

The Shepherd, The Sheep

By

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OVER BLACK

SADIE V.O

If ya gonna keep livin' ya life
like all the rest of 'em, you'll
end up just like 'em. You're young,
boy. You got time to make the
changes they never made. What you
got ain't all there is.

The sound of a man and woman bickering plays in the distance.

FADE IN

INT. RAYMER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

RAYMER HICKS (14) scrambles around his dingy, poverty stricken bedroom to clean up his clothes.

The bickering crescendos to a slammed cabinet. We hear footsteps storming toward the bedroom. The door opens, revealing a raggedy, drug-stricken woman, GIDDY.

GIDDY

How you gettin' on with this mess,
Raymer?

Raymer shoots her a look of disdain as he cleans.

GIDDY (CONT'D)

I asked you a question. (beat)

Giddy impatiently makes her way to Raymer and tries to grab him. He pushes her off. She pauses to look him over. He sternly defeats her attempt at silent intimidation.

She holds for a moment, hair in her face, crazed. He doesn't flinch. She concedes, slamming the door behind her.

The sound of the door is lost in the dribbles of a basketball.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Raymer walks up to a run down neighborhood court. A few kids are playing on one end. He stands and watches for a few moments. He makes eye contact with them, but they continue playing.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

The place is scattered with surly characters. We find FANNY and ESTHER (50s-60s) as they fold clothes and bustle about. We arrive mid-conversation.

FANNY

We was supposed ta just sit there
and take it?

ESTHER

Ya don't get decent service no
more, ya'll shoulda known not go in
there.

FANNY

(shaking her head)
Hand ta Jesus darlin', never have I
been treated like that.

ESTHER

S'why me and Gordon don't go out no
more. Rather just cook fa the two
of us and call it that. I hope you
complained to the manager.

FANNY

(exasperated)
Did I? Honey, if she ain't fired--

As the ladies' conversation fades, we see Raymer walking past outside. We join him as he continues into the convenience store next door.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Raymer grabs a drink and some candy. He walks to the counter. The clerk is a younger woman but looks weathered and rough.

CLERK

That it?

Raymer slides her his purchase and pays her. He leaves.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

As Raymer walks on, he passes two men (30s-40s) talking by a pick up truck. He walks on as we join them. They wear construction jeans and work boots. We see the dirt in their nails and mud on their clothes as they talk.

(CONTINUED)

DARRYL
Put a stop to it, though.

KIT
You told him you wasn't comin' in?

DARRYL
Yep. Can't do another fitty hour
week no overtime.

KIT
Hear ya. Comin' up on sixty myself
this week.

DARRYL
Yea, but you get paid. Cecil won't
even buy me lunch. 'Bout ta quit.

KIT
You been sayin'at fer years. You
ain't gonna.

DARRYL
(sighs)
I know. Don't know what ta do, man.
Same ol', and it don't get no
better. Workin' my tail off, man.
Gotta talk to Nikki, see if I can
get her ta let me start lookin' for
somethin' else.

KIT
If ya find it, lemme know.

EXT. ROAD SIDE - EVENING

The sun fades as Raymer walks alone.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

The house is small and old. Raymer walks through the front
yard. GIPSON HICKS launches from the house to the yard.

GIPSON
She told you ta do yer chores, boy.

He grabs Raymer by the arm and drags him inside. Raymer
doesn't resist. It feels like a routine.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gipson hurls Raymer through the doorway into the hall/living room. They study each other.

GIPSON
(tense, fevered,)
By God, I'll kill you.

Raymer doesn't flinch in his stare.

GIPSON (CONT'D)
(slowly breathing heavily)
You understand me? (beat) Son, if
you're lookin' for a fight--

Raymer sprints past Gipson back through the front door. Gipson angrily lurches at him and misses.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Raymer flashes through the yard and down the street. Gipson attempts to follow but stops at the edge of the yard and watches Raymer escape.

EXT. SADIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Raymer knocks on the door of the old, quaint house. SADIE (65) answers. She smiles. (beat)

SADIE
You're always welcome, but only if
you eat my cookin' and hear my
words, boy.

She opens the door. Raymer walks inside.

INT. RAYMER'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Raymer lays in bed, asleep. The door swings open revealing Gipson.

GIPSON
I know you gone over there last
night! Get up!

Raymer turns over in his bed. Gipson pulls the covers off and stands over top of him.

(CONTINUED)

GIPSON (CONT'D)

I forbid you to see that woman.
Until you can get it through your
thick skull to listen to my
authority, you're to clean this
house top to bottom. And you do as
Giddy tells you.

Gipson lingers for a moment then leaves, slamming the door behind him.

INT. SADIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Sadie is on the phone, then hangs it up, concerned.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Raymer takes two full garbage bags to the curb and heaves them over the side of the can.

He sweeps the driveway. Gipson watches in the distance, smoking a cigarette.

INT. RAYMER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Raymer straightens his room. He opens his door, peers out, then shuts it. He sneaks out of his window, through the yard and up the street.

EXT. SADIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sadie answers the door, revealing Raymer.

SADIE

(concerned)

Honey, you shouldn't be here.
What's the matter?

Raymer remains silent. Sadie looks up and down the street then lets him in.

INT. SADIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Raymer and Sadie sit at the kitchen table. There are cookies laid out in front of Raymer, but he hasn't touched them.

(CONTINUED)

SADIE

Ray, is somethin' goin' on at home?
You can tell me.

RAYMER

Did somethin' happen 'tween you and
Pa?

SADIE

What do you mean?

RAYMER

Like, before I was born. Long time
ago.

SADIE

Well, it's really not my place to
say. I've always told you that you
could come here and I would take
care of you. But your father wants
you at home. Is this about that
woman?

RAYMER

Nah, I don't know nothin' about
her. I've just been wonderin'...why
is Pa, y'know, the way he is?

Sadie straightens herself.

SADIE

Your father had a hard life, Ray--

RAYMER

--But you took care of him. You're
his mama. And you've always been
kind to me. So why's he like that?

SADIE

These things get passed down, son.
Your father's father had his own
problems. Gipson has his own, too.

RAYMER

Am I gonna have problems?

SADIE

If ya live ya life like all the
rest of 'em, you'll end up just
like 'em. You're young, boy. You
got time to make the changes they
never made. What you got ain't all
there is. You'll find what makes
you stronger.

EXT. ROAD SIDE - MORNING

Raymer walks along the road as the sun rises behind him.

SADIE V.O

Honey, you're stronger than the two
of em put together. I can see it.
You've been a blessing to this
family since the day God made you.

FADE TO BLACK