

BELIEVE

Written by

Richard Miraan

1 EXT. DRIVEWAY - EVENING

1

A gravel driveway, off a rural road, leads to a well-maintained prefabricated house. A full-size pick-up truck, kitted out for off-road use, sits off to the side, allowing access for two vehicles. The house, though simple, exudes an air of comfort, and home.

2 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

2

Sophia sits on the sofa playing a game on her phone. The occasional mild expletive grunt bears witness to her distraction and frustration. After one colorful outburst, she makes to hurl the phone, but thinks better of it and places it beside her.

SOPHIA

Damn level forty-two.

She looks up.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I won't ask for your help, with this.

The phone hums, indicating a text message. She looks up again, and arches a quizzical eyebrow. She picks up the phone and reads. "Home soon". She sets the phone back down without responding.

She places her head on her knees, stretches her arms behind and quietly moans. The escalating whistle of a tea kettle begins. Sophia growls in response.

3 INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

3

An impatient tea kettle waits for relief. On the kitchen counter sit a canister of loose-leaf Assam tea, a tea strainer, and teapot with its lid off. A hand turns off the burner, removes the kettle and pours a splash of boiling water into the pot. The pot is swirled and Sophia hums a soft, spiritual melody. The pot is set down and lidded. Three tablespoons of tea are deliberately placed in the strainer. Sophia's hands move to hold onto the edge of the counter.

SOPHIA (O.C.)

God, I'm walking through a valley
of death today, and I'm so lost.
Give me strength; in your name.

The teapot is emptied, the strainer placed inside, and water slowly added.

The tea steeps, Sophia continues humming, and the sound of teacups being retrieved from a cupboard is heard.

The front door is heard opening and shutting. Two cups wait on the counter for the tea to finish steeping.

4 INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

4

Sophia leans back against the counter. Abby fills the kitchen entryway. She glances at the tea makings.

ABBY

Assam? Thinking we're going to need the edge?

SOPHIA

Something lighter then?

ABBY

Smells earthy, and good.

SOPHIA

We'll have it in the living room?

ABBY

As you wish.

Abby lightly approaches Sophia and places a perfunctory kiss on her cheek. Sophia accepts in the spirit given and returns a wry smile.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Gotta pee.

She exits the kitchen. Sophia watches her leave with a smile now tainted with foreboding.

SOPHIA

I'll bring it out.

5 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

5

Sophia places the tea set on the table and takes her place at the end of the sofa.

6 INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

6

Abby sits on the toilet. She massages her stomach for a moment. Finished, she secures a maxi-pad to her underwear, stands and pulls up her loose-fitting jeans.

She turns, flushes the toilet, and watches the red and yellow liquid coalesce in a swirl, to be replaced by clear water.

ABBY

Yeah, right. A little spotting, my
ass.

7 INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

7

Abby washes her hands, splashes water on her face, and dries off. She reaches into her back pocket and retrieves a folded paper. She unfolds it and stares at a sonogram of a 14-week old fetus.

ABBY

Hey, little man.

She puts the sheet on the counter and looks into the mirror.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Shit happens.

She re-folds the paper and stuffs it in her back pocket.

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

8

Abby enters and takes her place beside Sophia, leaning in as Sophia enfolds her.

SOPHIA

So, you killed it?

ABBY

Him.

SOPHIA

Mother of God, did you name it too?

ABBY

Him. And no.

SOPHIA

Why should I think of it as a
person when you don't, didn't.
Didn't think it worthy of living.

Abby releases from Sophia's embrace and reaches for the teapot. She pours two cups, hands one to Sophia, and keeps the other. They sit quietly drinking.

A car is heard pulling into the driveway. Abby sets the cup down, gets up a little awkwardly, and motions to the teapot.

ABBY
Good choice.

She heads to the bedroom.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Stay here.

Sophia remains seated, watching Abby leave, and then turns an apprehensive gaze to the front door.

Abby returns carrying an automatic pistol pointed down. She exits the front door without a look back.

A car door opens and shuts. A few moments later the sound is repeated, followed by a car starting and slowly leaving the driveway. The front door opens and Abby enters.

SOPHIA
How's Jeff?

ABBY
Drunk.

She takes a seat at the end of the sofa.

SOPHIA
Will he come back?

Abby sets the gun on the table pointing toward the door.

ABBY
Not tonight, if he's smart. So maybe.

SOPHIA
He's right, you know. Just because he's an asshole doesn't make him not right.

Abby reaches for her cup and wraps her hands around it.

ABBY
It just makes him an asshole. A cunt-hungry hypocrite, who wears his Jesus like a raincoat.

SOPHIA
He's my Jesus too.

ABBY
And yet, I love you.

SOPHIA
Not now. Don't do that now.

Sophia looks directly at Abby.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
You know how much I wanted the
baby, Abby. We wanted the baby.
Your baby. Our baby.

ABBY
And now it's gone.

SOPHIA
It's not gone. You killed it. You
murdered it.

ABBY
Him. Not it. Him. You want proof?

Abby reaches into her pocket a pulls out the sonogram and
looks at it.

ABBY (CONT'D)
You can't see his dick yet but,
according to the amnio, there's a
'Y' in there somewhere.

She hands the image to Sophia. She reluctantly takes it,
placing it face down on her lap.

SOPHIA
I can't. How can you...How could
you...after seeing this? You made
this. It...He was living inside
you.

Sophia turns over the image and gazes upon it.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
Was there something wrong? The
tests?

Abby moves next to Sophia.

ABBY
The tests were negative. He was
fine. I was wrong.

SOPHIA
You mean we were, are wrong.

ABBY

No. This was wrong. It was wrong
right now, and how...and who.

Sophia strokes the image of the fetus and starts to shake. She rips the paper in half, and then again, and again until she can't tear the paper. She throws it aside and lets out an anguished moan. The shredded pieces of paper flutter to the floor.

Abbey wraps her in her arms, gently stroking until the shaking subsides.

ABBY (CONT'D)

He couldn't think yet. He wasn't aware. The parts of the brain that make a person; the consciousness, they hadn't connected yet. In every way that matters, he wasn't human.

SOPHIA

Yet. Wasn't a person yet. You and your science be damned. He had a soul.

ABBY

Does Jeff? Hmm? You know him. You hunted with him once. He laughs when he wounds. Doesn't even put a kill shot until the buck's crazed, screaming in pain. And then only so he doesn't get a real hunter come looking. Is that something with a soul?

SOPHIA

You chose him.

ABBY

The parts were good. Blood types mixed well. Checked out the family; gene's healthy going way back. So, yeah. I counted my days, bent over, and let him have a couple of minutes of bareback boy joy.

He's so bloody unaware, I thought he'd never figure it out. I was wrong.

Abby takes a sip of tea and looks at Sophia.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Small town, I guess.

SOPHIA
Is that why?

ABBY
He's part of it. Once he found out,
it was going to be bad either way.
This way I hold...

She looks at the gun.

ABBY (CONT'D)
...I can control the situation.

Sophia stands and walks slowly to the kitchen. She is hidden by the open fridge door.

SOPHIA (O.S.)
I told him.

Abby turns to the kitchen door. Sophia rummages through the fridge. She retrieves a platter of cold fried chicken and reenters the living room staring at Abbey. Abby locks her gaze in quiet disapproval, and slightly tilts her head.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
You knew.

Abby continues to stare silently.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
How?

ABBY
Not that small a town.

Sophia's expression slowly morphs from regret to anger as she reaches a conclusion. She drops the platter, looks at the pieces of meat on the floor, drops to her knees and in the midst of hysteria clumsily puts the pieces back on the platter.

SOPHIA
So this was what then; really?!
Some kind of twisted revenge! You
kill an innocent baby just...

ABBY
(genuinely confused)
What? Revenge? For what?

Sophia looks up and sees Abby doesn't understand. She turns her anger on herself.

SOPHIA
I betrayed you! Us. I told Jeff,
even though...

ABBY
Betrayal? I guess you could call it
that.

Abby calmly approaches Sophia.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Sweetie...

Abby helps Sophia to her feet, takes the platter and looks at
it a moment.

ABBY (CONT'D)
5-second rule.

Abby leads Sophia back to the sofa. She puts the platter on
the table. She kisses Sophia's forehead, cheek, and mouth.
They sit back on the sofa, Abby takes Sophia's hand, and
places it on her stomach.

ABBY (CONT'D)
What you call 'betrayal', I'd call
your nature. I shouldn't have asked
it of you; keeping it secret. You
had to tell him. You couldn't do
otherwise.

SOPHIA
I'm so sorry. I thought...

ABBY
No. Don't be. There's nothing to
forgive.

Abby strokes Sophia's hand.

ABBY (CONT'D)
This. This was me; only me. And it
was hard. I killed him, Sophia.
Ended a life before it had a
chance, or a choice to begin. Yeah,
okay, when I knew you had told Jeff
I was pissed for a bit. Remember
Monday?

Sophia thinks back and an understanding forms.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Yeah, then. But that's when things
became clear.

SOPHIA
About me? About us?

ABBY
About us. And about him.

Abby caresses Sophia's face. Touches her lips. Abby moves to the end of the sofa.

ABBY (CONT'D)
I know you wanted this child, desperately. I did too. But somewhere, you knew that I wasn't as sure, not 100 percent. We're not a perfect pair, you and me, but you want us to be. And you fight so damn hard. Loving you is easy for me. You, you had to scrape everything they taught you you were away. Even now you catch your breath when we pass your old church. But you still believe. You kept faith. You have God. And you talk to Him.

SOPHIA
Her.

They both smile.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
I talk to Her. Sometimes she's the only place I feel safe. Even with you. You look at the world so clear; I can't see it like you; like it's a puzzle, something to diagnose, fix maybe. But I have to believe; to believe in something.

Sophia leans forward, her hands coming together as in prayer.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
But that's not really true; I don't have to, I just do.

ABBY
You believe in love, and your faith is where that all starts, where we start.

SOPHIA
But you don't know God. You make your own rules.
(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I betrayed you but, with all my
heart,
(Turning to face Abby)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I want you to beg me for
forgiveness; for what you've done.
And you can't do that; not and
really mean it.

Sophia leans back on the sofa looking straight ahead

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

For you, killing our little boy
wasn't wrong.

Abby stands, lets out a little groan, and turns away from
Sophia.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Does it hurt?

ABBY

Just a little sore. It'll pass.

Abby walks to a table across the room. There is a framed
photograph of her and Sophia in camouflage, with orange
vests, holding rifles, in a clearing by the woods.

ABBY (CONT'D)

It wasn't this day; all bright and
crisp at the end of the season. It
was the year before, just after
opening day. You found the deer
marks I'd passed right over. That
morning was so damp and cold, how
you spotted them, I'll never know.

9

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

9

A wet, cold morning in the woods. Sophia crouches and touches
the ground. Abby turns at the sound. Sophia motions Abby to
be still and points to the deer's marks. She scans the area
and indicates the direction. She begins to move with great
stealth. Abby sets her watch, and follows.

ABBY (V.O.)

You tracked that buck like you were part of the woods. Two
hours, forty-seven minutes.

10 EXT. WOODS - MORNING

10

Sophia stops, gauges the wind's direction and listens. She points off to the west and moves on; slowing and stopping, crouching to examine the ground and foliage before moving on.

ABBY (V.O.)

So quiet; just you, me, and that damn owl, working late. And then, there he was, forty yards; three year old buck with six points, out looking for a mate.

11 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

11

Abby turns to Sophia.

ABBY

You turned, and saw me crying.

SOPHIA

And smiling.

ABBY

You set up and held him in your sights. And then I heard it; your prayer for a clean kill, and forgiveness.
He went down after one step.

Abby approaches Sophia, moves the tea set and platter aside, and sits on the edge of the table. She takes Sophia's hands.

ABBY (CONT'D)

When we reached him, you knelt down with your knife ready, and looked into his eyes to be sure. You thanked him and told him we'd treat him right.
We hung him, and dressed him. I remember tossing the guts a little ways off for the coyotes and crows and when I turned back I saw you cut your finger with that knife and spill a few drops on the ground where he died. You looked up at me, and from that moment, I've been lost, and home, in you.

SOPHIA

Abby.

ABBY

Sophia, no kill is right. In some way, it's wrong...every time. Killing our baby was wrong; but it was the right thing to do.

They sit, and slowly their foreheads touch. After a moment they pull back, still holding hands.

SOPHIA

It's going to be different now, isn't it.

ABBY

Yeah, it is.

SOPHIA

What do I do?

ABBY

Talk to Her.

Sophia stares at Abby; confusion giving way to acceptance.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Believe.

12 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT 12

Light traffic passes along the road at the end of the driveway. One car slows to a stop and waits.

13 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 13

Sophia and Abby lay entwined in bed. Abby's eyes open and she listens.

14 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT 14

The stopped car pulls back into traffic and drives away.

FADE TO BLACK.