

LOVE'S GRACE

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EXT/INT. HIGHWAY - DAY

JASON PRESCOTT, 30, wearing aviators, cruises down the highway. He changes the radio station until he finds some loud music. A sign on the highway reads: "San Francisco."

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Jason screeches into a parking spot in front St. Francis Catholic church. He slams the car door shut and bolts towards the church.

Jason texts on his phone. He runs into MICHELINA JENKINS, 23, a young woman with long silky brown hair, and knocks her to the ground.

JASON

Sorry.

FATHER PETE, 77, wears a black clergy shirt and slacks, and stands at the church door. Jason is surprised to see him.

FATHER PETE

Jason! Help her up!

MICHELINA

It's quite all right, Father Pete. I don't need his help.

Michelina gets up and walks away. Father Pete gives Jason a stern glare.

JASON

What?

FATHER PETE

You never think of anyone but yourself. That's not how your parents raised you.

JASON

Well, they aren't here now, are they?

FATHER PETE

I see you are right on time for your session.

JASON

I don't have a choice now, do I?

FATHER PETE

I thought we would take a walk for your session today.

JASON

Whatever, let's just get this over with.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - STREET - DAY

They walk the streets of San Francisco.

FATHER PETE

Jason, I know it's been hard for you
since you lost your parents and fiancé.
You still have a life to live.

Jason stares off at the city and ignores Father Pete.

FATHER PETE (CONT'D)

Jason... Jason...

Jason looks at Father Pete.

FATHER PETE (CONT'D)

It's been over a year. You can't keep
living like this.

JASON

Whatever.

EXT. PRESCOTT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION - DAY

They stop in front of an older, refurbished brick school
building. Over the arch of the doorway is "PRESCOTT
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION."

JASON

They left me. Why should I care about
this place, their vineyard, or life?

FATHER PETE

Because, it's their legacy. The reminder
of who they were, and what they taught
you.

JASON

I can't do this. It's too hard.

Jason starts to walk away as tears well up in his eyes.

JASON (CONT'D)

I don't want any part of their legacy.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - STREET - NIGHT

As they walk back to the church, Jason hears a girl scream. Two men run from an alley. Jason runs after them.

Father Pete goes to the alley and finds Michelina half dead, beaten and bleeding profusely. He takes her into his arms.

FATHER PETE

Michelina!

Jason comes around the corner.

FATHER PETE (CONT'D)

We must help her.

JASON

My car is not far.

EXT/INT. HOSPITAL ER - NIGHT

Jason pulls into the ER entrance and carries Michelina inside. A nurse sees the trauma, and brings a gurney to them. Jason lies her on the gurney.

Their clothes are covered with blood. A nurse brings Jason and Father Pete clean sets of scrubs.

Jason walks towards Father Pete, who stands next to two stiff-looking, suit wearing DETECTIVES, 40s.

FATHER PETE

This is Jason. He was also there.

JASON

Detectives, what can I help you with?

DETECTIVE BROUGH

The young woman you rescued is a prostitute. Her pimp's name is Victor Jennings, and he is a very dangerous man.

JASON

Okay, so?

DETECTIVE BROUGH

Well, we have been hoping to nail this guy. I think we may have just gotten our opportunity.

JASON

Great. If you'll excuse me.

Jason walks away. The detective yells out after him.

DETECTIVE BROUGH

Father Pete says you live on a vineyard
far from here.

JASON

Yeah, so.

DETECTIVE BROUGH

We need a place to keep her safe.

Jason waves the detective off and starts to walk away.
The detective yells to him.

DETECTIVE BROUGH (CONT'D)

Father Pete suggested she go home with
you.

Jason stops, turns, walks back to the detective.

JASON

No! No way! I am not helping her and
putting myself in danger!

FATHER PETE

Jason! She will die without your help.

JASON

Why should I care about someone who
doesn't care about herself?

Father Pete looks at the Detective.

FATHER PETE

Tell Jason how you can protect him.

DETECTIVE BROUGH

We will do everything we can to lower the
risk.

DETECTIVE MILIGAN

If we fake her death, Victor will not
think she's a threat. Which will lower
the risk.

DETECTIVE BROUGH

We will take her to your home via
ambulance. We will provide a screened
medical professional to stay at your home
to take care of her.

DETECTIVE MILIGAN

We need an answer now.

Jason looks at Father Pete, who gives him a stern parental look.

JASON

Fine, but it doesn't mean I have to like it.

DETECTIVE BROUGH

Okay, we will ensure that this group of people are the only ones who know where she is.

Detectives leave the hospital.

EXT. VICTOR'S HOME - NIGHT

Detectives knock on the door, and a young woman answers. They show the young woman their badges.

DETECTIVE MILIGAN

Hello Ma'am, we are looking for Victor Jennings. Is he here?

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes, please come in.

INT. VICTOR'S HOME - FOYER - NIGHT

They walk into the foyer.

YOUNG WOMAN

Can I tell him what this is about?

DETECTIVE MILIGAN

We have some news about his daughter.

She nods to the detectives as she turns to get Victor.

INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

VICTOR, 66, holds a cigar in his hand. He yells into the phone then slams the receiver down. The young woman knocks on the door. Victor yells.

VICTOR

Come in!

She hesitantly opens the door.

YOUNG WOMEN

Victor, there are two Detectives here to see you. They have news about Michelina.

VICTOR

Thank You, I will be right there.

INT. VICTOR'S FOYER - NIGHT

Victor walks into the foyer. His bodyguards are standing behind him.

VICTOR

Detectives, what can I help you with?

DETECTIVE MILIGAN

I'm sorry to bother you. We have some news about a young woman who lives here. Her name is Michelina Jennings. We understand she is your daughter.

VICTOR

Yes, she is. Is everything okay?

DETECTIVE BROUGH

She was beaten pretty badly. The doctors did all they could, but her injuries were life threatening. We're very sorry.

Victor immediately starts to sob and falls to his knees.

VICTOR

No. No this can't be true.

Victor looks up to the Detectives.

DETECTIVE BROUGH

That is why we are here.

Detectives show Victor the pictures of Michelina.

DETECTIVE MILIGAN

We hope you can identify her. Is this your daughter?

VICTOR

Oh, Michelina... No! Please take them away. I can't bare it anymore. Please.

Detective Brough looks at Detective Miligan and nods his head at him to put the pictures away.

DETECTIVE BROUGH

Mr. Jennings, thank you for your time.
Again, please accept our condolences for
your loss. We will be in touch.

Detectives leave the house. Victor shuts the door behind
them. He looks at his Body Guards with a cold and callous
tone.

VICTOR

They are lying. Call our informant and
find her. I will not lose my money maker.

Body Guards nod.

EXT/INT. JASON'S HOME - DAY

Michelina is taken off the ambulance and into Jason's
home. The Physician's Assistant steps off the ambulance.

Jason speaks to the Physician's Assistant.

JASON

You can take your bags to the bedroom
upstairs.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Thank you.

She walks up the stairs to her room, but stops when Jason
speaks to her.

JASON

How long will you be staying?

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Until she is awake and stable.

JASON

Great. Just great.

INT. JASON'S HOME - DAY

MONTAGE - JASON'S HOME

-- Michelina has woken. Jason agrees the Physician's
Assistant can leave. She trains Jason how to take care of
Michelina.

-- Jason helps Michelina with her physical therapy
exercises, never speaking a word to her.

-- Michelina is walking without assistance. Jason sets up a garden area for Michelina to grow grape seedlings.

-- Michelina and Jason eat dinner, neither one says a word.

END MONTAGE

INT. JASON'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jason sits at the desk paying bills. Michelina is knitting on the couch.

The phone rings. Jason answers.

JASON

Hello, yeah hold on I'll get her.

He hands Michelina the phone.

MICHELINA

(in phone)

Hello... Yes, sir... Yes, I understand...
I'm sorry. I can't testify... Yes, I
understand the consequences... Okay, I
will think about it one more night...
Goodbye.

She hangs up the phone.

JASON

Is everything okay?

MICHELINA

Yeah, everything is fine.

JASON

Who was that?

MICHELINA

The detective. He wanted to confirm that
I will testify.

JASON

And you told him?

MICHELINA

I don't think I can.

JASON

What? You have to testify. What have I
done this for if you don't testify?

With exasperation.

MICHELINA

Wow, it's all about you, isn't it, Jason?
Mr. I won't talk to anyone or let anyone
get close to me.

Jason shoots Michelina a piercing look.

MICHELINA (CONT'D)

You're the one who stays closed off and
keeps anyone from getting close to you.

Jason's face turns red. He looks at Michelina and walks
outside.

EXT. BACK YARD JASON'S HOME - DAY

Jason picks up a trash can, throws it across the lawn.

INT. JASON'S HOME - DAY

Jason walks back into the house. Michelina sits on the
couch sobbing. He holds out his hand.

JASON

Come with me. Please.

Michelina takes his hand. Jason leads her down a small
dirt path to a field of wild flowers.

EXT. COUNTRY CHURCH - DAY

A small, country church sits at the top of the hill with
a graveyard on the side.

JASON

This used to be an open field with only
this graveyard.

MICHELINA

Why are we here?

JASON

I built this church to run and hide from
the world. To tell you the truth I lived
here for six months.

He walks her over to a large cemetery headstone.

INSERT - GRAVE HEADSTONE:

"Here lies Adam and Faith Prescott, loving parents, and Angela Bowers, loving fiancé to Jason. May their legacy live on."

MICHELINA

Jason...

Jason interrupts her. They walk towards the church.

JASON

Michelina, I don't want your pity. I want you to understand why I am closed off.

Jason looks at Michelina with half of a smile.

JASON (CONT'D)

To be honest, Father Pete is the reason you are here. He wouldn't let me walk away from helping you.

Sarcastically.

MICHELINA

Really, I couldn't tell.

INT. COUNTRY CHURCH - DAY

Jason opens the door to the church, and they enter the church.

JASON

Father Pete came to visit me here about six months ago. Let me tell you, he was not the Godly, patient man we know him to be. He got me out of here physically, but I never left mentally. This is the first time I have been back.

MICHELINA

I think I am beginning to understand. You don't want anyone to get close to you because you don't want to have the pain of losing them.

JASON

Yes, and so you have to know, I understand how hard it is for you.

MICHELINA

Jason, I have seen your kindness, and I felt your compassion. You have a big heart if you would just let people in. You are not the jerk you try to be.

Jason begins to walk towards the back of the church. He stops and turns around.

JASON

No, but it's who I want to be. I know you don't want to be a prostitute. You want to be free from Victor.

MICHELINA

It doesn't matter because I will never be free from Victor. He will stop at nothing to make sure everyone knows I am trash and worthless.

JASON

Damn it, Michelina.... When are you going to stop holding on to your past with him?

MICHELINA

What about you, Jason? How's not living in your past working for you?

JASON

My past has nothing to do with you.

Michelina is exasperated.

MICHELINA

Other than you being a hypocrite.

Jason is frustrated.

JASON

Just shut up. You have no idea what it's like to see your family die in front of your eyes.

MICHELINA

You're right. I have no idea because my family didn't get blown up on a boat in front of me.

Jason looks at her with horror.

MICHELINA (CONT'D)

I was 12, and then Victor adopted me. So, excuse me if I think you are being childish.

JASON

Michelina, I'm sorry.

MICHELINA

I will testify. On one condition. You have to come with me.

JASON

Nope, that's not part of the deal.

MICHELINA

If you are going to make me overcome my fears, don't you think it is time for you to at least face yours?

JASON

I will help you through the trial. I can't promise anything more.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Michelina, Jason, and Father Pete enter the courthouse with the detectives.

Father Pete, walks in front of Michelina while Jason walks beside her. Victor sees Father Pete.

VICTOR

Father Pete, what a surprise to see you here.

FATHER PETE

I am here to make sure you pay for the crimes you have committed against the girls.

Victor laughs until he sees Michelina.

VICTOR

Michelina!

Victor wipes his forehead with his handkerchief.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

They told me you died. I am so glad to see that is not true.

Victor steps towards Michelina to give her a hug. Michelina turns sideways, and Jason puts himself in between the two.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

You are looking as beautiful as I remember.

Victor looks at Jason.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Who is this with you? Aren't you going to introduce us?

Michelina crosses her arms over her chest.

MICHELINA

No! If I am looking well, it's because I am away from you.

VICTOR

Always so FEISTY. We have talked about how you must respect your parents and elders.

MICHELINA

Yes, and respect is earned. You have not earned my respect.

VICTOR

You think you are so confident.

Victor leans in.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(whispers)

You should know, you will never be able to forget me. I will always be in your head reminding you that you are only good for one thing.

Michelina looks around. She locks in on Jason, who shakes his head no.

Michelina turns to Victor with boldness and gumption.

MICHELINA

No, Victor! I won't remember you. After this trial is over, I won't remember anything about you.

VICTOR

Your guilt will be your memory. It will live with you always, reminding you of what you really are.

JASON

If I were you, I would watch what I say to her.

VICTOR

Ahhh, someone who thinks they can save her. Let me tell you something.

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

You will never be able to save her from herself. She will self-destruct.

Father Pete steps in between Jason and Victor.

FATHER PETE

Jason you don't want to do this. We all just need to walk away.

Father Pete turns to Victor.

FATHER PETE (CONT'D)

We are not looking for trouble, so I suggest you just go into the courtroom with your attorney.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

In the courtroom, Victor is found guilty of all charges.

LEAD JUROR

We, the members of the jury, find the defendant guilty as charged.

JUDGE

The jury is dismissed. The defendant will be placed into custody, and sentencing will be one week from today.

The Judge hits the gavel on the bench.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Court is adjourned.

Michelina jumps up and gives Jason a hug. Victor is arrested and the bailiff walks him past Michelina. He stops just in front of her.

VICTOR

This is not over. You know I always have an ace up my sleeve.

Jason holds Michelina in his embrace. Michelina looks up at Jason.

MICHELINA

Jason?!

JASON

I made you a promise to protect you.

EXT. BACK OF COURTHOUSE - DAY

Everyone looks for the van.

FATHER PETE

Where's the van?

Tires squeal, Jason and Father Pete look to see a car that races towards them. The passenger window rolls down, a gun comes out of the window, and gunfire erupts.

Jason starts to dodge behind a dumpster. He sees Michelina is frozen unable to move. He runs in front of her.

EXT. FRONT OF COURTHOUSE NEAR BACK ALLEY - DAY

Police officers hear gunfire, call for back up, and run to the back of the courthouse.

EXT. BACK OF COURTHOUSE - DAY

Officers shoot at the car. Through the rear window, gunfire hits the driver. He loses control of the car and crashes into parked cars.

The gunman jumps out, and starts to run. Police officers run to tackle him.

Jason gets up and sees Father Pete wounded with gunshots. Jason runs over to him.

FATHER PETE

Jason, check on Michelina. Make sure she is okay.

Jason turns to Michelina. He sees she is unconscious, with a pool of blood around her shoulder. Jason checks to make sure she has a pulse.

JASON

Michelina, wake up, please. Open those pretty brown eyes, Michelina.

Michelina begins to open her eyes. Jason takes her into his arms.

JASON (CONT'D)

Oh, Thank God. You're okay.

MICHELINA

Jason? What happened?

Jason hears Father Pete moan and cough, and leaves Michelina to go to Father Pete.

JASON

I need to check on Father Pete.

MICHELINA

Jason! Is he okay?

Jason doesn't say a word.

FATHER PETE

Michelina?

JASON

Don't talk, she is okay. She has a small wound, but she's going to be okay. Just rest, don't try to talk.

FATHER PETE

Oh, Jason. This old man is tired.

Father Pete's eyes glaze over. He takes his last breath. Jason sees Father Pete in distress.

JASON

No, No, No. Fight! Do you hear me? You need to fight.

Ambulance sirens approach

JASON (CONT'D)

Hang in there, Father Pete. Don't you die.

Jason yells to the paramedics.

JASON (CONT'D)

Let's Go! Over Here! Hurry!

He looks back to Father Pete.

JASON (CONT'D)

Hang in there Father Pete. They are here!

As the paramedics arrive they push Jason out of the way. Jason embraces Michelina.

Paramedics check Father Pete, they shake their head, then pull a sheet over him. They turn to take care of Michelina.

Jason walks away from Michelina with tears in his eyes.

MICHELINA

Jason, don't leave me, please. You
promised to protect me.

Jason stops.

MICHELINA (CONT'D)

You have a choice to walk away or face
your fears.

Jason turns, runs to Michelina. They embrace.

THE END