

Biggest Break

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Synopsis: Two old friends are ready to risk it all when they get the chance at the biggest break they've ever had.

CHARACTERS:

BEN late 20's. Beth's son. The reality of his situation is finally setting in. Waiting.

URI late 20's. Ditto reality. Ditto waiting.

BETH late 40's. Her style is more stylized. Her favorite condolences card, written by an old friend, read, "With each door that closes, new ones open." Already always waiting.

LOUIE late 50's. Takes. Reacts. Is no longer waiting.

SETTING:

A suburban house in Tucson, Arizona. Summer, the present.

SPLIT STAGE. FOREGROUND: BETH SITS IN HER LIVING ROOM.
BACKGROUND: BEN 'S ROOM. BEN AND URI SIT. AFTERNOON.

BETH *stylish and stylized, wears ridiculous layers of cumbersome winter clothing which she slowly takes off throughout, as noted.* BEN *prepares to smoke a bowl as URI looks on.*

Wanna hit? **BEN**

Dude, maybe that's not a good idea. **URI**

Since when do you turn down pot? **BEN**

Since I got arrested last year for possession. **URI**

That didn't stop you last week. Or the week before that. **BEN**

With everyone downstairs maybe it's not a good idea, Ben.
(BETH *approaches the door. She is about to knock--*) **URI**

My mom doesn't give a fuck. **BEN**

When there's no one else here. But I mean, your grandma--
(BEN *lights the bowl.*) **URI**

Wanna hit? **BEN**

Maybe I should crack a window? **URI**

The A.C. is on. She may not care about smoking up but get the place hot and there'll be no end to the nagging.
(URI *doesn't move.* BETH *retreats. She resumes taking off her outerwear.*) **BEN**

URI

It was hot out there. It's the suits.

BEN

That's why I never wear one. *(He smokes.)* Some good shit.

URI

Ok. Just a puff. What are we doing, anyway? *(He smokes.)*

BEN

We're waiting.

URI

Waiting for what?

BEN

The biggest break we ever got.

URI

What?

BEN

I was thinking: what do you think happens after you die?

URI

What's "the biggest break we--"

BEN

--Tell me, Uri. Is it all dark and nothing? Or do we get wings and walk around on clouds and talk to God?

URI

I think there's like a light. And then you go in it.

BEN

You got that shit from some kinda tv show. There's just blackness. You're dead. Like a rock.

URI

Rocks never lived.

BEN

Like petrified wood.

URI

The light's at the beginning. After that, it's not people walking around in robes with harps. But it's not all dark either. It's something...between. Like maybe when you cum-- you know how your heart kind of stops and you feel like you're everywhere at once. I think it's kind of like death.

BEN

He'd like that.

URI

Yeah?

BEN

But when you die you're dead. Like a rock.

(BETH comes to the door.)

BETH

Ben!

URI

Hide the shit!

BETH

Ben! Everyone's leaving! Your grandmother wants to say bye.

BEN

Mom! I'm busy with Uri. We're talking business.

BETH

...you know he would've liked you to speak with her—

BEN

--Jesus mom! Can you not pound me with that shit today?

URI

Dude—

BEN

(To URI:) --Shut up. *(To BETH:)* How much can we talk about how "I'm the man of the house." And how I need to "look after my mother."

BETH

Ok, Benny. I'll tell her you're upset.

BEN

Tell her I'll see her at the airport.

(BETH retreats.)

URI

You shouldn't talk to her like that, man.

BEN

What?

URI

I mean...her husband just died.

BEN

If she had died my dad would be screwing so many company secretaries his dick would start oozing white-out and printer ink. 25 years of listening to him talk about responsibility, while he was out there fucking everything that moves. Mom pretends she doesn't know-badly I might add, and mopes around all day. 25 years of this shit. They owe me restitution for my life.

URI

We just went to his funeral.

BEN

My mom should've gone to Vegas instead of inviting the family over to Tucson. She's been a saint to that prick. Better yet, she shoulda gone to visit them back East. She's always talking about how much she hates the heat.

(BETH re-enters the living room and resumes taking off her winter clothing.)

URI

He kept you guys living alright, though.

BEN

He knew business. And you and me, my friend, are going to be the primary beneficiaries.

URI

How's that?

BEN

He gave me this fucking heart to heart where he apologized for being a prick. 'Told me he was going to make it up to me.

URI

What do you mean?

BEN

He said he'd never taught me how to handle business. And so when he was gone, that he would set me up.

URI

He left you money.

BEN

He had a shit load from his development company.

URI

The desert's destruction is your gain.

BEN

Our gain.

URI

Hazmat?

BEN

Hazmat's gonna happen. We've been talking about owning a record label since college. Now we can put money down.

URI

We can sign bands.

BEN

Not just any bands, man. The Sun Bolts were just released by 'F-ing.

URI

That would be like 5,000 dollars.

BEN

I wanna offer 'em 10.

URI

10?

BEN

Just to make sure we get them. We've known those guys since high school, since they were sitting around jerking off in their rooms like we're still doing.

URI

They probably still do that—

BEN

--If 'F-ing got a band like the Sun Bolts, think what we could do. Their last album made Pitchfork. They're gonna blow up with—

URI

--You know we'll get the money?

BEN

I'm willing to bet. In fact, I already did. 3 thousand.

URI

What's that?

BEN

What I gave them. Money down. No obligation.

URI

Where'd you get that?

BEN

College job.

URI

Selling weed does not qualify as a college job.

BEN

It got me 3,000 alright? It's my fucking life savings.

URI

And you gave it to Scott? No strings attached?

BEN

It got him to wait, OK? He said he'd wait a few days. He's got other offers, man. I bought us time. As soon as we get the rest, we're gonna sign.

URI

But if you don't get the money then you're out 5,000—

BEN

--He said he'd fucking set me up.

URI

He said that? Those exact words?

(BETH finishes undressing. She wears an elegant evening-dress and a scarf.)

BEN

You know how he talked out of the side of his mouth, he said: "You gotta learn business son, so I'm gonna set you up."

URI

It's all worked out? You're set? Cause I can call Scott right now, I mean, they're gonna get picked up soon so we should jump on—

BEN

--Wait. We have to wait for Peterson, my dad's business lawyer and business partner.

URI

Jon's dad. Ugly kid with the glasses. Used to play short stop.

BEN

Yeah. Dad said he'd work it out with him.

(Foreground: A man, LOUIE PETERSON, walks in the front door. BETH approaches. They embrace. A slow, sad music begins to play. They dance.)

URI

So then—

BEN

We gotta wait.

URI

Shouldn't we get them to sign?

BEN

No. We hafta wait til we get the money, then we can make it rain on 'em like R-Kelly.

URI

Make it rain?

BEN

Like in the hip-hop videos when they throw money in the air?

URI

Oh, yeah.

BEN

You got no idea what I'm talking about.

URI

No.

BEN

Well, we gotta wait. *(Beat)*. Do you hear something? Music?

URI

No.

(Beat. BETH and LOUIE kiss.)

URI

(Sings Tom Petty:) “Cause the wa-a-a-ting’s the hardest part.”

BEN

We’ve been waiting 25 years to get out of this dump. Go to New York or something where we get a bigger market. Pick up new bands. Get some dumb underfed model for a girlfriend.

URI

I could live in Soho with my sister.

BEN

I could live in Soho with your sister.

URI

Fuck that.

BEN

I fully intend to.

(BETH and LOUIE approach the door.)

URI

Dude you always turn everything around so that—

BETH

Ben!

BEN

Mom! I’m really busy right now, can you come back—

BETH

Louis is here to see you.

BEN

That’s him.

BETH

Should I ask him to come by later or—

BEN

No, no. I’ll come.

(He goes to the door and opens it. LOUIE enters.)

LOUIE

Hi, Ben.

BEN

Hi, Mr. Peterson. You cold Mom? You have the AC too high.

BETH

It's not that high.

URI

Neither are we.

BEN

You're wearing that scarf I got you.

BETH

Oh. So I am. It's a nice scarf, Benny.
(She returns downstairs to wait.)

BEN

You remember my friend Uri?

LOUIE

Yeah, sure. Whatever happened to that fastball?

URI

It's been a long time since I played baseball.

BEN

Uri was just leaving.

URI

Yeah, I got...uh...homework. Nice to see you, Mr. Peterson.
(He leaves and exits the house.)

LOUIE

I didn't know he was still in school

BEN

Yeah, well. He's not. He's got kind of a sense of humor I guess.

LOUIE

Ben, I'm sorry for your loss.

BEN

Thanks, Mr. Peterson.

LOUIE

Call me Lou. Your father did.

BEN

Ok, "Lou."

LOUIE

Known him for a long time. You know we grew up together?

BEN

Yes Mr. Peter-Lou. I knew that.

LOUIE

Hicksville, Long Island. The Fighting Comets. 'Course Sam was never much for sports. He preferred girls.

BEN

He always did.

LOUIE

I guess you-- knew about all that.

BEN

Yes, sir.

LOUIE

That must have been hard for you.

BEN

Not really.

LOUIE

We always wanted to start our own company. Knew we could do better than our own parents. I suppose you and your friend feel the same way about us?

BEN

No sir.

LOUIE

You don't have to pander to me.

BEN

Well, then, all right, yes. We can do better than you.

LOUIE

Judging by how far you've made it, I'd say you're right on.

BEN

Did you bring it or not?

LOUIE

There was nothing but Mexicans and cactus when we got here. We built this town. You can't do much better.

BEN

Whatever.

LOUIE

(Taking out a will:) And he left you more than you deserve.

BEN

How much?

LOUIE

It's all here.

BEN

Lemme see--

(He disregards Louie as he reads.)

LOUIE

People have to live somewhere. We've given them a good home at a decent price. My father sold onions from a street-cart. What do you do, son? Still selling pot? Or mostly just consuming your own product?

BEN

What the fuck is this?

LOUIE

It's his will.

BEN

It doesn't make sense. What is this clause at the end?

LOUIE

It requires you to begin work at the company to receive your inheritance.

BEN

(Beat.) You mean he gyped me?

LOUIE

If only the gypsies were so well off. He's giving you everything.

BEN

If I take a position at that shitty construction company.

LOUIE

I can think of far worse things. Believe me, I wanted it less than you do. My son is in Harvard. He'd do a fine job at the desk you're taking. But it was your dad's and he sold me a controlling share to get me to agree.

BEN

I'm surprised the prick didn't give it to Jon. He always talked about what a perfect kid he was. Even in little-league.

LOUIE

He's a hard worker, my Johnny.

BEN

So why'd you cave to Dad's offer?

LOUIE

It was for your mother too. A good woman.

BEN

So I wouldn't even own his share?

LOUIE

No.

BEN

Would I be VP?

LOUIE

Not at first. Eventually, yes. You'd be a part owner. You'd have employees: architects, designers, secretaries. You'd have a powerful position in this city and the 2nd highest in the company. But I'd make the final call. In a few years.

BEN

But in the beginning? The first few years.

LOUIE

Listen, we all have to take time to adjust. You'd start at the bottom. The only difference between you and the other guys down there would be that you're guaranteed to go to the

top.

BEN

How long?

LOUIE

A few years.

BEN

How many?

LOUIE

In five years we move you to Jr. management. Sr. In ten. It's all there in the will.

BEN

Ten years. All I have to do—

LOUIE

--Is show up at work next week.

BEN

And if I don't—

LOUIE

Then you're out of the will.

BEN

All I want to do is have a record company.

LOUIE

There won't be time for that. You shoulda done that when you graduated college. Now you'll be working six, seven days a week the first few years. That is of course, if you want the money.

BEN

That lousy fuck.

LOUIE

I believe he said that he wanted to "set you up."

BEN

Yeah. He set me up alright.

LOUIE

A job that gives you meaning makes you grow up quick.
(BETH *approaches the door.*)

BETH

Ben! Everyone's leaving! Won't you come say goodbye?

BEN

Jesus mom, you're like a fucking broken record. Can you just, leave me alone for once in my life?

BETH

Ok. Benny. I know you've got lots to do.

(She returns to the living room where she takes her scarf off.)

LOUIE

You should treat her with more respect than that.

BEN

Who the fuck are you?

LOUIE

Responsibility, Ben, can bring you a lot of things: Power, money, respect. It's makes people take notice. You want people to take notice, don't you?

BEN

I think we're done here.

LOUIE

I'm sorry about your father. Regardless of what you think, he had his pluses. See you Monday, Ben.

(He exits to the living room, and is joined by BETH. They exit together.)

BEN

Yeah. See you.

(He reads the contract again.)

Mom?

(BETH runs back in- she's forgotten something.)

BEN

Hey, Mom?

(She listens. She picks up the scarf, and walks out the front door. BEN comes downstairs to an empty room. He might even sit in his mother's chair.)

BEN

Where'd ya go? Hey, Mom. I'm sorry I didn't come down, before. Everything is gonna be different, now, Mom. Everything is gonna change.

END.