

Meat

By

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INT. HOUSE - DAY

LUCAS, a reserved and quiet 18 year old High School graduate walks through the front door of his parent's small but well furnished home, kicking off his shoes on the floor.

LUCAS

Hello? Is anyone home?

Suddenly the door opens and Lucas' pensive 45 year old father, BRIAN, walks through the door.

Lucas, startled by the noise, turns around to face Brian.

BRIAN

How did the job interview go?

Lucas looks down at his feet, not speaking for a moment.

LUCAS

I guess they're looking for someone with more experience.

Brian puts his arm around Lucas.

BRIAN

You know what? Their loss. They don't know a great employee when they see one.

Lucas, still looking disappointed, begins to walk up the stairs to his room.

BRIAN

Lucas! Come back down here for a minute, there's a few things we need to talk about.

Brian walks to the kitchen table and sits down, Lucas follows and sits across from him. Brian's expression becomes grim and for a moment, the room is so quiet that the ticking of an old grandfather clock nearby sounded deafening. Lucas breaks the silence.

LUCAS

This is about mom, isn't it?

Brian nods sternly.

BRIAN

She...She's getting worse. I'm so sorry I didn't talk to you about this sooner I just... didn't know how.

Lucas is silent and stares down at the kitchen table, tears beginning to well up in his eyes.

BRIAN

The doctors say that she needs a higher level of care, now that it's spreading.

LUCAS

I thought mom was supposed to be out of the hospital by next Saturday! They messed up! Mom even said she was starting to feel well enough to walk and eat.

BRIAN

Son, I know. We all thought she was going to pull through but --

Tears start streaming down Lucas' face.

LUCAS

What do you mean!? She *is* going to pull through! You're just going to give up on mom like that?

BRIAN

Look, no one is giving up on her. We just can't get too excited about a full recovery at this point. This is hard for me too, Lucas.

Lucas tries to dry his tears with the front of his shirt.

LUCAS

What do we do? There has to be something we can do, right?

BRIAN

That's the other thing I needed to talk to you about. Son, you remember my brother? Uncle Frank?

LUCAS

I think so. What does uncle Frank have to do with any of this?

BRIAN

Money is tight right now and your mom is going to need more expensive treatments that could really help. I talked with Frank today and he said that you could work for him in the shop...with you and I both working, I think we can cover all the treatments.

LUCAS

You mean the butcher shop in New Mexico?

BRIAN

That's the one. Frank owns the shop now and it's doing very well.

LUCAS

How the hell am I going to work in New Mexico?

BRIAN

Lucas! Language.

LUCAS

Sorry, dad.

BRIAN

Frank says that you can stay at his place if you decide to work with him... It would only be for a while and it'd be a great way for you to get to know your uncle.

LUCAS

Isn't uncle Frank like, really weird or something? Mom used to say he was.

Brian laughs.

BRIAN

He's had some anger issues but he's not the same guy anymore. Frank is a good man, Lucas. So what do you say? Do you think you'd wanna do it?

Lucas scratches his head, his face contemplative.

LUCAS

I'll do it. If it will help mom, I want to do this.

BRIAN

Lucas, I'm proud of you. I know your mom would be too.

Brian walks over to Lucas and gives him a hug.

BRIAN

Everything will be ok.

EXT. NEW MEXICO FREEWAY - DAY

Lucas speeds past a state sign on the Freeway in his car.

THE SIGN READS: Welcome to New Mexico, the land of enchantment.

EXT. FRANK'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Lucas steps out of his car into the New Mexico heat. Frank's disheveled and weathered house looks out of place compared to the rest of the tidy homes nearby. Lucas knocks on the door. Within seconds, Lucas hears footsteps and the 55 year old, portly, bearded, and boisterous FRANK emerges, smiling from ear to ear.

FRANK

My long lost nephew! How the hell are ya? Haven't seen you since you were in diapers!

Lucas laughs.

LUCAS

Hey Uncle Frank, I'm doing alright. And I don't wear diapers anymore, I promise!

Frank smiles and chuckles.

FRANK

That's good to hear! Come on in, Lucas.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucas steps into the house, he is immediately struck by how many taxidermied animals are present, mounted on wooden plaques and attached to the wall. Lucas' eyes move to a taxidermied lion, it's mouth permanently in a snarl, exposing a ferocious set of teeth.

LUCAS

Did you hunt that lion? It's huge!

FRANK

Sure did! Had to fly to Africa for that bad boy.

LUCAS

It looks amazing! I feel like I'm in a museum.

FRANK

Neat, isn't he? Lucas, I'll tell ya what. There's no feeling in the world like standing in front of a powerful animal like that and taking it down. The thrill isn't in the killing, the thrill is knowing that I am the most powerful animal on earth. An apex predator at the top of the food chain ya know?

Lucas looks puzzled.

LUCAS

Definitely. That sounds pretty exciting.

Frank's disposition changes from cheerful to somber.

FRANK

Lucas, I know ya might not want to talk about this but for what it's worth, I'm sorry to hear about your Mother. She's a strong woman and I know she can beat that damn disease.

LUCAS

Thanks, Frank. She's really been through a lot for the past few months but I know that she's going to get through this. My Mother is the strongest person I know.

FRANK

I'm glad you can see that it's all gonna work out. How're you doing kid? You holding up okay?

LUCAS

I'm fine, I just want to get to work so I can take my mind off this stuff for a bit you know?

Frank nods in approval.

FRANK

That's what I like to hear, buddy. Speaking of work, let's get you some butcher gear for tomorrow.

FRANK

Be up by eight o'clock so we can get to the shop by nine. Think you can do that for me?

LUCAS

Yes, sir!

Frank picks up a pair of black work boots and an off-white apron, handing them to Lucas.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Lucas dressed in his work uniform, stands behind the meat counter and watches Frank as he gleefully gives Lucas instruction. LEE, 32, a short man with many tattoos and an employee at the butcher shop stands closeby to observe.

FRANK

You need to line up the cuts of ham like this, Lucas.

Frank swiftly and neatly arranges pieces of sliced ham inside the meat display behind the counter.

LUCAS

Got it, easy enough.

Frank smirks and chuckles.

FRANK

Easy enough huh? Ya hear that, Lee? The kid thinks this is gonna be easy work.

Lee, standing closeby laughs and shakes his head.

LEE

Give him a week and then ask him if it's easy work.

The three men chuckle and Frank continues training Lucas.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Lucas grinds and packages beef for the next day in the back of the shop. Lucas notices Frank swiftly exiting the shop through the back door, as if trying to avoid detection. Lucas goes to the front of the shop to talk to Lee.

LUCAS

Yo, Lee. Do you know why Frank left? I think he's supposed to be here until ten. What's going on?

LEE

I don't know man, that's Frank for ya. The guy just does what he wants.

LUCAS

Did he tell us what needs to be cut for tonight? It's going to get pretty busy later.

LEE

Nah dude, Frank didn't say anything. That's the thing about him, you never really know what to expect. You'll get used to it.

LUCAS

Fair enough, thanks Lee.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - NIGHT

Later that night, Lucas mops up the work area and prepares to close up shop. The back door opens and Frank hurriedly enters, dragging large garbage bags across the floor and into to a locked freezer.

Frank slams the freezer door shut and turns around, jumping in surprise, unaware of Lucas' presence. Frank nervously laughs and walks over to Lucas.

FRANK

Lucas! Buddy, didn't see ya there. You gave me a bit of a scare! Are you working late?

LUCAS

Sorry, didn't mean to scare you. Yeah I'm working late tonight. Frank... what's in those bags?

Frank turns white and nervously replies.

FRANK

listen buddy. That stuff is just part of outside business that needs to be attended to, nothing you need to worry about.

LUCAS
Outside Business?

Frank's demeanor changes quickly.

FRANK
Outside business. It's none of
your business. Do I need to be any
more clear about this?

LUCAS
Not my business? I've been working
here for almost a month now, so
that makes me *part* of this
business!

FRANK
Lucas, I'm warning you. When you
start sticking your nose into
things you don't understand, you
might smell something bad.
Understand?

LUCAS
No! I don't! What's that even
supposed to mean, Frank?

Frank slowly walks towards Lucas until he is inches away
from his face, looking Lucas dead in the eyes.

FRANK
Stop asking questions, start doing
what you're told. It's been a long
night and I could do without the
attitude. Go home kid, I'll be
back after I take inventory.

Lucas glares back at Frank before storming out of the shop.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - NIGHT

Months later, Lucas is taking inventory of the unlocked
meat freezers late in the afternoon. Lucas hears shouting
coming from the opened back door. Lucas runs to the door
just in time to hear Frank losing his temper at the 23 year
old MEAT DELIVERY TRUCK DRIVER who just arrived.

FRANK

How can I get this through your thick skulls? The meat arrives at five fucking thirty! On the dot! Not five thirty five, not six o'clock. Got that? You inbred piece of shit!

MEAT DELIVERY TRUCK DRIVER

Calm down, man. There was heavy traffic all the way here. There's nothing I can do about that! please just sign for your order.

FRANK

Sign for my order? Maybe I'll sign for the order after I cut your goddamn head off with our bandsaw! How does that sound?

Meat delivery truck driver steps toward frank.

MEAT DELIVERY TRUCK DRIVER

Are you kidding? If that's a threat, I'm going to have to call the cops. You seriously need to take it down a notch.

FRANK

Jesus Christ, a little sensitive are we? Of course it wasn't a threat, fuck you. Give me that clipboard.

Frank violently grabs the clipboard from the truck driver and signs the order confirmation document, throws the clipboard on the ground, and walks back into the butcher shop.

Lucas stares at Frank in awe.

FRANK

What are you lookin' at? Back to work.

Lucas turns back around and continues his work.

LUCAS

Yes, sir.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Lucas walks past Frank's office and knocks on his door, which is slightly ajar.

LUCAS

Frank?

FRANK

Do you need something?

LUCAS

Sorry to bother you... I was just letting you know that we're all out of brisket, do we have any in that locked freezer?

FRANK

We have brisket in there. I'll pull it out to thaw tomorrow, don't worry about it.

LUCAS

If you give me the key I could go in there really quick and --

FRANK

Damn it, Lucas! For the last time, you're not going in there, alright? That freezer is for managers only.

LUCAS

Fine. I don't see what the big deal is, Frank. I was just trying to prepare for tomorrow.

Frank lets out an exasperated sigh.

FRANK

Since you need to know, I get all of the meat in that freezer for free and for your information, It's not legal and not FDA approved. I don't want to get anyone else involved in this mess, especially my nephew.

LUCAS

Why do we need free meat? Seems like we're doing pretty well here.

FRANK

We're doing well *because* we use free meat, it cuts our expenses in half. Drop it, kid. Empty the trash and turn out the lights before you leave, I'm headed out.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - NIGHT

Lucas finishes his duties and walks towards the back door to leave, but stops in front of the locked freezer. Lucas stares at the lock on the freezer door for a moment before pulling on the padlock. The lock clicks and comes undone. Lucas smirks and mutters to himself quietly.

LUCAS

Good one, Frank. Better luck next time.

Lucas cautiously opens the freezer revealing many full looking garbage bags in this freezer. Lucas slowly opens up one of the bags and screams, a severed human arm falls out of the garbage bag. Lucas vomits onto the floor of the freezer. Lucas quickly stuffs the arm back in the bag and runs outside.

EXT. BUTCHER SHOP - NIGHT

Lucas leans against the exterior of the shop for support, breathing heavily and closes his eyes. Lucas takes his phone out of his pocket and hesitates before calling Brian.

Phone rings.

BRIAN

Hello? It's late. Are you okay?

Lucas doesn't answer, holding back tears and then begins to cry.

LUCAS

D...Dad. I don't know how to tell you this...

BRIAN

What happened?! I need you to tell me what's going on Lucas, You're not hurt are you?

LUCAS

No... I think Frank did something really bad.

BRIAN

What do you mean?

LUCAS

Frank... I think he's hurt people.

BRIAN

Son if this is a joke, I'm not laughing.

LUCAS

It's not a joke! I wouldn't joke about this! I just found a dead body in the freezer at work and I know Frank is behind this.

BRIAN

Frank has had some problems but this is out of the question, Lucas. My brother could never do something like that, he wouldn't. Why are you saying this?

LUCAS

You don't believe me? I know what I saw, you have to believe me! Please!

BRIAN

Lucas, I think that your mom's situation has hit you really hard. I understand that, let's just --

LUCAS

let's just what? Stop being so fucking insane? Dad, I promise you this is real, I'm not making it up. I'm not crazy. Frank seemed nice when I got here but he's not who I thought he was and now I don't know what to do. I think he might kill me next.

BRIAN

I don't think You're crazy, but you're really scaring me. You need to get in your car and come home right now. Don't bother packing, just get here as soon as you can. Do you think you can do that?

LUCAS

I need to get out of here, I'll be there soon.

Lucas reaches in his pocket for his car keys and realizes that he left them inside the shop. Lucas quickly runs back inside.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - NIGHT

Lucas rushes into the building through the back door and stops dead in his tracks. Frank is standing in the darkness of the shop with a menacing look on his face.

LUCAS

F...Frank? I thought you went home?

FRANK

I did, now I'm back. Needed to check on something. Can you guess what I found when I got back?

LUCAS

An open freezer full of innocent people?

Frank says nothing and glares at Lucas.

LUCAS

It's true then? You really killed all those people? Damn it, Frank. Why would you do this? How could you do this?

Frank stays silent but a grin begins to slowly spread on his face.

LUCAS

Say something! Answer me!

Frank starts to laugh, at first quietly and then hysterically, falling to the floor cackling like a madman. Lucas watches Frank in terror as he laughs on the floor, smearing his clothes with scraps of bloody meat and animal fat laying on the ground.

Frank suddenly pulls himself off the floor and grabs a meat cleaver nearby and slowly walks towards Lucas with knife in hand.

FRANK

It's your turn, buddy.

Lucas backs away from Frank, making his way to the back door. Frank charges at Lucas, swinging the meat cleaver at him in the same motion. Lucas moves just in time to avoid the blade, which gets stuck in the wooden door of the shop.

Frank furiously tries to remove the cleaver that is now lodged deeply in the door. Frank removes the blade and swings the cleaver again at Lucas, this time cutting off his thumb.

Lucas retaliates and pushes Frank onto a running bandsaw, severing Frank's entire arm and spraying blood all over the walls. Frank slumps back down to the floor, profusely bleeding.

LUCAS

Tell me why you did it Frank. Why did you kill so many people?

Frank smiles another toothy grin and picks up the nearby cleaver with his still intact arm and slits his own throat. Franks lays face down as his blood begins to spread over the white linoleum.

Lucas stares at Frank's lifeless body in disbelief for a moment before turning around and walking into to Frank's office and sitting in his leather chair, adjacent to a rather large mahogany desk. Lucas' uninjured but trembling hand grasps his phone. Lucas stares out the office window before finally Dialing 911.

OPERATOR

911, what's your emergency?

