



## THE SONS

By Daniel Wolf

## A SMITH SCRIPT

This script is protected by copyright laws.  
No performance of this script – IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without payment of the  
appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.

For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at [info@smithscripts.co.uk](mailto:info@smithscripts.co.uk)

# **THE SONS**

A play

by Daniel A. Wolf

Copyright 2013 by Daniel A. Wolf

**Cast of Characters (age)**

Rita Finberg: Mother of Michael and Ben, widow of Sy (sixties)

Sy Finberg: Rita's late husband (sixties)

Michael Finberg: older son of Rita and Sy (mid to late thirties)

Ben Finberg: younger son of Rita and Sy (early thirties)

Sandi: Michael's girlfriend (late twenties to thirties)

Norm Singer (seventies)

Two FBI agents

Prison guard

Secretary

**Act I**

Scene 1

*Circa 1990s. RITA'S home. There's a living room furnished with an armchair, sofa, end tables, and lamps. A coffee table sits parallel to the sofa. A hallway leads to the kitchen area. The kitchen is generic, containing a refrigerator, table, and chairs. RITA, MICHAEL, BEN, and SANDI enter the living room, having just returned from the cemetery on the second anniversary of SY'S death. MICHAEL and BEN are wearing suits and ties. RITA and SANDI are dressed conservatively in dark or subdued colors, nothing flashy.*

**MICHAEL**

Good to be back.

**BEN**

I'll say!

*MICHAEL and BEN remove their jackets, loosen their ties, and drape the jackets over the far end of the sofa. BEN stretches.*

That feels better.

**RITA**

Go on, relax. Let me go and change. I have a nice lunch.

**BEN**

Sounds good to me.

**MICHAEL**

You don't want to go out?

**RITA**

It's no trouble. I'm sure you boys have a lot to talk about.

**BEN**

You're right.

**RITA**

I'm just so happy we could all be together.

**BEN**

You miss him?

**RITA**

Look, I know he wasn't easy to be with, but it's better than being alone. That I can tell you. I'm sure you miss him too.

**BEN**

Of course. I'm just sorry Sherri and the kids couldn't make it, but you know with school it would have been hard.

**RITA**

As long as you're here, that's all that matters. Well, let me change. I got some delicious cold cuts at Hymie's. You remember Hymie's? They had a place near the store.

**MICHAEL**

Of course. *(to BEN)* Hey, remember what we used to say when we went in there?

**BEN**

No.

**MICHAEL**

You don't remember?

**BEN**

No, what?

**MICHAEL**

We'd walk in and say, "Hey, Hoagie! Give me a Hymie."

**BEN**

*(laughs)* Oh, yeah. That's right.

**RITA**

I'll be down soon.

**BEN**

Take your time.

*RITA exits. BEN sits in the armchair. MICHAEL and SANDI sit on the sofa, with MICHAEL between BEN and SANDI.*

Hard to believe. Two years already.

**MICHAEL**

Tell me the truth. You miss him?

**BEN**

Let me tell you, you wouldn't believe the kind of people I see—movie stars, producers. And you know what? These people are as dumb as rock salt. I mean some of them can't utter a simple grammatical sentence. Then I think of Pops slaving away in a shamata shop. With his intelligence he could've been something. A mogul, even. You?

**MICHAEL**

Not really. All we did was fight.

**BEN**

That's because you didn't play the game. See, I never challenged him. Whatever he said I acted like he was Moses. But you, with your high ideals—you made him feel small. So he not only paid my undergrad—

**MICHAEL**

He paid mine too.

**BEN**

Yeah, but he threw in med school, while you had to go nights to get your master's. Say, you ever tell Sandi about the time you were in the hospital?

**SANDI**

Hospital? What happened?

**BEN**

You want to tell her or should I?

**MICHAEL**

Leave it alone.

**BEN**

Come on.

**MICHAEL**

No.

**BEN**

Then I'll tell her.

**MICHAEL**

*(pause)* I had an infection on my hand, so I went to Temple Hospital. The doctor said I needed to stay a few days. I called my parents, and that night they came to see me. *(to BEN)* That's it.

**BEN**

What are you talking? That's not it.

**MICHAEL**

So my father asked if I needed money. I told him they'd put my stuff in a locker, so I could use a few bucks. So he gave me ten dollars.

**BEN**

And?

**MICHAEL**

That's enough.

**BEN**

Tell her!

**MICHAEL**

*(pause)* When I got out of the hospital He asked for the ten dollars back.

**SANDI**

You're kidding.

**BEN**

No, he's not. Can you believe? What father on this planet could do such a thing? And while we're at it, how did he get the store? Did you ever find out? From what I understand, Aunt Goldie expected to take it over from Grand mom. I mean, she worked there since she was a kid. But suddenly Pops has the store and Goldie's selling shoes at Wanamaker's. How did *that* happen?

**MICHAEL**

I don't know. No-one ever talks about it.

**BEN**

Sandi, I don't know what the two of you are planning, but just remember this: Our family has more skeletons than a science lab.

**MICHAEL**

You're right.

**BEN**

Hey, ever tell her 'bout the times we went out to dinner?

**MICHAEL**

No.

**BEN**

*(to Sandi)* You gotta hear this.

*BEN stands.*

See, the four of us would go into a restaurant and the first thing he'd do is tell us where to sit.

*BEN imitates his father, pointing.*

"Ben, you sit there. Mom will sit here. Michael, you sit there and I'll sit here." By the way, this is not just with us. We'd be a party of ten and he'd do the same thing. He's telling people where to sit who don't know him, which caused all kinds of problems, if you can imagine. Then the waitress would bring us the menus. Well, you could never order the right thing. No matter what you ordered he'd say, *(imitating his father)* "When you gonna learn how to order?" Like the time I ordered shrimp scampi. He goes, "Shrimp scampi. Who orders shrimp scampi? I never knew anybody who ordered shrimp scampi. Fine, you want shrimp scampi, eat every last bite. Don't leave anything on your plate. Oy, when you ever gonna learn how to order?"

**MICHAEL**

I remember.

**BEN**

Here's another one. I could never order veal cutlet parmigiana, only veal cutlet. He'd say, *(imitating his father)* "You don't need the cheese. You see the difference in price? It's two dollars more. You want something on top, get tomato sauce. There's no charge for that." I mean this went on for years. I think I was twenty-one when I finally experienced the taste of cheese.

**MICHAEL**

Anyway, it's over. Let it go.

**BEN**

Let it go? You don't remember the last year of his life, when he couldn't drive and you had to schlep him from one doctor to the next? Then you'd stop for lunch and he'd never pick up the check. You used to complain about that all the time.

**MICHAEL**

What am I supposed to do—carry that the rest of my life? These are the cards we were dealt. Some have Einstein, we had Sy Finberg. Meanwhile, we're not starving. Look, we went to the grave . . .

**BEN**

Oh, that grave. *(laughs)* I love the stone. Here lies...

*BEN waves hand across as though following the inscription.*

"Seymour (Sy) Finberg. It was a great ride." It should really say "It was a great ride . . . on us." Really, do you think he ever saw you, me, and Mom as anything more than a source of cheap labor? I don't. Oh, and how about his goal?

*Imitates his father.*

"To be the number one mom-and-pop shop in the city of Philadelphia!" Wow, what an accomplishment! I mean, why wait for the Phillies to win the World Series? Just have the mayor declare Sy Finberg Day and have a ticker-tape parade down Broad Street. Then maybe you, me, and Mom could wave from one of the cars in the back *(waves and grins)*.

**MICHAEL**

*(stands, confronts BEN, points)* Stop it. Now just stop it.

**BEN**

Yeah, you're right. Why let an upbringing marked by constant abuse and browbeating ruin a perfectly lovely day.

**SANDI**

Sit down.

**MICHAEL**

I should sock you one.

**BEN**

*(sticks out chin)* Go ahead. *(points to chin)* Right here.

**MICHAEL**

Shmuck.

**BEN**

Putz.

**SANDI**

Sit down!

*They smile slightly and sit. RITA enters wearing casual clothes.*

**RITA**

How you kids doin'?

**BEN**

We can eat.

**RITA**

Give me a few minutes.

**SANDI**

Can I help?

**RITA**

*(to SANDI)* That's okay, dear. You just relax.

*RITA goes into the kitchen to prepare lunch. She takes various items out of the refrigerator and places them on the counter near the sink, then sets the table.*