

## **SICK**

By Erik Patterson

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### CHARACTERS (in order of appearance):

PAMELA: A twenty-eight-year-old woman.

DAVID: Her husband.

MICHAEL: Their ten-year-old son.

BROWN: His doctor. Handsome, charming.

GARY: Pamela's brother.

CARLA: His wife.

JEANNIE: An addict, a sales clerk.

### A NOTE:

There are many locations. We should move from one location to the next quickly, fluidly. There should be no intermission.

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**SCENE ONE**

Outside an apartment building. PAMELA and DAVID sit on a bench. Their son, MICHAEL, sits on the ground a few feet away. He's transfixed by GARY, a drunk man yelling at the building.

Gary looks like shit: black eye, bloody mouth, his shirt ripped at the neck. Pamela and David ignore his antics.

PAMELA

I think I'm dying, David.

GARY

Fuck you!

PAMELA

I don't want to be a waitress anymore.

GARY

You motherfucking...fucker!

PAMELA

The restaurant's giving me cancer.

GARY

You fucking...fucking...FUCKER!

PAMELA

I hate it so much. I mean, do you know how long I've been there? I've been, oh my god, I've been there for ten years.

GARY

Why do you have to be such a fucker?!?

PAMELA

I wish I could start over. What should I do, David?

DAVID

You could find another job.

PAMELA

But who would hire me? I can't *do* anything.

DAVID

We've talked about this. Take a class. Learn something.

PAMELA

That's good. I could take a class.

GARY

You...fucking -- fuck!

PAMELA

But when am I gonna find the time to take a class?

DAVID

I don't know, Pamela.

PAMELA

I don't have any time.

DAVID

Then don't take a class.

GARY

You...stupid, fucking -- fuck!

DAVID

Don't quit the restaurant. Don't do anything.

GARY

I mean, if you think I'm gonna fucking leave, then just --  
(he throws his shoe)  
...You're a fucker!

DAVID

Just keep complaining. Since you do it so well.

PAMELA

(genuinely hurt)  
Sorry...My day kinda sucked, that's all.

GARY

A fucking fucker!

PAMELA

There was this guy who sent his food back twice.

GARY

A fucking fuck-face fuckerrrr!

PAMELA

And this big party that tipped really bad.

GARY

I'm not leaving! I'm staying right here!

PAMELA

And then I had this really weird poop.

David can tell she wants him to ask  
about her poop...but he decides not to.

DAVID

That sucks. I'm sorry to hear you had such a bad day.

PAMELA  
Yeah, it totally sucked.

DAVID  
*My day* didn't suck.

PAMELA  
It didn't?

DAVID  
No...You gonna ask me about it?

PAMELA  
I'm distracted. Sorry. How was your day?

DAVID  
Fine. I left work early to go to Michael's game.

PAMELA  
Oh no...I was wondering how he got so dirty.

DAVID  
He had a game.

PAMELA  
Right...How'd he play?

DAVID  
He's getting better.

PAMELA  
Did he score a goal?

DAVID  
He hit a double.

PAMELA  
So you think he'll play football when he grows up?

DAVID  
He doesn't play football. He plays baseball.

PAMELA  
You know I get all those ball games confused.

DAVID  
They're completely different.

PAMELA  
Look, I said the wrong word, okay? It's not a big deal.

DAVID  
Pam, it is a big deal. It's what our son does. He plays baseball. He had a game today. And you weren't there.

PAMELA  
Can we talk about my poop?

DAVID  
*Your poop.*

PAMELA  
It was really weird.

DAVID  
Weird how?

PAMELA  
I don't know. Just different.

DAVID  
How do you know it was different?

PAMELA  
Because I know my poop. I know when it's normal. And I know when it's not. Today it was weird. I think it's because of the restaurant. ... You're giving me that look.

DAVID  
I just thought we weren't gonna do this anymore.

PAMELA  
Do what?

DAVID  
I can't do this. I thought we were over this.

PAMELA  
Over what?

DAVID  
Fine. Tell me why your job is making your poop weird.

GARY  
I'm still here, you know!

PAMELA  
Never mind, you're mad at me now.

GARY  
And I'm not your fucking tool!

DAVID  
No, you wanna talk about poop, let's talk about poop.

GARY  
'Cuz I'm not fucked up!

PAMELA  
Not if you're gonna be like that.

GARY  
*You are.* You're fucked up!

DAVID  
What do you want me to say? I'm listening. Talk.

GARY  
Fucked up on coke, you fucking cokehead!

PAMELA  
People are mean at the restaurant.

DAVID  
They're mean?

GARY  
*My ass* you're clean now: if so you'll be fucked up again!

PAMELA  
You know how people get. When they're hungry, they get mean.

GARY  
I mean, Jesus!

PAMELA  
And they take their frustration and hunger out on me.

GARY  
No: fuck Jesus!

PAMELA  
And then I get mad. But I can't let them know I'm mad because I need their tips. So I smile. And my anger builds...

GARY  
Jesus didn't die for my sins, not for fuckin' *my* sins!

PAMELA  
But I suppress it. And when I pretend I'm not angry...

GARY  
Saying that is fucked up, Jesus lover!

PAMELA  
...I think I tighten my anus. A lot.

GARY  
You should be loving Gary...fuck Jesus...all over my ass...and shit, I mean FUCK! I'm your fucking husband!

PAMELA

And that must do something to my body, right?

GARY

Be my fucking wife!

PAMELA

It must be doing something.

GARY

(almost to himself, defeated)

Fucking woman-ass shit...getting all up in her...God...and fucking shit...and fuck.

PAMELA

Then I had this weird poop today and it made me realize that maybe all of that anger is manifesting itself in my bowels.

DAVID

Your poop was that weird?

PAMELA

You should've seen it David. It wasn't just weird poop. It was worse than that. It was angry poop.

DAVID

Then you should quit your job. Find something else.

PAMELA

I don't know. I'm hungry. What are we gonna do for dinner?

DAVID

We should get something. Take-out.

PAMELA

Give him a few more minutes. Then we'll go.

Gary starts punching the building.

DAVID

Michael? ... Michael, are you hungry? ... Mike.

MICHAEL

What?

DAVID

Are you hungry?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

DAVID

What do you want?

MICHAEL  
I don't know.

DAVID  
McDonald's?

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

DAVID  
Okay. You think you can wait a couple more minutes?

GARY  
If you don't let me in right this fucking second you can eat  
shit and fucking die you fucking bitch!  
(one last attempt...)  
I LOVE YOU!  
(He lies on the ground for a  
moment, motionless.)

MICHAEL  
Mom, I think he's done.

PAMELA  
Gary, are you done?

GARY  
(to Pamela)  
Fuck you.

PAMELA  
Just tell me if you're done. Are you done, Gary?

GARY  
No.

PAMELA  
I want to go home. Let's go home.

GARY  
Just leave me the fuck alone.

PAMELA  
I'm tired and I'm hungry.

GARY  
So?

PAMELA  
So come on, Gary. Carla's not gonna let you back in. Just  
tell her to fuck off one more time and then let's go home.

GARY  
I don't have a home anymore.



PAMELA

You're coming home with us.  
(Gary doesn't move.)  
Help me, David.

DAVID

Gary, your sister has a headache, let's go. ... You wanna go to McDonald's, Gary? ... Are you hungry, Gary?

GARY

No.

DAVID

It's just past seven-thirty. When was the last time you ate?

GARY

I don't know.

DAVID

Come with us. We'll feed you, we'll take you home, we'll wash your face.

GARY

I don't want to wash my face.

DAVID

You'll feel better.  
(He touches Gary's bruised  
face. With compassion.)  
Gary, you look terrible.

GARY

Shut up.

DAVID

(Helping Gary off the ground.)  
Let's go home.

GARY

This is my home.

DAVID

I know, but are you hungry?

GARY

Yeah.

DAVID

Then let's get some McDonald's.

GARY

I hate McDonald's.

Michael wants it. DAVID

You like McDonald's? GARY

Yeah. MICHAEL

Well I hate that crap. So would you do your Uncle Gary a favor and tell your folks you wanna eat at fucking Del Taco? GARY

Lights shift.

## SCENE TWO

Pamela and David's kitchen. Gary sits at the table, holding frozen peas up to his face. Pam cleans up, throwing away trash from McDonald's, etc.

Where'd my other shoe go? GARY

You threw it at Carla's window. PAMELA

I only have one shoe now. That's fucked up. GARY

Are you sober? PAMELA

Getting there. GARY

Pam pours a glass of wine for Gary.

She's such a bitch, you know? She keeps saying this stuff about God, and I'm all: fuck, I haven't even had my coffee yet. It's just like, that kinda fucking shit warps you. 'Cuz I think about it and then my stomach gets even more twisted because: what the fuck is wrong with a little drink? Or a little coke? If God didn't want us to do it, he wouldn't of invented it, it's just simple logic. So the real question is: why's she gotta go around and say I'm defective? That's what she's saying! And it makes me wanna hate her because *fuck*. And then some of the things she does...piss me off so bad. GARY

Like what? What things will she do? PAMELA

Gary finishes his wine. Pam refills it.

GARY

You know, just...like, I don't know, it's not even that she'll do...one thing. Just...stuff. ... Where's Michael?

PAMELA

David's putting him to bed.

GARY

It's early.

PAMELA

School night.

GARY

I was gonna see if he wanted to play a video game.

PAMELA

I'd say yes, but David'll say no.

GARY

Well, then, can *I* play a video game?

PAMELA

They're in Michael's room. ... So, *no*. He's in bed.

GARY

I could move the video games to the living room...

PAMELA

Look, I'm gonna let you stay here. I'm gonna let you live here as long as you want. Until Carla invites you back home. Or until you get your own place. I won't ever pressure you to leave. You can think of this place as your own home, I swear.

GARY

Thanks, Pam.

PAMELA

But you gotta shut up when I tell you to shut up. (Beat.) Just hang out with me.

GARY

No offense, I love you and shit, but: I wish you were Carla.

PAMELA

I know. Sorry...

GARY

She's hated me before, but it was, like, cuz she loved me so much. But the God stuff's new and I'm afraid He's gonna make her hate me for real this time. You think that could happen?

PAMELA

I don't know Gary. Sometimes people change. They just change.

GARY

I don't get why she hasn't called me. That's all I want--a phone call. Just one fucking phone call.

Pamela makes a "phone" shape with her hand, puts it up to her ear.

PAMELA

Ring, ring. Ring, ring.

GARY

(playing along)

Hello?

PAMELA

(putting on a deep voice)

Hello, Gary.

GARY

Is this supposed to be Carla?

PAMELA

No, Gary, this is God.

GARY

Shit.

PAMELA

I have a message for you.

GARY

What is it?

PAMELA

Something I've been meaning to tell you...

GARY

Yeah?

PAMELA

You stink. Seriously, it's so bad. Have you ever heard of deodorant? Is it possible to die of smelling someone because you're killing me. You should shower. Shower!

They get into a playful shoving match, like two kids. After a few beats, they stop. Gary pours himself some wine.

PAMELA

Gary...? I need you to feel my left breast.

What?  
GARY

What I said.  
PAMELA

Why?  
GARY

I think I have a lump.  
PAMELA

I don't want to touch your boobs.  
GARY

I'm freaking out, Gary.  
PAMELA

Get David to do it.  
GARY

I don't want him to know --  
PAMELA

He's your husband.  
GARY

-- unless I know it's really something.  
PAMELA

Pam, if you're worried --  
GARY

I'm worried.  
PAMELA

Then you should talk to David --  
GARY

Just, stop, okay? Will you do it?  
PAMELA

It's kinda weird.  
GARY

It's medical.  
PAMELA

It doesn't seem medical.  
GARY

I don't want you to cop a feel, just tell me I have cancer.  
PAMELA

GARY

You don't want me to tell you you have cancer.

PAMELA

I said, *if* I have cancer. I want you to tell me *if*.

GARY

That's not what you said.

PAMELA

It is.

GARY

Is not.

PAMELA

Is too. Look, I don't care what I said, it's what I meant.

GARY

You don't have cancer, Pam.

PAMELA

Everyone I know has cancer.

GARY

Who? Who do you know that has it? Specifically?

PAMELA

Mom had cancer.

GARY

Besides mom.

PAMELA

A lot of people, Gary.

GARY

Name three. Other than mom. Three other people.

PAMELA

Aunt Meg. She had it.

GARY

That's one.

PAMELA

David's sister...

GARY

That's two.

PAMELA

And me.

GARY  
You can't say yourself.

PAMELA  
Why not?

GARY  
'Cuz you don't have it!

PAMELA  
Just touch my boob. Touch it and tell me if you feel a lump.

Beat. Gary feels for a lump.

GARY  
It feels good. Well, not good, that's the wrong word, but it feels normal. Not that it's normal to feel your sister's boob, but the boob itself feels fine. Healthy. It feels...

(He removes his hand.)

Don't tell anyone I touched that, okay?

Beat. Lights shift.

**THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!**

Email [erik@erikpatterson.org](mailto:erik@erikpatterson.org) to request a full draft.