

Fathers

By

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Fade in:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It is an overcast day. There are a few dozen people gathered around what appears to be a funeral. Everyone is wearing black and sitting in white folding chairs. In front of the group of chairs is a large coffin. In front of the coffin is a large picture of the deceased with a horseshoe of roses covering it. A podium sits beside the coffin.

There are three people sitting in the front row. They are ROSE, JEREMY, and JOSEPH. Jeremy is a 20 something with blond hair and a medium build. He is wearing a black suit with a slightly loosened tie and his suit jacket unbuttoned. He is slightly slouching. Joseph is also a 20 something. He has brunette hair and a medium build. He also has a black suit but his tie is on properly. His suit jacket is on and has the top button buttoned. Between them sits Rose. Rose is in her 50's with grey streaks but still has a somewhat youthful look for her age. Rose is the mother of Jeremy and Joseph. Rose is slightly weeping and dotting her tears with a handkerchief.

ROSE

I just can't believe he's gone.

JEREMY

I know. It seemed like just yesterday he was telling me how disappointed he was in me.

JOSEPH

Yeah, in reality it had been almost a week since he said that to you.

ROSE

Stop it. Both of you. Jeremy, your father was rough on you but you know he loved you very much.

JEREMY

No he didn't.

JOSEPH

That's true, he really didn't like Jeremy.

ROSE

Stop it, both of you! Father O'Malley is about to speak.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER O'MALLEY walks up to the podium. He is tall, in his late 70's, and has a full head of white hair.

FATHER O'MALLEY
Hello all. And thank you for
coming to the funeral of a man who
many of you loved and cared for...

Father O'Malley takes out a piece of paper from his vest pocket and puts on a pair of reading glasses.

FATHER O'MALLEY
George Betancourt.

Father O'Malley looks somewhat surprised. He looks at the coffin.

FATHER O'MALLEY
Oh, damn. I didn't realize this
was George's funeral. Sorry, I do
a lot of these.

Joseph starts to cry uncontrollably. Rose follows suit. Jeremy looks panicked.

FATHER O'MALLEY
Obviously, the loss of his presence
can be felt in every tear drop,
heard in every cry, tasted once
again, in every tear drop. You
know, the ones that fall into your
mouth.

Father O'Malley continues to talk inaudibly off-screen.

JEREMY
What are you doing, Joseph!?!?

JOSEPH
It's called crying, Jeremy. It's
what humans do when they are sad.

JEREMY
Yeah, I know what it is. But I
literally have never seen you cry,
ever.

ROSE
Stop yelling, Jeremy. You're
making a scene.

JEREMY

We're at a funeral. There's a dead guy in a box. This whole thing's a scene.

ROSE

That "dead guy in a box" is your father.

JOSEPH

It's just so much more real now. It didn't seem real until *right now*.

JEREMY

It didn't seem real? It wasn't real when we got the call to come to the morgue? Or when we identified the body? Or when we had the visitation?

ROSE

Leave your brother alone. He is in no condition for you to be berating him.

JOSEPH

Mommy! I miss Daddy!

Joseph buries his head in his mother's breast and continues to weep and moan heavily.

ROSE

I know sweetheart. We all do.

JEREMY

Some more than others obviously.

ROSE

Jeremy, please show some respect. It's a funeral.

JEREMY

I'll try. Showing respect for each other wasn't really Dad and my thing.

FATHER O'MALLEY

And here to speak the eulogy is George's youngest son, Joseph.

Joseph is still crying.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

Come on, Joseph. You gotta do the eulogy.

JOSEPH

I can't. I just can't. You have to instead. If I go up there I'm just gonna lose it.

JEREMY

You mean lose it more than this?

JOSEPH

Oh yeah.

Joseph makes a moaning, groaning, weeping sound.

JOSPEPH

Oh yeah. Big time! Like his favorite candy bar. Aghhhhh.

Joseph goes back to crying on Rose's shoulder.

JEREMY

Okay. Fine. Whatever. Just give me your speech and I'll adjust it for myself. Where is the speech?

JOSEPH

It's right here.

Joseph points to his heart.

JEREMY

Okay. Great. Fish it out of your breast pocket and I'll do my best.

JOSEPH

No, it's not written on paper, Jeremy. It's written in my heart.

JEREMY

Well crap, Joe, you might as well have written it in freaking wing dings.

JOSEPH

It doesn't matter now. The speech is broken now anyway...like my heart.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

Well next time you write anything on one of your muscles be sure to at least make a PDF copy, okay?

ROSE

Jeremy. Just get up there.

JEREMY

I'm a going.

Jeremy rushes up to the podium. Father O'Malley, slightly confused, steps off the podium and allows Jeremy to take the podium.

JEREMY

Joe was going to do the eulogy but he was overcome with emotion and tears and consequently a large amount of snot. But I am here to try and fill in for him. I'm Jeremy. The other brother. The older brother. Some would say the more relevant one. I mean, if this was the middle ages and Dad was king I would be next in line to take over and Joe would just be some prince. But anyway, some may know that my father and I didn't always get along too great. He often told me that there was nothing that I could do that he couldn't do two times better. But now he's dead, and I'm alive...so, I win. But we're not here to talk about who did or didn't win, which once again, is obviously me, the one still alive.

JOSEPH

You're botching it! (O.S.)

JEREMY

Oh, I'm sorry. Did someone say something? Does someone else want to come up here and do this. Perhaps any younger siblings?

Aside from Joe's weeping there is mostly silence.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

Alright then. Well, like I was going to say before being interrupted, rudely I might add, is: we are here to remember a man. A man some of us loved and cared about. Although I never got along with him a number of you obviously did. He had a humor that some would consider crude nowadays. I think he knew almost every racist joke ever told and invented a good ten percent of them himself. Which is to say, he was old school, if we wanted to be euphemistic about it. And isn't that what a eulogy is all about; euphemism? So, I will say, he loved hard work, and he loved others that looked and sounded like him. He also cared for those that voted in the same manner as him. He was quite fond of people who didn't let their hair grow too long and he loved it when heterosexuals got married and raised families.

Joe takes his head off of Rose's shoulder for just a moment.

JOSEPH

It's true. Every word. He loved heterosexual marriage!

Joseph once again buries his head into Rose's shoulder.

JEREMY

There were very few times that my father and I were both happy at the same time but I remember there was one time when we both had an overlap of happiness, albeit brief. I used to read comic books a lot when I was younger. When I was 12 I saw a pair of those X-Ray glasses you could buy. Being that I was twelve and the child labor laws that were in place I couldn't buy them on my own so I asked George to buy me a pair. George is what he told me to call him instead of Dad by the way. Anyway, I'd never seen him so eager to buy me

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JEREMY (cont'd)

anything. He was quite cautious to part with money no matter how little the amount. I once saw him argue the price of a Doc Ellis baseball card from an old woman. She wanted one dollar but George talked her down to fifty cents even though he knew the value of the card to be a hundred fold of what the old clueless woman was offering. Who, if memory serves, was just having the garage sale to help pay for a surgery, but I digress. Anyway, he said he would buy me the X-Ray glasses and all I had to do was paint the fence. A primer and then two coats. I agreed. I painted the fence as he watched from his lawn chair and drank beer. We both were happy. I talked about all the amazing things I would do with my X-Ray glasses. I talked about seeing through walls, poker cards, women's clothes, anything. I was elated. He would just smile when I would go on and on about it. That's when I should have been concerned but I wasn't. Ironically, my love and want of X-Ray glasses had blinded me to the truth that was right in front of my face.

JOSEPH

That's not irony, X-Ray glasses are supposed to help you see past things!

JEREMY

I'm sorry. Once again. Someone else want to do this eulogy? No?!?! Okay then. Anyway. It took about two weeks for my X-Ray glasses to get to our house. I was excited, as was George. He said to make sure that I told him when I was going to try them out. He wanted to be there for it. At the time I thought we finally were equally excited for a moment, which we

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JEREMY (cont'd)
were, but for different reasons. When the package finally got there I tried on the glasses. I tried to see through the wall. Nothing. I was disheartened, George laughed. I tried to look through a deck of cards. once again, nothing. And George laughed. The final test and hope for the glasses was the most important. Woman's clothing. I took the glasses to the pool. Nothing. George laughed. I was devastated. Keep in mind that this was during the infancy of the internet so a twelve year old couldn't just get unlimited access to pornography. We had to use our imagination to see naked ladies or maybe get a Playboy from the 70s that a friends uncle was willing to part with.

JOSEPH
You're rambling!

JEREMY
The point I am trying to say is that even though we didn't always get along he sometimes made me happy. And it seems that as happy as I was when I was waiting and thinking for my X-Ray glasses to get here, that's how happy George seemed to make my Mom consistently. That's how happy he seemed to make his co-workers. And that's how happy he seemed to make all of you, his friends. Except you.

Jeremy point at a man in the crowd.

JEREMY
I don't think I've ever seen you before. Anywho, that's my speech. Hashtag: Awkward. Hashtag: (toward coffin) Later pops. (Toward funeral audience) I'll see you all at the wake. We're having pastrami, it should be sweet.

(CONTINUED)

Jeremy walks off of the podium. Father O'Malley gets back to the podium.

FATHER O'MALLEY

So that's what happens when you allow your stream of consciousness to do a eulogy. Still, not the worst I have seen.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Rose, Jeremy, and Joseph are all sitting in a large office. There are a few other random people standing around in the room as well. Joseph has finally stopped crying but his eyes are red. Rose is once again sitting in the chair in between Joseph and Jeremy. Jeremy has his suit jacket off around the back of his seat and now has his tie so loose it looks more like a lasso than a tie. He is looking at his smart phone. There is a man sitting behind a desk. This is MR. DUNES, the family lawyer. He is in his 40s and had large black frame glasses and a suit on. he is looking at a piece of paper, presumably the will.

ROSE

Jeremy. Stop texting.

JEREMY

I'm not texting. I am looking at the digital copy of today's *Garfield*. Oh boy, he sure does love lasagna.

Rose takes the phone away from Jeremy and puts it in her purse.

ROSE

You can have it back *after* the will reading.

JEREMY

This is bogus.

ROSE

What was that, young man?

JEREMY

Nothing.

MR. DUNES

Okay. Before I read the will I just want you to know that it's a little weird. So don't get mad at me. I'm just the messenger, okay?

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

Don't you screw me over, bean counter.

MR. DUNES

Bean counters are accountants. I'm a lawyer.

JEREMY

Okay, sorry. Ambulance Chaser.

MR. DUNES

Well, that's not fair either. I do mostly estate and property law. I have never been a part of an injury lawsuit.

JOSEPH

Can we just get on with it, please?

ROSE

I agree.

MR. DUNES

Okay, here goes. I would like to leave all my possessions and estate to my lovely wife, Rose. I would like my money to be split evenly between my wife Rose and my son, Joseph.

Mr. Dunes pauses for a moment.

JEREMY

I'm sorry. When you say "son" you mean "sons", right? Pluralized. And when you said Joseph you just were pausing and were going to say "and Jeremy", right?

MR. DUNES

No, actually. That's where the will gets a little strange. He continues. Jeremy, you were a disappointment and I never loved you.

JEREMY

I was talking about that earlier. See Mom? Told ya'.

(CONTINUED)

MR. DUNES

I never wanted children but your mother did. And I would have done anything to make her happy. Unfortunately, after months and months of trying, and believe me, we tried a lot.

JEREMY

Jesus, did he write this or dictate this to you?

ROSE

Calm down.

JEREMY

Well, it's poorly worded and gross.

MR. DUNES

We eventually were told by doctors that your mother wasn't fertile. So we adopted you, Jeremy. I never really felt connected to you and you never really did anything to impress me or make me proud. You hit that home run once but then I found out you paid the pitcher from the other team ten dollars to throw you a meatball right down the plate.

JEREMY

Stupid Donny Tescaloni. Couldn't keep his rat mouth shut about that.

MR. DUNES

And that sums up why I never believed in you. You always took the easy way.

JEREMY

Well yeah. Work smart not hard, right? Right!?!?!?

Jeremy looks around at everyone. No one really says anything. Mr Dunes looks up for a moment at him and then back down at the will.

MR. DUNES

I used to feel guilty and thought that I just wasn't cut out to be a dad. And then, a miracle happened. Your momma got

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MR. DUNES (cont'd)
pregnant. And we had a baby
boy. We had Joseph. From the
moment he was born, I just felt
connected to him. He's my blood,
you're not.

JEREMY
What a terrible person. You don't
have any blood now do ya'!

ROSE
Jeremy, stop it!

JEREMY
But, really?!?! I mean,
c'mon! He's finding a way to be
mean to me from beyond the grave
and I'm the jerk?

MR. DUNES
So Jeremy, I hope you understand
that's why I am not including you
in the will. I think you should
make your own way. If I left you
any money you would probably just
waste it on booze, women, and video
games.

JEREMY
We obviously have different
definitions of the word "waste."

MR. DUNES
But anyway. Your mom didn't want
me to tell you about being adopted
because she didn't want you to
think we loved you any less. And
to be far, your mom does love you
just as much as she does
Joseph. So don't be mad at her, be
mad at me. You were a bad son but
I realize that I was a bad father.

JEREMY
No, I'll choose to be mad at both
of you actually.

MR. DUNES
But look on the bright side. I'm
not your father. You can go find
your biological father if you
want. Not your mother though. She

(MORE)

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MR. DUNES (cont'd)
died giving birth to
you. Sorry. I will leave you one
thing, however. You can have the
jet ski. You're the only one in
the family still juvenile enough to
enjoy it.

JEREMY
If he couldn't enjoy the jet ski he
died a long time ago, am I right?

Jeremy looks around and raises his hand to try and give
someone a high five. No one reciprocates.

JEREMY
Yeah, yeah. Inappropriate. I
know. But, score. jet ski is
better than nothing I guess. Is
that it, Dunes?

MR. DUNES
No, he goes on with some poetry and
parting words.

JEREMY
But I mean, I don't get anything
else, right?

MR. DUNES
Yeah, you just get the jet
ski. And...

Mr. Dunes looks through the will some more and flips a few
pages.

MR. DUNES
That's it for you. It looks like.

JEREMY
Alright. I'm outty. May I have my
phone, please?

Rose takes the phone she previously confiscated out of her
purse and hands it to Jeremy.

ROSE
Jeremy, please stay. I'm sorry I
never told you. I'm still your
mother.

JEREMY

Nope. George said it. My mother's dead. But on the upside, my real dad isn't. And he may have given me up for adoption but whoever he is I doubt when I find him he can treat me any worse than my adopted father.

Jeremy starts to walk out the door.

ROSE

Jeremy, wait!

JEREMY

Just shoot me a text. Gonna go find my sole biological parent. See ya everybody. See you at the next wedding or funeral.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy walks into the hallway from the lawyer's office and walks briskly; not stopping to close the door. Rose runs out of the office shortly after him in pursuit.

ROSE

Jeremy. Wait. Please!

Jeremy stops with his back still turned for a moment. He then turns around.

JEREMY

Is that even my real name? Or did you change it? Like when we adopted the dog from the pound and his name was Louie and I changed it to Millennium Falcon? Is that what you did to me? Actually, that would be sweet. Please. Tell me my name is Millennium Falcon.

ROSE

No, you're Jeremy. My son, Jeremy. And I am your mother no matter what George said in his will and no matter who actually physically birthed you.

JEREMY

Do you know who my biological father is?

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Does it matter?

JEREMY

Yes. No. Maybe. I don't know. Twenty minutes ago I thought my biological father was dead and my biological mother was alive. And now I know it's the opposite. And twenty minutes ago I didn't have to put adjectives in front of the words "mother" and "father." Because I only had one of each. They needn't be described further.

ROSE

Jeremy, I know you are upset. But I just lost a husband a few days ago. Please don't make me feel like I've lost a son today.

Rose has tears in her eyes as she puts her hand on Jeremy's cheek. Jeremy allows her to do so for a second and then slides away.

JEREMY

Just...where is he? My biological father, I mean.

ROSE

He moved away when you were little.

JEREMY

That's fine. Where is he?

ROSE

Marshalltown.

JEREMY

Marshalltown? That's like twenty minutes away. I thought you were going to say somewhere I wouldn't have the will to travel to like Antarctica, Siberia, or Missouri or something. I could go see him right now!

ROSE

Are you sure this is what you want?

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

I've never been so sure of something I haven't thought out at all since that time I tried to roller blade down that escalator rail. So, please. Just give me his name and address, Adoption Mother.

ROSE

Adoption Mother? That's my new name? Well, fine.

Rose pulls out a pen and a piece of paper from her purse and starts to write on it. She is still looking down at the paper as she begins to talk.

ROSE

I'm sorry that George wasn't a good father to you. I knew he wasn't but *I* still tried to be the best mother *I* could be. Maybe letting him treat you the way he did sometimes was wrong but I always loved you from the moment I saw you and I love you just as much now. I may not have birthed you but I fed you. I changed your diapers. I taught you how to walk and talk and do algebra and throw a spiral with a football.

JEREMY

You did kind of cover a lot of bases.

ROSE

But if you want to think of me differently because of something I had NO CONTROL of before I met you than that is your choice.

She stops writing and looks up with a tear streaming down her cheek.

ROSE

Here's his name and address. If you want to go then I guess I shouldn't stop you. Just remember, this man didn't want you. George didn't want you, but at least he kept you. Even if it was just to make me happy.

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Rose starts to walk away.

JEREMY
Adoption Mother, wait...

Rose walks back into the lawyer's room.

JEREMY
Yeah. That name is pretty cold.

Jeremy looks at the piece of paper.

JEREMY
I'm coming home, Pappa!

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

There is a small house surrounded by other similar looking houses in the middle of suburbia. The grass on the lawn is somewhat discolored compared to the two houses adjacent to it. It is also longer with a larger amount of noticeable weeds. There is a sign in the yard that read "No Solicitors." A car pulls up to the curb in front of the house. Jeremy gets out and is looking at the piece of paper Rose gave him.

JEREMY
1725 Lucas Street. This is it. Father and son reunion. I wonder if he's gonna cry. I bet he cries. He will obviously feel wracked with guilt over abandoning me all those years ago. He didn't know any better, I'm sure.

Jeremy not so much walks as he does skip up to the door and grabs the door knocker and begins to knock loudly with a grin on his face.

JEREMY
Old style door knocker. Cool.

Jeremy waits a moment maintaining a large grin on his face. A few moments go by before the door opens up. There is an older gentleman, in his 60s, at the door. He is mostly bald aside from a grey horseshoe of hair that surrounds the skin atop his head. This is PATRICK.

PATRICK
Didn't you see the sign? NO Solicitors!

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

I'm not here to sell you anything. I'm here to give you something. My love!

Jeremy extends his arms out. Patrick looks at him for a moment and then slams the door on his face. Jeremy frowns for the first time since pulling up to the house. He goes and grabs the door knocker and once again knocks. The door swings open again. Patrick is visibly more angry than he was before.

PATRICK

What!?!?

JEREMY

Sorry about that. I jumped the gun. I can explain. I'm your son!

Patrick once again slams the door. Jeremy is becoming distraught. He goes to the knocker for a third time and bangs on the door.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Go away!

JEREMY

But I'm your son!

PATRICK (O.S.)

I have no son!

JEREMY

No, that's actually not true. About 28 years ago, you gave up an extremely adorable baby, remember?

PATRICK (O.S.)

You killed your mother! You and that fathead of yours!

JEREMY

Ah-ha! So you *do* remember. To be fair, I was *literally* a newborn baby when that happened. It wasn't premeditated or anything. Come on, let me in. We'll toss back a couple cold ones and talk about sports. I don't even care which one, whatever you like. Baseball, football, bow hunting, anything!

(CONTINUED)

PATRICK (O.S.)

No! I don't claim you! Now leave before I call the cops and report you for trespassing!

JEREMY

This isn't exactly how I imagined our reunion would go.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Yeah, well. Life doesn't always go the way you expect it to.

JEREMY

Thanks! I've only talked to you for a minute and you're already teaching me life lessons! Come on, I want to get to know you.

Patrick opens the door. He still looks quite angry

PATRICK

Consider it a going away present. Now leave!

Patrick once again slams the door. Jeremy goes up to the door to talk through it.

JEREMY

You must care a little bit or else you wouldn't have opened the door again. There is so much I want to know about you. What's your favorite color? Mine's sky blue. Not like today because it's kind of overcast but when it's sunny out.

The door opens once again. Patrick has a large shotgun and is pointing it at Jeremy.

JEREMY

Are you taking me hunting?

PATRICK

Get off my property.

JEREMY

So, I take it that's a no.

Patrick cocks the gun.

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JEREMY

Okay. you're busy. I'll just come back some other time.

Jeremy starts to walk backward with his hands up.

PATRICK

No, you won't.

JEREMY

You wanna swap e-mails at least?

Patrick points the gun into the air and shoots.

JEREMY

Okay! Bye!

Jeremy quickly runs to his car and drives away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Jeremy is lying in a bath robe in a large recliner. There is a small table sitting next to him. The robe is poorly tied and is only really covering his genital area. Above him is a fan with a bath towel dangling from it. The table and whole area surrounding him is covered in all sorts of debris: Pizza boxes, fast food wrappers, a plethora of all sorts of beer, hard liquor, and even wine coolers, and random clothes. They are all strewn about at random.

Jeremy grabs a half drunk beer and chugs it. He then shuffles through some of the wrappers on the table and pulls forth a piece of pizza. The pizza has a receipt on it. Without a second thought he blows the receipt off of the pizza and shoves the whole piece in his mouth. He slowly chews. As he is doing this he grabs a bottle of whiskey and opens it up. He pours a small shot into the beer bottle and looks at it. He then sets down the beer bottle and opts for just swigging straight from the whiskey bottle. He finishes the swig as he is still appearing to be chewing on the pizza. He once again reaches into the seemingly magic pile on the table and pulls out a bottle of ranch dressing. He starts to pour some into his mouth but some of it falls on his face and robe. Jeremy groans, his voice is muffled from the remaining pizza.

JEREMY

Awhhhhhh, man!

Jeremy gets up and walks from the living room to the adjacent kitchen. He reaches under the sink and pulls out some detergent. There is a cupboard above the sink. Jeremy

(CONTINUED)

opens the cupboard and gets a glass. He fills the glass with water. He sets the glass down and takes off the top of the detergent. He pours some detergent on the part of the robe that got ranch dressing on it. He then drops the detergent and picks up the glass of water and starts to walk back toward the recliner. While on the way he throws the water on the stain, joining the detergent.

JEREMY

This should do.

Jeremy grabs the towel that is dangling from the fan and pulls it down. He starts to dab the stain. He sits down and re-reclines. He starts to sip from the bottle of whiskey as he still rubs the water and detergent in a lazy attempt to get rid of the ranch stain.

JEREMY

Damn, I'm resourceful.

Just then there is a knock at the door.

JEREMY

Go away!

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Jeremy! It's Joe. Open up!

JEREMY

Didn't you see the "Do Not Disturb" tag on my doorknob?

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Jeremy, this isn't a hotel.

JEREMY

I know, I live here. So if anything you should respect that sign even more!

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Just open up!

JEREMY

Ughhhh.

Jeremy gets up and walks to the door. He opens it up. Joseph is standing there.

JEREMY

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

Jeez, Jeremy. You look terrible.

JEREMY

Yeah, that's what it's like to be unloved, ya know? Oh, wait. You *don't* know. Because your biological father loved you. And you don't have to use adjectives to describe your dads because you only have one. Which I know that show from the eighties about having two dads, I can't remember the name right now.

JOSEPH

My Two Dads?

JEREMY

No, the one I'm thinking of one of the guys had a mullet.

JOSEPH

Yeah. It's *My Two Dads*.

JEREMY

No, not that one. This one had Paul Reiser.

JOSEPH

Yeah. It's *My Two Dads*. I'm fairly certain.

JEREMY

I don't think you're right. But whatever the show was called.

JOSEPH

My Two Dads. It was called *My Two Dads*.

JEREMY

Just let it go. It was the 80s. My point is. Whatever it was called, it's not as fun as they made it seem. I mean, I get two dads that both hate me and you get one dad that loves you.

JOSEPH

Yeah, and he died two weeks ago.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

You can't have it all
Broseph. Awh, crap. I guess we're
not brothers anymore.

JOSEPH

What about that time we cut our
fingers with a bottle cap and
pressed them together?

JEREMY

Okay. We're still blood brothers
but not now that we're not
biological brothers anymore we
aren't blood brothers squared. Why
did we do that at the time? What
was the point of being blood
brothers when we already thought we
were blood brothers?

JOSEPH

I don't know. It was the 80's. We
thought lots of things that were
silly were cool in the 80s.

JEREMY

Like *My Two Dads*.

JOSEPH

I told you that was the name of the
show.

JEREMY

Yeah, I know. I never
disagreed. so what do you want
anyway? Shouldn't you be off
somewhere spending your
inheritance. Unless your here to
split it?

JOSEPH

No, I can't do that.

JEREMY

You selfish bastard.

JOSEPH

No, I mean I *literally* can't do
that. It's a provision of the will
that Mom and I can't give you
anything or else we forfeit our
share.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

Wow.

JOSEPH

Yeah. I know. I was just coming by to make sure you were okay. Now that I know you aren't I am not sure what to do.

JEREMY

Just leave me be. I'll be fine. I'm not suicidal or anything. And if I become so, don't worry, I'll leave two notes. One for my reasons and one on the door that enters whichever room I do it in to warn whoever is gonna walk in what they are going to see. Later.

Jeremy slams the door. There is quickly a knock again. Jeremy reluctantly opens the door. Joe is once again standing at the door.

JEREMY

Yes?

JOSEPH

If you do kill yourself and you do leave a note you're not gonna blame me or mom at all are you?

Jeremy rolls his eyes.

JEREMY

No, if I kill myself I won't blame you or Rose.

JOSEPH

Thanks. And she's your mom, not Rose. I understand you hate George but she's had a hard enough time of late.

JEREMY

Yeah, yeah. She gave me a similar speech.

JOSEPH

Well, it's true. Also. I love you.

Joseph hugs Jeremy.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

I already said I wouldn't blame you in the note. You really need to be less emotional. At the funeral I see you cry for the first time and now you're hugging me. I don't know why you're worried about me I'm worried about you.

Joseph releases Jeremy from the hug.

JOSEPH

I know, I know. I'll be back to normal soon. It's hard to remember how to keep your emotions in once you start letting them out.

JEREMY

Don't worry. You'll get it back. You're the guy who *didn't* cry at the end of *Marley And Me*. That's a heartless, almost robotic ability to ignore emotion.

JOSEPH

Thanks.

JEREMY

Can I go back to what I was doing, now?

JOSEPH

Sure. What exactly are you doing?

Joseph attempts to peak past Jeremy as Jeremy leans into his eyeline.

JEREMY

Just stuff. Don't worry about it.

JOSEPH

Okay. Well, give Mom a call would ya'.

JEREMY

Okay. And she's no longer Mom to me. She's either Rose or Adoption Mother.

JOSEPH

You haven't really called her "Adoption Mother," have you?

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

I know. That's terrible, I probably shouldn't do that. I'll think of something else.

JOSEPH

That's probably best.

JEREMY

Okay. Later!

Jeremy slams the door abruptly on Joseph and walks back to his recliner.

JEREMY

What was I doing?

Jeremy looks around for a moment.

JEREMY

Oh, yeah.

Jeremy sinks back into his recliner. This time picking up the ranch dressing and drinking it.

JEREMY

Ranch is the new water.

Just then there is a knock at the door.

JEREMY

Joe! I told you! I won't blame you in the note.

There is silence for a second and another knock on the door.

JEREMY

For Pete Best's sake.

Jeremy slams the ranch dressing down into the wrapper pile and gets up. He moves as quickly as he can to the door and flings it open.

JEREMY

Just lea...

There is a small boy standing outside the door. The boy looks to be about ten years old. He has blond hair, glasses, and a large gap between his two front teeth. This is BILLY. Jeremy looks perplexed.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

What do you want, kid? If you're selling wrapping paper I don't want any. If you're selling cookies I'll take ten boxes.

BILLY

I'm not selling cookies.

JEREMY

Okay. What about popcorn? And if so does it come in those big tins?

BILLY

No.

JEREMY

Fine, the tins aren't a deal breaker. Just sign me up for a crapload of caramel corn and cheddar corn.

BILLY

No, I mean, I'm not selling anything. I'm looking for my dad.

JEREMY

Oh, jeez. Are you lost? Come on in and we'll get a hold of your parents and I'll check Amber Alert and make sure the whole town isn't freaking out.

BILLY

No, I mean, are you Jeremy?

Jeremy now looks at this kid suspiciously and with caution.

JEREMY

I might be. What did the collection company send you? They sent a kid to get me to pay up. Man, they have sunk to a new low. It's clever, I'll give 'em that. Those bastards.

BILLY

No, I don't know what that is. I'm Billy. I'm your son.

Jeremy has a look of shock as his eyes widen as far as humanly possible. He slams the door and puts his back to the door.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

I don't claim you! I have no son!

Jeremy takes a deep breath and grabs the bridge between his nose and calms down for a second.

JEREMY

Oh my God. I'm becoming my biological father.

BILLY (O.S.)

Do you remember Catherine Kelly?!?! That's my Mom

Jeremy closes his eyes for a moment.

JEREMY

Oh, boy.

Jeremy opens the door.

JEREMY

Come on in, kid. You want any whiskey?

BILLY

I'm ten years old!

JEREMY

So, just a lite beer or something then?

BILLY

What?

JEREMY

Awwwh, man. You're Mom didn't teach you sarcasm yet? I hoped that would be an inherited trait. Let's rap, or whatever kids call it now a days when a Dad talks to his son for the first time.

BILLY

Okay.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Jeremy is standing with his hand to his chin. Billy is sitting in the recliner.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Wow. You're messy. I bet you don't even make your bed.

JEREMY

Of course I don't make my bed. Why would I make something that I know I am going to unmake less than twenty four hours later. It's nonsense.

BILLY

That's what *I* say but I still have to do it.

JEREMY

So your mom...She's not dead is she? That's not why you're here, is it?

BILLY

No, she's alive.

JEREMY

Thank God. I was not ready to deal with that. Although I am not sure I approve. What kind of mother lets her ten year old son travel unsupervised to come visit me?

BILLY

She doesn't know I'm here. She told me about you but said I didn't need you. She said we were a family the way we were. Me, her, and Chad.

JEREMY

Is Chad your step dad?

Billy nods his head.

JEREMY

Is he terrible?

BILLY

He's okay, I guess.

JEREMY

He sounds like the worst. His name's Chad. So, as your father I want to ask you a couple questions before we go any farther with this conversation. Can you read?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

It's further, actually. It's a common mistake. Farther implies distance and I doubt you can measure a conversation in distance. And yes, I can read.

JEREMY

Great. You're a smart-ass. you get that from me, you know. Are you nice to people regardless of how good looking they are?

BILLY

I think so, I guess.

JEREMY

Good. Because everyone should be treated the same. And also there are some people that are ugly now that when you grow up are going to be very attractive and they'll remember who was nice to them and who was not. Play your cards right and you'll end up on some "Ugly Duckling Turned Into Beautiful Swan" episode on some talk show where some girl that wasn't good looking in high school asks you out on a date when you are like twenty and she'll be smoking hot.

BILLY

Should I be writing this down.

JEREMY

No, you should commit it to memory. Thirdly, have you seen the complete works of Mel Brooks?

BILLY

Who's Mel Brooks?

Jeremy looks genuinely frightened and upset.

JEREMY

Oh my God! You don't know who Mel Brooks is?!?! What have your mother and *Chad* been doing that warrants this neglect of comedy?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I get straight A's in school.

JEREMY

I'm gonna tell you something. Grades are meaningless, especially at your age. If you want to get into a good college maybe do well in high school but for now don't worry too much about it. I mean, pay attention and stuff, still, obviously. I never got good grades in school and I turned out...

Jeremy looks around at the dirt living room and then at himself in his robe.

JEREMY

Well, maybe keep getting good grades. Anyway, if you do good in school and your mom is doing alright and you've got *Chaaaaaaaad*, why come see me?

BILLY

I don't know. I just wanted to meet you, I guess. Is that so crazy?

Jeremy stands for a moment and looks teary eyed while he cracks a smile.

JEREMY

No, it's not crazy. I know exactly how you feel? You wanna hug? Let's hug?

Jeremy holds his arms out waiting for an embrace.

BILLY

Sure, but would you put on clothes first. You got some sort of stain on your robe.

Jeremy walks over to where there is a tall mirror up against the living room wall.

JEREMY

Yeah, I look pretty haggard. Do you know the word haggard yet?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

No. But if this is it I am guessing it's not good.

JEREMY

Yes, haggard is not something you strive for. Remember not to be *this*. What I am *right now...never* be.

BILLY

I hadn't planned on it.

JEREMY

Neither did I kid. But sometimes life doesn't turn out the way you plan it to.

Jeremy gets a smile on his face.

JEREMY

So, you met your biological father. You want to meet your biological grandfather?

BILLY

Will you put clothes on first.

JEREMY

I sure will!

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

Jeremy is once again in Patrick's yard walking with Billy a step in front of him. Jeremy is crouching a little as if to hide behind Billy.

BILLY

Why are you hiding behind me?

JEREMY

Because I don't think he'd shoot a kid.

Billy stops abruptly quickly followed by Jeremy.

BILLY

What?!?!

JEREMY

Nothing. Just keep walking.

(CONTINUED)

Billy starts walking again as Jeremy follows suit. They get a few steps away from the porch.

Cut to black:

BLACK

There is silence for a few seconds and then we hear a loud knock on the door.

JEREMY (O.S.)
Hey Dad! Come and meet your
grandson!