

KYRA: *(Beat.)* If he didn't do it.  
EDDIE: He didn't.  
KYRA: Then who did? *(Pause. He looks at her.)* You're covering for him. I know you.  
EDDIE: Or the other way around. Don't let your personal feelings get in the way.  
KYRA: They'll put you away for life.  
EDDIE: He's a lifelong drug dealer. I did them a favor. No tears will be shed. I won't even do three months.  
KYRA: You don't know. First of all, it's still murder. Second of all, you're not exactly Mr. Popular around here either.  
EDDIE: Hey, if they're mad about anything, it'll be that I got him before they did. They'll get over that. Look, you say you're all about truth and justice. Then Tot shouldn't go down for this. Look at the big picture. The hood's a better place. Tot will have a second chance, and I'll get free dental care for a couple of months. It's the happy ending. You even get to look good. Trust me. It'll be a piece of cake.

## CONCERNED CATHOLICS

*Gretchen, late 40s, has been working in the rectory and for Father Thomas, 40s, for eight years. During her time there, she has secretly fallen in love with him. Because of recent national news coverage regarding sexual abuse in the churches, Father Thomas' former actions have been called into question. Several years back, he was made aware of an accusation against one of his fellow priests. Some people think he did not react aggressively enough when he heard this. Though Thomas followed all proper procedures, he did not stop Father Patrick from taking on other duties that further exposed him to young boys. Father Thomas fully agrees with his critics. He thinks he left too much up to the church and its leaders, instead of acting upon his own instincts. Gretchen, too, has her theories about who is to blame in this situation. She has decided that all of the recent sexual abuse cases are linked to gays in the priesthood. In fact, several parishioners are considering getting on the warpath to hunt down and expose these gay priests—root them out so as to put an end to this problem.*

GRETCHEN: *(Waves her hand shooing him away while speaking into the phone.)* He's eating his dinner now. He has parish duties all day long. I won't disturb him. He's been at the nursing home for the last five hours and before that he presided over a funeral and did a final blessing at the hospital. It's his only time to rest—

FATHER: Who is that?

GRETCHEN: Yes, of course we're well aware of what Father Patrick is being charged with.

FATHER: Okay, now, let me have the phone.

GRETCHEN: Look, Father *Thomas* did nothing wrong!



FATHER: *(Reaching for it.)* Gretchen, give me the phone.  
*(Firmly.)* Gretchen.

GRETCHEN: *(She covers the receiver.)* No. *(She tries to wave him away again. Into the receiver.)* Leave poor Father Thomas alone. Father Patrick was here less than a year, and he's caused him nothing but—

FATHER: *(Grabbing the phone.)* Hello . . . Yes, this is he . . . Yes, I became aware of that this morning . . . *I* was in charge of the parish when the accusation was made . . . Uh-huh, well, I discussed it with the bishop and a religious team that included a psychologist . . . I don't know . . . I don't know why they weren't more aggressive . . . No, I wasn't aware of that. But we're rethinking how we should handle this in the . . . No, not now. No. But if you call on me tomorrow morning, I'll talk . . . Yes . . . Yes, fine. Tomorrow morning. *(He hangs up.)*

GRETCHEN: What are you doing? You have a wedding tomorrow.

FATHER: Oh. Do you think we could squeeze in the interview right after the wedding?

GRETCHEN: I don't think you should do it. You're liable to say something that will get you or the bishop in a lot of trouble.

FATHER: So what if I did? If things get complicated, it's God's will. He'll keep me on track.

GRETCHEN: Yes, well, I hope so. This one's very complicated.

FATHER: Well, we've dealt with complicated things before.

GRETCHEN: Yes, and some of them are still unresolved.  
*(Looks knowingly at him.)* Forgive me for even bringing it up again.

FATHER: Nothing to forgive. *(Holds her hand.)* We're good friends—always.

GRETCHEN: Yeah. *(Breaking it off.)* Anyway, it'll be tight tomorrow. And I don't know why you're giving these people the time. Send them to the bishop. He needs to be accountable too.

FATHER: I'm not going to pass them off. I have my part in it. Besides, the questions they ask are no different than what the people would be asking. People have a right to know.

GRETCHEN: Yes, but the way these people talk to you. Sometimes they act as if you have nothing to do but to be at their disposal. I don't like the accusatory way he was talking either.

FATHER: He wasn't saying anything I don't agree with. I should have been more assertive and reacted faster to everything.

GRETCHEN: It's not your fault at all. You're a trusting, loving man who thought his fellow priest could be trusted as well.

FATHER: You're always defending me, Gretchen.

GRETCHEN: I know you. They don't see you. They don't see what you've done. They don't know the incredible improvements you've made here on the school and the activities you've created for seniors. That's what should have been reported about. How you helped those folks who lost their factory jobs. That's what should have brought you into view, not this sick ordeal with Father Patrick.

FATHER: Yes, but unfortunately, it's not always the good things that we do that get recognized. But I know God recognizes them and that's all that's important.

GRETCHEN: The problem is those journalists act like there is nothing else to report in the world. They're like piranha.

FATHER: It's a big story—a national story. In a place like this, there isn't that much else to report. I just wish I had done things differently.

GRETCHEN: You can't turn back the time. Besides, you followed every procedure.

FATHER: Some of those procedures are not perfect. I should have followed my instincts over procedure. Sometimes the whole "brotherhood alliance" is a problem.

GRETCHEN: What are you talking about?

FATHER: Well, it's like being in a fraternity I guess. You feel



this incredible pressure to protect your own. I should have been protecting the boys instead.

GRETCHEN: There should be no need to protect the boys. It shouldn't even be an issue. There shouldn't be priests like that period.

FATHER: I agree, but how are we to know the priest is an abuser ahead of time? It usually crops up later.

GRETCHEN: Well, there should be something that screens them out before they're ordained.

FATHER: And what would that be?

GRETCHEN: Lie detector tests or something.

FATHER: And how would we do that? What would we ask?

GRETCHEN: Well, it's the gays that are the problem. It's the homosexuals.

FATHER: What are you talking about?!

GRETCHEN: Gay men in the priesthood is what I'm talking about, Thomas.

FATHER: Oh no. You haven't gotten all right-winged on me, Gretchen?

GRETCHEN: Are you saying you approve?

FATHER: Of what?

GRETCHEN: Of gay men in the priesthood?

FATHER: I suppose you disapprove even if they aren't practicing gays?

GRETCHEN: You're darn right I disapprove. It's too tempting. It's too powerful a position. I'm not saying we need to shut gay men out entirely. I'm not condoning gay bashing either. Nothing radical. I'm just saying that they shouldn't become priests. It's too tempting.

FATHER: And what about heterosexual men? What about young girls who have been abused through the years? And all those crying wives coming to them. Disturbed about their failed marriages. Wanting advice and support. Isn't that tempting as well? Isn't that a ripe opportunity for seduction?

GRETCHEN: *(Pause.)* That's not . . . You know what I mean.

FATHER: No, I don't know really. How come this has never come up before?

GRETCHEN: Well, it's not as if I haven't thought about it before, but I just had no reason until now to say anything about it. I had no idea the problem of sexual abuse was this widespread. None of us did. I didn't know these gay priests were affecting our children so profoundly.

FATHER: Yes, they are affecting our children profoundly. They're helping save marriages and guiding kids away from drugs and alcohol. Preparing them for first communion and confirmation and bringing God into their lives. Besides, all of these cases aren't due to gay priests, Gretchen. As horrible as it all sounds, many girls were abused as well.

GRETCHEN: Oh no, that's far and few between. I've talked about this with people.

FATHER: No, it's not! That's not what the statistics tell us. Some of these men are just troubled, and sick and willing to abuse their power—they don't discriminate between gender. They're pedophiles.

GRETCHEN: Many of the boys abused are not children. There's the clue. They're adolescents and these priests try to form relationships—homosexual relationships with them. And the young men do it at first because they feel special—privileged until they realize that it's just wrong.

FATHER: Oh my . . . Who's been feeding you this crap?

GRETCHEN: I talked to a woman who leads up a Catholic organization over at St. Alfonzo's parish in Allentown. She called me this afternoon asking if we would be interested in getting involved.

FATHER: Involved in what?

GRETCHEN: In organizing a group here.

FATHER: What kind of group?

GRETCHEN: Of concerned Catholics. Catholics who want to get behind removing these gay priests.

FATHER: *(Sarcastic.)* Well, that's an organization Jesus would have loved. All about patience, kindness, and forgiveness.



GRETCHEN: I'm sorry if we're having trouble forgiving them.

You do you realize this has ruined people's faith over and over? It may ruin entire lives too.

FATHER: Of course I realize that! So blame us! Blame the people who put the priests back into positions and exposed the children again. Blame us for being tight-knit and stubborn and stupid as hell, but do not blame gay men in the priesthood. Not all gay men—just like not all heterosexual men—abuse children. I hope you realize that!

GRETCHEN: I can't believe you're defending them!

FATHER: I can't believe you're targeting them! What you're suggesting, Gretchen, is just a huge witch-hunt to me—no different than rooting out communists or even the Jews.

GRETCHEN: Oh come on. That's not an accurate comparison. There's no death at the end of it. And besides, what some of those priests did is much worse.

FATHER: And for the gay priests who have done quiet duty for years at parishes never harming anyone and, in fact, making the lives of the people there much better—you would go after them too? *(She nods.)* What did they do wrong?

GRETCHEN: Nothing, maybe, but temptation may get them sometime. They may break. The parish at least has a right to know. They have a right to know who their children are exposed to.

FATHER: As long as the father is not pursuing any sort of physical or emotional relationships, he is following the word of the Lord, and of this religion as well. Is he gay if he merely feels as if he may have feelings for men, but never acts on them?

GRETCHEN: I'd say so. I don't know. It's hard to say.

FATHER: Well if you don't know exactly, how can you commit yourself to weeding them out? You don't even know what you consider gay.

GRETCHEN: Now, you're just trying to confuse me.

FATHER: Gay priests have been speaking to their parish and advising for more than a hundred years. Despite all our

denial, they have served the elderly, brought food to the bake sale and given your children first communion. This witch-hunt may not kill the Catholic Church, but it'll do serious damage. If you want to do something, create a support group for the survivors or demand more action if abuse occurs in the future.

GRETCHEN: Why are you so insistent on defending them?

FATHER: Because, because I am them.

GRETCHEN: *(Pause.)* What? No you're not. You can't be. I mean you and I have fee . . .

FATHER: I've always been aware of your feelings for me and I'm hugely flattered.

GRETCHEN: My feelings? *(Beat.)* I thought you . . .

FATHER: We're good friends.

GRETCHEN: Of course we are. I had no idea that you . . . I just spend so much time here at the rectory you misunderstood me. I'm a caretaker. *(Beat. Laughs.)* You're just trying to make a point, aren't you? This isn't true about you, is it?

FATHER: I've never acted on it—nor will I. And I would never harm anyone, least of all a child or a young person.

GRETCHEN: I can't believe this, Thomas.

FATHER: It's innocent to love a person. I don't think God believes it's a sin to love. I don't always agree with all the church's doctrine—gay issues, priests not being allowed to marry, but I will abide by it. It's part of my commitment.

GRETCHEN: I think I better go now. It's late.

FATHER: Will you tell this group about me, Gretchen?

GRETCHEN: There're some extra vegetables on the stove if you want.

FATHER: I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I've wanted to tell you so many times about this, but didn't know quite how—

GRETCHEN: Please, Father. I need to go now. I really need to go.

FATHER: So I'll see you tomorrow at eight o'clock?

*(He looks to her, but she doesn't answer.)*