adam and Eve. Adam could not rear a child on his own, so God gave him his other half. Do you understand what I am saying?

MAMA
(A little irritated, but not disrespectfully) Yes

PASTOR
And do you think you are the exception?

MAMA
No-

PASTOR:
I’m not done. Your son is not okay and it is your job as a mother to do what is best for him. This situation he’s in at present is a serious one, I don’t deny that, but there can be even more grave consequences of a boy not having his father in his life – more grave consequences that result in eternal damnation. Do you understand.

MAMA
I think so.

PASTOR
Good. You did the right thing in calling me, Rebecca. Stay strong, Lucas needs you. Remember, God does not give us anything we cannot handle.

(Getting up from the table)

I will go pray over the boy and anoint him and the entrances of this home with oils.

MAMA
How long will it take to work?

PASTOR
God does not work on our time, but he gives us what we need when we need it most. Have faith. Even faith the side of a mustard seed is sufficient to last a lifetime. I must get started with the lord’s work and I must not be interrupted, but please use your spirit to support God’s work in this home with prayer.

MAMA
I will.

(Pastor walks out of the dining room)

MAMA
(Moving the phone and the receiver closer to her and begins dialing the phone)

(Pause)

Yes, can I speak with ______?

(pause)

It’s- Well, It’s his ex-wife.
Yes, I understand, but I need to –

(Audibly irritated) I’m sorry, I think I gave you the impression that I give a fuck. Put him on the phone or I swear to God I will come up there myself and make you wish you had never been born.

Listen here you backwards swamp bitch, I will drive my car through the front of your fucking house. I’ll do it I swear to God I will. Don’t fucking cross me bitch, I don’t have the energy for your bullshit today.

I don’t give a fuck if he’s resting. In case you didn’t remember, I was married to him for seven years. I know exactly what he’s like. I don’t ask for a thing from him – ever. I just need to talk to him this one time.

Okay, I’ve tried being nice to you. Since you want to play games, lets play games. Does he know where you really are on Wednesday nights?

(Laughs) Try me bitch, I swear to God, I’ll do it. I don’t even like your stupid ass; I’ll do it without a second thought.

Thank you. I don’t have anything against you personally, I promise. You may be one stupid bitch, but I have been where you are. You deserve better.

Uh huh, honey you’re preaching to the choir. I have been where you are. You deserve better.
Fine, then give him the damn phone.

(Pause)

(Tapping her finger impatiently) Yes, it’s me. Yes, your ex-wife. I said yes!

(Pause)

I don’t ask you for anything and we both know that. This is serious. Pastor says your son needs you.

(Pause)

Please. It is for him. It’s not for me and I-

(Pause)

Mhmm, Mhmm, yeah. I know, but-

(Pause)

I know you might have to miss work, but your son is worth a day off work.

(Pause)

I see. So how much do I need to pay you?

(Pause)

No, I meant money, I will not go to dinner with you. You have a whole wife.

(Pause)

Fine! But no appetizers or deserts and I am not paying.

(Pause)

Yeah, see you then.

PASTOR
(Walking back into the dining room) I have finished with the anointments. It’s in God’s hands now.

MAMA
Thank you, and when will he feel better?

PASTOR
God doesn’t work on our time, sister. You have to have faith and patience. He may not bring it when we want it, but he brings it when we need it. Stay strong sister.

MAMA
I will. Thank you so much.

PASTOR
No reason to thank me, thank the lord. Especially in your tithes and offerings. God loves nothing more than seeing his God-fearing children building up his house in his name.

MAMA
Yes, Thank you. I will, pastor.

PASTOR
I suppose I’ll just let myself out then.

MAMA
I apologize, let me –

PASTOR
No need I’m already up. I’ll see you at bible study, right?

MAMA
Of course!

Pastor.
Good. This house needs as much holiness as it can get. Let the lord guide this house.

MAMA
Amen.

PASTOR
I’ll see you later sister.

MAMA
See you later pastor.

PASTOR
Bye

MAMA
Bye
What a mess you’ve made, Rebecca, what a mess.

(Lays her head back into her hands only to be shocked back to reality by a crashing sound)
Lucas!? Is that you!?

MAMA
Oh thank God! How do you feel?

LUCAS
Fine, why?

MAMA
Because you had been feeling not so well for the last couple of days and I want to be sure that you are okay.

LUCAS
What are you talking about? I feel great! I feel on top of the world. I might go for a run today. Or maybe I’ll call my friends.

MAMA
Calm down Lucas, you’ve been in bed for a few days, you should take it easy. You had me very scared. Really scared.

LUCAS
I’m sorry Mama. I didn’t mean to do anything bad.

MAMA
No, I don’t mean to –

(Pause)

What I mean to say is there are going to be some changes around here.

LUCAS
What type of changes?

MAMA
Well-

LUCAS
But why?

MAMA
What?

LUCAS
Why does he have to come here?

MAMA
Who? What are you talking about?

LUCAS
Dad. Why does dad have to come here? Didn’t we leave him?

MAMA
How did you know what I was going to say? Were you listening to my conversations again?

LUCAS
No, you just said it.

MAMA
Lucas stop playing games.

LUCAS
I’m not playing, I heard you say it – just now.

MAMA
I don’t have time for this right now. Just don’t do it again. I told you to not eavesdrop on adult conversations anymore.

LUCAS
I didn’t I promise.

MAMA
Lucas! Just stop lying! I am too tired to fight you on this.

LUCAS
I’m not lying-

MAMA
Stop talking! I have had enough! If you lie one more time, I’m going to put soap in your mouth.

LUCAS
(quietly) Yes ma’am

MAMA
Now, that you already know.

(Pause)

Your father is coming over next week. It is what’s best for you, but you have to be careful how you act and what you say, okay?

LUCAS
What do you mean?

MAMA
You can’t talk about certain things?

LUCAS
What things?

MAMA
Like what you told me the other night at the table. You can’t tell your father that. If you tell your father that he’ll kill you. Just talk about normal stuff, do you understand?

LUCAS
Yes ma’am.
Scene 6

At the same dining room table, Mama sits waiting for Lucas’ father to stop by. Lucas must be in another room.

(Knock at a door somewhere off stage)

MAMA
Yes? Who is it?

LUCAS’ FATHER
Who do you think it is?

MAMA
Lord keep me from killing this man.

LUCAS’ FATHER
I take that as a welcome in, then?

MAMA
Come in! (Under her breath) If you must.

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Looking around) Not much has changed, huh?

MAMA
Yeah, I guess so.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Everything looks the same – even you. You’re still as beautiful as ever.

MAMA
(Pulls arms back from the table and crosses them) Mmhhmm.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Oh, don’t be like that. We used to be good together, didn’t we? Don’t you remember that time we went to the beach in December. That’s probably how we got Lucas if I remember right.

MAMA
I don’t remember.

LUCAS’ FATHER
You better liven up a bit before I take you for dinner. You wouldn’t want me to get bored would you. Unless you planned on entertaining me with something else.
Make sure to wear something cute – maybe that blouse that had the flowers on the chest. And you know you always looked good in a skirt - easy access too (Laugh). I guess it doesn’t really matter, I’ll be ready to bend you over no matter what you’re wearing.

MAMA
(Angrily, but stopping quickly) Look, I-

LUCAS’ FATHER
Be careful now. You’re beginning to push my patience. I’ve been working hard to get it under control, but you and that ugly attitude are working my patience.

MAMA
I think you’re here to see Lucas, so why don’t we get him?

(Pause)

Lucas!

LUCAS
(From off stage) Yes, ma’am.

MAMA
We have company, your father is here! Come to the dining room!

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Lucas enters) Hey, how are you boy? Gosh you’re so much bigger than I remember.

MAMA
That’s what happens when you’re gone for 2 years.

LUCAS’ FATHER
I was talking to Lucas.

MAMA
You’re right, sorry. Lucas don’t listen to me.

LUCAS’ FATHER
But it can apply to you too, since it looks like you never miss a good helping of dessert. It never was very becoming of you.

MAMA
What wasn’t Becoming?
LUCAS’ FATHER
How much you ate. You were always sucking on something. It’s no wonder your ass looks like it’s about to fall over the sides of the chair.

(Pause)

Why don’t you go get me something to drink while I get caught up with my boy here (rubbing Lucas’ head)

(Pause)

(Right after Mama exits) You see that, that’s how you treat a woman. They’re only good for one thing and half of them don’t even know how to do that. Like your mother, old prude (laughing).

(Pause)

You hear me boy?

LUCAS
I did.

LUCAS’ FATHER
And?

LUCAS
And what?

LUCAS’ FATHER
I’m teaching you how to be a man and you have nothing to say?

LUCAS
It’s just a bit mean.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Mean!? Clearly, you’ve been around too many women – be careful or you’ll be a mama’s boy.

(Pause)

Don’t worry, I’m here now – I’ll toughen you up. I already taught you the first lesson. You’ve got to be mean to your lady.

LUCAS
But what if I don’t want too?

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Laughing) We’ve got our work cut out don’t we? Let me put it this way, God created Eve from Adam’s rib so Adam would not be alone. The whole point of woman was to serve us. Why else would have God done it?

(Pause)

And then Eve went and ate the forbidden fruit, you know what that is don’t you?

LUCAS
Yeah, pastor talked about it in church.

LUCAS’ FATHER
At least your mother is doing that right. A boy needs to be in church. Anyways, like I was saying – Eve ate from the tree that she wasn’t supposed to and then seduced Adam into eating the fruit too. So when God found out, he punished both of them and their offspring to suffer through their whole lives. That’s why you have to be strong and control your woman. If you let women do what they want, they will get us in trouble. All the pain and suffering on this Earth is because women cannot think past their emotions and wants. So you’ve got to be tough! You understand?

LUCAS
But what if I still don’t want to?

LUCAS’ FATHER
Don’t worry, women like that type of stuff. They want a man to put them in their place. They love a bad boy. No woman wants a nice guy. Being nice doesn’t get you anything but overlooked – and that’s with women and everything else in life.

(Pause)

Do you get it now?

LUCAS
What if I don’t want a woman?

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Laughing) Come on now, you’re not a peter puffer are you?

LUCAS
No.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Good. I only make strong men from these loins. (Pause) I know you don’t like them too much now. No boy ever likes girls until they do. You will one day.

(Laughing)
I’m good at this parenting stuff, huh? I don’t know why your mother took you away from me.

LUCAS
Maybe it was because you hit her.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Who told you that!?

LUCAS
I remember it, but I can also see it in your mind.

LUCAS’ FATHER
What the hell are you talking about?

LUCAS
I can see movies in people’s heads. And in yours you hit Mama.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Stop playing with this bullshit. What the fuck is wrong with you?

LUCAS
I don’t know. Something always felt different.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Well get your shit together before I knock it out of you. Rachael! Get back in here!

MAMA
(Running in) What’s wrong? What happened?

LUCAS’ FATHER
Your son is a psycho, that’s what.

MAMA
Why would you say something like that?

LUCAS’ FATHER
Because he’s talking out his ass about some fucking TV show in my head? He’s fucking crazy! You didn’t tell me he was weird!

MAMA
Please stop, he’s right there. He’s just a kid. Sometimes they act weird. It’s all part of growing up.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Maybe you’re right, but something is off with this kid.
MAMA  
Now Lucas, What is going on?

LUCAS  
I told him how I can see what’s in his head.

MAMA  
What? Lucas, that’s not funny. It’s not funny to say stuff like that.

(Now talking to Lucas’ father) See, he’s just playing a prank on you.

LUCAS  
No I’m not. I can see what’s in his head. I can see what’s in yours too.

MAMA  
Lucas, stop this right now. It’s not funny anymore.

LUCAS  
I’m serious. You were just in the bathroom crying and trying to throw up your lunch, but nothing was coming out. You keep thinking that you’re fat and ugly.

MAMA  
Lucas, I swear to God!

LUCAS’ FATHER  
He’s not my son. What did you do?

LUCAS  
You don’t believe that. I can tell. Plus, you’re thinking about that beach in December again?

LUCAS’ FATHER  
I’ve had enough of this! What type of game are you playing here?

MAMA  
(Sitting down now) I- I don’t know what to say.

LUCAS  
Yes you do. You’ve been wanting to say it since he first put his hands on you. You thought about it when he came through the door. You just thought about it again.

MAMA  
Lucas, what are you talking about?

LUCAS  
You know what I’m talking about. It’s okay to say it. You need to say it.
MAMA
(Starting to cry) I don’t know how.

LUCAS’ FATHER
What the hell is going on here? I’m tired of this bullshit! Rachael you always were a screw up, but goddam how do you fuck a child up this much?

MAMA
Me? What about you? You think you hitting me wasn’t something that fucked him up too? When you would threaten to hit him if I didn’t do what you wanted.

LUCAS’ FATHER
I had anger problems. I’m working on it. I’m better now. I don’t do that stuff anymore.

LUCAS
Not true.

MAMA
I already knew it wasn’t true. You’ve lied to me so much I think I learned how to smell them. Like a lie detecting drug dog. I can sense it every time you lie. Each time you came home smelling like a different woman’s perfume or your buttons of your shit happened to fall out your shirt again, I learned how to read your lies even better.

LUCAS’ FATHER
You can’t still blame me for that. I’m just a man. I prayed for forgiveness. God forgave me, so you have to too. I don’t even cheat anymore.

LUCAS
That’s not true either.

(Mama starts laughing hysterically)

LUCAS’ FATHER
I swear to God if you don’t stop that shit, I’ll-

MAMA
(Standing up and leaning over the table) What? What will you do? Please let me know!

LUCAS’ FATHER
I’ll have to beat him because you clearly don’t do it enough.

MAMA
I wish the fuck you would! I Wish you would! I’m begging you, try that shit if you want to!

LUCAS’ FATHER
Watch your mouth, bitch!
MAMA
Or what!? Are you going to hit me now? Huh!?

LUCAS’ FATHER
If I have to, then I will.

LUCAS
He won’t.

LUCAS’ FATHER
Are you challenging me you little faggot? Do you want to see what I can do? Clearly you need a man to straighten you out some.

MAMA
I fucking dare you! Say another word and I’ll kill you. I will-

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Interrupting) You think I’m scared of you? (Laughing)

LUCAS
He is. He’s scared.

LUCAS’ FATHER
What type of-

MAMA
I’m talking! It’s my goddam turn! I spent so many years trying to be quiet for you. Being someone else for everyone else. Being everything but what I wanted to be. Covering my legs in church so the pastor doesn’t get too distracted by the space between my legs. Covering my bruises each time you hit me! Covering my breasts with goddam bras! Making sure my shirts didn’t show too much, but also making sure they didn’t show too little. I’m so tired! No more!

LUCAS’ FATHER
Ah, so angry I see. That never looked good on you either.

MAMA
Maybe if you didn’t fuck every ugly bitch in a 33-mile radius, I wouldn’t be so angry. Maybe if you didn’t hit me every time you had a bad day at work. Maybe if you didn’t hit me for crying after you hit me. Maybe if—

LUCAS’ FATHER
I-

MAMA
I’m not fucking done! You’ve had your word. Men have had their word forever. You think because you have a penis you get to treat me like shit and I have finally had enough. I’m not bowing to you anymore. You don’t control me anymore and if you even think of putting your hands on me or Lucas, I will kill you – Dead.

LUCAS
She will.

LUCAS’ FATHER
You don’t have the balls to do it, you’re just being hysterical at this point.

LUCAS
She’ll do it. I can see it. She wants you dead – she has for a long time.

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Throwing his drink across the room and getting up in Mama’s face) I won’t be talked to like that by someone like you. You have no right to talk to me that way.

MAMA
(Quietly) Get out my house.

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Laughing) What?

MAMA
(Loudly) I said get out my house.

LUCAS’ FATHER
And what if I don’t?

MAMA
(Grabbing the knife off the table) I said get the fuck out my goddam house you bastard!

LUCAS’ FATHER
You wouldn’t dare!

MAMA
Try me you sorry excuse for a man!

LUCAS
She’ll do it.

MAMA
Listen to your son. I’ve been waiting for the courage to hit you back for a long time and now I finally have it.
LUCAS’ FATHER
I- I can’t believe this. You ungrateful bitch. You can’t survive without me. You need me. That’s why I am here. That’s why you called me here.

MAMA
I called you here because someone convinced me I needed a man to fix my problems. But, you are the problem. I finally see it. So I’ll give you ten fucking seconds to walk out that door or I call the police.

LUCAS’ FATHER
And what are they going to do?

MAMA
Probably arrest me for putting this knife in the side of your neck.

LUCAS’ FATHER
You’ve lost it!

MAMA
One.

LUCAS’ FATHER
You’re just bluffing.

LUCAS
She’s not.

MAMA
Two.

LUCAS’ FATHER
(To Lucas) You’re just going to take her side?

LUCAS
I will always take Mama’s side.

MAMA
Three.

LUCAS’ FATHER
You’re not my son. You’re nothing to me.

LUCAS
I wish that was possible.

MAMA
Four!

LUCAS
You don’t know how much I wish you weren’t my dad.

MAMA
Five!

LUCAS
We don’t want you here!

MAMA
Six!

LUCAS
Leave! She’ll do it, I swear to God.

MAMA
Seven!

LUCAS’ FATHER
(Walking towards the door) You’re both fucking crazy. You’re both going to hell.

MAMA
Eight!

LUCAS
I’ll make sure to save you a seat.

MAMA
Nine!

(Lucas starts laughing. And Lucas’ father is almost out of the room)

MAMA
Ten!

(The door slams right after Mama says ten.)

MAMA
(Screaming) And I won’t make it to our dinner tonight either, you bastard.

(Silence)

(Mama sits down and begins to cry.)
LUCAS
(Hugging Mama) It’s going to be okay, Mama.

MAMA
I’m sorry.

LUCAS
I know.

MAMA
Don’t be mad at me.

LUCAS
I’m not.

MAMA
I’m so sorry.

LUCAS
It’s okay.

(Pause)

Mama?

MAMA
Yes?

LUCAS
Can I tell you something?

MAMA
Yes.

LUCAS
Sometimes I want to die.

MAMA
Me too, Lucas – me too.

(Silence)

(Mama’s cry starts turning into laughter and Lucas just stares at her. After a little while, Lucas starts laughing too.)
THE END
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