

DEAD DAD'S CLUB

"OUR FATHER WAS AN ELDRITCH TERROR"

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TEASER

EXT. MIDDLEDITCH FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

A split-level stone house that looks like it belongs in a Norman Rockwell painting. Cozy lights offer a warm glow from the bay living room window.

Down the stone-pebbled driveway, a taxi pulls up. Black Converse sneakers step out of the cab onto the ground. A 85-litre mud-covered traveller's backpack plops down.

The taxi pulls away. The Converse shoes remain still. Facing towards the house. Unmoving.

MATT MIDDLEDITCH (35), the type of person who would rather fake his death than ask anyone for help, stares at the house. His expression cold.

MATT'S POV: Second story window. A *memory flash*--a TEEN MATT (15) pops open this window, a rucksack over his shoulder.

INT. MIDDLEDITCH HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Soft lighting, nineties posters litter red bedroom walls. Twin beds across a shag carpet. Teen Matt turns to his siblings, KIERAN (12) AND JAMES (9). The brothers whisper:

JAMES

Where are you going?

KIERAN

I don't want to sleep in the room alone.

MATT

That's why James is here.

JAMES

Are you joining the circus?

The innocence stumps Matt, he gets down to eye level.

MATT

This place is the circus. I'll come right back.

KIERAN

Promise? James sucks at fighting monsters.

JAMES

You suck!

MATT

Guys, chill. Nobody sucks. Get to bed.

James and Kieran slip into bed. Matt plugs in a nightlight, Kieran shooting him a silent 'thanks'.

KIERAN

You'll come back, right?

MATT

Always.

EXT. MIDDLEDITCH FAMILY HOME - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Adult Matt's fixated on the window. A ghost of a sad smile.

The rest of the house looms, almost forbidding. Matt clenches, takes a breath, and forces himself up the driveway.

INT. MIDDLEDITCH FAMILY HOME , HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lights are on but the house feels empty. Quiet.

Matt takes in family photos. A CREAK. No one's there.

He spots the dining room.

MATT'S POV: A flash of memory, 15 year old Matt barrels out of a chair. A pint glass SHATTERS against the wall.

Matt's hand grazes the perfectly retouched wall, surprised to find himself standing there.

MATT

There's no such thing as monsters.

It's hauntingly quiet, but one voice echoes in his memory:

GERRY (V.O.)

Grow the fuck up, Matthew!

INT. MIDDLEDITCH FAMILY HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Middleditch family home--modern elegance. Museum level clean.

Sympathy flowers, "Sorry for Your Loss" cards, mountains of lasagnas, shepherd pies, brown bread loaves--everywhere.

TRACY MIDDLEDITCH (60s) breaks down at her kitchen island. She chucks a loaf of brown bread at the wall. She's done. Almost broken.

Matt, looking like he's had time to clean up and settle in, hovers in the doorway.

TRACY
Forty...forty years--

Matt offers her the world's most awkward hug.

TRACY (CONT'D)
He's never spent the night alone.
He's just in the church. All alone.
No family...Can you--

MATT
Yes.

TRACY
It should probably be me and--

MATT
Whatever you need. Tea?

TRACY
Yes.

Matt turns to make tea but Tracy won't let go.

JAMES MIDDLEDITCH (30), forever socially awkward, pokes his head in.

MATT
Can you make tea?

JAMES
I don't want tea.

Matt turns his mother in a hug as if offering a pass-off to his brother. James ignores this, picks up the fallen loaf. Starts eating.

James' phone vibrates; a slew of texts:

JARED (LAW FIRM): *Do you know where the Myfets brief is?*

JARED (LAW FIRM): *People die all the time so if there's any chance you can come back early it would look great for making Junior Partner!*

LIAM (7) bounces into room and barrels into Matt's leg.

LIAM
Uncle Matt!

MATT
Hey, kid.

Matt looks to James. He mouths, "Where's Kieran?". Trying not to disturb their mother's grief in his arms.

James has no idea what Matt's saying.

Tracy cries harder, a banshee howl. Matt silently asks James again "Where's Kieran?".

JAMES
(mouthful of bread)
What? That's the opposite of helpful.

MATT
Liam, where's your dad?

LIAM
I think he's sick. He thinks it's Tuesday. But it's Friday, right?

INT. MIDDLEDITCH FAMILY HOME, SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Matt storms down the hallway.

INT. MIDDLEDITCH FAMILY HOME, KIERAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

West Elm elegance meets frat house squalor.

KIERAN MIDDLEDITCH (32), eternally youthful, usually with a smile that could charm the pants off anyone. Currently hungover--towel over his forehead in the dark on his bed.

The bedroom door bursts open.

MATT
Oy! Fuckhead!

KIERAN
Are you a dream?

Matt rips a book from the shelf. Throws it in Kieran's direction.

The book crashes against the headboard near Kieran's head.

KIERAN (CONT'D)
I'm grieving.

MATT
Oh? I'm sorry. Forgot I came down
narcissism lane. I'll give you
something to grieve about.

Matt yanks Kieran up.

KIERAN
You're not a dream, you're a
fucking nightmare.

EXT. MIDDLEDITCH FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Matt and James carry Kieran between them. Narrowly avoiding a
garden gnome on the porch step.

Matt checks his phone--tracking an Uber.

KIERAN
We're going to stay in a church
overnight with a corpse--

JAMES
With Dad.

KIERAN
Sure.

MATT
Look, it's what Ma wants. End of
story.

Kieran shakes his siblings off, getting a second wind.

KIERAN
It's fucking weird.

JAMES
It's actually not, historically
speaking. It's an old catholic
tradition, having the body
overnight so it's ready for mass.

KIERAN
I think it's because the priest
wants to bang Ma. Horny priest is
taking his shot.

MATT
Shut up.

KIERAN
You woke me up.

MATT
Stop moaning.

KIERAN
It's fucking creepy.

MATT
(off family home)
You'd rather stay in the Norman
Rockwell painting crossover with
'The Tell-Tale Heart'. Minus the
happy ending.

JAMES
'The Tell Tale Heart' doesn't have
a happy ending.

MATT
Disagree. That guy had peace.

JAMES
He went insane and confessed to
killing someone.

MATT
Yeah, peace.

Uber pulls up.

On the porch: the garden gnome SCRAPES slowly across the
wooden porch. Like someone dragging it. Except no one's
there.

INT. OLD CHURCH - NIGHT

GERRY MIDDLEDITCH (60s) dead. Open casket. Clean-shaven in a
crimson golf shirt, stoic face below a full head of gray
hair.

Matt stands over the body. Kieran and James are on either
side of him like bookends. Matt's eyes focus on Gerry's face.

MATT
Can finally get a word in.

END OF TEASER