

# Judgment

by

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(Judgment)

EXT. A GRAVEL PATH - NIGHT

TED, dark hair, late thirties, is stumbling along a gravel path, surrounded by impenetrable fog. He appears lost and confused. Ted is wearing an expensive suit, currently disheveled.

He walks slowly along the path until, in the distance, a building can start to be made out through the fog. He stops to stare at it and seeing no other choice walks up to the building.

The path leads up to what appears to be the front door. Very little of the rest of the structure is visible through the fog.

Ted knocks on the door.

After repeated unanswered attempts on the door he pushes into it. There is a loud creak but the door swings open easily.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Ted steps into a well lit room.

It looks like a waiting room at a doctor's office. There are several empty chairs to the left and a window on the far wall letting natural light into the room. A second closed door is on the opposite wall.

There is a counter to his right but no one is sitting behind it.

He turns back to the chairs and backs startled to see a man sitting in one of the chairs.

The second man appears to be sleeping.

Ted stares at the seated man as he walks over and takes a chair ninety degrees opposite him.

As he sits down the second man opens his eyes.

Having been caught staring and feeling a little awkward Ted tries talking to him.

TED FIRST MAN  
Been waiting long?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SECOND MAN  
(not losing eye contact)  
That all depends on how you look at it.

TED  
(almost in a whisper)  
Do you mind if I ask you a question?

SECOND MAN  
Anything you'd like.

TED  
Where are we? What are we doing here?

SECOND MAN  
It's funny how we sometimes forget what  
just happened yet we're able to recall  
vivid details from our past.

His eye's finally leave Ted's.

Ted looks down at the table confused.

TED  
I don't see what that...

The sounds of civilization cut him off. A car, voices, not  
loud but noticeable interrupts him and he starts looking  
around the room.

TED (CONT'D)  
What was that noise? Did you hear it?

Ted nods towards the window.

TED (CONT'D)  
What's out there?

SECOND MAN  
(again closing his eyes)  
I don't know. Truth, life?

Ted stands up and walks to the window.

TED  
There's a school right out here.

P.O.V OUT THE WINDOW

Across a street is a school with children playing outside.

BACK TO SCENE

Ted reaches up and opens the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kids can be heard yelling and laughing. Balls are bouncing by the basketball hoop. Once in a while a car drive's by and drowns out the children's sound.

The other man gets up and stands beside Ted. He points to their left.

EXT. KIDS OUTSIDE THE WINDOW - DAY

Along a brick wall, just outside the window, five kids are standing on the grass. They are no more than ten years old. One of them starts yelling.

KID

Pansy face, pansy face, Darrel is a pansy face.

The other kids take up the chant as the one child backs himself up to the wall.

KIDS

(yelling)

Pansy, pansy, pansy, pansy,

They keep yelling until Darrel (the victim) breaks himself free from their semi circle around him and runs back into the schoolyard crying.

The other four break into laughter once he is out of yelling range.

INT. WAITING ROOM CONT. - DAY

Ted and the second man are standing and looking out the window.

The man turns to Ted.

SECOND MAN

Do you remember being a child?

TED

(chuckling slightly)

Do I? Boy that could have been me and my friends years ago. I remember scenes just like that. Looks mean when you see it from a distance.

SECOND MAN

Seems mean no matter where you stand, to me. I guess you regret that now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man walks back to his seat along the wall. There is a seat on both sides of him.

Ted turns and steps over the back of a chair that is in front of him and sits down as well.

TED

Are you trying to tell me that you never called the other kids names when you were young?

SECOND MAN

No... I saw no need for that.

TED

(smiling)

I see... So you were one of the ones that got called names.

SECOND MAN

Yes, I suppose that's true.

TED

I don't think we really wanted to be that mean either. Just some harmless fun.

SECOND MAN

What do you think now that you see it from a distance?

Several loud honking sounds come from outside and Ted gets up to look out the window.

TED

There's a funeral procession going by... Pretty short one by the looks of it. I guess the guy didn't have many friends.

SECOND MAN

Perhaps everyone was too busy picking on him to become a friend.

Ted spins around to glare at the man but he has once again closed his eyes and made himself comfortable.

Ted turns back to the widow and watches speechless until the last of the cars are out of sight.

TED

(speaking quietly)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

As a matter of fact, there was one kid that got picked on a lot. He killed himself one day. No note, no warning. He just walked off the edge of a building.

SECOND MAN

Did you go to his funeral?

Ted, not responding to the question rests his head against the glass and stares out the window.

EXT. CAR CRASH - DAY

a car comes screeching around the corner. It clips the back corner of a parked car almost in front of the building they're in.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

The man sitting in his chair hears the noise and gets up. He stands beside Ted looking out.

EXT. CAR CRASH 2- DAY

The driver is just a kid, probably seventeen. He jumps out of his car and looks at the damage.

He takes a look around; nobody else is around even the kids have gone back into the school.

For a second it appears that the driver looks straight at them through their window.

He jumps back into his car and drives away.

INT. WAITING ROOM CONT. 3 - DAY

SECOND MAN

Hmmm.

He turns back to his chair.

TED

I suppose you've never done that either?

SECOND MAN

Rather dishonest, don't you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TED  
(annoyed)  
What makes you so holier than thou?

SECOND MAN  
Must have been my upbringing.

TED  
Well I've done the same thing myself.  
Sure it's not something that an adult  
should do, but I was no older than that  
boy. Kids will be kids. You sort of  
expect that kind of thing from them.

SECOND MAN  
I'm afraid you're probably right. But we  
can always hope for more.

TED  
He'll learn as he gets older, like we all  
had to.

The man sits up to stare at Ted.

SECOND MAN  
What did you learn?

Ted Turns to face him.

TED  
(alarmed)  
Wait a minute! Where did the chairs go?  
Weren't there more of them here?

Ted's chair is right against the window wall. The other man is sitting in a chair with one other beside it. There is a third chair sitting along another wall. The room has closed in around them.

TED (CONT'D)  
Did this room just get smaller?

The man gave Ted a look of puzzlement then shut his eyes again. His head was shaking slightly, as if Ted had gone crazy.

Ted takes his seat while re examining at the room.

SECOND MAN  
I asked you a question.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TED  
(still puzzled)  
Huh?

SECOND MAN  
What did you learn as you got older?

TED  
What do you mean?

SECOND MAN  
You said that the boy would learn as he got older, like we all had to. So I ask you again, what did you learn?

TED  
(slightly annoyed)  
I don't know. Everything I guess.

SECOND MAN  
Most of what we know we learn as children. Everything important anyway. We know right from wrong when we're very young. You and that boy both knew that what you did was wrong, yet you did it anyway. So tell me, what have you learned since then?

Ted sits silent for a moment, either pondering or bothered by the interrogation.

TED  
I learned responsibility.

SECOND MAN  
Did you? Or did you learn more fear of being caught?

TED  
Now listen here, you self-righteous... I'm plenty responsible! I have a wife and child that I care for and take care of.

SECOND MAN  
That makes you responsible?

TED  
I think so, yes.

SECOND MAN  
Okay, than tell me something. Have you ever cheated on your wife?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

TED

How... I... what makes you think I cheated on my wife?

SECOND MAN

I was bluffing, but most people have. Besides you gave it away by your answer.

TED

So what if I did, that was a long time ago. Nobody got hurt by it.

SECOND MAN

Really? Do you still know the women you cheated with?

TED

No I never kept contact.

SECOND MAN

(laughing slightly)

A prostitute... well nothing irresponsible about that.

Ted stares hard at the man for a moment, then to ease the tension chuckles a little as well.

TED

So did you ever cheat on your wife?

SECOND MAN

I never married.

Ted looks slightly exasperated and covers his face with his hands.

TED

(mumbling through his hands)

Yeah, than what the hell would you know?

Ted opens his eyes then jumps up out of his chair.

The second man is sitting right beside him. There are no other chairs in the room. There is no room for any. The two chairs are along the window wall. Right in front of them stand the doors to the room. There is nothing else there.

SECOND MAN

(ignoring Ted's shock)

What do I know? Everything, nothing and more every day. As far as this room is concerned, I know enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The man gets up and opens the second door, which is now right beside his chair.

TED  
Where are you going?

SECOND MAN  
I'm sorry, you couldn't understand, and I won't teach you.

He turns and closes the door behind him, leaving Ted alone. With the door closed and the man gone the room appears to shrink even more.

TED  
(aloud)  
My God, what's happening here?

Ted turns back to the window.

EXT. PROSTITUTE AND CAR - DAY

Leaning against a pole is what looks like a prostitute. Though probably once attractive she appears to be a mess of heroine addiction and aging years. She is swaying.

TED (O.S.)  
Dear Lord it can't be...

There is a middle aged man standing over his car in the street. He is staring at the back of his car where it has been hit. He curses as he throws his briefcase on the ground.

INT. WAITING ROOM CONT. 4 - DAY

Ted pulls his eyes away from the window.

TED  
Aaah!

There are no more chairs. The opposite wall is right beside him. The room is no bigger than a closet.

He turns back to the window grabbing at the side, but now its closed, locked and won't open.

Ted turns back to the room. The door he came in is gone.

He turns back to the window. He hits it, once, twice, then again as hard as he can. The window hold's firm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is no room to move anymore, the walls have closed in on him.

He takes one last look out the window.

EXT. JUMP- DAY

There on top of the school stands a boy. He looks ready to jump.

TED (O.S.)

God no!

The boy takes his last step and plunges.

INT. WAITING ROOM CONT. 5 - DAY

Ted grabs for the handle on the door of the room but there isn't one there.

He pushes against the door, the middle pushes out. The door becomes rounded. The walls are tight around him. They have become soft, almost padded.

Suddenly Ted is no longer standing. He is lying down on the soft wall behind him.

Above him the rounded door has become another soft wall, there is no opening. There is no more window.

Somewhere above him words are being spoken.

NARRATION

Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.