BEN. What do you want to know?

BOB. I want to know what drugs you've taken.

BEN. It's easier to ask me what drugs I haven't taken.

That's a red rag to a bull... BOB *is taking his jacket off and squaring off in a flash.*

BOB. That's it. I should have taken you in hand years ago.

FRAN (*simultaneous*). No, Bob!

ROSIE (*simultaneous*). Dad!

BOB. Come on... Come on... I'll take you on.

BEN. You're going to hit me?

FRAN. Ben, don't you dare touch him.

BEN. I'm not. He's trying to hit me.

FRAN. No one's hitting anyone.

BOB. Get out of the way, woman.

ROSIE. Dad, you can't fight him.

BEN. This is not about drugs. Dad! Please! I need you. I've done something really bad.

Everybody stops.

I've stolen some money.

FRAN *goes to say something but* BOB *holds up his hand to silence her.*

BOB. Go on.

BEN. I've been skimming.

BOB. Which is?

BEN. I move money. Lots of it. Every day. It's possible to skim a little off the top and to direct it to a bogus account. If you're the one who inputs the data. If it's done in small amounts and at irregular intervals it's difficult to trace.

BOB. How long has it been going on?

BEN. About eighteen months. I got greedy. I got lazy. I kept taking. There's an internal investigation. It's going to come my way very soon.

BOB. Are we talking about a lot of money?

BEN. That depends on what kind of world you live in.

BOB. How much?

BEN. Around two hundred and fifty.

BOB. Thousand, right? Two hundred and fifty thousand.

BEN *nods.*

In what world is that not a lot of money? It's not a world that we live in. When did you go there? To that world?

BEN. I don't know. Mum?

BOB. She can't help you. She can't solve this one.

BEN. Mum?

BOB. What part of you doesn't understand that stealing is wrong?

BEN. Yeah, all right.

BOB. It's black and white, isn't it?

BEN. Dad, I can't cop a lecture now, right?

BOB. A lecture from me is the least of what's coming your way. So answer me. It's black and white, right?

FRAN. Bob.

BOB. Shut up, Fran. For once. Shut up! Is it black and white, Ben?

BEN. Yes.

BOB. You know the difference between right and wrong. You couldn't have grown up in this house without knowing that.

BEN. Yes.

BOB. So you knew you were doing the wrong thing.

BEN. Yes.

BOB. And you did it anyway?

BEN. Yes… yes!

BOB. Then why?

BEN. Because I could.

BOB. Do you hear that, Fran? Our son stole money because he could.

BEN. Listen.

BOB. It better be good.

BEN. I started hanging out with a different kind of people. People who earned more. Had more. The private-school boys. Rich. Safe. And paid for. You've got no idea what these people have. I wanted to be one of them. You know, they just assume that you've got what they've got. And if they find out you haven't they don't want to know you. You're out. You're looking at their backs before you even know it.

BOB. Am I meant to be moved by that?

BEN. Mum?

BOB. Am I meant to feel sorry for you?

FRAN. Okay, Bob.

BOB. Poor little boy with the working-class parents found himself on the other side of town. What did you tell them when they asked you what school you went to, Ben? What did you tell them when they asked what your parents did for a living? My old man works on a car assembly plant? How dare you think that this is not good enough? Who the hell are you? Who even let you into this house?

He goes for him. FRAN *and* ROSIE *intervene.*

FRAN (*simultaneous*). No, Bob.

ROSIE (*simultaneous*). Stop it, Dad.

BEN. Hit me, old man… come on, hit me.

BEN *starts hitting himself in the face.* FRAN *and* ROSIE *leave* BOB *to hold* BEN *and stop him from hurting himself.*

FRAN (*simultaneous*). Stop it. Don't.

ROSIE (*simultaneous*). Ben.

In the fracas, BEN *raises a fist to strike his mother. It shocks them all to stillness and silence.*

A moment.

FRAN. Right. The first thing that is going to happen is that you're going to pay back the money.

BEN. I don't have it.

BOB. No. Of course you don't. Some of it is sitting in the driveway. We'll sell that. That's a start. And a fair whack of it probably went up your nose. Can't get that back.

FRAN. We'll take out a mortgage on the house.

BOB. We bloody well will not.

FRAN. Bob… please.

BOB. Have you forgotten? A thirty-year mortgage paid back in sixteen?

FRAN. How could I?

BOB. What that cost us?

FRAN. I know.

BOB. The double shifts? The overtime? The holidays not taken? Years of doing without. Why? Because we thought being debt free meant something. We thought it meant we were good people.

FRAN. He's stolen from people… He could go to jail.

BOB. That's right.

BEN. Dad, I'll pay you back.

BOB. With what wage? You're not going to have a job by the morning and nobody employs a thief. No. You'll need two signatures on the paperwork, Fran, and you're not getting mine.

FRAN. All right then… I've got the money.