

WORSHIP

by Tom Smith

Sample

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Characters

Claire, 50s

Josh, 25, her son

Rachel, 28, her daughter

Time

The present

Location

Claire's living room, Kansas City

WORSHIP

The living room of a small, dated Midwestern home. JOSH, 25, is sneaking a peek through the closed drapes of a large picture window as his sister, RACHEL, 28, anxiously checks her phone. Their mother, CLAIRE, is drinking coffee in a small armchair.

JOSH

There's even more than yesterday.

(CLAIRE says nothing.)

Almost 20...

RACHEL

This is ridiculous! It's been three days. There's got to be something else they can cover.

JOSH

Mom, just go out there and get it over with. It doesn't matter what you say. Just...something. Then they'll leave.

RACHEL

Josh can go with you. Then things can get back to normal.

JOSH

Mom?

(CLAIRE says nothing. JOSH looks at RACHEL.)

RACHEL

Look, Josh and I can't keep running your errands, picking up groceries, getting the mail. We have to get back to our own lives, you know? Just talk to them!

CLAIRE

No.

RACHEL

Quit being stubborn!

JOSH

One comment. Anything.

CLAIRE

No!

RACHEL

...Fine, fine: forget it! Do what you want. But they won't go away!

JOSH

Rachel, don't freak out...

RACHEL

She doesn't want to talk, fine! But I don't want to hang around here if she doesn't need us. I'm going home. And if you were smart, Josh, you'd go too.

JOSH

We can't leave. Not now.

RACHEL

You may be ok getting sucked into whatever she's dealing with, but I'm over it. She wants to play the silent mourner, the grieving mother? Fine, that's her right; just don't expect me to stop my life because of it. I have a family back at home who needs me. More than she does, apparently.

JOSH

God, Rachel! Why are you being like this?

RACHEL

We all feel the loss, Josh. She's not the only one!

JOSH

You said you were staying until Monday.

RACHEL

I would if she needed me. But, look at her...!

JOSH

Well, I'm staying.

RACHEL

Of course you are. You'll do anything she wants ...

JOSH

What does that—? Screw you!

RACHEL

I'm going to go pack.

(To CLAIRE.)

I'll call you when I get home, Mom.

(To JOSH.)

Don't get pulled into all this, Josh. It'll be like Dad leaving all over again.

(SHE exits.)

JOSH

Mom, please, just go out there and say something. Answer their questions. Or just make a statement. Then this can all be over.

CLAIRE

Not yet.

JOSH

Then when?

CLAIRE

I don't know.

JOSH

Tomorrow? Next week? I'm supposed to go back to Omaha on Monday.

CLAIRE

I don't know!

JOSH

I'll tell them to leave.

CLAIRE

They won't.

JOSH

I know.

(Pause.)

CLAIRE

Where's the card? I want to read it again.

JOSH

Mom...

(SHE glares at him.)

Here.

(HE hands her a condolence card.)

CLAIRE

She has such beautiful penmanship. No one writes anything by hand any more.

(Beat.)

She wants me to call her. What on earth could we possibly talk about?

JOSH

She probably wants to thank you.

CLAIRE

For what?

JOSH

For what John did. For her family.

CLAIRE

She'd be thanking the wrong person.

JOSH

Look, just let me go outside and say something; they won't care if it's you or if it's me. They'll get what they need for their story and then you won't have to keep barricading yourself in—

CLAIRE

Your brother's death is not a "story."

JOSH

It's news. He's a hero.

CLAIRE

Heroes live.

JOSH

Why are you being like this? Do you want them out there?