

# SERVANT

Ep. #1

**"Reborn"**

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. AERIAL OVER BROOKLYN - NIGHT

It's raining in New York. October. Colorful city lights behind a curtain of weather.

We descend gracefully into Park Slope. Highly desirable, four storey brownstones in an Autumnal tree-lined street. One house becomes our focus. The warm, inviting lights draw us in from the cold.

We PUSH IN on a second floor window, through the glass, and into:

INT. NURSERY ROOM. THE TURNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Snug and cosy, everything in this nursery that a baby could possibly need. Top end paraphernalia. A wooden rocking horse, dangling mobiles and marionettes. In the corner of the room is a COT, the clean white blankets covering the outline of a THREE MONTH OF OLD BABY, fast asleep, facing the wall.

As we gaze out through the bars of the cot we observe the lower half of a MOTHER fussing with the temperature and the lights. She tip toes out, leaving the baby to sleep.

Sounds of a car pulling up in the wet street outside, the headlights rolling shadows across the ceiling, making the faces of the marionettes and dolls seem ALIVE, if only for a fleeting second.

EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A TAXI has pulled up outside of the Brownstone, signal lights flashing, as A SHAPE through the wet glass pays the driver.

INT. STAIRWELL & ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

KNOCK KNOCK at the front door.

Let's meet MOTHER, as she walks down the exposed wood staircase towards a show-piece entrance hall. DOROTHY TURNER is mid to late 30s. Intolerant to lactose, gluten, and half the neighborhood. But you can't blame her for inherited privilege. She loves and hates at full throttle.

As Dorothy reaches the bottom step, she pauses.

DOROTHY  
(calling)  
Sean? Sean!

A kitchen door opens and FATHER steps out into the entrance hall, clutching a bottle of wine that he's in the process of uncorking. SEAN TURNER is early forties, wire thin and unshaven, the devil in his eyes. Everything Sean got, he scrapped for. Not only is his glass half empty, it's the wrong fucking order.

KNOCK KNOCK.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
Do you think this is her?

SEAN  
Maybe answer it and see?

Dorothy crosses to the front door, pulls it open.

A HOODED FIGURE stands on the front step. Silhouetted by the street lights, drenched in rain. So tightly bundled into a hooded raincoat that it's impossible to determine age or sex. Just a young, innocent face poking out of the hood. By the visitor's side, a SUITCASE.

DOROTHY  
Leanne? Leanne Grayson?

A hand unzips the raincoat and pulls down the hood. That's our first look at LEANNE GRAYSON. No older than eighteen, stick thin and crowned with a bushy head of hair. Little more than a child.

LEANNE  
Hello, Mrs. Turner.

Leanne offers a handshake but Dorothy steps forward and embraces her in a soggy hug.

DOROTHY  
Welcome to Park Slope, Leanne.  
Let's get you in out of the rain.

Dorothy takes Leanne by the hand and gently draws her in over the threshold.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
Sean. Suitcase.

Sean steps forward to collect the suitcase, smiles at Leanne.

SEAN

Hi. Sean.

Leanne leans in to hug him, but Sean offers a handshake.

LEANNE

Pleased to meet you, Mr. Turner.

Dorothy draws Leanne deeper into the entrance hall as Sean gathers up the case, closes the front door.

SEAN

(the case)  
Should I--?

DOROTHY

Of course.

Sean heads upstairs with the case.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Let's get you out of those wet things, dear.

The young girl wrestles herself out of the raincoat, throws a glance at her surroundings. Everything so pristine and classy. Designed.

LEANNE

You have a lovely home.

DOROTHY

How very kind of you to say so. Why don't I give you the tour?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's showing off time. Postcard images of all the right things in all the right places. Like something you'd see in a celebrity rag.

Dorothy and Leanne stand in the middle of a white walled living room. Leather sofas and hanging abstracts.

DOROTHY

Living room.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

An eight seater Eero Saarinen dining table is perfectly set - not for use, just for show.

DOROTHY  
Dining room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A heady mix of granite and chrome. Top of the range appliances.

DOROTHY  
Kitchen.

INT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Dorothy motions to two closed doors.

DOROTHY  
Master bedroom to the left, Sean's office to the right. Both off limits, as I'm sure you appreciate.

INT. TOP ROOM - NIGHT

Leanne and Dorothy ascend the final stairs at the top of the house and enter a small, functional bedroom.

Sean's already inside, struggling to close the old sash window. The suitcase is on a single bed. There's also a wardrobe and a dressing table. Clean and tidy, but with no pictures or artifacts. Every inch the servant's quarters.

DOROTHY  
And this is you... We left it bare so feel free to stamp your own personality on it. Oh, and...

Dorothy opens the door into a tiny en suite bathroom.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
Bathroom. Of course. You must tell us straight away if the ceiling leaks.

Sean gives up on the window, that won't close on the final inch.

SEAN  
(the window)  
I'll get someone out to look at that.

A slightly awkward beat. Still lots of smiling. No one really knows what to say next, so Dorothy's assuming control.

DOROTHY

We didn't know what time you'd be arriving so I only have a cold plate prepared. Why don't you take a few minutes, settle in, and come down to the kitchen when you're ready. Sean...

Sean and Dorothy head out, closing the door behind them.

Leanne looks around the room. She sees something on the dressing table, crosses to it. It's a blue ring folder with the words "Duties & Responsibilities" written on it. On top of the folder is a house key.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is the heart and hub of this house. Naturally comforting, competing personalities in the mix.

Sean is pouring himself a glass of wine as Dorothy unpacks a cob salad on the table.

DOROTHY

She seems very nice.

SEAN

You don't think she smiles and says 'thank you' too much?

DOROTHY

She's a long way from home. It's our job to make her feel-

SEAN

Yeah, yeah, I get all that.  
(then)  
How old is she?

DOROTHY

Does it matter?

SEAN

I guess not. But that hair... Do you think the Jackson Five know it's missing?

Dorothy closes the kitchen door for fear that Leanne might over-hear.

DOROTHY  
(threatening)  
If you screw this up for me...

SEAN  
What? I'm not allowed to make jokes  
now?

DOROTHY  
I want us to make a good  
impression.

SEAN  
She's staff, Darling. Let's try and  
remember that.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Leanne walks down the stairs from her room. She sees a door slightly ajar, and a half lit room behind it. She crosses to the door and peers inside.

INT. NURSERY ROOM - NIGHT

Leanne enters and crosses quietly to the cot. She kneels down and stares through the bars. A warm, kind smile on her innocent face. Once again, we don't get to see the baby.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leanne is sitting at one end of the kitchen table, eating the cob salad, as Sean and Dorothy sit at the opposite end, watching her. On conversation stakes, Dorothy is still making all the running.

DOROTHY  
Do you have any siblings, Leanne?

LEANNE  
No, Mrs. Turner.

DOROTHY  
I'm reading a fascinating book on  
the subject. How where you place in  
the family can determine  
personality traits. For example  
they say that the middle child of  
three can be a strong negotiator  
but often feels that life is  
somewhat unfair.

LEANNE

Oh, are you...?

DOROTHY

Confident, responsible, and determined. I'm the eldest of two.

Leanne looks to Sean: same question.

SEAN

Spoilt, selfish, and critical of others.

DOROTHY

Classic male only child.

Beat.

Dorothy shoots Sean a look: "make an effort".

SEAN

Hobbies?

DOROTHY

Sean, *please*... Eighteen year old girls don't have time for hobbies.

LEANNE

I like to read.

SEAN

Which authors?

LEANNE

Magazines.

SEAN

Oh. Well that's technically reading.

LEANNE

Mrs Turner says you work from home. What is it that you do?

SEAN

Nothing as glamorous as my wife, I'm afraid. I'm a professional bon vivant. That means--

LEANNE

Good living. It's French.

DOROTHY

Sean devises recipes, Leanne. A consulting chef. He advises for some of the best restaurants in the city.

SEAN

I feed butter and cream to fat people.

DOROTHY

Don't be self deprecating, darling.  
(to Leanne)  
He's very talented. An extraordinary palette, some say.

Sean tops up his glass. Glugs.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

And what about yourself, Leanne? What do you see yourself doing? Long term, I mean. What is your goal in life?

LEANNE

I guess... to one day be happily married and raise my own children.

Sean scoffs.

SEAN

You see darling, for some people that is enough.

Another false, nervous laugh. It's not hard to hit a nerve on Dorothy.

DOROTHY

I think we covered all the formal stuff.

SEAN

The Gaggia?

Sean motions to a 1950s vintage coffee machine in the kitchen. His pride and joy.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I don't know if Dorothy mentioned it in her emails, but it's not to be touched. Vintage. Temperamental.

DOROTHY

Only Sean can get a coffee out of  
that contraption.

Dorothy rolls her eyes to Leanne - "humor him" - which  
elicits a little smile.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Aside from that, we hope you'll  
treat our house as your home. I'm  
sure you and Jericho will form an  
instant bond.

LEANNE

I can't wait to meet him.

DOROTHY

Fantastic. A drink, then. A little  
something to toast your arrival. We  
have some vintage champagne in the  
cooler. Sean...

Sean moves for the wine cooler (yes, this house has one).

LEANNE

I'm eighteen, Mrs. Turner.

SEAN

A little glass won't hurt.

But Dorothy senses a major faux pas.

DOROTHY

No, you're right, Leanne. That was  
silly of us. I'm so sorry. I hope  
you don't think we're--

(then)

Perhaps you'd like to call home.  
You can use the landline. I'm sure  
everybody back in good old  
Wisconsin would want to know that  
you arrived safely...

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Leanne stands in the hall and gathers up the phone. She goes  
to dial and then stops herself. She looks around the entrance  
hall and up the chimney of stairwell. She takes in all the  
detail: the pictures; the figurines; the chandelier. It's a  
whole other world from what she's used to. She's already  
seduced by it.

Leanne hangs up the phone without dialing.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dorothy is loading the dishwasher as Sean pours another glass of wine.

DOROTHY  
Please don't let her see you drunk  
on the first night.

SEAN  
Three glasses of Chateau le Puy is  
not drunk. By her standards,  
perhaps...

Dorothy takes the glass from him, tips it down the sink and loads it into the dishwasher.

SEAN (CONT'D)  
And now what do you expect me to do  
during the uncomfortable silences?

DOROTHY  
She's probably terrified of us.

Sean gathers a fresh glass and fixes himself more wine.

SEAN  
She should have a drink, it would  
relax her.

DOROTHY  
You agreed to give this a go. What  
happened to all the "I'll make an  
effort, darling"?

SEAN  
I am making an effort. But I don't  
intend to be judged every time I  
have a glass of wine or jerk off in  
the middle of the day.

DOROTHY  
Don't you dare masturbate while  
she's in the house.

SEAN  
(taunting)  
Just you watch me.

Leanne enters the kitchen. Dorothy turns on her heel.

DOROTHY  
Everything OK?

LEANNE

I think I'm going to go to bed, if you don't mind.

DOROTHY

Of course. You must have had a long day.

SEAN

Goodnight, Leanne.

DOROTHY

We hope you'll be happy here. And if there's anything you need - anything at all - please just ask.

LEANNE

You're both very kind. Good night, Mr. and Mrs. Turner.

Leanne heads out, with everybody adopting polite grins.

As the door swings shut:

SEAN

(whispers)

Why does she keep calling us that?

INT. LEANNE'S EN SUITE - NIGHT

Leanne unpacks her wash bag. Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap. Everything is new and unopened.

She runs the bath and undresses. A skinny, young frame. She lays down in the tub and stares at a damp patch on the ceiling.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. EN SUITE - NIGHT

Dorothy lays in her own tub, jets of water gently massaging her as she reads a novel.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sean is switching out the lights and checking the window locks.

He gathers two small bottles of water out of the fridge. He starts towards the door, stops, considers something, then heads back to the fridge. He opens the door and pulls out a third bottle of water.

INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Sean ascends the stairs and approaches Leanne's bedroom door, carrying a water bottle. As he gets to the door he sees that it's ajar. He looks inside, to see Leanne knelt beside the bed in a nightdress. She has her hands clasped and her eyes shut in prayer. The definition of innocence. And yet...

... The way the light catches her sheer nightdress, Sean can just about see the outline of her naked frame. Just enough to make him feel bad for looking.

Sean watches for a beat longer than he should, then rests the water bottle just inside the door and creeps back out.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dorothy is fast asleep in bed. On the bedside table next to her face is a BABY MONITOR -- the lights not moving, the baby still sleeping.

On the next pillow we find Sean, wide awake, staring at the ceiling. Wired.

He rises out of the bed, careful not to wake Dorothy.

INT. NURSERY ROOM - NIGHT

The door CREEPS open and Sean looks in. Is he checking on the baby?

He snaps on the ceiling light, walks deeper into the room, stands beside the cot and looks down over it. Just a bare baby-ankle exposed from under the blankets.

Sean reaches into the cot, GRABS the baby by the ankle and unceremoniously HOISTS it up, out of the cot. The upside down head CLUNKS against the wooden barrier.

But the baby STILL doesn't wake.

Sean carries it, dangling by the leg, towards the window, where he sits on the floor, his back against the wall, and props the baby on his thighs.

ANGLE ON THE COT -- empty.

ANGLE ON SEAN -- staring at the baby on his lap, that still hasn't made a noise.

REVERSE -- to reveal that this isn't a live baby at all -- it's a REBORN DOLL.

As lifelike as you can get, but the eyes are glass and the skin is fake. It's even wearing a diaper and vest.

What the fuck?

Sean stares into the doll's eyes. There's great sadness here. A loss that no one has come to terms with, and indeed no one will even mention within these walls.

Knowing that he is alone and in a safe place, Sean begins to SOB, his repressed grief rising to the surface.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dorothy remains sleeping in the bed as the gentle sounds of Sean SOBBING comes through the baby monitor, dancing the little colored lights.

INT. NURSERY ROOM - DAWN

Morning light washes the room.

Leanne enters, dressed in a robe, her hair restrained in a net. She crosses to the cot, delicately gathers up the REBORN DOLL, and lays it on the changing mat. She begins to change the diaper, cooing over the doll. She's treating it like it's very real.

EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE BROWNSTONE - DAY

A VAN pulls up in the street. A DRIVER climbs out of the van, gathers a crate from the rear and carries it to the front door. He lays the crate on the front step, rings the doorbell, then walks back to his van.

CLOSE on the crate. It's a high-end food delivery, filled with dead fish, cuts of meat, fresh vegetables and herbs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The same crate is now on top of the work counter.

Dorothy's flitting back and forth in the kitchen, dressed smartly for her return to work, rocking the REBORN DOLL on her shoulder. Sean's drinking coffee and checking the contents of his delivery, sniffing the food for freshness.

DOROTHY

Remind me why I'm doing this.

SEAN

Because there's a shortage of people willing to work in the television industry?

DOROTHY

Please do not choose now to be horrible to me. I am quite emotional about what is happening.

SEAN

You don't look emotional.

DOROTHY

Why, because I'm not crying?

SEAN

Are you consciously trying to stop yourself from crying?

(cautious)

Maybe we should call Dr.--

DOROTHY

I'm leaving my son for the first time since he was born. Could I just be emotional about that without having to justify myself?

SEAN

Maybe you're not ready.

He waves a dead fish under her nose.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Does this smell on the turn to you?

Leanne enters the kitchen.

LEANNE

(cheery)

Good morning, Mr. Turner.

SEAN

Leanne.

Sounds of a car horn from outside in the street.

DOROTHY

That's my car.

Dorothy carefully off-loads the DOLL onto Leanne, gathers an expressing pump and cool bag from the counter.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I've left three bottles in the fridge, that should be enough until I get back. Keep him warm, keep him safe, ring me whether you think you need to or not.

LEANNE

I will, Mrs. Turner.

Dorothy kisses the DOLL and hurries out of the kitchen, delivering a kiss to Sean as she goes.

SEAN

(lips sealed)

"Mommy, mommy, please don't go."

She doesn't even acknowledge it, just walks out.

Beat. Sean waits until he hears the front door closing before he turns to Leanne.

SEAN (CONT'D)

So. I guess we should talk about this.

Sean motions to the table and they both sit, Leanne bouncing the DOLL on her shoulder.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I don't know how much Dorothy told you in her emails. By your lack of surprise, it's clear she said something. And that's good. That's healthy.

(then)

You can put it down now.

But she doesn't, just keeps gently bouncing the DOLL like it's real.

LEANNE

I'm fine as I am, Mr. Turner.

SEAN

It's called a reborn doll. We lost Jericho when he was 13 weeks old. Just didn't wake up one morning, poor little sod. Dorothy took it hard. She was catatonic for weeks. Full psychotic break. And this -- this was the thing that brought her back. "Transitory object therapy".

(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)

Or so her unlicensed quack likes to call it. We're keeping it on the hush for now. Didn't announce the death, didn't want to put her through the wave of sympathy. Only her mother and brother are aware. Plus you. And some valet guy I got horribly shit-faced with one night on two bottles of Grenache and a Syrah. How long we'll have to keep up this charade, I don't know. You're paid to the end of the month, Dorothy will be working crazy hours. The 2 or the 3 will get you into Manhattan in fifteen minutes. Live it up.

Beat. Sean waits for her to say something, but she just keeps smiling and bobbing the DOLL.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Do you have any questions?

LEANNE

No, Mr. Turner.

SEAN

Nothing at all?

LEANNE

I should take Jericho for his walk now.

Leanne rises from the table, carries the DOLL out of the kitchen, into--

THE ENTRANCE HALL -- where she begins to gently lay the DOLL into a stroller.

Through the open kitchen door we catch sight of Sean, at the table, watching her. Did she hear any of that? Is she still just playing along, even in Dorothy's absence?

EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE BROWNSTONE - DAY

Leanne maneuvers the stroller down the steps, onto the sidewalk. As she walks away down the street, pushing the stroller, we--

RISE to an UPSTAIRS WINDOW, where we see Sean looking out of his office, watching Leanne go.

INT. LEANNE'S BEDROOM. - DAY

The door creeps open and Sean slithers into the room. He just can't help himself. He snoops casually around the room in a manner that tries to suggest he is not actually snooping. He sniffs a deodorant, dangles a dainty bracelet.

Soon his snooping becomes increasingly blatant. It's not long before Sean's rummaging through drawers filled with clothes.

As he delves his hand into the guts of a drawer, a sharp pain in his hand forces him to snap it back. Inspecting his finger there is a tiny dot of blood on the skin.

Sean reaches into the drawer and pulls out the offending item: a straw CRUCIFIX, six inches tall, has pricked his finger.

Sean closes the drawer, sucks the blood from his finger as he walks out of the bedroom.

INT. NURSERY ROOM. - NIGHT

Leanne rests the DOLL gently in the cot, settles it to sleep.

INT. WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

Sean stands in the cellar, staring at a WALL OF WINE. It's an impressive collection -- his one true love.

He gathers up a bottle, blows off the dust, checks the label.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leanne empties a tin of soup into a pan, carries it to the stove and puts it on to heat. She sees that the kitchen is littered with dirty pans. Fish heads on chopping boards; vegetable peel on the floor. By day, this kitchen is a professional workspace.

As Leanne begins to clean up the mess, Sean enters from the cellar, clutching his wine. He uncorks and pours it.

SEAN

You don't have to do that.

LEANNE

I don't mind.

Sean sits at the table, sips his wine, checks news on a tablet. One eye constantly on Leanne as she cleans, the clanking pans getting in the way of his relaxation.

SEAN

You know what? I insist. Just...  
leave it.

Leanne decants her soup into a bowl, loads it onto a tray, and heads upstairs to her room.

INT. LEANNE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A portable television is playing. On screen, TV Dorothy is standing at the scene of a car accident, microphone in hand, addressing camera. This is the 'glamorous career' she was so eager to return to.

TV DOROTHY

Police have confirmed the identity  
of one of the deceased - a Mr. Eric  
Sherman, believed to be a visitor  
to New York--

FIND Leanne sitting cross legged on her bed, the bowl of soup on her lap. Eyes fixed on the screen as she slurps her dinner.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Dorothy enters from the street, wet from the rain, carrying a cool bag, returning from work. She throws a look up the stairs as she crosses to the kitchen.

DOROTHY

(calling)  
I'm home...

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Dorothy enters from the entrance hall, sees Sean at the table, drinking and reading.

SEAN

Hey...

Dorothy carries the cool bag to the fridge, pulls out three filled bottles of breast milk, loads them inside.

DOROTHY

Where is he?

SEAN

Sleeping.  
(for his own amusement)  
Went out like a light.

DOROTHY

(hurt)  
She didn't keep him up for me?

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

Rain streaming down the windows. Dorothy is kneeling at the cot, staring at the sleeping DOLL through the bars, cooing over him.

She gathers up a children's book of nursery rhymes, begins to read.

DOROTHY

The itsy bitsy spider climbed up  
the waterspout. Down came the rain  
and washed the spider out.

Her emotion is genuine, no question that she believes this thing to be real.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sean cleans the kitchen worktops, scraping the fish heads and bones into a waste disposal unit. As he switches on the unit, the blades WHIR and CLUNK. He switches it off, reaches a hand inside to find the obstruction.

DOROTHY

(over)  
Out came the sun and dried up all  
the rain. And the itsy bitsy spider  
climbed up the spout again.

Sean pulls the obstruction from the waste disposal unit -- a small teaspoon.

INT. NURSERY ROOM. - NIGHT

Sean stands in the doorway, halfway to bed, looking in at the cot with the DOLL inside. Then something catches his eye--

He sees that a straw CRUCIFIX has been pinned to the wall over the cot. The exact same crucifix that pricked his finger when he was snooping through Leanne's bedroom.

It torments him.

INT. SEAN & DORA'S EN SUITE - NIGHT

Dorothy relaxes in the whirlpool bath, soothing her sore breasts with a warm wash cloth. Sean is sitting on the toilet seat with a glass of wine. Something on his mind.

SEAN

Did you know she's religious?

DOROTHY

Who? Leanne?

SEAN

She squeezes her palms together and recites silly little prayers. She's a Christian.

DOROTHY

So?

SEAN

So you don't think that's... unusual?

DOROTHY

Where she comes from, it's probably normal.

SEAN

Yeah, well. I think it's weird.  
(then)

It's our home. She has to respect the way we live. Without criticism or judgement. Don't you think?

Dorothy feels a shooting pain in one of her breasts, winces and massages it with the wash cloth.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Could you leave your tits alone for three minutes?

DOROTHY

I have mastitis. I'm running a fever.

SEAN

She's a God-botherer! Didn't you check that out first? Before you invited a potential maniac into our home?

DOROTHY

She's here to care for our son. What were you hoping for? A lap dancing Satanist?

SEAN

I didn't criticize her abilities, I just think... it's not an ideal fit.

DOROTHY

This is one of two things: A) you're disappointed because there's super young pussy in the house and you don't want to fuck it.

SEAN

Technically correct.

DOROTHY

Or B), you just can't stand the thought of another woman raising your son. Pre-historic man, sitting on the crapper, envious of his wife's achievements.

Now he's being taunted. He wants to go there. Wants to have it out. But he bites his tongue.

SEAN

You got me. "B" all the way.

DOROTHY

We need Leanne more than she needs us right now. \$900 a month and the coldest room in the house -- we got off lightly. Who cares if she brings a little God into our world?

EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE BROWNSTONE - DAY

JULIAN PIERCE, 33, gym physique, smartly suited, carrying a brown paper bag in the shape of a liquor bottle, bounds up to the front door and knocks.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Sean descends the stairs from his office and opens the door. When he sees Julian on the step his heart sinks a little. The brother in law. The regular pain in his ass.

SEAN

Julian.

JULIAN

Is Dorothy home?

SEAN

She's at work. Which you knew already.

Julian sidles past Sean and enters, throws a look up the stairs.

JULIAN

(whispering)

Is she here?

SEAN

You came all this way just to check out the nanny?

JULIAN

I waited until almost the weekend, I think I've been pretty respectful.

SEAN

She's taken him--  
(corrects)  
She took it out for a walk.

Julian slides a tequila bottle out of the brown paper bag.

JULIAN

Lunch?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sean is at his vintage Gaggia, operating the steampunk controls until the brown syrupy liquid spews out into a pair of espresso cups.

Julian's at the kitchen table, smoking cigarettes, the bottle of tequila, a towel, two glasses, and a soda fountain before him. Throughout the conversation, Julian mixes tequila slammers, one after the other, that they take turns to down in one hit.

Sean's focus is primarily on his index finger, as he picks and stabs at a splinter he received from the straw crucifix.

JULIAN  
Is she hot?

SEAN  
The nanny? No. God, no.

JULIAN  
Shame.

SEAN  
Try the coffee.

Julian tastes his espresso.

JULIAN  
That's insanely good...

SEAN  
I told you, right?  
(then)  
Even if she was hot, I wouldn't--

JULIAN  
No, no, of course. Kinda  
insensitive, I suppose.  
(the finger)  
What's wrong with you?

SEAN  
I got a splinter.

He gathers up some culinary tweezers to pick at it.

JULIAN  
You know I really think it might  
benefit the situation if you  
shopped around for a new shrink. Go  
for the zero tolerance option.  
Shake darling Dorothy out of  
this... fug.

SEAN  
She only trusts Natalie.

JULIAN  
That over baked doula is making  
this entire family look insane. And  
you're allowing it to happen.

SEAN

What do you care? It's not like you bring a date for Christmas.

JULIAN

She's my sister. I love her. But by association we all look bad. And hiring a bogus nanny - well - that's just the cherry on top, isn't it?

SEAN

If you want to talk to her, go right ahead. Just remember how she was before the doll.

(then)

This girl. Leanne. She's just playing along. Like nothing's...

JULIAN

She's getting cash in hand and free accommodation. For what? She doesn't even have to change a diaper. If you were her, would you put a stop to this?

Julian watches Sean wincing at the splinter.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

You know what'll get that out? Egg shells.

Julian crosses to the fridge, gathers up an egg, cracks it into the sink, then hands the empty shell to Sean.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

My mother used to swear by them.

Julian lines up another shot for Sean.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Here. One for the pain.

Sean slams.

SEAN

Speaking of your mother, we're visiting her this weekend. We're taking 'him'.

JULIAN

Do send my regards.

SEAN

We shouldn't have let it go this far. It's not healthy. We're enablers, that's what we are.

Julian rises from the table, pops a mint.

JULIAN

I can't sit here and listen to you, you're killing my buzz. I'm going back to work.

(the smoke)

Don't forget to light a scented candle.

EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE THE BROWNSTONE - DAY

Sean is attempting to fold the stroller into the trunk of a 4x4 as Dorothy secures the DOLL into a car seat.

INT. LEANNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Leanne stands at the bedroom window, looking down over the street. She sees the 4x4 finally drive away from the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leanne stands at a bookshelf, staring at rows and rows of DVDs. Every spine of every case has a hand-written date on it. Dora has recorded her every news report. A wall of vanity.

INT. SEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Leanne snoops through Sean's office, opening drawers, flicking through the bills and scraps of paper. She finds a small pot of weed, opens it up, sniffs it.

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

Leanne stands at Sean's wall of wine, just staring at the bottles.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leanne stands before the vintage Gaggia. She pulls on one of the handles and something falls off, so she quickly tries to reattach it.

INT. SEAN & DOROTHY'S EN SUITE - DAY

Leanne stands at the edge of the whirlpool bath, staring down at it. She puts the plug in, opens up the taps, and begins to undress.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

All dark and peaceful. The lights are off.

The front door opens and Sean and Dorothy enter from the street. Sean is loaded down with the change bag and the bouncy chair and all the other paraphernalia, as Dorothy carries just the doll in her arms.

DOROTHY

I've gotta pee, take him, will you?

Dorothy carefully hands the doll off to Sean as he rests down the equipment and she hurries through the kitchen door. Knowing that Dorothy is out of view, Sean drops the doll onto the pile of paraphernalia as he collapses the stroller in the hallway.

A NOISE from above. Sean looks up the dark stairwell. He sees a FIGURE in the shadows, looking down at him. It's Leanne. Barely visible. But then she moves and we catch a glimpse of her nightdress as she walks up to her room.

SOUNDS of a door closing above.

SOUNDS of a flushing toilet from the kitchen area. Sean gathers up the doll from the floor, cradles it just as Dorothy emerges from the kitchen door.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Here. I'll settle him.

Sean carefully hands the doll to her, then watches as Dorothy takes it upstairs. He is an enabler, and he feels terrible about it.

EXT. AERIAL OVER NEW YORK - EVENING

The sun sets over the city, casting long shadows.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - EVENING

Quiet, still, and empty. The stroller at rest by the front door. The kitchen door is open, through which we see Leanne at the stove, heating a pan.

INT. NURSERY - EVENING

The DOLL lays motionless in the cot, settled for sleep. As Leanne's feet tip toe out of the room, his fake eyelids FLAP as boards creak and the mattress shifts.

INT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING - EVENING

LEANNE is heading up to her room with soup and toast on a tray. As she passes the open door to Sean's office, she throws a look inside, where she sees Sean at his desk, lit just by the glare of the monitor. He doesn't see her pass by.

Leanne carries on, and as she passes the door to the master bedroom she hears FEMALE GROANING coming from within.

LEANNE rests her tray on the stairs, knocks gently on the bedroom door, pushes it open just a crack.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM / EN SUITE BATHROOM - EVENING

Leanne enters the bedroom, follows the sound of GROANING towards the bathroom door. She pushes the door open, looks in to see Dorothy laying in the tub, groaning in pain.

She watches her for a moment, until, sensing someone, Dorothy looks up, sees Leanne in the door.

LEANNE

I'm sorry, Mrs. Turner. I heard---

DOROTHY

It's OK.

Dorothy really wants some company. Someone to cry on.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Come in. Please.

Leanne takes a step inside, sits on the edge of the tub.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

It's mastitis. I'm on the road all day, there's just no opportunity to express...

Leanne gathers up a clean wash cloth, soaks it in the warm bath water, wrings it out.

LEANNE

We need to clear the blockage.

Leanne reaches down, proceeds to massage the wash cloth on Dorothy's breasts. It's an intimate procedure, and before Dorothy could even protest, a hand was on her tit.

A long beat as they adjust, and it starts to feel less weird and more generous.

DOROTHY

(teary)

I've dropped too many feeds. I'm going to have to put him on formula. And then he'll get cancer and it will be all my fault.

LEANNE

If you don't mind me saying so, Mrs. Turner, I think you should persevere.

A fresh wave of pain causes Dorothy to groan. But Leanne continues to massage her breast with the wash cloth...

Until there's a release of milk from the nipple, dripping into the bath water. With it comes great physical relief for Dorothy.

She begins to sob, through a combination of pain, relief, and deeply repressed grief.

Off Leanne -- unreadable, but utterly in control.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The DOLL is in a mechanical swing chair, facing the gigantic wall mounted television.

ON SCREEN -- TV Dorothy is walking through a run-down neighborhood, addressing camera. She's on form, the fever shifted.

TV DOROTHY

The message from Mayor Bullock is simple -- these are your amenities, and if you don't use them, you're in danger of losing them. This is Dorothy Turner, in Queens. Back to you, Rod.

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

Sean stands at the wall of wine, perusing the bottles. He gathers one up, checks the label. That'll do nicely.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Sean emerges from the cellar door, carrying the bottle of wine. As he steps into the entrance hall he sees Leanne maneuvering the stroller in through the front door, returning from her walk.

LEANNE

I'm going to put him down for his nap, Mr. Turner. And then I need to run to the pharmacy, pick up some items for Mrs. Turner. I'll only be thirty minutes. Could I ask you to listen out for him?

Sean sighs, frustrated by the pretense.

SEAN

She's not here. Lady Turner. She's at work.

LEANNE

I know, Mr. Turner.

Sean heads through to the kitchen with the wine.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sean is at the work tops, several pans on the go, drinking wine, butchering a cut of lamb, weighing spices, devising a new recipe. In his comfort zone.

The kitchen door opens and Leanne enters, carrying the baby monitor. She switches it on, rests it on the work-top.

LEANNE

Thank you, Mr. Turner.

SEAN

Take as long as you need. Hit a bar. Whatever.

Leanne heads out and Sean hears the front door CLOSE behind her.

Sean sips his wine -- doesn't like the taste. He carries the glass to the sink, tips it away, rinses out the glass.

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

Sean is in front of his wine collection again. He reaches up, chooses another bottle.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sean steps back into the kitchen, carrying the new bottle of wine.

SOUNDS of a BABY CRYING.

Sean looks to the baby monitor. The little lights are moving in time to the baby's cry.

He stands rooted to the spot for a moment.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Sean stands at the bottom of the stairs, looking up. He can hear a faint cry coming from the top of the house.

He starts to walk slowly, cautiously, up the stairs.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAY

The crying is louder now as Sean walks slowly along the landing and approaches the nursery room door.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

Sean pushes the door open, looks in.

REVERSE to see a LIVE BABY in the cot, three months old, CRYING.

Off Sean, unable to comprehend what he's seeing--

SMASH TO BLACK

End of Episode One