

Like Father, Like Son

Introduction: As the scene opens, Mom is working at the kitchen center with her back to the audience. Dad is seated at the breakfast table dressed for work, hidden behind the newspaper, occasionally sipping his coffee. Jason comes bounding in the side door, school books in hand.

Jason: (Plopping books down on table and taking his seat) Hey, has anybody seen my backpack?
(Nobody responds. Dad remains behind newspaper)

Dad? (Pause) Have you seen my backpack? (Pause) The one I carry my books in? (Still no response). Jason cranes his head this way and that to see around the paper. Finally settles in his seat and begins to flip through one of his schoolbooks.)

Mom: (Turning around from kitchen counter and bringing a stack of toast to the table) Well, it's about time you got down here. What's taken you so long, young man?! (Jason doesn't look up—keeps reading.) Jason! I'm speaking to you...do you know the school bus arrives in 10 minutes? (Jason remains buried in book.)

Dad: (Finally looking from behind paper) Jason! (Jason's head snaps up.) Your mother is speaking to you. Why don't you answer?

Jason: (Flustered) Well, I was just reading...

Dad: You know the rule about reading at the table. We've spoken to you about that before. Now put those books away...and answer your mother when she speaks to you!

Mom: (As Jason puts books aside with a big heave) Thank you. It's a pleasure to see both of your faces for a change. (Turns back to counter). Dad picks up paper and begins to place through it again—though not holding it up in front of his face)

Dad: (Sips his coffee, then holds cup out to the side) Sue...This coffee's cold. Could you warm it up?
(Mom turns with coffee pit and fills cup as Jason says...)

Jason: Where's the milk? (Picking up cereal boxes and looking around table). Mom, would you get the milk?

Dad: What do you think your mother is? Your maid? You don't need to be waited on hand and foot...if you want the milk, get up and get it. (Jason heaves a sigh, gets up and walks to counter, returns with milk.)

Mom: (To Dad) A full day today, sweetheart?

Dad: You can say that again! (Puts paper down and speaks to wife between sips of coffee.) The boss is the biggest egghead! He's got up working on three different projects at once! I'll be surprised if the company makes any profit this year the way that joker is running things.

Mom: (She returned to the counter where she's working on something) Well, that's too bad, Sweetheart. If they'd promoted you instead, I'm sure things would be in better shape. (Pause)

Jason? (Calling over her shoulder) Did you get that math homework finished?

Jason: Are you kidding? It would take a year to finish it all. Mr. Thompson's a slave-driver! I can't stand him!

Dad: (Reprimanding tone) Now we'll have none of that kind of talk in this house. I thought I've spoken to you about name-calling?!!

Jason: But I ...

Dad: No "Butts!" I want you to speak with respect when you talk about your teachers. Do you understand me?!

Jason: (Gloomily) Yes sir...

Mom: (Breaking tension, clearing throat) Uhh...Herb? The Johnsons have invited us over for dinner after church on Sunday. What should I tell them?

Dad: This Sunday?

Mom: Yet. They'd like to have a cook-out in the backyard.

Dad: (Getting up, wiping crumbs from mouth and putting on suit jacket) Oh gee, honey. I'd really like to...but this Sunday is the company golf tournament. I wasn't planning on church, to be honest.

Wow! (looking at watch) Tim to run. Did you get my lunch packed into my briefcase? (Mom turns to counter where briefcase is sitting open, closes it and hands it to Dad.)

Mom: Here you go. Peanut butter and jelly on rye.

Dad: Great! (Grabs briefcase, bustles away) I hope not to be too late. Don't wait dinner if I get held up (calling over shoulder as he disappears out door. Mom stands with hands on hips, watching him go.)

Jason: Hey, Mom? Mike Anderson wants to know if I can go to the Cubs game with him this Sunday. They're going to leave at 10:00 o'clock.

Mom: Of course you can't go at 10:00 o'clock! You know we go to church then. If Mike can leave a little later, that's fine.

Jason: But Mom! Dad isn't...

Mom: The answer is "no" for 10:00 o'clock!

Jason: Do you have my lunch ready yet?! (Commanding tone) I've got a bus to catch! (Mom hands him a brown paper sack from counter. He snatches it from her and stomps off.)

I don't know when I'll be home from school. If I'm not home by dinner time, start without me!!

(Scene closes as Mom watches Jason disappear with her hands on her hips and shaking her head.)