

The Family's Business

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CHARACTERS

KEVIN: CEO and owner of a software development and information management company. In his mid-late thirties, the oldest son. Charming, handsome, with no intention of settling down any time soon.

EMMETT: In his mid-late sixties, the family patriarch. A salesman before he retired, always ready to make his next pitch. He is seldom without his leather briefcase.

JAMES: President of the company. Early 30's, the responsible younger brother, with a wife and mortgage. Soft spoken and the voice of reason, he usually has his hands in his pockets.

FAYE: Mid to late sixties, the matriarch and the glue holding the family together. She knits baby hats and booties for the grandchildren she wishes she had. The needles are almost an extension of her hands.

TIME

Late 2002.

SETTINGS

Office

Open office space in Tribeca.

Family Home (Informal Dining Room)

A modest home on the North Shore of Long Island. It was last remodeled 20 years ago, but is kept well.

Deli

Across the street from Baby Gap, it is where the family eats lunch from time to time. Plastic trays and wobbly wooden tables are staples of the decor.

Garage Organizational Store

A showroom filled with shelving units for the garage.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Stage is dark.

EMMETT:

Jeanine, you just call the number on that card. I'm bettin' my son, Kevin, could use someone with your talents... You'll fit right in, Honey, you'll fit right in...

The bell of a shop's front door is heard knocking against the glass.

Lights come up on Kevin's office.

Kevin is tinkering with a device that scans and saves images of business cards. He is synching it with his PDA.

At first it interests Emmett, but Kevin hovers over it so his father can't see. Emmett takes to pacing or sitting.

KEVIN:

We killed 'em at the show!

EMMETT:

Big difference between killin' 'em and makin' a killing! How many sales ya' make?

KEVIN:

It's not just about the sales, it's about the contacts... See this? (*holds it up*) This has at least 200 cards in it... Everybody, I mean everybody was stopping at our booth!

EMMETT:

That's the problem with those trade shows... too many lookie loos... what you need is a closer, a guy to go one on one n' make the sale!

KEVIN:

How many times I gotta tell ya'? It's not like that anymore... We're talkin' to a guy in Tokyo... Probably never see his face!

EMMETT:

They're big on that, the Japanese... savin' face... bowin' down... respect!

KEVIN:

(still synching cards)
We almost went through a whole box a' cards!

EMMETT:

I'm almost out!

Kevin ignores him.

EMMETT:

I'm close to fresh outta cards, Kev...

KEVIN:

I couldn't give `em out fast enough! *(holding up the card scanner)* Need to order more.

EMMETT:

She got my second to last one, but I tell ya', Kevin, she's a real find.

KEVIN:

Like Brad — or Chad...and the clepto, what was her name?

EMMETT:

Barbara didn't —

KEVIN:

Barbara!

EMMETT:

She didn't steal those things!

KEVIN:

She had a stockpile ready for WWII in her desk.

EMMETT:

This one's different. She's just what you need around here...

KEVIN:

How do you know what I need?

EMMETT:

Kevin.

KEVIN:

How do you know what I need? Have you ever owned a business? I'm the one who built this place from scratch, not you.

How could you possibly know what I need?

EMMETT:

Listen, Bigshot, I know people! I was in sales longer than you've been alive! Or did you forget?

KEVIN:

How could I forget?

EMMETT:

If I know one thing, I know people! And I know you only get —

TOGETHER:

— one chance to make a first impression, so ya' better make it sharp!

EMMETT:

Someone walks in that front door, sees a warm smile, gets a friendly hello, n' the sale's in the bag!

KEVIN:

How much did she take you for?

EMMETT:

She didn't "take me" for anything!

KEVIN:

Nothing?

EMMETT:

Nothing.

KEVIN:

You didn't buy one thing from her?

EMMETT:

It was a steal —

KEVIN:

Just add it to the pile...

EMMETT:

I know a bargain when I see it — just like I know a star when I meet one.

KEVIN:

I don't need a star! I need someone to answer the phone and make a pot of coffee when we're in a meeting.

EMMETT:

She does coffee.

KEVIN:

Can she type?

EMMETT:

I'm sure...

KEVIN:

D'ya' ask her?

EMMETT:

Whad'ya' want me to do a full interview right there? Wasn't gonna take the wind outta your sails!

KEVIN:

But you offered her the job!

EMMETT:

I said you might have a job for her.

KEVIN:

Might?

EMMETT:

A strong possibility...

KEVIN:

What if I'd already found someone?

EMMETT:

Ya' can always use another pair a' hands! 'Specially if you're movin' to the new place...

KEVIN:

Another pair a' hands is another check to cut!

Did ya' find someone else?
EMMETT:

Not yet...
KEVIN:

So you should be thanking me, one less headache for you to worry about.
EMMETT:

Until I have to file a restraining order!
KEVIN:

Jesus, when are ya' gonna let that die?
EMMETT:

Don't, alright... Just... Forget it! Just, forget it.
KEVIN:

Gimme the number, I'll call her n' set something up.

Already took care of it, son! She'll be here tomorrow at noon.
EMMETT:

During lunch?
KEVIN:

'S the best time!
EMMETT:

What if I had a lunch meeting?
KEVIN:

Your mother said you were free.
EMMETT:

Of course she did...
KEVIN:

Are ya'?
EMMETT:

Yes, but that's not the point!
KEVIN:

EMMETT:

So what're ya' gettin' so sore about? You should be thanking me, one less headache to worry about.

KEVIN:

(more to himself)

So why are my temples throbbing?

EMMETT:

Just remember, ya' get what ya' pay for, so don't be cheap!

KEVIN:

Me? Cheap? You're telling me not to be — Out! Just, go... I'll meet her, fine — just...

EMMETT:

I knew ya'd come around!

I'll go see what your mother's up to.

KEVIN:

Good idea! I'm sure she'd love to see you.

Emmett gets his briefcase and exits.

Light change.

SCENE 2

A few weeks later in Kevin's office.

Blueprints are laid out in front of Kevin, Faye, and James.

Faye is knitting a baby hat. Her knitting is a reflection of her fluctuating mood, which gets more erratic when she's upset.

FAYE:

He doesn't need the corner office, Kevin.

KEVIN:

I need the corner office — I think I'm entitled. (*looks to James*) Am I right?

JAMES:

I'm gonna have to go with Kev on this one, Ma. It is his company.

KEVIN:

Our company.

JAMES:

Our company.

KEVIN:

Which means ole' James has the other corner.

Faye stops knitting and looks at the blueprints. She traces the lines on the drawing with her knitting needles. She is obviously perplexed.

FAYE:

Only a friend of yours could draw up plans for a square office space with only two corner offices.

KEVIN:

What's that supposed to mean?

FAYE:

Nothing... It's just... I've never seen a square with two corners.

She begins knitting again.

KEVIN:

(*pointing*)

This is the reception area, and then this is the conference room.

JAMES:

It's better when you visualize it in the space.

They both look at him.

FAYE:

The new space is double —

JAMES:

Actually, almost triple...

FAYE:

Thank you, Dear — Triple the size of this space, and you want to tell me there's no where to put him?

KEVIN:

We pay for every square foot of the space.

FAYE:

(pointing with needles)
What's this big room?

KEVIN:

That's for the servers.

FAYE:

Why do the machines get so much space?

JAMES:

They're very delicate.

FAYE:

They're machines. Can't you just stack them on top of each other?

KEVIN:

Those "machines" and everything stored on them are what pay for the new space.

FAYE:

But machines aren't people.

KEVIN:

No, they're worth more.

FAYE:

Aren't you ashamed?

KEVIN:

He doesn't even do anything...

JAMES:

He found Jeanine.

KEVIN:

(to Faye)

That's why there's no room, he keeps trying to fill the place with people — people I hardly have jobs for.

(to James)

You gave 'em more a' my cards?

JAMES:

They're the ones with the old logo...

KEVIN:

Oh...

FAYE:

I'm sure the new cards are under lock and key! Heaven forbid he should lay a hand on the new cards!

KEVIN:

They're my cards. I can do whatever I god-damn please!

FAYE:

When did you get to be so cheap? Doing the books, you go through money like water!

KEVIN:

Cheap? Are you really gonna start that conversation?

JAMES:

Kevin —

Kevin paces.

Faye looks at the blueprints again.

James looks at them as well.

FAYE:

What about just a desk?

KEVIN:

There's no room!

FAYE:
There's plenty of room in my office.

KEVIN:
For you, not him.

FAYE:
He's as much your father as I am your mother.

KEVIN:
You are my mother at your house. Here, you're Faye. You do the books and manage the office.

FAYE:
I'm always Faye, when I'm being your mother or doing your books, but I'm also his wife.

KEVIN:
I don't need you two at each other's throats in your office all day.

FAYE:
We're never "at each other's throats."

Kevin and James both look at her.

FAYE:
Your father's a spirited man, that's why people like him so much.

KEVIN:
I don't need spirit. This is an office, we do work here.

FAYE:
Spirit doesn't take that much room, Kevin, and neither does heart.

KEVIN:
So now I'm heartless? Because there's no room, I'm heartless?

JAMES:
No one said —

KEVIN:
She did — she just did!

FAYE:

A man needs a place to go —

KEVIN:

So I should just let 'em drive his golf cart in the new reception area? Make omelets in the kitchen? Practice his swing on the conference room table?

FAYE:

Aren't you going a little too far?

KEVIN:

Not until he's far enough.

FAYE:

(to James)

He needs to feel like... like he's doing something with his day.

JAMES:

Maybe we can take another look, Ma...

FAYE:

I knew you would, son.

She kisses his cheek and exits.

KEVIN:

What're ya' doin'?

JAMES:

What's the big deal, Kevin? Just give 'em a desk for cryin' out loud!

KEVIN:

And have him hanging around even more? Every time he blows in here it's like a freakin' tornado — suddenly everything's upside down...

JAMES:

He likes to stir things up; he thinks he's keepin' everybody on their toes.

KEVIN:

He's just getting on their nerves — on my *last* nerve. Am I the only one who really sees what's going on here?

JAMES:

Kev, you're makin' more a' this than it is... Five minutes ago you said it's "our" company — if it's ours, then I say give the bastard a desk!

KEVIN:

I would'a given him a desk seven years ago, but now I wouldn't even sell 'em one for 10 — no, 20 times what I asked him for!

He sent me over the edge that night, but it was the best thing he could'a done, 'cause I never looked back...

JAMES:

You always look back...

Kevin looks at his brother for the first time.

JAMES:

He did you a favor — forced you to prove to him and everybody else that you could do it.

KEVIN:

C'mon, Jay, don't you get tired sometimes? Always smoothing? Always making things nice?

JAMES:

(nervously rubs temple, forehead)

I am tired — tired a' rehashing the same old crap — tired a' living a life that isn't even... *(pulls himself back, physically...sticks his hands in his pockets)* Just give 'em the damn desk, alright? *(as if he's had the wind knocked out of him)* Just give 'em the desk.

Kevin's PDA alarm beeps

KEVIN:

Saved by the bell!

He takes it out and silences it.

They'll be here in ten minutes.

JAMES:

I'm gonna go check the side room —

KEVIN:

(setting the PDA on his desk)
— the conference room.

JAMES:

The conference room... see if it's all set...

James exits with his hands deep in his pockets.

Kevin looks at the blueprints again. He's ready to tear them up.

KEVIN:

Spirit!

He picks up a stress ball from his desk and squeezes it

Lights fade.