

Family Troubles

OPEN:

INT. SKIBICKI'S DINER, NORTH NEW JERSEY --- AFTERNOON

The diner is a relic from the 50's, just like most of the usual patrons. The once vibrant colors and chrome finishing are now dull and rusted.

CUT TO: A young man, Michael, sitting in a booth alone by a large window in the front of the diner. He keeps looking at the door nearby until somebody walks in. It's Vito, an older man in his mid-50's with salt and pepper hair, he sees Michael and walks toward him and smiles showing off his golden canine tooth.

VITO

"Mikey! Good to see you kid!"

Vito sits down across from Michael.

MICHAEL

"Hey Uncle Vito. It's Michael now, nobody's called me Mikey since I was 12."

Vito adjusts himself, seemingly ignoring what Michael said.

VITO

"Well I'm glad you called, nobody's heard from you since your Dad's funeral. How're you holding up?"

Michael looks away from Vito, putting his hands in his jacket pockets.

MICHAEL

"That's actually what I wanted to talk to you about. I just...don't understand how it happened. The last time I heard from his doctor, I was told his condition was improving."

Vito does not make eye contact with Michael, instead he looks over the menu.

VITO

“You know these freak things just kinda happen, Mikey. Who really knows how it’s gonna end, right?”

Michael leans back in his seat and looks out the window, unsatisfied.

MICHAEL

“I just thought it was strange how he was getting better then all of the sudden -”

Vito interrupts.

VITO

“Did you know, your dad and I used to come here all the time back in the day? Your grandfather, used to take us here every week. Then when we were in high school, we’d hang out here after every football game. And after every win, I swear to God, this place was packed just so people could tell your old man how well he played. HA! Those were good times, Mikey.”

Michael looks at his lap and sighs. Then puts his left elbow on the table keeping his right hand in his pocket, gripping onto the object in it. He leans in, like to tell Vito a secret.

MICHAEL

“But don’t you think it’s strange how he died so quickly? I mean it couldn’t have been his sickness. I went to the hospital and found out he died of asphyxiation.”

VITO

“C’mon Mikey. He had cancer, very late stage stuff. The kind that you just don’t come back from.”

Michael throws himself back into his seat, visibly upset with Vito’s reaction.

MICHAEL

“That doesn’t explain the asphyxiation!”

VITO

“Oh what?! You think he was whacked? You think someone wanted him gone?”

Both Vito and Michael start looking around realizing how loud they were getting. Vito leans in.

VITO

“Listen. Everyone, and I mean everyone, respected your Dad. No one would’ve done him in.”

MICHAEL

“Well someone did. And they got him. And I’m going to find out who they are and make them pay.”

Vito now looks uncomfortable.

VITO

“Okay alright...you want me to get some guys to find out for you? Have some words with the hospital staff? Then what?”

MICHAEL

“I talked to them already. They didn’t know anything besides the real cause of death. And a description of the guy who did it.”

Vito sits up straight, trying not to show his surprise.

VITO

“Mikey...Anybody who would get rid of your Dad, you don’t want to go after.”

Michael is gripping the item in his jacket pocket. Debating pulling it out or not.

MICHAEL

“They said an older man with graying hair...and a golden tooth.”

Vito remains expressionless.

VITO

“Do you know how many people look like that?”

Michael’s eyes are set on Vito.

VITO

“Good seeing you Mikey. Take care of yourself.”

Vito gets up, Michael gets up faster with his eyes fixed on Vito. He looks like he’s going to say something but no words come out. Vito looks at Michael, smiles and nods. Then turns and walks out the door.

Michael watches Vito leave, pulls out the gun from his pocket, and follows Vito.

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