*26 December 2015* | **Indifferent Sons**

**Jerome**

*Oh captain, my captain*

*Our fearful trip is done.*

*The ship has weathered very wrack,*

*The prize we sought is won.*

“For me, and I think for many others in this room, James Manning was our Captain. The man who set us on the path that we would go on and steered each one of us into the direction that our lives would take. The one who protected us from the storms and the one the steered family into the port in which we now live. He made sacrifices, yes, but he made them for us and at every stage we knew that we could reach out to him for help. I will miss him and his determination which had come to be a source of strength to each of us that knew him.”

Jerome Manning had to stop himself from cracking a smirk as he delivered the last part of his speech. He’d meant the thing as a discreet insult that only he and his siblings, and maybe his first step-mother (who was the only former wife to show up), would understand the true meaning of.

He had always found it remarkably easy to fake sentiment. A few beautiful words here and a well-placed snivel there often worked wonders to coax out emotion for those willing participants that wanted to share his burden.

Truth be known, Jerome didn’t give a damn. The emotional manipulation came so naturally to him and it helped garner sympathy while he appeared to be doing exactly what the outside world expected of him. As far as he was concerned it was all bullshit, though. All that really mattered was furthering his own agenda. If he had learned one thing from his father’s dogged pursuit of the status that he had enjoyed by his untimely end, it was that the goal was all that mattered and the means of achieving that goal were irrelevant.

Jerome’s current goal was to sit through this wankfest of a funeral - he swore he could hear the old man laughing at each word he said - and then the reading of the will before going out to get drunk out of his mind. Maybe he’d chat up Tay Jacobson afterwards.

He hadn’t spoken to James Manning in ten years and still didn’t want to. He rejected the old man’s money once he had obtained it – there was no way to buy his love, not this late in the game. Jerome’s speech hadn’t been worth the Pizzhut napkin that he’d written it on once he had come out of the ether this morning. As he stepped down from the podium he could see several member of his extended family in tears and several more with the unmistakable silvery glint in their eyes.

He allowed himself half a smirk as his sister stepped up to give her address. He clapped her on the shoulder and walked out of the hall. Screw it. He wasn’t going to waste any more of his life entertaining the memory of the old man. Screw what everyone else thought about him and what they expected from him. He’d been a fool to think that he chould stand up there and lie for someone as bad as James Manning. He’d done as Dorie had asked but no more. The rest was her problem now. Jerome was done here.

**Pandora**

Dorie Manning was the type of person who planned every nanosecond of everyday. She had given her older brother a tribute slot with a full 15 minutes to manipulate the hearts of everything in a skirt in the name of mourning their father. So when her jerk of a big brother had walked out after just 2 she was panicked.

Come to think of it, she was more surprised that he hadn’t grabbed the Jacobsen girl on the way out than she was about the walkout itself. Jerome had always been an asshat but a predictable asshat at that and Dorie knew that his relationship with their father was worse than dogshit. She’d figured he’d be upset that she’d asked him to stand up and lie for 15 minutes but not so upset so as to walk out.

Now she had to clean up after him. Again. This was exactly like the incident with that 18 year old from Rosewood Girls’. He was blackening his name and, in turn, blackening Dorie’s by association.

Jerome may have been the oldest but he wasn’t the wisest and, incidentally, not the only one who remembered James Manning’s rampant mistreatment of them and their mother. Still Dorie had loved him after a fashion. Well, ‘love’ was a bit strong. Her relationship with the man was better than her other brother’s in that she actually called him on occasion and tolerated his presence when they did see each other.

Dorie wasn’t happy that he was dead but she wouldn’t miss him either. She would give her address and then figure out what to do with the last ten minutes.

**Terence-Kelvin**

When Jem stormed out, TK Manning had thought about stopping him but sat still when his sister shot him an angry look. He never understood the full extent of the hatred that the two of them had for their father. Well for Jem it was hate, Dorie was as close to not giving as damn as you could get. And for Dorie, that was saying something. She treated people like dirt if they weren’t of use and worse if they got in her way.

The thing about TK was that he had been born after dad left to ‘make his fortune’ and could never really summon any hate. He would definitely side with his mom 100% but she had gotten on comfortably enough without him - if anyone should do the hating it was her and her alone.

For TK, his relationship with James was largely strategic. He took the summer jobs that the man offered and used it to further himself, he took the money and put it in his pocket, and he took the love that James Manning offered and tried to take it heart. It wasn’t that he hated the guy. TK understood that he was trying to make things right.

Dorie was still in planning mode when he looked up at the stage. TK wondered whether he could take out his phone and have a go at level 4 of *Secret Hunters II: Ancient Worlds*. Nope, scratch that. She was looking straight at him.

An objective observer would never have known the depth of his sister’s indifference towards the man in the coffin when she called TK up to that podium and whispered in his ear to play a song for her on the piano.

**Pandora**

As her little brother sat down to play, Dorie got ready to sing the lost time away. Once this was done she would do the thanks and mingle for a bit before assembling the inner circle for the reading of the will. But alas, she was getting ahead of herself.

Paul Cupido