

Support Me

By

Will Hightower

Will Hightower
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Will Hightower
Will@EasierSaid.net
www.EasierSaid.net

ACT IScene 1

Lights up on a man in casual clothes, Daniels, face down on the floor with an intricate bottle just out of reach. There are some places to sit, a coffee table, and a wheelchair. After a few beats of silence a woman in comfortable clothes, Baker, walks in and surveys the room. She steps over Daniels to check the bottle to discover there is one swig left. She retreats to the couch, sits, and shoots the remaining liquid, then sits the bottle down.

DANIELS

That was perfume.

BAKER

I know that now.

DANIELS

Great. So we both lose. Are you going to help me up or not?

BAKER

Yeah, Yeah.

She starts to help him up. It is difficult as Daniels, a (Para/Quad)riplegic, is not making it any easier for her and she does not have a particular technique yet. It's like lifting a bag of sand. They talk while she aids him.

BAKER

I thought you were asleep or...

DANIELS

Dead? I would be so lucky. I appreciate you showing your concern with the investigation and rescue of the mystery bottle before checking in on me.

BAKER

Hey, if you were dead, what was I going to do anyway? You have "do not resituate" tattooed on your chest. Where do you wanna sit?

(CONTINUED)

DANIELS
My chair please.

BAKER
Maybe I was drinking to celebrate your death.

DANIELS
Thoughtful. I doubt that would be the case because you don't get to stay here when I'm gone. Drinking to your release maybe?

BAKER
I'm not being held hostage.

DANIELS
Right, right, sorry. It's Court "Suggested" Community Service.

BAKER
It's a mutual...

DANIELS
Captivity?

BAKER
Yeah. Couldn't sleep?

DANIELS
Sleeping is not the issue; it's dreaming that's the problem.

BAKER
Same one?

DANIELS
Of course.

BAKER
Still?

DANIELS
What do you mean still? Like I'm choosing it? Do you pick your dreams, Baker?

BAKER
No, I mean, like, it happened years ago.

DANIELS
For you. To me, it happens every night.

BAKER
Well I couldn't sleep either.

DANIELS

Oh good, you're done feeling sorry for me already. On to your thing.

BAKER

Jesus Daniels, why are you attacking me?

DANIELS

I'm not attacking you. But go on, go on! Tell me about how you can't sleep because, until 2 months ago, you didn't know what it was like to fall asleep sober.

Baker stares at him.

DANIELS

Okay, that was an attack. You got me. Sorry.

BAKER

Was that a sincere apology?

DANIELS

Does it matter? On to your thing.

BAKER

My room creeps me out. You have to let me change it.

DANIELS

It's not your room. No.

BAKER

It's like sleeping in a tomb.

DANIELS

You are lucky I let you sleep in there at all. You can sleep on the couch like that last one.

BAKER

That might be better! As much as I love sleeping in a racecar bed, I think it's time for an upgrade.

DANIELS

That bed need more horsepower?

BAKER

I want an adult bed. With adult decorations and stuff. Unless you are expecting your next caregiver to be nine.

DANIELS

Eight.

BAKER

What?

DANIELS

Charlie was eight. It's Charlie's room.

BAKER

What I am trying to say is, I think it would be a step in a healthier direction to redecorate the room. Maybe it will help with the dreams. What do you think?

DANIELS

I'm glad we're back to feeling sorry for me, but I think you don't get to tell me what to do. I think I should tell your PO about your little midnight swig tonight.

BAKER

It was perfume!

DANIELS

You didn't know that! I'm going to have to report it!

BAKER

Please do. I'm sure they'll come drag me away in cuffs because I took a shot of Chanel.

DANIELS

There's alcohol in it. It'll show your desperation.

BAKER

Oh come on, you didn't set up a sting.

DANIELS

Maybe I did.

BAKER

It was entrapment, at best.

DANIELS

I'm just trying to help you, you know. How are you ever going to get better unless you change your old ways? Drinking from bottles indiscriminately in the middle of the night?

BAKER

I'll admit, it was a moment of weakness.

DANIELS

Sounds like a guilty plea to me. I'll ask for leniency on your behalf.

They smile. The first time in a long time. It fades and they lose eye contact quickly.

BAKER

What was with the perfume anyway?

DANIELS

Nothing. I just thought the bottle looked cool.

She studies the bottle and stares at him. He does not look at her.

BAKER

It was her's.

DANIELS

No, I think it was from a yard sale or something. I like the ornate looking stuff.

BAKER

Oh my god, you were trying to smell her again.

DANIELS

...

BAKER

You were trying to smell her again. You want to stop having that dream? You have to let that scar heal. Change the rooms, get rid of the clothes, stop recreating her presence!

DANIELS

It's all I have!

BAKER

It's causing you pain!

DANIELS

It's nice to feel *something*!

BAKER

You're addicted!

DANIELS

It's not a choice, god dammit! I don't know what else to do. I need them. I need to hold on. I need their...

BAKER

They still love you. Regardless of how you mourn. They'd be happy if you grieved and...

DANIELS

No.

BAKER

They don't blame you.

(CONTINUED)

DANIELS

No.

BAKER

You did the best you could.

DANIELS

NO! I did it, I watched, I lived and they suffered! I was in control, they trusted me with their lives and I...

BAKER

...Daniels.

DANIELS

I saw their pain, I heard their bodies fail, I felt their last breaths, I tasted their blood, and I could smell... I could smell their... disappointment.

BAKER

They are glad you survived.

DANIELS

Survived!? Look at me! I'm a worthless sack of organs who hires addicts to wipe my ass!

Daniels tries to move/get up, but cannot.

DANIELS

I did not survive. My body is alive but I can't feel anything. (Para/Quad)riplegics are the living dead. I deserve this.

BAKER

No one "deserves" anything. Consequences aren't assigned; they just happen.

DANIELS

Doesn't even matter anymore. I'm stuck like this forever.

BAKER

No, Daniels, no. Look at me. You could accept their forgiveness.

DANIELS

THEY'RE DEAD! THEY CAN'T forgive me.

BAKER

Forgiveness doesn't work that way. Look, I forgave David. For what he did to me, turned me in to... I haven't spoken with him since I was 14, but I forgave him. It was the only way I could move on and let go of that pain, that anger, that disgust... with myself. Forgiveness is not apologizing,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BAKER (cont'd)

it's understanding, empathizing, and moving forward without resentment or negative feeling towards them. Or yourself.

DANIELS

Just kill me. Does that count as moving forward?

BAKER

Technically. It took me 20 years. It will happen. I believe in you. And your strength, Daniels.

She picks up the bottle, opens it, gives it a sniff then walks over to Daniels.

BAKER

How about one last wiff?

DANIELS

Do you want to take one last sniff before I throw this out for good?

DANIELS

Please don't.

BAKER

I'll make you a deal. We can live in this memory, this one last time, but then no more. Back to the present, looking to the future. A healthy future.

DANIELS

I... I don't know.

BAKER

I'll be here with you. I'll bring you back safely. How about it?

DANIELS

...Okay.

She opens the bottle and holds it under his nose. He breathes deep. He closes his eyes and smiles wide. Tears begin to run down his face, into his open mouth. She removes the bottle and he holds on to the moment a little longer. Baker wipes the tears from his face. Still holding his face, Baker looks consciously into his eyes and then they both take a deep breath together.

(CONTINUED)

Okay? BAKER

Okay. DANIELS

Would you like to go back to bed? BAKER

Please. DANIELS

Baker starts to push him out of the room.

Baker. Will you help me pack up Charlie's... Your room? DANIELS

Absolutely. BAKER

Blackout.

End of play.