

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

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EXT. MALL - EVENING

Outside a dying mall at twilight the lighted sign announces it to be the "WEST HAVEN MALL" and in small letters underneath "DEVRON REAL ESTATE ASSET MANAGEMENT" Weeds grow around the base of the sign and the parking lot is nearly deserted.

INT. MALL HALLWAY - EVENING

Attention follows the MALL MANAGER, a middle aged man, as he makes his rounds delivering fliers. He stops in the doorway of GRACE CHRISTIAN SHOP which is crowded with various Christian knick knacks, boxes lay about the floor evidence of CONSTANCE, a dowdy middle aged woman and the shop owner's packing interrupted.

MALL MANAGER

How's it going Constance?

CONSTANCE

It's Miss. Parson to you, and I'm doing as fine as can be expected.

MALL MANAGER

Still after all these years this formality?

CONSTANCE

Still after all these years being kicked to the curb like this?

Constance resumes packing up her store.

MALL MANAGER

Look I did what I could it was a decision by corporate.

CONSTANCE

And what fat bonus are you getting for being a regular Judas?

MALL MANAGER

Look this place is old,

CONSTANCE

It has character.

MALL MANAGER

You can't even get a cell phone signal in here.

CONSTANCE

Good it gets people off of those damned devil screens.

MALL MANAGER

But in an emergency?

CONSTANCE

You don't use a phone to call for help, you call Jesus. Now if you'll excuse me I've got work to do.

MALL MANAGER

Think you'll be done in time?

CONSTANCE

Not with you standing there bugging me.

MALL MANAGER

Just came to drop off this flier. The mall will be closing at regular time, you'll have until midnight tonight to clear out after that the gates will lock.

The Mall Manager takes one last look around at all the stuff still on the walls and shakes his head before heading to his next store. He passes by ANDY the maintenance man and janitor who is mopping the floor.

MALL MANAGER (CONT'D)

You know you don't have to do that? The mall's closing tonight.

ANDY

(thick Russian accent)  
Are you paying me to work today?

MALL MANAGER

Well yes, but I mean-

ANDY

Then I am working today.

Andy resumes mopping the floor as the Mall Manager just shakes his head and walks away.

INT. COVERS BOOKSHOP - EVENING

COVERS BOOKSHOP is empty except for AMBER, a young woman who sits behind the register drawing.

The Mall Manager puts on his best smile and walks up to the register to hand her the flier. Amber doesn't stop drawing or bother to look up.

AMBER

They already know about it.

MALL MANAGER

They?

AMBER

Corporate is bringing in professional movers. They'll be here first thing tomorrow morning to pack everything up.

Amber continues to draw.

MALL MANAGER

So what are you drawing?

AMBER

Nothing much.

MALL MANAGER

Don't you ever want to do more than work here? You seem to have such potential. If it's the business world you want to break into I can give you a few pointers perhaps some lessons.

AMBER

Thanks but no thanks.

MALL MANAGER

Are you sure you aren't throwing away a golden opportunity?

AMBER

Business lessons from someone who is about to lose his job just like me? Sounds like two blind travellers arguing about which direction to walk.

MALL MANAGER

Hey no need to be harsh about it, you kids still do use that word?

AMBER

Wouldn't know. I haven't been a kid for awhile.

MALL MANAGER

Well since you're not a kid I'll invite you to drinks if you ever want to discuss business...and other matters.

AMBER

Don't hold your breath.

MALL MANAGER

Still it is kinda sad to see this place go.

AMBER

Huh?

MALL MANAGER

You know, this was always one of my favorite stores.

AMBER

I've never even seen you set foot in here until now.

MALL MANAGER

Well it must have always been when the other girl was working.

AMBER

I'm the only girl who works here, though Mike's hair is kinda long.

Mike gives up on his attempts at flirting.

MALL MANAGER

Anyway here's a flier outlining the closing procedures.

He holds the flier out but Amber doesn't look up from her drawing to take it.

AMBER

Just leave it there.

The Mall Manager gives up and placing the flier on the counter before leaving.

INT. MALL HALLWAY - EVENING

In the hallway outside of STEVE'S TECH TOYS, STEVE the young owner is talking with his FATHER, a well dressed man.

FATHER

Are you sure you're doing alright,  
with the mall closing and  
everything?

STEVE

Sure I am; to tell you the truth  
I've been thinking of selling off  
the business and using the profits  
to travel around a bit.

FATHER

By the way someone from a bank  
called the house the other day.

STEVE

Did mother pick it up?

FATHER

No, it was me.

STEVE

And what did they say?

FATHER

Something about an application you  
had made for an emergency loan.

STEVE

That's odd.

FATHER

But you wouldn't know anything  
about this?

STEVE

No it must have been a spam phone  
call, people call constantly trying  
to loan me money.

FATHER

Still they seemed to know an awful  
lot about you.

STEVE

That's how they get you, I'm out in  
the public eye a lot so there's  
bound to be a lot out there about  
me.

FATHER

The hazards of being so successful,  
I understand.

STEVE  
Preaching to the choir. Anyway  
what did he say?

FATHER  
Something about your credit already  
having reached the max.

STEVE  
Now see that right there is wrong.

FATHER  
But you're sure everything is  
alright?

STEVE  
Of course it is. Like I said I'm  
sure it was just some spam call.

FATHER  
(thoughtful)  
Well that explains the one.

STEVE  
There was another?

FATHER  
No a different one, more  
threatening. Your mother wanted to  
call the police.

STEVE  
No don't do that. The police have  
better things to do than chase down  
prank calls.

FATHER  
Are you sure that everything is  
alright?

STEVE  
Of course. Now how is mother?

FATHER  
If only she were here.

STEVE  
Speaking of which where is she?

FATHER  
Some charity function for the  
hospital, I told her I'd meet her  
there.

STEVE

So that explains the formal attire.

FATHER

Yeah have to look the part.

STEVE

You look great.

FATHER

Why don't you come along, everyone would love to see you. I mean you are so reticent about letting anyone visit you at work.

STEVE

Well things are just so busy.

FATHER

Busy or ashamed?

STEVE

What do I have to be ashamed of?

FATHER

You know, about our insistence that you make your own way having put you at a certain economic disadvantage compared with your classmates whose parents constantly shower them with everything; but we've been over this-

STEVE

-It helps to build character, I know and I appreciate that, but it does mean that I am busier than they are so unfortunately I will have to decline your offer.

FATHER

Always hard at work, I knew we raised you with a good head on your shoulders.

STEVE

Tell mother I'm sorry that I couldn't make it, business just has me swamped at the moment.

FATHER

(laughing)

Look at that, my son a business tycoon and at such a young age.

(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)

Your mother does nothing but sing your praises to anyone and everyone who will listen.

STEVE

Well-

FATHER

We always knew you had the brains. Ah, anyway can I have a peek in the store for old times sake?

STEVE

Sure.

As Steve's father steps into the small store Steve spies a pile of mail marked 'PAST DUE' and 'FINAL NOTICE'. He quickly shoves the flier left by the Mall Manager over the pile to hide the notices.

FATHER

It'll be sad to see this old place go, but on to bigger and better things.

STEVE

Onward and upward.

FATHER

So when do we get to see this new place.

STEVE

I've already shown you the pictures.

FATHER

Yes but those were all conceptual we can't wait to see it in person.

STEVE

Oh soon enough; I just need to get the permits and the interior sorted out, you know it's going to be four times the size of this place.

FATHER

Only three years in business and already expanding. Well here's to you! I'm sure your mother would love to plan a grand opening celebration for you.

STEVE

Sounds great. Now shouldn't you be going.

FATHER

Oh yes, can't keep the donors waiting or their pockets run dry.

Steve and his Father shake hands and his Father walks away.

Steve pushes aside the flier and opens a particularly ominous looking letter with the heading "LOAN DENIED" and begins reading it.

INT. REGAL DIAMOND JEWELERS STORE - EVENING

The Mall Manger passes by the REGAL DIAMOND JEWELERS store where TIFFANY, the young beautiful salesperson is busy flirting with BRADY, a handsome jock.

TIFFANY

So you wouldn't believe what happened?

BRADY

What?

TIFFANY

Not only did I get a bonus, best salesgirl in the store for the third quarter-

Brady leans over and kisses Tiffany.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

But Peter, you know Peter the distract manager? Well he said that I had no reason to worry that he was going to take care of me, reward my hard work and dedication by making me an Assistant Store Manager at the Baker store. Isn't that great?

BRADY

One step away from Store Manager?

TIFFANY

I know! Can you believe it! I mean I'll practically be the Store Manager, I have so many ideas of how to run the store, I bet I'll even get to sit in on the new product designs and everything.

BRADY

Just think my girl a Store Manager.

TIFFANY

Assistant Store Manager.

BRADY

Practically a Store Manager. When do you start?

TIFFANY

Oh that's the best part!

BRADY

It gets even better?

TIFFANY

I'll have two weeks off from when this store closes to when I start at the new store.

BRADY

Two weeks?

TIFFANY

Yeah it's something about the paperwork having to be processed, it's more complicated than a regular transfer, he says but I'll end up getting a two week vacation out of it as well.

BRADY

That sounds great!

TIFFANY

With my bonus I can even buy the ring that I want!

BRADY

But wait, it's my job as the man to buy your engagement ring.

TIFFANY

Don't be silly, you can always pay me back, it's just that this way I can get the discount.

BRADY

So which one is it again?

TIFFANY

Oh silly, this one of course.

Tiffany points to a large and elaborate engagement ring. She takes it out of the case and tries it on.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

See it even fits me!

BRADY

Guess what I've got some good news too.

TIFFANY

What?

BRADY

They're holding open tryouts for the reserve team this weekend!

TIFFANY

(squealing)  
Are you ready?

BRADY

Pros here I come! I'm in the best shape ever and with you by my side, I mean you'll come won't you?

TIFFANY

I wouldn't miss it for the world, me the wife of a professional athlete, just imagine it!

From the back room MELANIE, the middle aged severe looking Store Manager emerges and COUGHS to get the couple's attention.

MELANIE

Now Tiffany we've talked about this before.

TIFFANY

I know but there's no one else around.

MELANIE

They won't come around if they think there's no one available to help them, and Brady don't you have a store to run?

BRADY

Yes ma'm, right away ma'm.

Brady turns to leave but just after Melanie turns her back he leans across the counter and pulls Tiffany close giving her a deep passionate kiss.

MELANIE

I saw that!

INT. BRADY'S SPORTS EQUIPMENT - EVENING

Brady passes by Andy cleaning the floor. At the entrance of Brady's Sports Equipment Brady stops using a display to steady himself as he rubs his chest in pain. He quickly takes out a small pill bottle and pops a few pills in his mouth. Andy looks up at him worried.

BRADY

Heartburn.

Brady goes in the store and Andy resumes mopping the floor.

INT. REGAL DIAMOND JEWELERS STORE - NIGHT

Tiffany is busy polishing the cases and HUMMING to herself when Melanie emerges from the back ready to leave for the evening and trying to stop crying.

TIFFANY

What happened? Is everything alright?

MELANIE

No, no it's not.

TIFFANY

Tell me about it.

MELANIE

It's Peter.

TIFFANY

What about Peter?

MELANIE  
He's been fired.

TIFFANY  
What? Why?

MELANIE  
Apparently there have been problems  
with his inventory and other  
things.

TIFFANY  
Problems? What problems?

MELANIE  
(angerily)  
Do you have to be so dense?  
They're saying he's been stealing  
from the company.

TIFFANY  
So what happens now?

MELANIE  
Corporate will be going over  
everyone's books with a fine tooth  
comb.

TIFFANY  
But we'll be fine, no one here has  
stolen anything.

MELANIE  
They said if Peter has visited the  
store recently then there's a  
chance he's taken something. Now  
there will be an internal  
investigation and just when I  
thought I'd made a clean break from  
this damned job.

TIFFANY  
But what else?

MELANIE  
(whispering loudly)  
Sexual harassment. You've seen the  
way he is with the girls around  
here.

TIFFANY  
What do you mean?

MELANIE

The way he grabs them, brushes up against them. He tried it on me once. What about you?

TIFFANY

(hesitating)

No nothing that I can think of.

MELANIE

Well count yourself among the lucky ones, but his goose is cooked now.

TIFFANY

So what will happen?

MELANIE

Well thank god I have unemployment lined up.

TIFFANY

But I thought you were transferring to another store?

MELANIE

God no, I never wanted to be in this one.

TIFFANY

Then why did you work here?

MELANIE

It was a paycheck. Don't be so dense girl, in life you do what you have to in order to put food on the table. This job was legal and didn't require taking my clothes off, but all things must end. Back to unemployment for all of us.

TIFFANY

But Peter promised-

MELANIE

Peter's promises are poison. Don't hitch your future to something that radioactive.

TIFFANY

But what now?

MELANIE

For me it's home, a bottle of wine and some stupid tv.

TIFFANY

What about me?

MELANIE

You've got some sense in there  
somewhere, you'll figure it out.  
Night.

Tiffany watches Melanie leave the store before returning to  
polishing the cases.

INT. MALL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is deserted and most of the storefronts are empty  
with the lights off. Constance is struggling to carry a  
heavy box towards the doors. She pushes herself against the  
door but it doesn't open. She tries the others and finds  
them all locked.

Steve comes running up.

STEVE

Wait! Try the door.

CONSTANCE

But it's locked.

Just then the heavy bars of the security gate roll down  
locking them in.

STEVE

There was a chance.

CONSTANCE

But it was locked.

STEVE

It is now.

Steve holds out his hand for Constance to shake. Constance  
juggles the box awkwardly in order to shake his hand.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hi I'm Steve and you must be  
Constance.

CONSTANCE

That's Miss Parson if you don't  
mind.

STEVE

Okay Miss Parson it is. Let me  
help you with that box.

Constance judges that Steve can be trusted with the box and hands it to him.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Lots of books in here.

CONSTANCE

All the words of God himself.

STEVE

Well how about we drop these by your store before we go look for the others.

CONSTANCE

What others?

They start walking down the hall to her store.

STEVE

Well they closed the gates two hours early so I guess we probably aren't to only ones to be caught off guard.

CONSTANCE

And if there aren't any others?

STEVE

Well then at least we'll know. Besides we can check the other doors along the way.

INT. FOOD COURT - NIGHT

As they are walking down the hallway all the lights shut off. Steve clicks on a flashlight.

STEVE

Guess they don't waste any time.

The food court appears deserted and lit only by emergency lights. There is the usual collection of quick service restaurants including a coffee shop and an Ice Creme shop as well as an Information Booth, along with a large open seating area. At one end dominating the atrium is a large waterfall and fountain now turned off. Plants and flowers surround its base.

As Steve and Constance approach the notice Brady and Tiffany sitting at one table deeply involved in conversation. At an adjacent table Steve, Sylvia and Amber sit awkwardly.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
Hi everyone I'm Steve.

Steve goes to grab a chair leaving Constance standing awkwardly.

CONSTANCE  
(annoyed)  
Well aren't you going to introduce me?

STEVE  
Uh everyone this is Constan- Miss Parson. Would you like me to get you a seat?

CONSTANCE  
That would be most courteous.

She sits down and everyone looks around at each other awkwardly.

STEVE  
I feel like I've seen all of you everyday, yet here we are and I don't even know your names.

BRADY  
Well I'm Brady, I work in the sports store. I mean I used to work in the sports store.

TIFFANY  
And I'm Tiffany like the jewelry brand.

Sylvia rolls her eyes in disgust.

SYLVIA  
And I'm Sylvia like the writer who killed herself.

It's Tiffany's turn to look disgusted.

CONSTANCE  
(under her breath)  
What a sin.

AMBER  
And I'm Amber.

CONSTANCE  
What no 'like the' descriptors?

AMBER  
I'm Amber...like myself.

The awkward silence returns.

BRADY  
So what now?

STEVE  
Well we were in the process of  
checking all the doors to see if  
there were any left open.

Tiffany looks up from her phone.

TIFFANY  
I can't get a signal in here.

STEVE  
This mall was built in the pre-cell  
phone days too much metal and stone  
to ever get a signal.

Everyone but Constance pulls out there phone to verify what  
Steve has said.

TIFFANY  
What about those old phones?

STEVE  
You mean the land lines?

TIFFANY  
Yeah those ones.

Steve stands up and goes over to the Information Booth. He  
picks up the phone and holds it to his ear for a moment.

STEVE  
Nothing. Guess the phones went out  
when the power did.

CONSTANCE  
Damned devil's work.

SYLVIA  
The lack of a signal or the phones  
themselves?

CONSTANCE  
You know what I mean.

SYLVIA

I have no damned idea what you mean.

Constance looks shocked and stands up.

CONSTANCE

I'll be damned if I'll put up with this from a bunch of kids. You're parents and you should be ashamed for disrespecting your elders so. If you need me I'll be packing my things.

Constance stalks off in the direction of her store while the others look at each other with guilty expressions but no one gets up to go after her.

BRADY

So what do we do now?

STEVE

I'd suggest we split up and go looking for an unlocked door. Remember to check the main doors as well as the access corridor. We'll meet back here in half an hour.

The group splits up with Brady and Tiffany going in one direction while Steve, Sylvia and Amber go in another.

INT. GRACE CHRISTIAN SHOP - NIGHT

Constance is busy packing when she reaches deep back under the register and pulls out a well-read but forgotten copy of "AFTERMATH OF ADOPTION". The recognition makes her sink to her knees.

She opens the cover of the book and from inside an old photograph falls out. It is of a very young woman holding a newborn child. There is also a yellowed business card for an adoption agency. She turns it over to study the case number written on the back.

Constance begins crying uncontrollably.