

HORSE

by

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OPEN ON:

1 INT. DINING ROOM - HOUSE - DAY

GLENN PHILLIPS, 14, sits at large dining table. With one hand he holds a book open, intently peering at the pages. With the other he dangles a chess piece between his a finger and his thumb. In front of him is a marble chess set, it appears delicate and expensive.

A younger boy, DANIEL PHILLIPS, 6, darts into the room. He wears an oversized jumper. He runs up to the table, pushing himself up onto the tip of his toes so that he just see over it.

DANIEL  
What does the horse do?

GLENN  
It's not a horse it's a knight.

DANIEL  
But what does it do?

GLENN  
It doesn't matter what it does. Can  
you go away, I'm trying to  
concentrate.

Glenn moves the board and then his chair diagonally. Repositioning himself so that Daniel can longer see. Glenn goes back to reading the book.

DANIEL  
Neigh.

Glenn looks up to see that Daniel has taken one of the knights from the board and is playing with it. Glenn snatches it away from him.

DANIEL  
Be careful with that, I'm still using  
it.

Daniel goes for another piece, a black rook. Glenn reaches out to stop him and the rook slips from Daniel's hands and topples to the floor. It smashes on impact.

Glenn stares at the broken piece. His jaw clenches.

GLENN

Idiot.

Glenn shoves Daniel, he lands awkwardly and cries out.

2 INT. TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY - TWENTY YEARS LATER

The hall is grandiose, tables upon tables line it. Each table is nicely furnished and smartly presented with a chess set in the centre. Most of the games have finished except for two.

At the first game sits Glenn, 34, he wears a simple grey suit with an accompanying grey waistcoat. As he did as a child, he holds a bishop piece between a finger and his thumb.

He plays methodically, staring at the board and completely ignoring his opponent. Only breaking his gaze to stop his glasses from sliding off his nose. He's stuck in a difficult position. He hears cheers in the background.

Behind him sits Daniel, 26. He still wears an oversized jumper, pulling a sleeve over his hand to rest his head on. Daniel plays chaotically, with a large smile on his face. He's just enjoying it. Daniel has just won. He shakes the hands of the other players and several people who were watching his game.

Glenn sees this from the corner of his eye and frowns. He finds the right move, forking his opponents Queen and Rook. His opponent resigns.

3 GREEN ROOM - TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

Glenn raises a bottle of water to his mouth and takes a sip. In the background a chess stream plays on a tv. On it, his brother is being interviewed.

INTERVIEWER

You must be fairly confident going into the final after that performance?

DANIEL

Well it always helps but each game is different, and when you look at it from that perspective...

Glenn turns the tv off.

GLENN

"When you look at it from that perspective." I mean Jesus.

The green room door opens. A woman, Natalie Phillips, enters. She is short, blonde and carries a cup of coffee in her hand.

NATALIE

Were you talking to someone?

GLENN

No, just had the Tv on. Do you think I should talk to him?

NATALIE

Who?

GLENN

Daniel

NATALIE

To wish him good luck?

Glenn lifts up a chess magazine.

GLENN

No this. I want him to apologise for the article.

NATALIE.

Glenn. No. Just prepare for the game. Shake his hand. Be the bigger man.

GLENN

He should apologise, that article is hurtful, disrespectful, childish.

NATALIE

You do both play a children's game for a living.

GLENN

Chess isn't a children's game. Connect four is a children's game. Chess was played by Kings and Emperors.

NATALIE

And you, in about fifteen minutes, so maybe focus on that and talk to him after.

GLENN

Yes, yes you're right.

Glenn stands up and heads towards the door.

NATALIE  
Where are you going

GLENN  
Just to the toilet.

Natalie raises an eyebrow.

GLENN (CONT'D)  
Honest.

Glenn opens the door before turning back around.

GLENN (CONT'D)  
I love you.

Glenn leaves.

4 INT. BATHROOM - TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

The Bathroom is painted a bland white. It's lights bright and sterile. Glenn stands at a urinal.

The bathroom door swings open, Daniel enters.

They lock eyes. Daniel is the first to break and casually walks into a cubicle, closing it.

Glenn finishes using the urinal and goes to wash his hands. He glances back at the cubicle.

He proceeds to dry his hands but continues to look at the cubicle.

The groan of the hand dryer finishes. Glenn clenches his jaw and marches towards the cubicle.

5 INT. CUBICLE DOOR - BATHROOM - TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

Glenn approaches the door. Now beside it, he takes a moment to straighten his tie and clear his throat.

GLENN  
I just have one question.

DANIEL  
(shouting)  
Jesus Christ.

GLENN

How did you think that doing that would be acceptable. That writing that wasn't a nasty and cowardly thing to do.

DANIEL

Glenn, I'm trying to take a shit.

GLENN

Yeah well you took shit on me when you wrote that. That hit piece.

DANIEL

Can you at least wait until I've washed my hands?

GLENN

All I want is an apolo-

The toilet flushes, drowning him out. The cubicle door opens and Daniel strides towards the sinks.

6 INT. BATHROOM - TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

DANIEL

Okay. Firstly it was interview, do you know what an interview is Glenn? I didn't write it. I just answered questions. I answered truthfully. Secondly I actually said a lot of nice things about you, they just didn't add those bits.

GLENN

You are full of crap. Why? Why did you do it.

DANIEL

Because-

GLENN

Well actually I can answer that. Because you're jealous.

DANIEL

Of you? Why would I be jealous of you. You have the appearance of cardboard and the personality of talcum powder.

GLENN

Because I had recognition and you didn't. Because you were bitter that you couldn't beat me.

DANIEL

I don't care about beating you.

GLENN

Just fucking apologise.

DANIEL

Fine. I am sorry. What I said was mean, I regret it. I honestly am so sorry and I wish I could take it back. Are you happy now?

Beat.

GLENN

No.

DANIEL

You are such a... You know I was so excited when I realised I was playing you in the final. Not because I wanted to beat you or humiliate you but because I wanted to play against you. I mean that's reason I started playing in the first place. So that you would actually talk to me rather than stare at the board all day. Well good luck, I'll try not to be too bitter when I lose.

Daniel storms out of the bathroom. Glenn looks at himself in the mirror. He sighs. Slowly he begins to rest onto the mirror opposite. He raises his head back up and looks at his reflection. A sullen expression stares back.

The bathroom door opens once more. An assistant walks in.

ASSISTANT

Mr Phillips? The game is starting two minutes.

GLENN

Yes, I will be right with you.

## 7 INT. TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

Glenn arrives back in the main hall. There is a modest crowd and several cameras surrounding one of the tables. Daniel is already sitting.

Glenn walks towards the table, he spots Natalie in the crowd who gives him a half smile. He sits down.

Glenn and Daniel awkwardly shake hands. Daniel has chosen to be black giving Glenn the first move. He looks down at the board and spots a knight. The white horse.

He picks it up between his thumb and finger, it dangles in the air. Glenn places the horse on the board, making clip clop noise as he does so. Confused gasps emit from the crowd.

GLENN

Neigh.

Daniel laughs. Glenn smiles. The two begin to play the game.

End.