

The Family's Business

ACT II

SCENE 1

Friday night, informal dining room.

Faye moves between the dining room and the kitchen.

KEVIN:

Feels like Thanksgiving or something... turkey dinner...

EMMETT:

Home for the holidays!

Long, awkward silence.

KEVIN:

When is Thanksgiving?

Faye enters, setting a basket of rolls on the table.

FAYE:

November 28th.

She exits.

Silence.

EMMETT:

Lemme see if your mother needs help.

KEVIN:

I'll go.

EMMETT:

No, no. You sit. I'll go...

Emmett exits.

The doorbell rings and Kevin exits.

Kevin enters with James.

James is in a heavy metal rocker outfit.

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KEVIN:

There a mix up at the dry cleaners?

JAMES:

I'm in a band... I'm headin' to a gig from here.

KEVIN:

Whatever floats your boat, Kid!

They sit at the table.

KEVIN:

(motioning to his outfit)
Rebecca know about all this?

JAMES:

She knows...

KEVIN:

And?

JAMES:

She thinks it's some kinda mid-life crisis thing... The whole thing, the divorce, the band...

KEVIN:

Is it?

JAMES:

No! I'm not even in my 40's...

KEVIN:

Kid, sometimes you sound like you're in your 80's... I never saw anyone who wanted to grow up so fast. You wanted the house, wife, and kids before you even had a girlfriend.

JAMES:

Excuse you, Peter Pan!

KEVIN:

Why should I give up my life up for some baby to come along?

JAMES:

Your kid isn't just "some baby."

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KEVIN:

Look, Kid, not everyone's meant to have babies... But some people are. I'm not, but you are.

JAMES:

I know.

KEVIN:

So, what's the problem? She still upset from the —

JAMES:

We're both still a little...

(checking that the coast is clear)

Look, it wasn't an accident... she didn't lose it...

KEVIN:

You asked her to?

JAMES:

We thought a baby would help — then we knew it was a mistake...

KEVIN:

That's why you hate the deli so much!

JAMES:

They don't need to know, okay?

KEVIN:

...none of their business...

Emmett enters carrying the turkey. Faye has the side dishes.

EMMETT:

(sing-songy to "Here Comes the Bride")
Here comes the turkey...

They see James and stop cold in their tracks.

JAMES:

I'm in a band.

They stare in silence.

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JAMES:

Heading into the city after dinner.

They nod and continue staring.

JAMES:

Rebecca's not coming.

Awkward pause.

JAMES:

Let's eat!

Emmett picks up the carving utensils and begins carving the turkey grandly.

The bird is pink inside.

EMMETT:

It's pink!

KEVIN:

It's fluorescent!

He cuts deeper this time, the next piece is also pink.

FAYE:

Best put it back in the oven, Dear.

Emmett exits with the turkey.

FAYE:

We might as well start with these...

Faye takes a plate and begins ladling food on it. She passes the plate to James, who hands her a clean plate.

FAYE:

This is new... the band...

She continues serving until all the plates are full.

Emmett enters.

JAMES:

Remember I was in a band? At school?

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FAYE:
The Clothespins!

JAMES:
The Pinheads!

KEVIN:
The Pinheads!

JAMES:
That was the best time of my life — I had everything ahead of me...

FAYE:
That's what you have now. A wife, a house...

JAMES:
Ma, she's not coming tonight, or any night.

FAYE:
Is it because of the — She — you, you both can try again...

JAMES:
It's because of a lot of things...
Faye can only look at her plate.

EMMETT:
It's tough in the beginning, it's tough... You two'll figure it out.

JAMES:
There's nothing left to figure out; we signed the papers today.

FAYE:
You can come home.

JAMES:
Ma...

FAYE:
Until you find a place...

JAMES:
I found a place. I found my own place... I'm finally on my own! No one to answer to — I come and go as I please. Doesn't matter where I'm going, or when I'm coming back — if I'm coming back...

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EMMETT:

A little early for a mid-life crisis, isn't it, son?

JAMES:

Why is this a crisis?

I finally have everything in front of me — I'm not just holding up the rear anymore — picking up where Kevin left off...

FAYE:

You've made a good, solid life for yourself. Something to be proud of — something we can all be proud of.

You've always made your own way...

JAMES:

(to Faye)

Since when was it ever my way? Were you here that night?

(to Kevin)

You were so tanked!

(still kicking himself after all these years)

I knew it was a mistake coming back here that night...

(to Emmett)

He was cursing you to the walls, the urinals — anyone he thought'd listen. Why couldn't ya' just give him the money? Why'd ya' have to hit 'em so hard?

FAYE:

It was an accident.

JAMES:

That's what I told them at Mercy Hill — said he was drunk and fell down the steps.

EMMETT:

He was drunk — He was a raving lunatic! Outta control!

KEVIN:

No, you were out of control.

EMMETT:

Whad'ya' think you were gonna find at the bottom of those bottles?

KEVIN:

More than you ever gave me.

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EMMETT:

It just poisoned ya' — poisoned your brain, and your mouth.

KEVIN:

Like it poisoned his liver?

FAYE:

Keep Poppy out of this.

KEVIN:

Never heard a guy badmouth his old man so much!

JAMES:

Ever listen to yourself?

KEVIN:

Whose side are you on anyway, Kid?

JAMES:

My side — for once, I'm on my side.

KEVIN:

Well, at least you're learnin', Kid... Better late than never...

EMMETT:

Stop fillin' his head with nonsense! A man's not a man without a family to support.

KEVIN:

I thought it was "A man's not a man if he doesn't leave his mark!"

'S that what you were tryin' to do that night? Leave your mark?

Long pause.

EMMETT:

It wasn't from that punch that ya' fell.

Long pause.

You were shaky — shaky on your feet, and ya' tripped.

(almost whispering)

...and I didn't reach out... to catch you.

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KEVIN:

Is that what that was? Lunch, the other day... your last ditch effort to “reach out” n’ “catch me”?

Ya’ know, it wasn’t even the punch... or even the money so much...’cause at least I got it in the end... it was because you never wanted me to make it...

You were happier having him scrape me up off a’ some sticky barroom floor than you are giving people my business card...

Even now after I’ve made it , there’s still a part of me that hates the way you come in to my office like some blowhard barking orders... sticking your nose into things that aren’t even your business.

EMMETT:

What would you do without me, Kevin? Ever ask yourself that? Who would ya’ blame for all your problems? Go on, tell her it’s my fault you won’t settle down, I’m sure your mother’d wanna hear about it. I’m the one pimpin’ to ya’, right? Or you tell her, go on, tell her why the business is in hot water — tell her it’s my fault that you’re in over your head!

KEVIN:

(to Emmett)

Were you tryin’ to look like some kinda hero or something? “Lemme break the news to her...” The revenge was just too sweet, and you wanted to savor every second of it, but I got news for ya’, we’re in the black, and we are only gettin’ bigger!

(to James)

Why’d ya’ tell ‘em that shit for? I knew it was too good to be true, I knew you’d never be able to say no.

JAMES:

I know how to say it.

KEVIN:

Then say it — tell ‘em.

JAMES:

No. You’re not putting me in the middle a’ this.

KEVIN:

It’s too late, Kid, ya’ put yourself there already.

JAMES:

No.

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Then at least tell 'em the truth.

KEVIN:

Silence.

James?

EMMETT:

James looks to Faye.

Faye?

EMMETT:

(to Emmett)
When did you go to lunch?

FAYE:

(to Kevin)
Why did you come to dinner?

FAYE:

Faye sits down for the first time.

Is it still pink?

FAYE:

The turkey?

EMMETT:

The turkey...

FAYE:

The men look at each other helplessly.

Don't get up! I'll do it!

FAYE:

She gets up and marches off to the kitchen.

She enters with the pink turkey and sets it down in front of Emmett.

It's still pink!

EMMETT:

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FAYE:

You forgot to turn the oven back on.

And you want to open a business? You can't even follow directions, how are you going to give orders — or take them?

I'm sick and tired of cleaning up after you — all of you!

You never grew up — any of you... *(to Kevin)* You with your tramps, *(to James)* you with your broken home, *(to Emmett)* and you — you can't even sit for five minutes without running to me and crying about something or other...

No more! No more! If you even try and open that store, or a deli, or anything else, it'll be over my dead body!

I'm done! You hear me? Done!

She sticks the carving fork directly into the bird, the handle sticking straight up.

Faye exits.

The men are dumfounded.

Awkward silence.

Faye enters and gets a fork and a casserole dish. She exits with food in hand.

No one dares look at her.

Door slams, off.

KEVIN:

Is she...?

JAMES:

Should we... ?

EMMETT:

Just leave her be... Let her cool down a bit, blow off some steam...

Long pause.

KEVIN:

Now what's all this about a store?

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EMMETT:

A showroom, and a warehouse.

JAMES:

Garage accessories — and storage, right?

EMMETT:

Custom built — that's where the money is... The accessories, those are just to keep 'em comin' back.

KEVIN:

So that's what dinner was for?

EMMETT:

Yep...

Long pause.

KEVIN:

How much ya' need?

EMMETT:

I'd need to buy the materials... and the guys to put 'em together... the warehouse... the showroom... marketing.

KEVIN:

How much?

EMMETT:

Hundred.

KEVIN:

Hundred thousand?

EMMETT:

I'll take fifty...get the rest from the bank.

KEVIN:

This is a loan, not a gift.

EMMETT:

I'll make ya' partner.

KEVIN:

I don't want it... I don't want anything to do with it. Your business is your business. Do whatever the hell you want. Ya' don't need me breathing down your neck.

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EMMETT:

Sounds good, what's the catch?

KEVIN:

No catch, but there are three conditions:

One: I want it back, all cash, in five years.

EMMETT:

Okay... two...

KEVIN:

Ma's got nothing to do with it — nothing... You're on your own.

EMMETT:

Sounds fine... next?

KEVIN:

You never step foot in my office again. Never hand out another business card... never bark another order. My business is my business, not the family's business.

EMMETT:

Done!

KEVIN:

Ya' hear that, Kid? He's not allowed in the place.

JAMES:

Hey, it's your business.

KEVIN:

It's our business.

JAMES:

Not when you're the one makin' all the decisions. I didn't even have a say about the new sofa!

KEVIN:

Fine, we can look at another sofa, alright! Geez! But c'mon, does he really need to be there? Does he contribute anything?

EMMETT:

(*to James*)
It's okay, son.

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JAMES:

(to Kevin)
Without this family, you wouldn't even have a business!

(to Emmett)
She gave him the money.

KEVIN:

Kid —

EMMETT:

I know.

TOGETHER:

You know?

EMMETT:

She's got some fancy-pants financial advisor squirreling it away for her. She's very independent, your mother... She knows I won't be around forever... I couldn't ask her for it.

KEVIN:

So we got a deal?

Emmett shakes Kevin's hand.

EMMETT:

Deal!

KEVIN:

C'mon, Kid, I'll drive ya' to the city for your gig.

JAMES:

Pop, tell her I said thanks for dinner.

EMMETT:

You got it. Knock 'em dead tonight!

JAMES:

Thanks.

KEVIN:

Don't wanna be late, Kid...

They exit.

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Emmett is alone.

He gets the fork out and pokes at the bird a bit.

EMMETT:

Fluorescent!

(He picks at it, trying to eat it, but it's inedible, and he pushes it away.)

...maybe a few more minutes in the oven couldn't hurt...

Emmett exits with the turkey to kitchen. We hear the oven door open, then shut.

Lights dim on table.