Dirt Side #1: SR/JR/Garland

Start

JAMES SR.

I don't want to hear this right now.

JAMES JR.

Right! He don't want to hear it. Because someone has to grow the damn garden, mow the law, clean the house, clean the damn toilets - you gonna to do that, Garland? You ever come in here to help clean Mom before she went to the home?

GARLAND

You're saying it's inherently good for you to live in your parents' house at the age of thirty, or that it is an evil necessitated by your parents aging which can therefor be expunged in time?

JAMES SR.

Tickwitoos. My God, you're talking about Tickwitoos!

JAMES JR.

What? He's what?

GARLAND

Exactly.

JAMES JR.

Help me out here?

JAMES SR.

Tickwitoos, "The Civil War In The United States." T. C. W. I. T. U. S. Tickwitoos! Garland, your brother does not see himself as a slave.

GARLAND

Doesn't he? See himself as an institution?

JAMES JR.

You going to clean Dad when he gets too old to do it himself?

JAMES SR.

No -

JAMES JR.

No! Right. No, he did not and is not going to because -

JAMES SR.

No! I mean no, I am not hearing it because you are moving out. You have to get out. Not tomorrow, not next week, not some time when you get a job, not when your social worker says it is OK, I mean now. Son, get your things together tonight and go find someplace to live that is not here.

JAMES JR.

What?

JAMES SR.

You have to go. I told your mother but she would not hear it, and then she was too far gone to hear it. She's gone now and you go. It is doing you no good to live here and it never has. God bless her, but it never has.

JAMES JR.

Do you think I am going to commute back here to grow the garden?

JAMES SR.

I do not and have not needed a garden when there is a grocery store in walking distance and has been for damn near five years now. And I can still walk!

JAMES JR.

This is because I was her son.

JAMES SR.

God damn it, you are my son! You are James *Grey*, Junior. If I did not care about what you do - who you are - I would let you live on in your... delusion that you are somehow needed here. You are not needed here. I can get a, I don't know, a maid up in here, I can get a lawn maintenance company, if I want to. If I want to I can park a pickup truck in the front lawn, put it up on cinder blocks and let it rust while the whole place goes to seed! If I want to!

End #1

JAMES JR.

And I get tossed out and -

GARLAND

That doesn't sound like -

JAMES SR.

You, too. Go on to your hot tub or giant screen whatever you have over there and come back when I ask you to. Both of you, go. I need my time to be alone with what I have left of Desiree. I need a morning or two more to wake up and maybe think for a second you two are still tiny babies, or not even here yet because she has just slipped into the kitchen to make us some breakfast, just us two. Good night! Go on now!

Side #2, Dif: Jane/Janet

SCENE FIVE

JANE and JANET are left in the living room.

Start ↘

JANE

Some of this might be new material.

JANET

I don't know. Half of being a lawyer is just listening to client and making them feel heard.

JANE

Half of being a woman.

JANET

More than half!

JANE

Point taken, counsel.

JANET

There is always judgement.

JANE

Yeah. We're not going to pass the Bechdel test right now, are we?

JANET

Talking about men.

JANE

I don't see much to talk about, do you? With all due respect, I don't see how your client has a leg to stand on. We'll get the gears of justice grinding and we'll have a court order to get him out of here in the morning.

JANET

Calling him my client doesn't mean we're not talking about a person.

JANE

Don't you think it means in a romantic or fawning way, not a professional way, though?

JANET

That's cutting it pretty fine, I'd say.

JANE

The principle -

JANET

The principle is most often lost.

JANE

True enough. We'd be pretty bad lawyers not to know that going to court is a crap shoot.

JANET

Jimmy could come off as a money-grubbing sociopath.

JANE

Or a much-maligned adult child, the unthanked caretaker of a greedy man.

JANET

Toss in the brother, and that's another way to go right off the rails.

JANE

Fast. Or God knows what else could jump in and complicate things these days.

End #2

We see MARGARET at the front door. She knocks.

JANE

OK. Hello?

MARGARET

Hi! Margaret Tanner, fredericksburg.com I'm here to see James Grey. Does he live here.

JANET

NO.

JANE

NO.

JANE

I'm sorry. Ms. Tanner. James Grey Sr., or James Grey Jr.?

MARGARET

Margaret. There's more than one? Of course.

JAMES JR. looks in from the kitchen door.

Dirt, Side #3 : Margaret / Janet

Start

JANE

James? (*pauses to listen*) James? Could you come out for a second? (*pause*) May I come in, James? (*to MARGARET*) My client is obviously indisposed right now, so on his behalf I'm going to respectfully ask you to leave the premises.

JANET

You're not going to get anything out of me, either. I think you should just go.

MARGARET

I've got plenty. My sources say that the son here is thirty and still living with his parents. Was that him? His dad and him both have lawyers talking about tossing him out? What are you doing here exactly of you're not discussing two childish men having an insane inheritance fight?

JANE

You should go now, or it could result in charges against you.

MARGARET

Don't threaten me. I don't think I heard you before. Did you say your client Mr. Grey Sr. - Senior, right?

JANE

Yes.

MARGARET

Did you say that Mr. Grey Senior was the one who had ordered the crane set up at the gate to the farm here?

JANET goes to a front window as she says:

JANET

Crane.

MARGARET

Yes, crane. There's also a truck full of some pretty tall what looks like fence sections. Wall sections, really. Care to comment?

JANE

Still no, Margaret. And you really have to go now and I say for the second time clearly. Do you understand me?

JANET is still looking out the window.

JANET

Unless you drive a white Honda Fit.

MARGARET

Excuse me?

JANET

I said unless you are driving a white Honda Fit and maybe are in the habit of leaving your keys in it?

MARGARET

What? Why?

JANET

Because one is driving away up the dirt road here, out front, right now.

MARGARET rushes over to the window as:

JANET

I drive a GTI, and that's Jane's Volvo I think.

MARGARET

Fuck!

MARGARET rushes out the front door. JANE steps over to a window.

End #3

JANE

You're not serious.

JANET

That's the dust you see still out there, hanging in the air.

JANE

Virginia dirt. Grey as ash and just as powdery. You could tell you were in Virginia if all you saw was red taillights through a dust cloud like that.

JANET steps away from the window, followed by JANE.

JANET

Bad habit, leaving your keys in the car.

JANE

I'd hate to speculate who might have just driven off in her car.

Dirt, Side #4 : Garland/JR

JAMES JR.
That the plan? Me in jail and can't take this place while you get a child and come take it?

GARLAND
That doesn't even make any sense. You literally just thought that up. The one thing you will never admit you need - you need help. Not just me, not even AA. Dad couldn't do it and now he's dead. Nothing is going to put this all back together, Jimmy. That's not on me.

JAMES JR.
Oh, it'll all get put back together nice and neat. And somehow you'll end up just fine out of it. I'll end up with whatever I can steal or what nobody else wants. A box of toys from the attic and an old shotgun.

GARLAND
The shotgun. I forgot about it. That was supposed to be mine.

GARLAND takes up the will again as:

JAMES JR.
The first-born son gets the shotgun, he always said. Seems like a shame for it to leave the farm, though. They've both been here together so long. That's a lot of Christmases.

GARLAND takes out the will and starts to read as JAMES JR. goes into JAMES SR.'s room.

GARLAND
Shooting the shotgun on Christmas morning might be a good tradition to let go. Alright, there's just a paragraph after the house. Rings, something to the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge No 61. We should call the Masons about Dad's funeral. Here. Yes, he does say the shotgun goes to me. Nothing new.

JAMES JR. has come back in with a heavy, semi-automatic antique shotgun, circa 1910.

JAMES JR.
Pretty thing. No matter how many deer I take with it, I never will get used to the kick.

GARLAND
Put it down for a second. Did you hear what I read?

JAMES JR.
No surprise.

GARLAND

I don't need to take it this second. It should stay in Dad's room for now, Same pegs its been on since that was Grandad's study. Seriously could you put it down for a second?

JAMES JR.

Don't you trust me, Garland?

GARLAND

I never said I didn't.We Just don't - the first thing Dad taught us was not to wave guns around.

JAMES JR.

Do you trust me?

GARLAND

Do you want to just wait on all of this until after the funeral?

JAMES JR. Takes the safety off and points the weapon at GARLAND.

JAMES JR.

I SAID DO YOU TRUST ME?!

GARLAND

I never said I didn't, Jimmy.

JAMES JR.

DO. YOU. TRUST. ME?!

GARLAND

Fuck. You.

JAMES JR.

Just go.

GARLAND walks out the front door. JAMES JR. points the gun away.

JAMES JR. (CONTD)

Fuck.

GARLAND returns to look in the screen door.

GARLAND

You know the police have to come now. Brother against brother. I will gladly give my life for a victory.

JAMES JR.

Tickwitoos.

GARLAND

Tickwitoos.

JAMES JR. Discharges the weapon, and pieces of the ceiling and doorframe explode out into the room. GARLAND leaves. JAMES JR. lowers the weapon.

JAMES JR.

End #4

Charge!

Dia Side #5: Monica

JAMES JR.
Nothing. There's not even a - a gun in the house any more.

MONICA
You were never rough with me, Jimmy. You never hurt me. That's part of why I'm here now.

Start

JAMES JR.
What I want is to be the person I am with you, it's just that... we were that close and I never thought you could be pregnant. Isn't that a way of hurting you? I kept you away from my family because I was afraid the person I was with you wasn't the person I was with them. That you'd see who I really am.

MONICA
Who and what hurst me is up to me, I get to say that.

JAMES JR.
Yes. Do you believe people can change?

MONICA
I'm not asking you to change.

JAMES JR.
But I have to change to be that child's father, to stand by you. That's not me. I mean, that's the me I was with you. Or do a thing I know will change me.

MONICA
Then just be that way. Do that. I cared about you that way, I trusted you.

JAMES JR.
Yes, you did. It's me who should be trusting you now. I want to ask you to hang on through some changes. They are not going to be pretty. I believe that I have to try and make it all work out, to fix all this, to make the future possible.

MONICA
The best way to predict your future is to create it, Jimmy.

JAMES JR.
There has to be some drama now, and I regret that. We are passing through one of the greatest revolutions in the annals of the world, our world. This can be the past to a better future. I have to believe that it can. I've got to admit that I've made the people I love slaves to my bullshit, my inability, my fear. If I can, I have to change that for us, I have to start that changing. Make it about us, not just me, for the child.

MONICA

For him.

JAMES JR.

Naw...

MONICA

Yup.

GARLAND enters form the front door.

JAMES JR.

How do?

GARLAND

I have the gun. Cease hostilities until after Dad's funeral, if ever.

JAMES JR.

If ever. I'm sorry if it's too late to help with that.

GARLAND

I'll let you know. Monica. If you'll excuse me, I need to get a few of his things.

GARLAND moves toward JAMES, SR.'s room.

End #5