

STEEL

Written By

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EXT. THE STEEL YARD - DAY

Beams of Steel dangle from cranes. SPARKS protrude from the metal filaments, as molten metal is poured into a shaping mold.

A man, mid 50's with a mustache that would make an 80's action star jealous hammers a molten slate.

Sweat slides down his forehead and into the molten ore - it sizzles like bacon grease.

His fogged goggles are brimmed in soot, and his worker slacks are darkened from the stale dirt steam that rushes through the machinery.

A bell CHIMES.

The man lifts his goggles and looks up towards the clock - 6:00pm Closing time.

The man turns a button on the machine valve and the bangs and booms of the machine turn SILENT.

A voice HOLLERS from the steel grate walkway above the factory.

EDEN
Mathieu, A word.

Mathieu checks his watch and looks up towards the voice.

A man in a slick silver suit, his hair gelled back to the side and eyes pit dark brown holds a clipboard. He BEAMS at Mathieu.

MATHIEU
Sure boss. Give me 10?

The factory slowly goes silent as more machinery winds down.

EDEN
(Beat)
Now.

Mathieu throws down his hammer and takes off his gloves.

MATHIEU
Right away.

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INT. EDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is a far cry from the dirt stained factory, and is encased in sheer panel glass that overlooks the local city.

Eden sits at his desk.

A knock on the door.

EDEN

Open.

The door swings open.

MATHIEU

You wanted to see me?

EDEN

Yes. Please. Take a seat.

Eden motions his hand towards the seat across from him.

Mathieu pulls the chair back and PLOPS into it.

EDEN (CONT'D)

As you know the company has taken a hit in the recent quarter. Therefore our export needs to double in all markets. As floor lead, I expect you to be on it?

Mathieu wipes the sweat from his face.

MATHIEU

Sir I already got the guys working doubles. They got families, you know? Seeing as the holidays are coming-

EDEN

Are you telling me what I ask for is impossible?

Mathieu bites his lip.

MATHIEU

Well not impossible, just unrealistic.

EDEN Smiles.

EDEN

For a second I thought you were telling me how to do my job.

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MATHIEU
I would never, I just-

EDEN
If you can't do what I ask, maybe
I could find someone else that
could?

(BEAT)
I know Marco was eyeing a
promotion.

MATHIEU
Now hold on I got mouths to feed
and-

EDEN
And?

MATHIEU
Well.
(BEAT)
I could possible get my second
staff to stay late.

EDEN
Good.

MATHIEU
I don't think they'd like it.

EDEN
I dont give a damn what they like
or not. They work and that's
final.

MATHIEU
Yes sir.

Mathieu sits frozen.

EDEN
(beat)
You got your answer. why are you
still here?

MATHIEU
Right.

Mathieu gets up and goes to the door.

EXT. THE STEEL YARD PARKING LOT - DAY

The light has gone down and the sky is cast in the dusk orange hue. Men load their trucks with steel equipment and unstrap their work boots.

One of the guys grabs a 12 pack from his truck bed and walks over to a group of men prepared to go home.

REED a built man with a neck tat down his right side throws beer to his coworkers.

REED
Nothing better than a beer at the
end of the day.

STAN
I couldn't agree more.

WILL
Say when did you start bringing
the lady drinks, huh?

REED
7% Adam's brew? You call that a
lady's drink?

WILL
I do indeed, I don't blame ya
though, I always thought you had a
lady like quality with the steel.

The men laugh.

REED
(beat)
My daughter she's a ballerina. I'd
be honored to take from her.

STAN
Amen to that. My girl she just
turned three. Just got over the
crayon eating hump, now she's
actually drawing. I got a future
artist on my hands.

WILL
So unemployed?

The men laugh.

STAN
Man, she's sweet, she got that
wonder in her eyes.

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STAN (CONT'D)

A curious devil she is. I swear seeing her look at the world and be in awe, hell it makes me feel like im seeing everything from a different angle.

WILL

Huh, I remember when my boys were like that. They just turned twelve. They're glued to football, everything about it. Games, highlights, its their life. Makes me think of my days.

REED

Say Marco, you got one on the way dont you?

A small stocky man sits on his bed undoing his laces.

He looks up at Reed.

MARCO

Yeah. Due dates in 3 weeks. Madison and I have been working on this nursery. Hell that's my first job!

The men holler.

In the distance, MATHIEU walks out the steel yard and towards the group of men.

Reed notices and tosses him a beer.

REED

The big man! Alive in the flesh.

MARCO

Say Mathieu you got a little girl right?

Mathieu keeps his eyes towards the floor.

MATHIEU

Uh yeah. She's one. Love of my life.

MARCO

Madison and I are going shopping tonight and need some good diaper recommendations. Got any?

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MATHIEU

(beat)

Uh. Pampers, heavy seal. No leaks,
no mess.

MARCO

Alright I'll take note.

WILL

I can't wait to go back to my
boys, the Pats they play tonight
and let's say I got a pats fan and
a giants fan at home so I'm
walking into a fire.

REED

Pats fan? Jesus and here I was
thinking you were a good guy.

WILL

Hey that's my boys team. Im a
bills fan. America's team!

REED

Atta boy.

Mathieu puts his beer on the gravel. He holds his hard hat in
hand as he looks up at his team.

MATHIEU

Guys.

(beat)

The boss wants me to-

REED

Ah the boss! Say I saw him pull
you over, you going to be the
ground lead?

MATHIEU

Not exactly.

WILL

I tell you if I got the ground
lead, my boys would be going to
Hill Crest Academy instead of
meadows public.

MARCO

Hey hey nothing wrong with
meadows, We moved here for the
public school. I want my girl to
be educated, get out of small town
and make something for herself.

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REED

Get through the diapers first my friend, that's a full time job.

The men laugh.

MARCO

Madison just got this mobile one with the planets on it. I can't tell you how excited I am to be a father.

STAN

You'll make a good one Marco. Got any names?

MARCO

Well tonight I'm going to try and sway Madison. Im thinking Luna, like my mother. I got a plan you see. I bought candles, the steak and greens from Geronimo's, give her what she likes, you know? Butter her up then tell her that Luna is the only name our baby girl can be.

REED

You got it down to a science.

MARCO

She's been teasing names all week, Honey you should read this! Rita Martinez and her poetry is fantastic, I just love the name Rita! I'll be damned if we name her Rita. So tonights the big one, got to make her see that Luna is the name for our baby girl.

WILL

You're going to need to do more than candles and steak if you want that.

Will HUMPS the air.

WILL (CONT'D)

Give her that steel pipe.

MARCO

Relax Will.

The guys laugh.

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Marco unstraps his work boots and puts them into his truck bed.

MARCO (CONT'D)
God I can finally breathe with
these off.

REED
Long days. Nothing better than
unstrapping the boots.

WILL
Mathieu, are you going to drink
that?

Mathieu looks at his unopened beer on the gravel. He picks it
up.

MATHIEU
Oh yeah. Just taking a moment.

REED
Something off? Never seen you this
quiet.

Mathieu pops the cap of his beer and takes a sip.

MATHIEU
No I'm fine. Tired is all.

MARCO
So what did the boss want?

MATHIEU
Oh uh. Nothing, just saying good
work is all.

MARCO
Damn right good work. Best steel
bender in the east.

STAN
I'll drink to that.

Mathieu smiles through his teeth.

MARCO
Well boys. A pleasure as always.
I got to get going, can't leave
the wife too long.

WILL
Yeah. I'll be leaving too, can't
miss the game.

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REED
Alright See y'all Monday then?

MARCO
To Monday! Next time bring some
man beers, like a Coors.

REED
Only you would drink that piss
water.

STAN
Thanks for the beer, Reed.

Stan smiles and gets into his truck.

REED (CONT'D)
I'll see ya Monday Mathieu.

Mathieu takes a deep breath.

MATHIEU
Reed thanks for all the hard work.
(beat)
And the beer, I appreciate it.

REED
All for you boss.

Reed gets into his truck. He turns the ignition and drives down
the gravel road.

Mathieu stands alone. He turns back to the steel yard.

He drops his beer, the golden liquid blends into the cracks
between the gravel.

Mathieu walks back into the plant.

INT. EDEN'S OFFICE - DUSK

The glass office is now a dark red haze from the setting sun.

EDEN sits at his desk, he scrolls through files on his
computer.

A KNOCK.

EDEN
Open.

Mathieu enters. His hard hat tucked between his fingers. His
head down.

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Eden stares at his computer.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Mathieu. I don't hear the
machinery. Is the crew stationed
up?

MATHIEU
Actually sir I sent them home.

EDEN
You did what?

MATHIEU
I sent them home, most of these
guys they got families-

EDEN
I don't give a damn. I need men
working to get us back on
schedule, you hear me? Now you get
their asses back here or your hat
on my desk is that clear?

MATHIEU
To shit with that.

EDEN
Excuse me?

MATHIEU
Now I've been working here for 10
years, not once have I acted
against you. Now I see my men
hauling ass all day, putting sweat
and blood into the steel. Im not
taking them away from their
families just because you want a
double overtime.

EDEN
You got a nerve son. Now listen
here-

MATHIEU
No you listen! These men are more
than a statistic, they're not
ants! But people! People who have
lives, people who work hard and
demand the respect that at the end
of a long day they can go home and
be with their loved ones.

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MATHIEU (CONT'D)
Now I don't know how cold your
heart is but by God, the least you
can do is give them a break.

EDEN
Breaks don't make me money.

MATHIEU
There's more to life than money,
then shipping steel beds and
busting iron. Now if you don't see
that then I'd be happy to resign.
Hell my wife may kill me, but a
man knows when to work and when to
know enough is enough, I guess my
boss will never be that man.

EDEN
Plant your hat on my desk and get
the hell out of my office!

Mathieu walks to his desk and places his hardhat on the desk.

MATHIEU
one more thing, do you have kids?

EDEN
Best investment I made was to not
start a family.

MATHIEU
(beat)
Your going to walk through life
not knowing how beautiful it is to
see your daughters face light up
when you walk through the door.
The smiles that hit you on an idle
Tuesday morning as you carry your
baby in your arms. To feel
responsible for a life other than
your own. I may not have the money
you do, but I'm loads richer than
you'll ever be.

Mathieu walks out the office.

Eden stares DUMBFOUNDED like a nerve just sprung loose. He
sinks into his chair as Mathieu's words hit him like a bullet.

EXT. THE STEEL YARD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mathieu picks up his spilt beer. He crushes the can and opens his truck door. He throws the can to the passenger side and starts his car.

His phone buzzes.

He picks it up.

MATHIEU

Hey honey.

(beat)

Im on my way home.

(beat)

Work was...hard as steel. How's
Lucy? Put her on the phone.

The noises of baby grunts protrude through the speaker.

MATHIEU (CONT'D)

Hey baby! Can you say Da-Da? Da-
Da?

Through the phone the muffled sounds of "Da-Da" ring.

MATHIEU (CONT'D)

I love you baby. I'll see you
soon.

Mathieu hangs up.

He smiles and puts the car into gear.

END.