

Short End Of The Stick

by

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Cast of Characters

GIA: 27

CHAZZ: 31

Place
Queens, New York

Time
Afternoon

2.

Setting: Between a living room and kitchen in a small home in Queens, New York.

At Rise: Chazz sits on the couch with the TV on, while Gia moves all around the living room.

CHAZZ: I'm supposed to go running. Soon as she has a problem, I'm supposed to go flying over to her and be a hero. Well, I don't want to be a hero, alright? Not after she shows me such disrespect.

GIA: But you know that's her way. Why you gotta make such a scene?

CHAZZ: I'm not the one making a scene, *she* is. I mean, how embarrassing was she last week at my mothers? Airing out all my dirty laundry in front of the whole family. I paid back my debts, I'm debt free, the past is the past and she goes on like it was yesterday.

Yeah, I borrowed five grand from her cause I had to pay off Milo from the races, okay? I got a gambling problem—HAD, HAD a gambling problem. I liked going to Atlantic City on the weekends, there's a big surprise. I mean, everybody in the entire family knows this about me, they know this is my character and they know I put myself in check a long-time-ago. Right?

But she wants to bring up the past, she wants to belittle me and make me feel like a loser, because that's how she gloats, she gets happy when I'm down and I got news for her, I haven't been down in years, YEARS, and I'm not planning on going down anytime soon, that's for sure, that's the truth. (beat) Not like I didn't do right by her.

I was hit hard, but I came back harder and paid that bitch off, plus interest. Gave her an extra thousand on top of it, but I still get smashed. Nobody wants to talk about that. I didn't have to give her an extra thousand, right? Right?

Yeah. Nobody wants to talk about how I changed my life and became somebody. Got married, good job, nice house, but that don't count cause it overshadows who I was in my past. See, everybody got me as this bum my whole life and everybody got used to sticking it to me...but now they can't and they don't know how to treat me like I'm one of them, cause the conversation was always about how I'm NOT one of them, and it breaks my heart...it does...I arrived, finally, finally arrived and I get no respect.

GIA: Tell me how you really feel.

(THEY laugh, CHAZZ saddens)

CHAZZ: Eh, what's the sense in any of it Gia, you know? I made so many mistakes in my life, how can I even blame them for still treating me the way they always did? You know, I thought that they were the light at the end of my tunnel. I thought that if I made good, my family would love me better and...I can't.

GIA: Don't get yourself so worked up, I know it's been a long journey for you. I know better than anybody.

CHAZZ: It's important for a man to have his dignity.

GIA: Sure it is, Chazz and you have your dignity.

CHAZZ: I have my dignity, but why can't others see me in a new light?

GIA: Cause they are jealous assholes, what do you want me to say?

CHAZZ: That don't help me, though.

GIA: But it's the truth and the truth sets us free.

CHAZZ: You sound so cheesy with that.

GIA: With what?

CHAZZ: With the whole truth setting us free talk.

GIA: I'm sorry, but that's what I believe in my heart, Chazz. You can make funny of me all you want.

CHAZZ: Nah, I'm not making fun...I guess you're right...you're right. It is true.

GIA: And you can only change yourself, which you've done but you can't change others.

CHAZZ: But now my mother is asking me to call my sister to lend her money. Imagine, that? I actually have to call my sister to lend her money. Why can't she call me and ask?

GIA: Chazz, she's going through a divorce, she's got like twelve kids, her mind is not her own. Be there for her, call her up and see how's she doing, when she gives you the hint, throw her a bone.

CHAZZ: But am I the only one who's normal here or what? Last Sunday she buried me in front of the whole family, and now I'm expected to be her hero? Does that make any sense to you?

GIA: I know, I know it's crazy, you're right, but your sister is going through a lot of hard times, and she has pride too.

CHAZZ: She should have reached out to me and apologized by now.

GIA: You're so stubborn.

CHAZZ: I'm not trying to be stubborn, I'm trying to be honest. Don't you think she should have said sorry?

GIA: I don't know.

CHAZZ: What do you mean, you don't know?

GIA: Do you really need her apology that bad?

CHAZZ: It would be nice.

GIA: It would be nice, but is your life dependent on it?

CHAZZ: No, but still.

GIA: Oh, stop being such a big baby. Call your sister and lend her money, stop being such a prick about it. She was there for you when nobody else was and yeah, she made a stink over it by rubbing it in your face last week, but here's your chance to level the playing field. If you lend her money, then she's got nothing on you. All your years of humiliation, of always getting the short end of the stick, will all come to an end, because you stepped up to the plate. You see? And when you step up to the plate and play ball, nobody can say shit to you. So, give the bitch some money, shut her up for life. Simple.

(beat)

CHAZZ: You got a good point there.

GIA: I know I do.

CHAZZ: But still.

GIA: Come on!

CHAZZ: She needs to call me and say sorry and then I'll help her out.

(phone rings)

(CHAZZ answers)

...Hello? Hey sis, how are ya? (beat) Doing fine, yeah, things is good. Gia's fine, yeah. We're about to go out for dinner. No, no it's not a bad time, not leaving for another hour or so, Gia takes forever to get ready.

(GIA fake kicks CHAZZ,
he smiles and runs)

Yeah, what's up? (beat) Right...right...okay...sure, sure no problem...how much? Ten? That's a serious deposit, no? (beat) It's crazy, I know. (beat) Yeah, I don't mind helping you out but I gotta be honest with you.

(GIA slaps CHAZZ on the shoulder
for real)

(CHAZZ dirty looks GIA)

CHAZZ (cont'd): Don't you think you should say sorry for last Sunday? For what? For the way you put me down in front of our whole family.

Yeah, I'm serious. I wouldn't talk that way to you. I mean, I know I wasn't the greatest brother growing up and everything, but I get zero credit for turning my whole life around. Joking? You won't even admit it to me, Flo, you outright held me down and made me feel like a little weasel. (beat) (sarcastic) You were not joking, stop it, you weren't joking, why can't you just admit it and say you're sorry. (beat) I have problems? YOU have problems. (shouts) Show some respect for once in your life, I'm your brother! Hello? HELLO?!

(to GIA) She hung up.

GIA: Oh, really?

CHAZZ: Don't be wise.

GIA: I told you not to argue with her and now look, look what you did.

CHAZZ (growls): I'm sick of everybody always accusing me of being in the wrong. I can't stick up for myself? She actually lied to me on the phone, playing it off like it was no big deal, like she was joking. Am I insane?

GIA: I was there.

CHAZZ: And?

GIA: She took things too far.

CHAZZ: Exactly!

GIA: What started out as a joke, turned sinister. I'm not gonna lie, but the way you handle yourself is a joke.

CHAZZ: Don't start.

GIA: If you learn to control yourself, people will have less to say. Isn't that what you said you want?

CHAZZ: Yeah, but how do I defend myself if I don't stick up for myself?

GIA: Use your brains and be diplomatic.

CHAZZ: Diplo-who?

GIA: You have to be a politician.

CHAZZ: I hate politics.

GIA: No, no, listen up cause your ears need to hear what I'm about to say.

(GIA pauses for affect)

CHAZZ: Well, go ahead, you're leaving me in suspense, SAY IT.

GIA: You have to be nice to get what you want in this world. When you play the asshole, you get nowhere. What do you have at stake, Chazz? Your pride or your dignity? (beat) When you take pride out of the equation you are left with dignity, and if that's what matters to you most, you will learn to play nice, because when you play nice, you will get what you want...respect. Stop being on the defensive and start being on the offensive, with kindness and it's not because you're faking it, it's because what you stand for something that matters a great deal to you...think about that.

CHAZZ: I have to learn to put things in a better perspective.

GIA: Start now by calling Florence back and lending her the money.

CHAZZ: But she's wrong.

GIA: Doesn't matter, be the bigger person, it will all come back to you in a good way, I promise.

CHAZZ: Let me just blow off some steam, alright?

GIA: Don't take forever.

CHAZZ: Just give me a few seconds, damn it. I'll call her back.

GIA: Do it before we leave please, I want to have a nice dinner.

CHAZZ: I will, I will, just go finish getting ready. I'll call in a bit.

GIA: Good.

(GIA goes upstairs)

(CHAZZ stand up from couch and paces)

(CHAZZ growls and sighs and calls his sister from his cellphone)

CHAZZ: Hey ya, uh, yeah Flo, just forget about it alright, sorry I got mad at ya and all, it's stupid, we're being stupid. (beat) I'm being stupid? (sighs) Yo know, it takes a lot for me to make this call to you, cause I'm already pissed off. Hello? Yeah. I'm already annoyed but I'm willing to forget last week. I know you're in a situation and I want to help you but you don't make it easy for me...what? Say it again, the reception---(to himself) This fucking phone...

(CHAZZ stands on the couch)

Yeah, Flo, say the last part cause the phone cut out. (pause.) I know...I understand...I know you're going through a lot...don't cry...don't...listen, I'm gonna swing by tomorrow, everything will turn out alright, ya hear?

(CHAZZ jumps off the couch, but stands in one spot)

I'll take ya---we'll go for lunch tomorrow too if you want. You wanna go for lunch? Okay, you could treat me since you'll have tend grand. Ha, ha, ha...nah, I got you, don't worry about it sis...listen, I'm here for you, alright...

(CHAZZ hangs up the phone and sits on the couch)

I love you.

END OF PLAY