

## 39. The Homecoming

(In a house. #1 enters, looks around. #1 puts down a suitcase, then sits. #2 enters.)

- #2: I see you finally made it.
- #1: Yeah, I did. So what are you doing here?
- #2: Your mother asked me to stay and help settle things.
- #1: Well aren't you special.
- #2: (Checks his/her watch.) Congratulations. It only took you fifteen seconds to become a jerk. Must be a new record.
- #1: It's late. I don't want to get into this now. I'm here. Isn't that what matters?
- #2: The funeral was yesterday. That's what mattered.
- #1: Hey, I did the best I could! It wasn't possible to get here any sooner.
- #2: Uh-huh. (Turns and starts to exit.)
- #1: What do you know about it?
- #2: I know that we've been trying to reach you ever since your father collapsed.
- #1: I wasn't available. Maybe my father should have called to let me know he was planning to die. You know how he lived by his precious schedules.
- #2: You always have an answer to everything, don't you?
- #1: Pretty much, except I don't have the answer to what difference this makes to you. He wasn't even your father.
- #2: It means a great deal to me. Your father...and mother, have been like parents to me for a long time. I'd do anything for them.
- #1: So I've been told. So why do I have to even be here?
- #2: Because he was your father...and your mother wanted you here. She thought the past should be forgotten now.
- #1: Well, welcome to the real world. It's not! Just because someone dies doesn't erase what they've done.

- #2: Can't you just do this for her? Do you always have to be so insensitive?
- #1: Hey, I'm here, so you can shove your little insensitivity speech. And I'm here for my mother, but if you expect me to play the devastated, grieving child, forget it. The truth is, I don't feel that way and I won't pretend that I do.
- #2: What was it between your father and you?
- #1: None of your business.
- #2: So you finally got back at him by missing his funeral, huh?
- #1: It must be wonderful to live in your world where everything is so...simple. So black and white.
- #2: It's not all black and white, but he was a good man and he deserved better than this.
- #1: He was a "good man"?
- #2: Yes, he was.
- #1: Really?
- #2: Really!
- #1: To whom?
- #2: Everyone.
- #1: I would have settled for him being good to me.
- #2: He was good to you.
- #1: No, he was good to you and everyone else.
- #2: And how was he so terrible?
- #1: Don't put words in my mouth. I didn't say he was terrible.
- #2: Then what was he?
- #1: He was...nothing! He was absent. (Pause) He ignored me.
- #2: I never saw that.
- #1: Of course you didn't! Outwardly he was the perfect father, perfect husband. He had the act down to a tee.
- #2: I don't understand. He always seemed very supportive. I know he was to me.
- #1: You were his partner's child. You went into their business. So naturally he was interested in you.



- #2: I don't believe he had no interest in you.
- #1: Start! Look, I'm sorry if I'm ruining your image of him, but the facts are...nothing I ever did seemed to please him. Because what I wanted held no interest for him, I held no interest. Probably explains why I never liked you.
- #2: Well maybe it's time you grew up. Nobody likes everything their parents do, but you're an adult now. If what you felt is true, just accept that and show him a little respect now that he's gone.
- #1: Please. Spare me the sanctimonious speech, too. Listen to what I'm saying. I do accept the way he was. It took me a long time to put it in its proper place. I know I'm still somewhat bitter, but that's for me to deal with, not you. So don't you dare sit there and dictate to me that I should feel bad because I don't feel worse!
- #2: OK, I've heard what you have to say and I think you had it pretty good. You know why I went into my father's business? I had no choice! The only reason I stayed was because of your dad! He was kind, supportive, tough and fair. So you'll excuse me if I don't see where you're coming from.
- #1: That's fine! I'm not asking you to. I respect your opinion of my father, so please show me the same courtesy and respect mine.
- #2: And you think missing his funeral was right?
- #1: For me, yes.
- #2: Why?
- #1: Because I couldn't sit here and pretend during the service. Now I can go to the cemetery with my mother, I can help her settle things, do whatever she needs. But I don't have to put on an act and pretend to everyone that he was the perfect father. I think he'd even appreciate my not faking it.
- #2: So this isn't just an act for attention?
- #1: I'm an adult, you said so yourself. I don't do that. Not

- showing up yesterday was one of the hardest things I've ever done. But I had to be honest to myself.
- #2: Did you even like your father?
- #1: I didn't know him. It's like you might be with some distant relative of yours. Someone you might know of, but not know.
- #2: I don't understand. You speak as if he wasn't even around. You grew up with him.
- #1: No, I grew up next to him, not with him.
- #2: You want to explain the difference?
- #1: I can't. It's like they say about music, "if you can't feel it, I can't explain it." And trust me, you can't feel it.
- #2: No, I guess I can't. I know my father wasn't the greatest either, but I can't imagine feeling nothing for him. Especially after he dies.
- #1: What can I say? That's the way it is. I stopped trying to figure it out long ago. I've accepted it. So maybe you should just do the same. You just go on and grieve any way you want. I'm just asking you to let me be.
- #2: If that's what you want...fine. I'll leave tomorrow and let you and your mom take care of the rest.
- #1: Thanks. *(Pause)* I do appreciate you being here for her. Thank you for that, too.
- #2: You're welcome. *(#2 starts to exit, but turns and starts to say something.)*
- #1: *(Stops him/her.)* Don't! Just let it alone.  
*(#1 & #2 stare at each other for a second. Then #2 exits.)*