

BURYING YOUR BROTHER IN THE PAVEMENT (EXTRACT 3)

Jack Thorne

TOM:

I first had the idea that I was the son of God, when I was nine. I'd just read the Bible. Not the whole Bible, not cover-to-cover but - you know... extensive dipping... Anyway, the more I read, the more it sort of made sense, that I was the second coming. Jesus Christ. Two. The sequel. I mean, my mum a virgin? Well, looking at her you could certainly believe so. Check. Dad not my real dad? We never did have much in common. Check. Me leading a sad-and-tortured-life-where-everyone-hates-me-and-I-have-to-die-for-the-good-of-humanity-who'll-be-sorry-when-I'm-gone? Check. But then I tried to cure a leper - well, a kid with really bad eczema... it didn't work. He just bled a lot. I tried to - rip some of his skin off and... Beat. I first got the idea I might have Aids after a particularly aggressive sex-ed class - you know, the sort of class where your teacher just repeatedly shouts -

You must NEVER have sex. Never. Ever. Ever.

So Aids - me? Unlikely! But then I had a tetanus shot and it took them ages to find a vein and I thought - well, maybe I had a mutated version of Aids - the sort where you don't get to do anything good to catch it. 'I caught mine through drugs.' 'I caught mine through sex.' 'I just, well, I just sort of got it.' 'Why?' 'Because I'm unlucky.' 'There are loads of other examples - the time I thought I'd developed a cure for blindness in biology class because I seemed to be able to see things with my eyes closed - the time when I thought I may have inadvertently started a war between Korea and the Isle of Sheppey with some stuff I'd written on my blog - the time when I thought I'd accidentally castrated my dog -

Okay, well, I sort of did castrate my dog. That's a long story... my point is this...

It's normal to be centre of your own world, in your head, star of your... and me... I don't just star in my head, I kind of suffocate all other forms of life. But this - finally - I've got the opportunity to actually be some kind of star and I'm -

(Tom hears something. He holds his breath. Breathes out.)

They're a - having a funeral downstairs. I'm supposed to be there. Down there. With them. I mean, it's not like a guy missing his own wedding - I mean, it's not my funeral, obviously - TA-DAH! I'm alive - so, but... still... I'm expected to be there. And not here - hiding under a table in my attic.

Luke - my brother - always used to come up here when he was upset. I was - too afraid - always thought there was something living up here. Something swimming in the water tank, sliding through the pipes, nestling in the insulation. But now -

| a n | t h o | l o | g y |

well -

(Tom looks around.)

Funerals - fun-e-rals - rals from the Latin meaning 'the rule is'. The rule... is fun. Great news for my little cousin Kevin, who has jam around his mouth and mayonnaise in his hair and likes randomly launching into his world-famous impression of Robbie Williams. And less good news for my mum who just wants to cry - on me.

My brother died. Badly. It's that simple really... You know why they call them wakes? It used to be a time when people sat by the body waiting to see if it woke up. Before doctors knew what they were doing. Some bodies did wake up - in which case they were alive and mourning was kind of pointless - others didn't - in which case... well... Either way, everyone got drunk. I know that I can't stay here. I didn't mean to - I was panicked up here when an auntie I barely knew, licked my face and told me I was a good boy and then tried to give me a deep-fried-mushroom thing. And it... Jesus didn't have to deal with this rubbish, did he?

(Tom looks around.)

I need to get out of here. I mean... here. I mean, all of here. I mean, the house... I mean, the funeral... I need to get out.