Conservative
by
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INT. DINER AFTERNOON

TOM PARKER SITS ACROSS FROM HIS SON ADEN AT A BOOTH. HE TAKES A SIP OF HIS COFFEE AND EYES OVER HIS BOY.

TOM
So you're trying to tell the old man that you're gay. Right?

ADEN
Yeah.

TOM
Christ.

Tom rubs his chin.

ADEN
Am I out of the family?

TOM
What do you mean?

ADEN
You had always told me that if I ever brought home a man, I'd be disowned.

TOM
You're my son. And I love you. Even if you are defective.

ADEN
You can't help how you're born.

TOM
You weren't born this way. You chose to be this way.

ADEN
Come on, dad. Get out of the dark ages.

TOM
I can't really blame you. All this gay pride bullshit in the media nowadays is enough to twist anyone's mind around.

ADEN
No one twisted my mind around. I knew I was gay since I was fifteen.
TOM
Should have figured you were queer when you had no interest in sports.

ADEN
So there are no gay sports stars?

TOM
Sure, but we ain't talking about the WNBA or guy's soccer.

Aden shakes his head.

ADEN
It's time you stop living in the stone ages and dive headfirst into the twenty first century.

TOM
I'm not in the mood for a lecture. I'm in grieving.

Aden wears a mask of confusion.

ADEN
What are you grieving over?

TOM
My son's a faggot. What else?

ADEN
Stop being so overly dramatic. I don't suppose I can get you to meet Chet.

TOM
Is that your boyfriend?

ADEN
Yes.

TOM
Has your mother met him?

ADEN
Uh huh.

TOM
Does she like him?

ADEN
Yeah, the three of us all went wedding dress shopping together.
TOM
For Chet?

ADEN
No. For me.

TOM
Oh for God's sake. You're gonna marry this guy?

ADEN
Of course. I love him. We're all gonna meet at my place for dinner next Tuesday night. I already told mom and she is coming. Can we count on you to be there?

TOM
I can't do it. I'm sorry. You know my feelings on this. The answer is no.

ADEN
It would really mean a lot to me if you could support me in this.

Tom looks down at his coffee cup.

TOM
I sure could use a refill. Maybe have the waitress pour some brandy in it.

ADEN
Dad? Are you listening to me?

TOM
Where's that damn waitress?

Tom looks all around, growing more and more agitated.

ADEN
I can see this is useless.

Aden starts to leave, but Tom grabs his wrist.

TOM
Wait a second. I'll make a deal with you.

ADEN
I'm listening.
TOM
What would you say to a father son bonding weekend?

ADEN
Go on.

TOM
You agree to this weekend, and I will have dinner with you and Chet. Deal?

ADEN (SHRUGS)
Deal.

The men shake hands.

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT
Tom is doing some reading and Joanne is brushing her hair and looking at herself in the dresser mirror.

JOANNE
Would you mind running your plan by me one more time?

Tom puts down his book on the night stand and continues conversing with his wife.

TOM
I plan on turning our son straight.

JOANNE
You can't turn a gay person straight. They're born that way.

TOM
You're such a liberal. You're probably the reason our son is gay.

JOANNE
I beg your pardon?

TOM
Yeah. you babied the boy and now he thinks he likes men. But after this trip, he'll be a man.

JOANNE
What are you planning on doing on this father son bonding trip?
TOM
Man stuff.

JOANNE
What are you gonna do? Throw raw meat on the floor and fight over gets it?

TOM
I'm not a barbarian. We'll cook the meat before we fight over it.

Joanne rolls her eyes.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm gonna take our boy on a weekend to turn him into a real man. Shake that sissy out of him.

Joanne starts laughing.

JOANNE
You can't be serious.

TOM
I'm very serious.

EXT. STRIP CLUB EVENING

Tom and Aden are standing outside the strip club. Aden peers up at the sign. It reads Cherry's.

ADEN
Cherry's?

TOM
It's a bar.

Aden shrugs. The two men enter. A woman is dancing topless on the stage and several men are surrounding the stage hooting and hollering and tossing money on the stage. Aden's face turns red.

ADEN
I'm leaving.

Aden starts to walk out of the place but Tom grabs his son's wrist.

TOM
Do you want me to meet Chet or not? You promised you'd give this father son weekend a chance.
Aden takes a long pause. He looks into his father eyes and looks back at the exit sign and back at his dad.

    ADEN
    Alright.
    
    TOM
    Terrific.

Tom drapes his arm around Aden's shoulder. Tom smiles as he gazes upon the stage.

    TOM (CONT'D)
    Wow. Look at those boobs. Hot stuff, huh?

Aden looks down at the floor.

    TOM (CONT'D)
    Hey, honey. How bout a dance for my boy here?

Aden turns to his father.

    ADEN
    Dad!
    
    TOM
    Don't mind him. He's just shy.

The stripper is named Candy. She walks offstage and escorts Aden to the VIP room.

Aden sits down in the chair and is visibly tense. Candy smiles as begins giving him a lap dance. He clutches the sides of the chair and shuts his eyes and keeps whispering to himself.

    ADEN
    Chet, Chet, Chet.
    
    CANDY
    What's wrong, honey? You don't seem to be having much fun.
    
    ADEN
    I'm not.
    
    CANDY
    Don't you like me?
    
    ADEN
    I'm gay.
CANDY
Haven't heard that one before.

ADEN
My dad brought me here as part of this father son weekend, I guess trying to turn me straight.

CANDY
You can't change from gay to straight. That's silly.

ADEN
I know that. But my dad seems to think you can. He's real old fashion. He even has Ronald Reagan bumper sticker on the back of his car.

CANDY
Be patient with your dad. Sounds like he means well.

ADEN
He does. I just wish I could talk to him about things. Serious things.

CANDY
I wish I could visit my dad.

ADEN
Why can't you visit your dad?

CANDY
Heaven doesn't have visiting hours, sweetie.

Aden exits the VIP room. Tom has a smile on his face.

TOM
Well, what'd you think? You like girls yet?

ADEN
Nope.

TOM
Damn. Well that's alright, son. Tomorrow's activity will make a man of you yet. Because tomorrow, we're going hunting.
ADEN
How will killing animals help turn me into a man, as you say.

TOM
It'll get your primal instincts again. At one time, men hunted for food. But then the internet and MTV came along, the world went to Hell and now the media is brainwashing our kids into thinking they're gay.

ADEN
Makes sense.

EXT. WOODS EARLY MORNING
The men are dressed in hunting gear.

TOM
Isn't this great? A father and son bonding over a hunting trip. Reminds me of the ones I used to take with your grandfather when I was a kid.

ADEN
Why didn't you ever take me hunting?

TOM
I worked a lot when you were little.

ADEN
I always felt like I came in second place to your work.

TOM
Being a cop is busy work.

ADEN
I guess it is.

TOM
I thought about ya all the time. Ask my partner, Murphy. That son of a bitch wanted to punch me I'd talk about you so much.

ADEN
Whatever happened to him?
TOM
Chief took his badge.

ADEN
How come?

TOM
For punching me.

Aden and Tom share a chuckle.

ADEN
Why do you have such a problem with me being gay?

TOM
I thought I had raised a son. Not a daughter.

ADEN
Be serious.

Tom pauses for a moment. He scans his son's face and sees the general concern there.

TOM
It has a lot to do with the way I raised. I was raised in a christian household. God hates the gays. That's how I was raised. It's an abomination.

ADEN
You don't even attend church anymore. As a matter of fact, you haven't attended church in the last ten years.

TOM
I still believe what the bible says.

ADEN
There are gay Christians.

TOM
Phony ones.

ADEN
What makes you think the bible is the true word of God?

TOM
I'm gonna smack ya.
ADEN

Sorry.

TOM
Anyway, it goes beyond the whole bible thing. It's also about tradition.

ADEN
Tradition?

TOM
Yeah. I always wanted a grandson to pass on the family name.

ADEN
Why would it have to be a grandson? Why not a granddaughter?

TOM
I've already got a daughter.

Tom says elbowing his son in the ribs.

TOM (CONT'D)
I just figured I could have a grandson that would enjoy the stuff I did. Football, baseball. You know, guy stuff. You were always into writing poetry and cooking and sewing, always found it hard to relate to ya.

ADEN
You were ashamed of me?

TOM
No. I was never ashamed of you. I just know it isn't going to be easy. I mean, I'm sure you've heard of gay bashing?

ADEN
I can take care of myself. I'm not going to live my life in fear just because of some ignorant people.

TOM
I know. It's just, I'm your dad. Ever since I first held you in my arms when you were just born, I made a vow to always protect you.
ADEN
I can protect myself. And Chet will protect me.

TOM
How can you two fight with limp wrists?

Aden places his hands on his hips.

ADEN
Dad.

TOM
Sorry, I couldn't resist.

They see a doe in the distance. They get in position. Aden is visibly shaken.

TOM (CONT'D)
Take it easy. Steady your gun.

Tom helps his son steady his gun.

TOM (CONT'D)
Aim down the sight.

He shows him how to look through the eye hole.

TOM (CONT'D)
Hold your breath. Count to three and fire.

ADEN
One...two... three.

The gun is fired and the deer falls down.

TOM
Nice shot.

ADEN
I can't believe I killed a living creature.

TOM
It's just a deer.

ADEN
Chet will be furious.

TOM
Oh yeah?
ADEN
Yes. He's a vegetarian.

TOM
Good.

Time passes. They skin and cook the deer and eat it.

TOM (CONT'D)
I don't just hunt for sports. I usually only hunt what I can eat or make coats out of. I figure if an animal has to die, it better be for a reason.

ADEN
It's like you're honoring the animal, like the Native Americans used to do.

TOM
Exactly. I have to admit that this has been a fun weekend.

ADEN
I agree.

TOM
I don't suppose you like girls now?

ADEN
Nope.

TOM
Worth a shot. So you're serious about this guy?

ADEN
We're engaged.

TOM
I was really hoping for grand children.

ADEN
Chet and I can still make you a grandfather.

TOM
You can't make babies with two bananas.

ADEN
We could always adopt.
TOM
What are you Rosie? Donnell?

ADEN
I held up my end of the bargain, now you got to come have dinner with Chet and I.

TOM
I don't suppose you'd accept me as being sick Tuesday?

ADEN
What'll you come down with?

TOM
Bubonic Plague.

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT
Joanne turns off the bathroom light and enters the bedroom. She gets into bed. Her husband is reading a book. He keeps glancing over at her, rolling his eyes and muttering to himself.

JOANNE
What?

TOM
You turned our son gay.

JOANNE
What?

TOM
You coddled the boy too much and he thinks he likes men. How can you live with yourself?

JOANNE
You can't become gay. You're just born that way.

TOM
Spoken just like a liberal. It wasn't my genes that made him gay. You're probably a carrier.

JOANNE
Are we going to spend the next several nights playing the blame game?
TOM
Yes.

JOANNE
This isn't exactly the end of the world, you know.

TOM
Not for you. That's my only son.

JOANNE
He's my only son too.

TOM
Yeah, but you're a woman.

JOANNE
So what?

TOM
You don't understand. It's a guy thing. It makes me feel...

JOANNE
Feel what?

TOM
Like I'm less of a man or something. I don't know.

Joanne begins rubbing her husband's shoulders.

JOANNE
You know that isn't true. Don't you?

TOM
I just feel totally blind sighted by this.

JOANNE
Really? I knew when he was fifteen. Why do you think he never brought home any girls and only guy friends?

TOM
Just figured he was really shy. Why didn't either one of you tell me?
JOANNE
We were scared of how you'd react. You're not exactly the most tolerant person in the world. Remember when you found out Mexicans were working on our drywall? You threatened to call immigration on them if they messed up?

TOM
They didn't screw up, did they?

JOANNE
Why does this bother you so much?

TOM
You know the way I was raised.

JOANNE
I was raised catholic.

TOM
Yeah, but you're lapsed.

JOANNE
You haven't been in a church in a decade.

TOM
I still try to keep God's commandments.

JOANNE
Did you ever think that God made our son gay?

TOM
The media did that.

JOANNE
How do you figure that?

TOM
All this crap about gay rights and how it's suddenly cool to be a fanny bandit. It's enough to warp any young impressionable mind.

JOANNE
Are you serious?

TOM
Do I look serious?
JOANNE
You're not going to embarrass yourself when we go have dinner with Chet and Aden, are you?

TOM
I'm not going.

JOANNE
You have to. You promised.

TOM
I know...

JOANNE
Aden will be crushed. You don't want to hurt our son's feelings.

TOM
He's broken my heart.

JOANNE
What is so bad about our son being gay?

TOM
I don't want to talk about this anymore. I'm getting a headache.

INT. SQUAD CAR DAY

Tom is driving and his partner Harry is sitting in the front seat. Harry notices Tom is upset.

HARRY
What's wrong?

TOM
I don't want to talk about it.

HARRY
Might make you feel better to talk about it.

TOM
Well... Found something really troubling out about my son.

HARRY
Really? What?

TOM
He's gay.
HARRY
And?

TOM
That's it.

Harry starts laughing.

HARRY
It's not exactly the end of the world.

TOM
You got a boy?

HARRY
Yep.

TOM
How old?

HARRY
Thirteen.

TOM
How would you feel if he were gay?

HARRY
Bite your tongue.

TOM
On top of that, the wife and I are suppose to have dinner with my son and his fiance on Tuesday.

HARRY
That sounds nice.

TOM
I'm thinking about not going.

HARRY
That ain't right. You can't do that.

TOM
Why not?

HARRY
Because I'm sure it would devastate your son.
TOM
Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would be facing a dilemma like this.

HARRY
It's 2016, a lot of people have gay kids.

TOM
Yeah, but not me.

HARRY
What makes you so special?

TOM
I'm so manly.

HARRY
Aren't you the guy that screamed like a girl when someone found a garter snake in the toilet at the station?

TOM
I don't like snakes.

HARRY
I thought you were being murdered.

TOM
Thought it was gonna bite my nuts off.

HARRY
It was a garter snake!

TOM
Still scary.

The person on the dispatch talks.

DISPATCH
We got a code 506 in progress.

INT. LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Tom is watching a movie on television. It features a father and a son that are arguing. Hank is the father and Dale is the son.

DALE
If that's the way you feel, then don't come back.
HANK
That's fine with me. As far as I'm concerned, I have no son.

Hank storms off, allowing the screen door to make a loud banging noise.

Tom lets out a slight sigh and dials his son's phone number. He hears three rings before he hears his son's voice on the other end of the telephone.

ADEN
Hello?

TOM
Hey. This is dad. Listen, I called to ask what time you said dinner was tomorrow night?

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