

The Other Son

By

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CHRIS, a well-dressed young man in his late 20s, sits at a dinner table, staring at his MOTHER, a well-dressed lady in her late 50s, around a table set for four. They are not eating, but listen to the yelling from the next room, where blurry forms move around.

ADAM (O.S.)
(yelling)
Grades aren't everything!

DAD (O.S.)
(not yelling, but firm)
I am aware of that, but did you even bother to show up to your classes?

ADAM (O.S.)
I can't experience life in a classroom! I need to get out and explore - to find myself!

DAD (O.S.)
Adam, I'm not paying \$40,000 a semester for you to find yourself.

ADAM (O.S.)
You never understood me! I can't be a wage slave and spend my entire life selling land!

DAD (O.S.)
You don't have to develop estate. But as long as I'm paying for your college, you'll have to -

ADAM (O.S.)
You always throw that in my face! I wish you were dead!

ADAM, a clean-shaven young 20-something in green "slacker" clothes, storms into the room, grabs a plate, and stomps away.

MOM
Adam, your father doesn't....

Chris's hand trembles in rage as DAD, a finely-dressed man in his 50s wearing a blue shirt, walks in and sits down with dignity, politely pulling out his napkin and cutting his food.

CHRIS
Dad, may I please be excused?

DAD
You're not done with your dinner yet.

CHRIS
I'm not hungry.

DAD
Yes, Christopher, you may be excused.

Chris gets up and quietly and follows Adam's path.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - EVENING

2

Chris opens the door, fists clenched. Adam sits playing a video game, headphones on, blaring music still audible.

CHRIS
You shouldn't talk to Dad that way.

Adam pauses the music and pulls off his headphones.

ADAM
What was that, Chris? I shouldn't talk to Dad that way? Let me guess what else.

Adam pauses the game, gets up, and advances on Chris.

ADAM
What else, let's see...we wouldn't have any of this without Dad? He sacrificed so much for what we've got? Don't you know how hard he works to provide for us? Blah. Blah. Blah.

CHRIS
This attitude is beneath you.

ADAM
Your sucking up makes me sick. I wish he would just die so I could get what's mine and be out of here.

Adam goes back towards his game as Chris turns to leave.

CHRIS
Be careful what you wish for.

INT. CHRIS'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

3

Chris puts on a red tie.

DAD (O.S.)

Chris. Adam. Come to the living room,
please.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

4

Chris enters and sees Dad sitting with two brown envelopes in front of him. Hesitantly, Chris takes a seat.

Adam (green shirt) slinks in and leans on the doorway, arms folded.

ADAM (O.S.)

What?

DAD

I have something for each of you.

He pushes the envelopes towards each of them. Chris and Adam take them and open them questioningly, revealing them to be cashier's checks.

CHRIS

Dad, what is this?

DAD

These checks are each for half the value of the company. They represent its controlling interest. If you choose to cash them, then all of our current holdings and development projects will be liquidated and you'll divide the assets as per my instructions to my attorney, and I will officially....

He trails off as Adam looks at the check, turns, and walks out of the room. Chris and Dad look at each other, listening to the sounds of crashing from Adam's room.

Adam walks past the entry of the living room, a stuffed backpack over his shoulder. We hear the front door open and close. Chris jumps up.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

5

Chris crashes out of the front door. Adam is already halfway

across the lawn.

CHRIS

Adam! Wait!

Adam doesn't turn around.

ADAM

Why? I got what I want. He's not even going to come see me to say -

The front door opens again. Dad steps out and stops, looking at Adam.

Adam turns slowly, staring at Dad. Dad stares back. Adam spits, and turns, walking away.

CHRIS

Now what?

DAD

As I was about to say, I'm officially retired. What's left of the company is yours, but it will take some work to rebuild it after the liquidation. But I'm here to help.

Dad turns to go inside. Chris hesitates, then turns to...

CONTINUOUS:

INT. CHRIS'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

6

...The Private Investigator sitting across the table, an older man in a cliché trench coat and fedora.

CHRIS

His name is Adam, and he's my brother. I want to know everything.

INVESTIGATOR

Following someone 24/7 isn't cheap.

CHRIS

You worry about knowing what Adam's doing - you'll get paid.

The PI nods. A calendar on Chris's desk reads "Feb 7".

MONTAGE

7

- (Development Site 1) Chris gets out of his car with rolled up plans, sees a sign with "sold" on it - he throws the plans on the ground in anger.
- (Office) Chris in his office, shirt sleeves rolled up, busily typing and checking red-marked balance sheets.
- (Meeting 1) Chris shows a development board to investors.
- (Front Yard) Chris drives to his parent's home late at night, Dad standing on the front porch. Dad greets him with a warm wave as he walks up. Chris shakes his head.
- (Meeting 2) Chris shows the development board to another group - one stands up and shakes his hand.
- (Office) Chris typing, looking more upbeat.
- (Development site) Chris looks up from plans at the building going up
- (Front Yard) Chris drives home, smiling as Dad greets him from the front porch.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

8

A wall calendar reads "May 15" as Chris walks in the door and through the room.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT.

9

Dad sorts mail on the table as Chris walks in.

DAD

How was your day, Son?

CHRIS

Long...but no complaints. What's that?

Chris indicates a large plain envelope with "Chris" handwritten on it.

DAD

I don't know. It was in the mailbox.

Chris grabs the envelope...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT CONTINUOUS.

10

...and pops down on the couch with the envelope and a glass of scotch.

He opens the envelope and riffles through the contents. Surveillance photos of Adam at a party surrounded by girls, at the doorway of a huge home, driving with a different girl in the car.

Then a folded paper with more photos: the home with a "Repossessed" sign in front. The car at a used car dealership parking lot.

Adam, with a beard, waiting tables.

Chris smiles, then unfolds the paper: a bank statement printout with "Overdrawn: Account Closed" across the top.

*Ring*Ring*

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

11

Chris opens the door as the bell rings, and smirks, putting on sunglasses.

Adam is waiting tables, bringing out dishes of food.

Chris sits at a table, picking up a menu and careful to hide his face. Adam steps up, holding a writing pad.

ADAM

Welcome to Snug on the Square. What can I get for....

Adam trails off as Chris lowers the menu and takes off his sunglasses.

ADAM

....what do you want?

CHRIS

I'll start with an iced tea.

ADAM

Great.

Adam starts to walk away.

CHRIS

So...is this where you finally "found

yourself"?

ADAM

Shut up.

CHRIS

Is that any way to talk to a customer?

A BALD MANAGER with a "Manager" name tag looks on from a distance.

ADAM

Let me get you a new server.

CHRIS

No, I don't want to cause you any trouble. After all, someone has to take care of you wage slaves, right?

ADAM

Chris, just get out!

Chris smirks, stands up, and walks away. At the door he turns back and sees the Manager griping at Adam.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

12

Chris walks out towards his car, a spring in his step.

ADAM

Chris!

Chris turns. Adam, without an apron, charges across the parking lot - and takes a swing at Chris.

Chris dodges, and Adam falls to the ground.

CHRIS

Nice.

Chris starts to walk away.

ADAM

Chris.

Chris pauses, not turning.

ADAM

I'm...I've got nothing. Do you think...do you think Dad will give me

a job?

Chris turns slowly, then bends down right in his face.

CHRIS

It's not Dad's company anymore. You cashed your check - I cashed mine. Do you have any idea the damage you did? How much was liquidated - at a LOSS - when you walked away? I stayed. I was loyal. I wasn't greedy. I worked to undo the damage that you did. So let me leave you with the same parting words that you left us with.

Chris spits, stands up, straightens his jacket, and walks away, leaving Adam in the dirt.

FADE TO:

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

13

Fireworks light up the sky - July 4th.

Chris pulls up to the house. He jumps out, an American flag pin on his lapel.

He smiles, watching the fireworks for a moment, then jumps up the steps towards the house.

He glances in the front window -

Adam sits in the front room with Mom and Dad. Dad sees Chris and waves him in.

Chris's face hardens, and he turns, sitting on the steps of the front porch.

He sits, listening to the party inside. Time ticks by.

Dad slowly opens the front door looking around until he spots Chris.

DAD

Chris, what are you doing? Didn't you see? Adam came home! It's a miracle....

He slows as Chris stands up and walks into the yard - to the same place where Adam stood as he left.

CHRIS

How could you? How could you!?! Don't you remember what he did to us? To our company?

DAD

I know better than you. I know what cashing that check did to the company. Now I'm learning what cashing the check did to him.

CHRIS

I know what it did to him! Would you like the pictures? I've got plenty of them.

DAD

I know. I saw them.

CHRIS

Then why? WHY? Why did you let him back in? Why even talk to him?

DAD

Chris...he's my son.

CHRIS

SO AM I! But I'm the one that stayed! I put my life on hold so you could stay here. In this big house, eating your nice meals, with your nice clothes!

DAD

Chris, I didn't need you to do that. I told you I retired - I was planning on that for years.

CHRIS

I killed myself to rebuild that company. Why didn't you tell me?

DAD

You never asked me what I needed. I am so proud of what you accomplished. Aren't you proud of yourself?

CHRIS

Of course I'm - I think I'm - stop it! That has nothing to do with why HE is back - and why you LET him back in.

He's the one that walked away - that turned his back on us.

Chris turns away. Dad slowly steps towards him.

DAD

Adam was standing right where you are when he left. And he was standing right where you are when I ran up to him...

Dad turns Chris around by the shoulders, and puts his hand on Chris's face as only a father can.

DAD

...and I told him that no matter what, he would always be my son, just like you, Chris, will always be my son. And I will always be father to both of you. You have everything I could give you, and everything you worked so hard for - and now we both have what we could never earn - your brother, back again. We can be a family again - but not without your brother, and not without you.

Dad wraps his arms around Chris's shoulders, guiding him back towards the house as fireworks blaze in the sky.