

ECHOES OF TOMORROW

Written by

Matthew Phillips

mattp3385@gmail.com
(13) 289-3298

FADE IN:

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - DAY

JACK, a 23-year-old man with a relaxed demeanor, is seated comfortably on his couch. He's dressed in a wrinkled white t-shirt, casual blue jeans, and comfortable tennis shoes.

JACK

I need to find something to take my
mind off of things.

Walking over to the refrigerator, he swings open the door, revealing its contents. Inside, we see a tempting bottle of alcohol in a brown paper bag, three refreshing cans of soda, a half gallon of milk, and a delicious-looking sandwich waiting to be savored. Jack, feeling thirsty, doesn't know what to choose and ultimately reaches into the cold refrigerator for a can of soda. He grabs the can and twists the tab to hear the satisfying "pop."

JACK (CONT'D)

Ahhh. It tastes so good.

Jack grabs his headphones and decides to take a leisurely stroll outside to enjoy the weather.

EXT. STREET - DAY

As Jack begins his walk, he sets out with the intention of using the physical activity to help ease the mental distress he's feeling. As he strolls, he walks with a slump, and his clothes are wrinkled and look like he slept in them the night before. His mind is consumed by contemplation about how addiction has been impacting various aspects of his life. Despite the inner struggle, Jack resiliently presses on, sipping on his soda as he walks. As Jack continues his walk, we see a stranger bump into him.

STRANGER

Hey, watch where you are going.

JACK

You're the asshole that bumped into
me.

This unexpected mishap triggered a surge of anger within Jack.

STRANGER

What are you talking about, you drunk?

JACK

What are you talking about, you prick? I'm not drunk.

STRANGER

Dude, I can smell the alcohol from here.

This intense feeling shocked Jack, prompting him to reevaluate his actions. Jack tightens his fingers into a fist and elevates his hand in a threatening manner, as though he is preparing to strike the stranger. He decides to continue on his walk and leaves the stranger.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Jack arrives in front of the local church. Jack hesitates as he gazes at the imposing structure of the church, its ancient stones weathered by time and history. His mind is heavy with the burden of his past transgressions, and he wonders if he is worthy of seeking solace within the sacred walls. Standing on the threshold, Jack battles with his inner turmoil, grappling with the fear of judgment and rejection. Time seems to slow as he wrestles with his doubts, questioning whether he deserves forgiveness.

After what feels like an eternity, a surge of resolve fills Jack's heart, dispelling the shadows of uncertainty. Jack takes a deep breath before heading up to the doors of the church. He pushes open the doors and steps into the hallowed interior of the church. The creaking of the door reverberates through the stillness, marking his entrance into a realm of contemplation and hope.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Jack stepped into the peaceful ambiance of the church, the solemn serenity washing over him like a soothing balm. He found himself drawn to a pew where he sat, and his eyes fixed on the poignant symbol of hope and salvation—the cross adorning the wall. Sensing Jack's need for companionship, PASTOR JIM, a 45-year-old man wearing a white button-up shirt, black slacks, a black tie, and black dress shoes, joined him, offering a compassionate ear and wise words of comfort.

PASTOR JIM

Welcome. What brings you in today?
Is there something that troubles
you?

JACK

I am struggling with alcohol
addiction, and I am on the verge of
losing everything I have and love.
I lost my job because I used to
come in to work drunk all the time.
My family doesn't want anything to
do with me.

PASTOR JIM

If you would like then we can meet
a few times a week for counseling.

After their conversation, Jack left the church, feeling a
glimmer of hope kindling within him.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

As Jack steps out of the weathered church, the soft light of
the moonlight bathes the paved path before him. With each
step he takes on his way home, his mind becomes a
battleground of doubt and determination. Should he continue
attending the counseling sessions with the pastor, drawing
strength from the shared experiences, or should he embark on
this daunting journey of conquering his addiction alone?

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Jack arrives home to an eerily quiet house, he kicks off
his shoes and sinks into the plush couch, feeling a wave of
exhaustion wash over him. Uncertain of how to fill the empty
evening ahead, Jack reaches for the remote and flicks on the
TV, the soft glow of the screen filling the dimly lit room.

A rumble in his stomach draws Jack to the refrigerator. He
swings open the door, revealing its contents. Inside, we see
a tempting bottle of alcohol in a brown paper bag, two
refreshing cans of soda, a half gallon of milk, and a
delicious-looking sandwich waiting to be savored. He
ultimately decides on a bowl of cereal for dinner.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - DAY

Jack slowly wakes up as the sunlight filters into his room,
signaling the start of a new day.

He slowly makes his way over to the kitchen, opening the fridge to find it sparsely stocked. His gaze lands on a lone bottle of alcohol in a brown paper bag, and for a moment, he considers indulging in an early morning drink. Ultimately deciding against it, he moves on to scanning the shelves for something substantial to eat. Settling on a simple bowl of cereal, he sits down at the table and begins to ponder the activities that lie ahead, mentally sketching out a rough plan for the day.

EXT. STREET - DAY

As Jack feels the weight of temptation pressing down on him in the confines of his house, he decides to take a walk in an attempt to clear his mind. Despite his efforts, the desire to drink gnaws at him persistently. Lost in contemplation, he eventually finds himself standing before the imposing facade of the local church.

INT. CHURCH - MIDDAY

Jack entered the church, pushing open the doors with a sense of purpose. The dim light filtering through the stained glass windows cast an ethereal glow over the sanctuary as he made his way through the aisle.

JACK

Excuse me. Do you know where I can find the pastor?

A kind parishioner pointed him in the direction of the podium, where the pastor stood.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thank you very much.

Jack continues in the direction of the podium.

PASTOR JIM

Welcome back, Jack!

JACK

I need to speak with you urgently.

PASTOR JIM

Please take a seat over here, and let's talk.

JACK

I am still struggling with the constant urge to drink.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

The temptation follows me everywhere I go. I feel like just one sip won't hurt anything. But I know that if I take that one sip, then I will not be able to stop.

PASTOR JIM

I know what you are going through. I once struggled with this same addiction, and as I went to meetings, I finally overcame it. I started attending church and entered the priesthood and haven't looked back on my past ever since.

Amidst the solemn tranquility of the church, he found solace in their exchanges, seeking guidance and reassurance in the pastor's comforting presence.

EXT. STREET - MIDDAY

As Jack emerges from the cool confines of the church, the warmth of the summer afternoon envelops him. The lingering heat of the day weighs heavily on him, and he longs for something to alleviate his growing thirst. He trudges through the sultry afternoon, his gaze settling on a nearby liquor store. The temptation to purchase a bottle of alcohol lingers in his mind, but he ultimately resists, choosing to press on. Eventually, he encounters a different store and decides to step inside. Upon emerging, he eagerly opens the can of soda he's just purchased, savoring the first invigorating sip of the cold, fizzy beverage.

EXT. PARK - MIDDAY

As Jack arrives at the park, he feels a mix of emotions swirling inside him. He searches for a sense of calm, his mind preoccupied with the weight of his thoughts. Taking a moment to gather his resolve, he gazes at the swaying trees and the gentle sway of the grass in the breeze. Uncertain whether he should open up in the upcoming meeting, he seeks solace on the familiar park bench.

A young man catches Jack's attention as he approaches, carrying a nondescript brown paper bag. He takes a seat next to Jack and places the paper bag on the bench, offering a brief nod before swiftly departing. Gently cradling the bag, Jack's curiosity peaks, and he gingerly opens the bag to reveal the contents. To his surprise, he finds a chilled, alluring beer nestled inside the bag.

Puzzled by the unexpected gift, Jack ponders the motives of the mysterious stranger. Torn between caution and his inclination for adventure, he weighs his options.

JACK

I don't think one sip will hurt anything. Oh, it tastes so good.

Jack gets up from the bench, departs from the park, and proceeds in the direction of the church.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

As Jack arrives back at the church, he is filled with a sense of trepidation and worry. Uncertain of his next move, he hesitates before slowly making his way towards the entrance of the old, weathered church building. He proceeds to push open the doors and steps into the sacred confines of the church.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Jack's heart pounded as he stepped through the church doors, and an uneasy feeling settled in his stomach as he anticipated sharing his recent encounter at the park with the Pastor.

JACK

Earlier today, I was sitting at the park, and a young man came and sat next to me on the bench. He didn't stay for long, but a brown bag was on the bench after he left. Temptation ultimately took over, and I looked in the bag. When I saw what was in the bag, my mind couldn't stop wondering what it would taste like. I opened the beer and took a few sips, which tasted so good.

PASTOR JIM

Thank you for sharing this with me, Jack. I appreciate your honesty and hope we can continue our weekly counseling sessions. I think that by continuing these sessions, we can ultimately get you to the right place to help you through this challenging time in your life.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

As Jack exits the old, weathered church, the moonlight casts a nice reflected light across the paved path. He starts his journey home, the sound of his footsteps echoing in the quiet street. While walking, a whirlwind of thoughts swirls in his mind. The advice shared during the meeting plays over and over, causing him to re-evaluate his choices and contemplate the allure of the mysterious occurrences in his life.

Contemplating the potential trajectory of his life had he remained committed to attending those pivotal meetings, he finds himself grappling with his inner conflicts. Nevertheless, amidst the internal turmoil, Jack finds the resolve to persevere, recognizing the significance of attending those meetings as a crucial stride forward in overcoming his personal battles.

FADE OUT