

BRICK, JR.

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A Drama in Four Scenes

By Greg Phillips

Contact:  
Greg Phillips  
1019 Grant Street, Unit D  
Santa Monica, CA 90405  
(310) 717-5282  
[Gregphillipsdrama@yahoo.com](mailto:Gregphillipsdrama@yahoo.com)

A few hours later. Brick is in the bathroom taking another shower as Sookey enters the room slowly and quietly.

SOOKEY

Brick Jr., are you asleep, again?

(She looks around the room.)

Well, where are you? Brick Jr.?

BRICK JR.

(Turning off the water.)

I'm in here. Taking a shower.

SOOKEY

Another one? What in the world for?

BRICK JR.

(Getting out of the shower and toweling off.)

I needed to cool off.

SOOKEY

Well, I need you to get dressed in some decent clothes right this second.

BRICK JR.

Why's that?

SOOKEY

Against my better judgement, I'm letting Lacey Jr. come up to see you for a few minutes.

Brick comes into the bedroom in just a towel.

BRICK JR.

What do you mean against your better judgement?

SOOKEY

You know exactly what I mean.

BRICK JR.

No, I don't.

SOOKEY

My nephew, Lacey Jr., turned his life around by asking the good Lord to save him, and he did, so it's best for him to just keep moving forward and not look back.

BRICK JR.

It seems to me now that Lacey and I have both turned our lives around this is a cause for a great celebration. I would normally say we should open up some champagne, but considering neither one of us drinks anymore, perhaps we could...

SOOKEY

But you both turned your lives around in very different ways. Lacey now celebrates through prayer with the Lord instead of champagne and such.

BRICK JR.

So I guess I should have had the Lord save me instead of the Betty Ford Center. Is that what you're trying to say?

SOOKEY

Don't you dare get smart with me.

BRICK JR.

No, ma'am. I'm not. I'm just trying to understand how this all works. So are you telling me the Lord answers all prayers?

SOOKEY

No, because I'm still working here, but I still have great faith that one day he may hear my prayer. Now get dressed and no foolishness.

BRICK JR.

Foolishness? What craziness are you talking about now?

SOOKEY

I may not have a fancy education like all of y'all, but just always know, I am not a stupid person. I raised both of you like you was my own kids. I loved you both and tried to teach you right from wrong, but Lacey Jr. is my own blood. You're not. So I feel I have a family obligation to protect him from whatever harm may come along. And I will. So watch yourself. Now get dressed and act like the gentleman I tried to teach you to be.

Sookey exits.

BRICK JR.

I am dressed.

Brick checks himself in the mirror.

After a moment, Lacey, Jr, Sookey's nephew, tentatively knocks on the open door. He is a good-looking, tall, athletic-looking, black man who is one year older than Brick.

BRICK JR.

Do come in.

LACEY JR.

(Seeing Brick in only a towel.)

Oh, I'm sorry. You're not decent yet. I'll come back in a few minutes.

BRICK JR.

Oh, please. We've seen each other in less than this.

LACEY JR.

That was a long time ago, plus we were just kids.

BRICK JR.

It wasn't that long ago, and we certainly weren't children.

(Going to Lacey and hugging him tightly.)

Oh god, it's good to see you again.

LACEY JR.

(Breaking away from the hug.)

Okay, now. That's enough. I've got a little cold that I don't want you to catch.

BRICK JR.

I may have one, too. So just relax.

LACEY JR.

I am.

Pause.

BRICK JR.

My goodness, would you look at you. You haven't changed a bit. You still look like the star athlete that you were in high school. I bet you work out every day, don't you?

LACEY JR.

I shoot a few hoops now and then. Run on occasion.

BRICK JR.

We should take a run together soon or play a little touch football, now that I hear you're living back here in town.

LACEY JR.

I don't know if you've heard or not, but I'm the new preacher at Zion Methodist.

BRICK JR.

Is that so?

LACEY JR.

Yes, it is. I have a wonderful congregation that I'm trying to lead on a spiritual journey much like I've gone on myself, so they can attempt to lead a righteous life like I'm trying my very best to follow each and every day.

BRICK JR.

I never in a million years would have guessed that you of all people would...

LACEY JR.

I've changed, Brick. I'm now a man of God. A married man of God.

BRICK JR.

Married? To whom if I may ask?

LACEY JR.

I found a real good woman who understands me and my problems. She's even had problems of her own, so now we try to help each other stay on a straight and narrow road.

BRICK JR.

Like we used to help each other try to straighten up before class or a game?

LACEY JR.

No. Nothing like that.

Pause.

BRICK, JR.

Do you ever see any of the old gang and hang out with them?

LACEY, JR.

No. I run with a very different crowd these days.

BRICK, JR.

Yeah. Me, too.

Pause.

LACEY JR.

I was happy to hear that everything went so well for you out in California. I came over here several times while you were away and had prayer with your mother and Aunt Sookey.

BRICK JR.

My mother prayed?

LACEY JR.

In her own special way... yes.

BRICK JR.

That must have been something to witness.

LACEY JR.

I've discovered that each and every one of us has to find our own personal relationship with the Lord, and I think your mother has found some type of peace with all of this.

BRICK, JR.

Is that so?

LACEY, JR.

Well, it's certainly been good seeing you... I need to....

BRICK JR.

Do you remember how it all started between the two of us?

LACEY JR.

No, and I really don't want to be reminded.

BRICK JR.

Vampires. We would pretend to be vampires and bite each other on the neck like they did in those old movies we used to watch, and slowly that led to other more intimate things. There are times when I can still feel your bites on my neck. In fact, I remember one time when I bit you so hard, I drew blood. And then I licked it up. Do you remember that?

LACEY JR.

No. Now, I really need to go because my wife is expecting me home for an early supper. If you'll please excuse me.

Lacey Jr. starts to leave.

BRICK JR.

Remember how Daddy used to coach both of us in football? You were a natural, and I was nothing but a natural disaster.

LACEY JR.

(Turning back around.)

Your daddy was a good man who took me under his wing and taught me everything he knew about football. Without him, I never would have gotten that scholarship. I'll always be grateful to him.

BRICK, JR.

Yes, I bet Daddy taught you all sorts of things, didn't he?

LACEY, JR.

Yes, but football things only.

BRICK JR.

I've always wondered why I didn't inherit Daddy's football genes.

LACEY JR.

But you were the state's number one ranked swimmer, and also captain of the tennis team at school.

BRICK JR.

Like that means a goddamned thing in Mississippi where football is king. I'm sorry. I guess I should watch my language around a preacher.

LACEY JR.

It's okay. We're all human. I'm more concerned about what's in people's hearts.

BRICK JR.

You know what's in my heart.

LACEY JR.

The love of Jesus I hope.

BRICK JR.

So you really are a preacher?

LACEY JR.

Is that so hard to believe?

BRICK JR.

I'm sorry, but yes. It is a little complicated for me.

LACEY JR.

Actually, it's quite simple. People change when they give their lives over to the Lord.