

DETOUR

Written by

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Based on a Stageplay of the same name

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1 FADE IN 1

2 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY 2

Family dinner. PASTOR RUDOLPH JAMES, early 50's, sits at the head table. His wife, JANET JAMES, late 40's sits to his right; older son JOHN JAMES, 22, sits to his left and younger son CALEB JAMES, 20, sits at the opposite end of the table.

They move the plates around, helping themselves to individual portions of the prepared meal in silence. They are organized and discipline in their mannerisms and eat as we would expect an upper class family to eat...with knife and fork.

In a moment of frustration, Caleb puts down the knife and fork and begins eating with a spoon.

RUDOLPH
Caleb.

CALEB
Sir.

RUDOLPH
That's not how we do things here.

CALEB
Is there a book of rules somewhere
I need to read?

RUDOLPH
You know the rules.

CALEB
I know your rules.

RUDOLPH
Which are applicable in my house.

Caleb continues to eat with the spoon. Janet puts a hand on his.

JANET
Please. For a peaceful life.

CALEB
Don't you ever get tired of doing
the same thing, the same way, every
single time?

JANET
This is not the time or place.

Caleb sees the concern in his mothers eyes. He looks at his father and reluctantly decides to comply.

3 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 3

Caleb sits in his bed and writes in his journal.

CALEB'S VOICE

In this life, good people are often treated as though they were wicked, and wicked people are often treated as though they were good. This is meaningless. So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people to do in this world than eat, drink and enjoy life. That way, they will experience some happiness along with all the hard work God gives them. (Ecclesiastes 8:14-15)

4 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY 4

Back at the dinner table. The food is almost gone. The atmosphere is a bit tense. Janet looks around at the serene faces.

JANET

Today was lovely. I think the message was relevant.

CALEB

No it wasn't.

JANET

Caleb, please.

CALEB

Pops was preaching about guineps and tofu. Why do all his messages have to have some reference to food?

JOHN

I think it was a good message.

CALEB

You would think so you little zombie. Why not develop a mind of you own instead of sopping up what everybody else think?

JANET
Caleb! You're out of line.

Caleb catches himself.

CALEB
Apologies.

Uncomfortable pause.

RUDOLPH
I preach so people can relate to
what I'm saying.

5 INT. CHURCH - DAY - FLASHBACK

5

Rudolph is at the pulpit sweating. Members of the congregation are on their feet clapping, praising...some remain passive as Rudolph moves from one end of the stage to the next.

RUDOLPH
...Tofu is tasteless ahah, but it
can adapt. It absorbs whatever
seasoning is used on it ahah.
Likewise Christians should absorb
difficult times ahah. Trials come
to make us strong ahah. We are no
longer tasteless, but we develop
flavour ahah. But some of us are
too much like guineps ahah. Some
can be stripped easily from the
seed while others take greater
effort ahah....

6 EXT. SOMEWHERE BEHIND THE CHURCH - DAY

6

Caleb sits alone with his thoughts. SAMUEL, early 30's approaches.

SAMUEL
Hey.

CALEB
I'm not in the mood for another
sermon.

SAMUEL
Just checking to see if you're
good.

CALEB

Yeah.

SAMUEL

You sure?

CALEB

I don't belong here.

SAMUEL

Wanna talk about it.

CALEB

How do you stay saved for so long?

Samuel sits beside Caleb.

SAMUEL

I have been to many places and done many things and have found the Christian life to be one of the best choices I made in my life. Nothing else compares to it.

CALEB

I was born in a Christian home. I have nothing to compare it to.

SAMUEL

You're searching for something Caleb. Whatever it is, if you find it to be better than this, you let me know okay.

7 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - PRESENT

7

Janet begins to clear the table. John helps her.

RUDOLPH

The message was good, but did it accomplish anything.

JANET

I'm sure it did honey. Many responded to the altar call.

RUDOLPH

Not my son.

CALEB

Why would I need to go to the altar today? I'm neither a guinep or tofu.

(MORE)

CALEB (CONT'D)

That altar call should have been done at the market. I don't see how it was relevant to me.

RUDOLPH

Your attitude for one.

CALEB

What's wrong with my attitude?

RUDOLPH

Its not Christ-like.

JANET

Are you two really gonna do this again?

RUDOLPH

Dinner was lovely honey.

JANET

Thank you...I dream of the day the two of you get along. I don't even know what the problem is between you two.

RUDOLPH

Conflict of interest.

CALEB

How so Pops?

RUDOLPH

I'm interested in Church and you are not.

CALEB

Do you have any idea what its like being a Pastors son...your son?

RUDOLPH

No. My father made coal and grew callaloo. He went to church twice. His wedding and his funeral.

CALEB

Well, then let me tell you. It feels like I'm in prison. No freedom. No space.

RUDOLPH

Where the presence of God is there is liberty.

CALEB

There is no liberty in being your son Pops. There are just rules, curfews and padlocks. I am in chains. No fun. No freedom.

RUDOLPH

Freedom to do what?

CALEB

Whatever I want to do.

RUDOLPH

As long as you live under my roof, you will live by my rules.

CALEB

Maybe I should move out.

RUDOLPH

Maybe you should.

CALEB

Maybe I will.

JANET

Where would you go?

CALEB

Anywhere my feet take me.

RUDOLPH

You're nothing but an ungrateful sluggard.

Caleb slams his fist against the table.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

Did you just slam your fist on my table.

JANET

Please stop.

RUDOLPH

This house is mine. All these furniture are mine. I am the one who took them out on hire purchase and I'm still paying for them. The only thing you own in this house, is your stinking attitude.

JANET

ENOUGH!!!

Pause.

Caleb leaves the table.

RUDOLPH

Why can't that boy be more like his brother?

JANET

Stop comparing him to John.

RUDOLPH

You saw what he did. Today he walked out of Church five minutes into the message. I think that says a lot about your son.

Pause.

JANET

I will go check on our son. Excuse me.

Janet leaves.

Rudolph looks at John, who is practically frozen in time, not sure if he should turn to the left or right. Rudolph pulls up a chair closer to him.

RUDOLPH

Come sit with your father son.

John sits on the chair.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

You okay?

JOHN

Yes sir.

RUDOLPH

You should go feed the animals and get some rest. You have a big day tomorrow.

JOHN

Yes sir.

RUDOLPH

Make sure you don't give the goats what the pigs should get. You remember what happened the last time.

JOHN

Yes sir.

RUDOLPH

Don't worry. We'll hire someone to take care of the farm once you start college.

JOHN

Yes sir.

RUDOLPH

Go.

John gets up to leave.

RUDOLPH (CONT'D)

John...thank you for not being like your brother.

John is unsure how to respond. He nods and leaves. Rudolph is lost in thought for a beat. He gets up and looks at the table.

8 INT. CALEBS BEDROOM - DAY

8

Janet hugs her son.

RUDOLPH'S VOICE

Honey...can you come finish cleaning up this table. Its a mess.

Janet rolls her eyes.

CALEB'S VOICE

He has buried me in a dark place, like a person long dead. He has walled me in, and I cannot escape. He has bound me in heavy chains. And though I cry and shout, he shuts out my prayers. He has blocked my path with a high stone wall. He has twisted the road before me with many Detours. (Lamentations 3:6-9)...I must break free.

9 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

9

Pastor Rudolph sits in his recliner reading the Sunday Paper. Caleb comes in.

CALEB
We need to talk Pops.

Rudolph looks over his glasses at Caleb....then at his watch.

RUDOLPH
Talk time is at five thirty.

CALEB
Its five ten.

RUDOLPH
You know how much I value my moment. This is my moment. You are interfering with it.

CALEB
Your son wants to talk to you, but you are busy having a moment? A moment Pops. What do I do? Make an appointment?

RUDOLPH
That's how it usually works. Now if you'll excuse me ---

CALEB
Everything for you is a schedule. I am your son. I think I should be able to talk to my father when I feel like it.

RUDOLPH
If I run this house on feelings, there would be no order.

CALEB
Is there a book for that?

RUDOLPH
Parenting for Dummies.

Caleb raises an eyebrow.

CALEB
You're taking advice from a book called parenting for dummies?

RUDOLPH
Yes.

CALEB
Does that say something about you?