

DINNER WITH THE FAMILY

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INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

We hear the RAIN thumping loudly on the roof of the garage. We see the distant city lights softly sparkling in the background. The MAN walks briskly to his car. Exhausted, his eyes sunken like a zombie. Tall and average looking, maybe 35, clean shaven, neatly kept dark brown hair. Just another grueling day at the office. He approaches the car and hops in, ready to finally head home.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The man buckles up. He places his hand on the stick. A SHADOW emerges from the backseat, the silhouette of a mysterious STRANGER. The man feels the cold steel of a pistol pressed against his neck. A thick gravelly voice follows.

STRANGER:

Hey there, pal. Long time no see.

The man jolts. His voice trembles. Throws his hands up.

MAN:

I . . . I don't . . . W-what do you want? Who are you?

The stranger chuckles. Keeps his gun pressed firmly against the man's sweaty neck.

STRANGER:

Well, I'm your new friend, and I've got some wonderful things to show you. Oh, you're gonna love it. But first, I think we oughta get to know each other a little better.

MAN:

Please, man. Please, I don't carry cash, I . . . I don't have anything you would want.

STRANGER:

Oh, but you do. Listen, I'm gonna be upfront with you. I'm going to need your phone.

MAN:

My . . . My phone? I left it back at the --

STRANGER:

Yes, your phone.
(MORE)

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

The one you've been slowly trying to wiggle free from your pocket.

The stranger cocks his pistol. The man GULPS audibly. Stranger holds out his palm.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

Hand it over. Please.

The man is reluctant. Nervous, if not flat out terrified.

MAN:

Alright, alright. Jesus, come on, man. . .

He hands his phone to the stranger. The stranger tosses it onto the seat beside him.

STRANGER:

Outstanding. Now . . .

The stranger falls silent for a moment.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

You ever wonder if anything we do here even really matters in the long run? I mean, what are we really? We all die eventually, don't we? And what do we take with us? Nothing. We all act like we're so fucking important every second of every day, but really . . .

MAN:

I . . . I . . .

The stranger chuckles devilishly.

STRANGER:

Sorry, a bit heavy for our first heart-to-heart conversation. But hey! I heard it was someone's anniversary tonight, yeah? Old lady probably wasn't too happy you had to stay late, huh? She wanted me to tell you she got a gift just for you. In fact, I happen to have it right here.

We hear SHUFFLING in the backseat as the stranger digs into a small gift bag.

MAN:

My wife? What . . . What do you know about my wife? How do you . . . Who the fuck are you?

STRANGER:

Ah yes, here it is.

He pulls out a Polaroid photo and gives it a gentle kiss.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

You see, I'm a bit of an artist. Rather starving, honestly. I met with your wife earlier today, and I . . . Well, let's just say she became the muse to which my magnum opus was born. My masterpiece, if I may be so bold.

We see the man's eyes fill with rage.

MAN:

What the fuck are you talking about, you sick **fuck**? I swear to God, if you . . .

The stranger presses his pistol harder against the man's neck. We see the moonlight briefly illuminating his face for a second.

STRANGER:

Play nice, Bob. We're friends, remember?

He places the Polaroid face-down in front of the man.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

Now, on the count of three . . . And do it with me, okay? On the count of three, I'm going to show you your wife's big surprise. Okay, ready?

The man remains silent. He nods his head.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

One . . . Come on now, Bob. **One**.

The man takes a deep breath.

MAN:

One.

The stranger smiles coldly.

STRANGER:

Two.

MAN:

T-two.

STRANGER:

Three!

The stranger flips up the photo. It's the man's wife. Well, what's left of her. Her corpse is bloody and mangled, contorted. Tied up and carefully posed like some sadistic sculpture. He cackles with twisted glee.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

Surprise! Happy anniversary!

The man's breathing gets heavier and faster. He begins crying, screaming at the stranger. His shock quickly turns to rage.

MAN:

Oh, fucking Christ! Oh, please! Oh god, no! Please, my children! I swear to . . . Please tell me they're okay!

The stranger sighs.

STRANGER:

Oh of course, pal. They're absolutely perfect. In fact, we're going to go see them right now.

He grins, his pistol subtly reflecting the soft moonlight upon his crazed eyes. He hands the man a small slip of paper with an address hastily penned in blood.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

Drive to this address.

The man sits in silence for a moment, still in shock as his life crumbles before his eyes. His wife is dead. Murdered, brutally, all for some twisted game. We hear the stranger cock his pistol once more.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

Drive. **Now.** And I promise you'll see your kids again. Like I said, we're friends, and I *only* want what's best for you.

MAN:
You're a sick fuck . . . A fucking
psychopath.

STRANGER:
Words hurt, Bobby. But, it's alright.
I understand. Now, **drive!**

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

We arrive in front of a dilapidated building, almost resembling some kind of old warehouse, only smaller. It's run down, windows boarded. Nobody's been here in decades.

CUT back to inside the car.

The stranger pulls out a set of handcuffs. Dangles them in front of the man's face.

STRANGER:
Put these on.

The man looks confused, anxious, hesitant.

MAN:
No. Please, I won't run.

The stranger fires two GUNSHOTS through the windshield. The man jumps up, shaken, covers his ears.

MAN: (CONT'D)
Jesus fucking Christ, okay!

The man attempts to put the cuffs on, then looks back toward the stranger with confusion.

MAN: (CONT'D)
How the hell am I supposed to --

STRANGER:
Figure it out. You're a smart guy,
Bobby.

CUT TO:
FRONT OF
BUILDING

We see the man with cuffs behind his back. The stranger reaches into his coat pocket, takes out a second pair, links them to the other onto a metal post. He walks back to the car and grabs the man's phone, lays it on the ground next to the man. The stranger fires two GUNSHOTS into the phone. The man WHIMPERS as his last ounce of hope is destroyed. The stranger grins and releases the cuffs.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)
Go on inside. They're waiting for you.

He puts his pistol against the man's back and follows him inside the building.

INT. - ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

It's empty, except for a large dining table with a couple of lit candles and covered metal dishes, the kind you'd expect to be served by a butler.

The man looks around the room in sheer horror. What is this place? Where exactly is he? Why him?

STRANGER:
Gift number two, my gift to you. A wonderful home-cooked meal for a friend.

The stranger pushes the man into a chair and chains him to the table. The man begins to sob briefly, then collects himself. He BANGS his fist against the table.

MAN:
Where . . . Where are my **fucking** kids?! You said they'd be here.

The stranger stares silently for a moment, then smirks.

STRANGER:
Oh, but they're right here! Can't you smell them?

He takes a seat across from the man and uncovers the first dish. It's his son. Or at least some of him. We see hands, a foot, chunks of brain matter. Little trinkets, pieces of toys. Just enough for the man to recognize his little boy.

The man's eyes widen. He vomits profusely onto the floor. He suddenly faints.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. - CAMPGROUND - DAY

We see the man enjoying a camping trip with his family. He's fishing with his children. His beautiful wife watches them with a warm smile. They all look so happy. So peaceful.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. - ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

The stranger splashes water onto the man's face. He jolts awake, gagging a bit.

STRANGER:

Stay with me, pal. We're just getting started.

The man cries in agony. He feels his heart ripped from his chest.

MAN:

Oh, god. God, please! Fuck!

STRANGER:

Eat up. I worked so hard to make everything perfect for you.

The man screams and shakes violently, desperately trying to break free from his chains. He bangs his fists on the table repeatedly.

MAN:

I won't do it. I'm not eating anybody, you sick **fuck!** You fucking bastard! I'll fucking kill you!

The stranger sits perfectly still, his blank face hiding behind the shadows.

STRANGER:

Oh, but you are. Every pound of flesh will be consumed.

MAN:

You . . . You can't. I won't.

The stranger smirks and stands up.

STRANGER:

Fine. Seems like you might work better with a little incentive. I've got just the thing. Hang tight.

He walks away, leaving the man alone, and afraid. The man struggles harder to free himself. We hear the loud RATTLING of his chains and ear-splitting SCREECHING of his chair, but to no avail. We begin to hear an infant CRYING. The man stops struggling, sits still. His face turns pale.

MAN:

No! No! No! Not my little girl . . .
No, please! Not my little baby girl!
Please! I'll do anything!

The stranger sighs.

STRANGER:

Okay, pal, here's the deal.

He bounces the hysterical infant in his arms.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

You eat up your little boy there . . .
. Or, **or** . . . You watch me hack up this little dumpling right here in front of you, and watch me fry her up and eat her for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the rest of the week. And *then*, I kill you.

The man trembles uncontrollably. He's lost the ability to speak. He sits silently, head buried in his hands.

STRANGER: (CONT'D)

Eat your boy, this one goes free. To a good home, of course. Either way, you're dead. But at least you can die knowing this little princess will grow up loved and adored, with no knowledge or recollection of any of this. The choice is obvious, my friend. Bon appetit.

FADE TO BLACK

END