

Fresh Coat of Paint

by

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Cast of Characters

BREWSTER:

36

RODNEY:

34

Place

Cliff

Time

11:00 PM

Setting: A dimly lit porch.

At Rise: Brewster and his brother Rodney overlook an oil field. They drink.

BREWSTER: I look out there, at all my workers, I witness the sweat on their faces, their backs, not one of them have my work ethic, not one. Why do you think that is? What makes a man work harder than the next?

What I feel, this push to move forward, most do not have, but for me, for me, well, it's the only way I can breathe. Doesn't matter the elements...I will show up.

This is why they try to stop me, slow me down. Groups. Groups that conspire against me, to bring me pause, but I will cut them all to pieces and eat their flesh over a warm, toasty fire.

I am ruthless, relentless and simply do not care for my enemy, not for one damn second.

Does that make me an evil person? To have this appetite?

When I first started out, all I had was a pair of gloves, a hammer and a chisel, maybe some rope that I would steal from the closest horse ranch, during the night.

You come along, my brother, and you wish to work side by side with me. I have always wanted to have my brother work with me, to feel like we are conquering, together. Always been a secret fantasy of mine. Loyalty, honor, trust...intelligence.

But you are a waste, I'm afraid.

Always inaccurate, always inefficient. I oftentimes wonder how our mother and father could have spawned the two of us.

I am refined, you are haggard.

I am relentless, you are soft.

I am strategic, you are dumb.

I am hungry, you are weak.

I keep you around because you are my blood and because I promised our father that I would look after you. If it were not for my promise to him, I would have cut your head off your shoulders by now.

Did you know that about me?

Well, here you are, working for me, acting like a buffoon amongst my men, and I must tolerate your disloyalty to me.

What would you have me do if you were in my shoes? Should I keep you on and turn a blind eye to your dealings? Perhaps you should have an accident of some sort? ...What say you?

RODNEY: What dealings, brother?

BREWSTER: Ha, ha, ha. He adds insult to injury. Dealings! Your dealings! Haven't you been in talks to buy land? Haven't you?

RODNEY: You gave me permission.

BREWSTER: I gave you no such permission.

RODNEY: I asked you. Not three months ago, if I could canvas some land as a potential prospect.

BREWSTER: My own brother wishes to compete with me?

RODNEY: Not at all. I only wish to have something I can call my own. One day, I'd like to build a home, get married, start a family.

BREWSTER: To whom? Louisa, the barmaid?

RODNEY: Well---

BREWSTER: She's been with everyman I ever spoken to and you wish to marry her.

RODNEY: We're in love, Brewster.

BREWSTER: Love? How can you possibly be in love with Louisa the barmaid?

RODNEY: That isn't something I can ever explain to you.

BREWSTER: And why's that?

RODNEY: Because I don't imagine you've ever loved anyone your entire life.

BREWSTER: ...That may be so.

RODNEY: It's true.

BREWSTER: Why not buy land from me? Why investigate untapped soil?

RODNEY: What would be wrong with me making money back on my own investment?

BREWSTER: And let us say your findings explode? Let us say that there's wealth beneath your feet...what will you do then?

RODNEY: I will build my home, marry Louisa and start my own family.

BREWSTER: You work for me!

RODNEY: Why are you so afraid that one day I may compete with you?

BREWSTER: Ahh, there, you said it, honest words from a crooked brother.

RODNEY: I am not speaking honest words. I raise a question.

BREWSTER: I knew it. I knew with a little probing that the truth would drip out from you.

RODNEY: Answer my question.

BREWSTER: State your question!

RODNEY: Why are you afraid to compete with me?

BREWSTER: Because I will crush you into the ground you stand on and it will go against everything I promised father.

RODNEY: Since when have you been so loyal?

BREWSTER: One cannot go against dying wishes.

RODNEY: I never had plans to rise against you. I have every right to carve out a life for myself.

BREWSTER: You're a drunk! Do you really believe you will be capable of drilling? Do you have any idea the level of commitment you will need to have in order to carry anything through? Haven't you learned anything working for me?

RODNEY: I've learned quite a great deal, actually.

BREWSTER: Such as?

RODNEY: Excuse me?

BREWSTER: ...What have you learned?

RODNEY: I've learned to be everything other than what you are.

BREWSTER: Oh, you're turning the conversation into high moral ground...that won't do you any good with me. I know who I am. I know what I stand for and what I believe in. Your words are useless with me. Go! Go fund your scheme. You will go bankrupt in a fortnight. Go! When you come crawling back to me, I will give you a good licking.

RODNEY: I---you didn't even give me a chance.

BREWSTER: Chance? What chance? I've given you a fresh coat of paint and each time, you start to fade, crack and crumble. I am there to see you through, aren't I? I am the one to pick up your pieces and put Rodney back together again.

RODNEY: You didn't give me a chance to fully hear me out and support my endeavor.

BREWSTER: Your endeavor is wrong!

RODNEY: Wrong for you!

BREWSTER: Wrong! Wrong! Period, WRONG!

RODNEY: You are wrong! You work your men until they fall ill. Two men have even died because of your treatment. And don't sit there and tell me otherwise because I know the truth. You tried to cover it all up and you succeeded, but how do you sleep at night? How do you live with yourself?

BREWSTER: One thing has nothing to do with the other.

RODNEY: What are you even saying?

BREWSTER: No man that works for me comes onboard without understanding the consequences of the task expected of him.

RODNEY: They paid with their life, Brewster.

BREWSTER: Every man gets a fair shake.

RODNEY: By signing contracts?

BREWSTER: By accepting the responsibility of hard work.

RODNEY: It's one thing to work hard, it's quite another to work to death.

BREWSTER: The weak shall fall and the strong shall grow stronger.

RODNEY: You've worked men to the bone, until their flesh can no longer stand. Paying them wages that even peasants couldn't live on. Never giving anyone a kind word or smile...I don't believe I have ever seen you smile. You have green in your eyes and it has warped your soul. You aren't my brother, you are something else entirely.

BREWSTER: If it were not for me and my motives, you would not be sitting where you are today. You would be destitute with your Louisa, doing God knows what, and maybe even dead somewhere by now.

RODNEY: Have you no shame, brother?

Brewster remains silent.

...I'm done.

BREWSTER: Go on!

RODNEY: Nothing is worse than trying to dishonor your fellow man.

BREWSTER: Bravo!

RODNEY: I will be sure you hear of my success.

Rodney leaves.

BREWSTER (to himself): ...Bravo...

Brewster downs his beer.

END OF PLAY