

Brother Joe

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FADE IN:

INT. TONY'S FLAT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

TONY CASTLER (early 20s) lies in bed, curled up in the fetal position. The room is basked in darkness. The only light that makes Tony visible at all creeps through the blinds of the room's sole window.

Tony's muscular body bathed in sweat as he sleeps restlessly. His face pained.

INT. CASTLER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Tony stands in the center of the room, well over six foot. A brick shit-house. His nostrils flared. A mixture of shock and fear on his face.

In front of him, POPS (late 30s), raises his belt, bent over with a furious look on his face.

He brings the belt down on a SIX YEAR OLD TONY, curled up in the corner of the room.

Older Tony screams (MOS) at his father.

Pops looks over his shoulder, smiles and raises his belt again. Lays down brutal hit after brutal hit.

JOE (early teens) walks through the door. Shock and disgust register on his face as he takes in the view.

Older Tony shakes his head at Joe, panic in his eyes. Walks over to him, blocking his path to the carnage.

Joe strides through Older Tony, towards their Father. Jumps on Pops' back, pulling him away from his little brother.

Older Tony turns around. Horror apparent in his eyes but a horrible look of resignation behind them.

INT. TONY'S FLAT, BEDROOM - NIGHT (END DREAM SEQUENCE)

Tony awakens with a start. He sits up, breathing heavy. His eyes panicked and confused.

His breathe calms... he settles.

Tony's gaze falls to the table by his bed. Turns the lamp on and picks up a framed photograph. Stares into it. A sad smile creeps over him.

He turns the light off and lies down. Cradles the photograph in his arms.

The photograph is of Six Year Old Tony and Joe.

INT. BOXING CLUB, GYM - DAY

Heavy with sweat and testosterone. THUDS on punch-bags and the TAP-TAP-TAP of skipping ropes fill the air.

Tony is alone in a corner. He's hard at work on his punch-bag. Muscles flexed, causing damage.

Tony's eyes are ablaze with rage. Pent up aggression unleashed with every explosive punch to the leather.

A TRAINER walks his way, nods his head backwards towards -

PETER FELPS (early 50s) stands at the doorway. Worried eyes fixed on Tony.

Tony picks up his towel, letting out a SIGH. Wraps it around his shoulders and walks towards Peter.

INT. BOXING CLUB, FOYER - DAY

Peter gazes at Tony pleadingly.

TONY

A picnic!?

Tony laughs softly to himself.

TONY (CONT'D)

Not my thing really, Peter. Sorry.

PETER

Please son, it would mean the world to your Moth --

Tony pushes Peter against the wall, hard.

TONY

Don't you ever call me that, okay?

Peter's panicked eyes reflect the beast that is Tony.

Tony releases him, eyes lowered.

TONY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, it's just... just, you
know...

Peter calms his breathe. Nods with sympathy.

PETER
I know, Tony. When was the last
time you came over to see us
though? Your Mother? Your kid
brother?

TONY
Half-brother.

Peter runs his hand through his thinning hair.

PETER (CONT'D)
Jesus Tony, you know how much she
worries about you? Can't you just
make the effort? This once?

Tony raises his eyes to Peter, biting his bottom lip.

TONY
Where you going?

PETER
Just the park. Sun's shining and
there's plenty chicken.

Peter grins hopefully.

Tony half-smiles... shakes his head.

TONY
Let me get showered. I'll meet you
along there.

Peter taps Tony on the shoulder, nodding.

PETER
Good lad... Good lad.

Tony watches him turn and walk out the front door.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Tony, dressed in tracksuit, walks along the grass with his
hood up. The sun bright in the clear sky.

Ahead of him, Peter, his MOTHER (late 30s) and JOSEPH (4)
sit on a blanket. All smiles as they eat their picnic.

Tony stops by a tree a little distance from them, out of sight but within earshot.

Mother looks to her watch, frowning.

Peter pats her leg with reassurance.

PETER
He'll be here.

Mother raises her head to meet Peter's gaze.

PETER (CONT'D)
I've never understood the problem
between you two.

Mother looks into the distance. From Tony's POV she appears to look directly at him but of course he is hidden by the tree.

MOTHER
He blames me... he blames me for
his brother's death.

Tony closes his eyes, laying his head back against the tree.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
He thinks I could have done
something to stop my husband. I
don't know, I could have told
someone?

Tony bursts from behind the tree, tears wet his eyes.

TONY
I don't blame you, Mom. I blame
myself. It was my fault Joe died.
The beating was meant for me.

Mother, Peter and little Joseph stare up at Tony in shock.

TONY (CONT'D)
I'd been bad, not Joe. He was
looking after me. He was protecting
me!

He breaks down in tears, turning away from them.

TONY (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, Mom.

He runs away from them.

His Mother looks after him, deep sadness in her eyes.

BEGIN MONTAGE: END OF PICNIC & TONY LOOKS FOR HIS FATHER

EXT./INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

The sky overcast now. Tony stands in the phone booth, looking through the phone book.

He holds the phone to his ear, shakes his head and slams it down.

INT. PHONE BOOTH

He crosses out the third MR W. Castler of four in the phone book.

Picks up the phone again.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Storm clouds gather overhead.

Mother looks to the sky with worry.

Peter and Mother gather the picnic together with haste.

Little Joseph looks up at them confused as the first few raindrops fall.

INT. TONY'S FLAT, BEDROOM - DAY

The top drawer opens. A hand rummages amongst the underwear and pulls out a knife.

Tony slides the knife into the back of his tracksuit bottoms. Walks out of the room.

INT. CASTLER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mother looks out of the window, into the dark, rainy night.

Peter walks up behind her. Wraps an arm around her shoulder.

She smiles up at him.

Little Joseph plays in the middle of the well-kept room.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. GRUBBY FLAT - NIGHT

Drenched by the rain, Tony knocks on the door.

He waits for an eternity, until -

POPS (early 40s) opens the door.

Tony stares across at him with a steely determination.

Tony's hand rests on the handle of the knife behind his back.

Pops looks much older than his true age. Gaunt, flushed and a bitter scowl.

POPS

Yeah?

Tony moves to speak... stops.

POPS (CONT'D)

Well? What d'ya want!?

Tony pushes Pops into the flat. Follows him in and slams the door shut.

INT. CASTLER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mother and Peter sit on the couch, watching television.

The doorbell RINGS.

Peter stands and walks out of the room.

INT./EXT. CASTLER HOUSE

Peter opens the door to a freezing, shivering Tony.

PETER

Tony! Christ, get in here, you'll catch your death.

Tony stumbles in.

INT. CASTER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

Mother gets to her feet as Tony and Peter walk through. She wraps her arms around her son.

Tony buries his face in her bosom.

TONY

I'm sorry, Mom. I'm so, so sorry.

She SHUSHES him, patting his back.

A POLICE CAR approaches out of the WINDOW.

Mother holds Tony away from her a little, looks down at him.

MOTHER

What you done, Tony?

Tony shakes his head.

TONY

Nothing Mom. I done nothing.

The doorbell RINGS again.

Mother looks to Peter. He nods and walks to the door.

EXT. GRUBBY FLAT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The rain pelts down harder than before.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)

Hi, Sir, is there a Mrs. Castler
here please?

The flat is in darkness, only the flickering image of the television can be seen.

PETER (V.O.)

Yes, what's this all about? What's
he done?

A police car approaches the flat. Parks right outside.

INT. GRUBBY FLAT, LIVING ROOM

The television shows a happy family. A sitcom.

The place is a tip. Pizza boxes, empty beer cans and the like litter the floor.

Heavy BANGS on the front door.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
Mr. Castler?

More BANGS.

The bathroom door stands ajar.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
It's about her husband. Can we come
in?

INT. GRUBBY FLAT, BATHROOM

Water pools on the dirty, tiled floor. More drips land.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
Mr. Castler!?

Tony's knife lies on the floor. The blade covered by blood.

Pops lies in the overflowing bath. His wrists cut. Dead.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
Okay, break it down.

Pops' dead eyes stare blindly out.

INT. CASTER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (END FLASHBACK)

Mother stares blindly out. Tony sits next to her, staring pleadingly.

TONY
I swear, Mom, I just told him how
things were. What he'd done.

Peter walks back through.

TONY (CONT'D)
Come on, say something Mom.

Mother turns to him.

MOTHER
You haven't spoken to your little
brother yet, Tony.

She lets a smile creep over her. Takes Tony's hand in hers.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
We called him Joseph. I think he
would like a big brother, don't
you?

Tony looks to the floor. Raises his head and smiles.

INT. CASTLER HOUSE, JOSEPH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Little Joseph sleeps in his bed.

The night-light on his bedside table illuminates Tony, who
sits by his side.

Next to the night-light rests the same photograph of SIX
YEAR OLD TONY AND JOE.

TONY
Goodnight Joe.

He lowers his head.

TONY (CONT'D)
See ya in the morning.

FADE OUT.