

## LIBERTY BRANCH

Brazenly stolen from the Icelandic film "Hafið".

## THE PATRIARCH

Brother Hanan McCourt is a wealthy man, the sole proprietor of King of Life Cooperage, a large and busy manufacturer of barrels and containers. He owns an enormous assembly facility, as well as a lumber yard and stave and heading mills in the rail-spur town of Liberty, where he resides on a grand ranch. Liberty is surrounded by forests of the clear, tight-grained oak vital for barrel-making, and the King of Life Cooperage owns vast tracts of land. It is, by far, the largest employer in town, and McCourt takes pride in the fact that all his barrels are still hand-made and of the highest quality. This is a problem, because competitors have sprung up in the territory selling machine-made barrels at a greatly reduced cost. Hanan loves his town and knows that shutting down his operation would ruin it.

Brother Hanan is an old man, and he is dying.

He fathered three children with his first wife Tess - Samuel, Mariah, and Benjamin. Tess has been dead for twenty years.

Hanan has called his three children - and their spouses - back to Liberty. It is his intention to install his business-trained younger son, Benjamin, as president of the cooperage. Smelling money and power, all have come. Hanan has a surprise for all of them, though - knowing that his children may not have Liberty's interests at heart, he's called in a favor and invited some Dogs to "rest and recuperate" at his ranch.

## MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

Sister Carmel, Hanan's second and current wife, used to be his sister-in-law. Tess was her older sister. She had been married and widowed once before marrying Hanan.

Sister Leah is supposed to be the daughter of Carmel and her dead husband. She is, in fact, the daughter of Carmel and Hanan. Everyone calls her "cousin". She lives with Hanan and Carmel. To complicate matters, Leah is desperately in love with Benjamin, her half-brother. Not everyone knows her origin, but some do. Play it by ear.

## THE OLDER SON

Brother Samuel, eldest son of Hanan, has been working in the cooperage since he was ten. He has tremendous responsibility and is not a very good businessman. He has been stealing money from the company and is being pressured to drive Hanan out entirely, aiming for a quick sale to competitors who will shut down operations in Liberty and raze the forests to make cheap barrels.

Sister Temperance, daughter-in-law of Hanan and wife of Samuel, is a scheming ne'er-do-well with a taste for men and whiskey. She's forged Hanan's name on a loan using the cooperage as collateral and is deeply in debt. She completely dominates Samuel and hates Hanan.

Micah, Peter, and Eve are the three children of Samuel and Temperance. They are spoiled and ill-mannered and generally run wild.

## THE DAUGHTER

Hanan's daughter Mariah was sent back East to finishing school, where she acquired an upper-crust husband, Simon Winthrop. Winthrop is a vain banker and convert of convenience. Mariah loathes her father and wants him out of the picture so that she can acquire her share of his fortune. The pair have a teenaged son named Jared who is sullen and disconnected, preferring burying his face in a book to human contact.

## THE YOUNGER SON

Brother Benjamin is the younger son of Hanan. Like his sister, Ben was sent Back East to business college. He accepted his father's cash, but instead of studying, he chose to live freely and play piano in a bar. Recently he got a girl pregnant and married her when no alternative presented itself. Dinah loves him, and has joined him on the trip to Liberty with some trepidation. She has encouraged Ben to come clean about his big lie although, as an unbeliever pretending to adhere to the Faith, she's living her own. Benjamin has a hard time resisting Leah's advances, although he knows who - and what - she is. They'll eventually end up in the sack.

## THE RIVAL

Brother Isaac Todd is Hanan McCourt's business rival and, not coincidentally, a former lover of Carmel. Todd has a huge factory in Bridal Falls City for making cheap barrels, and wants Hanan to sell out to him. To this end he's working with Samuel and Mariah to get him declared unfit. He's been hanging around Liberty "on business", buying freight cars of seasoned oak from Samuel under the table.

## SOMETHING'S WRONG

A lot is wrong, and a family is going to be torn apart, taking a community down with it, unless something is done.

## PRIDE

All the children want something they do not deserve. They are all disregarding their father. They all want money they don't really deserve, at the expense of the community. Samuel and Temperance are in debt based on a forged signature, and would take it all if they could get away with it.

Benjamin and Leah want sex without consideration of virtue or sin.

## INJUSTICE

Samuel, Temperance, Mariah, and Simon all want to liquidate the cooperage and, in so doing, effectively destroy Liberty.

The skein of lies and disrespect causes Hanan to choose between righteousness and the love of his family.

## SINS

Disunity in a huge way, among all the children.

Sex, duh, between Benjamin and his half-sister Leah.

Deceit - the forged signature on Temperance's loan, Benjamin's "education", Samuel's embezzlement and machinations with Isaac Todd.

Worldliness - Temperance, in a nutshell.

## DEMONIC ATTACKS

The demons want Hanan dead. To this end they've whipped up a wet, suffocating fog around the ranch which has given the old man rumbling, debilitating catarrh. He can't move without being wracked with explosive coughing. Rainy weather, isn't it?

Everybody else is doing a good job looking after the demon's interests.

## WHAT DO THE TOWNSPEOPLE WANT FROM THE DOGS?

Brother Hanan McCourt wants the Dogs to return his children to the bosom of the King and save his business - and town - from ruin. He wants them to help him die in peace and happiness.

Sister Carmel wants the Dogs to keep her step-children from destroying the man she loves.

Sister Leah wants the Dogs to affirm and honor her incestuous, adulterous love for Benjamin. She also wants them to keep it a secret.

Brother Samuel wants the Dogs to bring his wanton wife to heel. He wants to be forgiven for stealing and running up debt secretly. He also wants them to legitimize his authority and remove his father from power.

Sister Temperance wants the Dogs to toss out Hanan and allow her husband to sell the business. She'll use every tool in her arsenal to accomplish this, "every tool" being pretty much sex, alcohol, and violence in that order.

Micah, Peter, and Eve want the Dogs to make their parents love them, rather than shower them with gifts and ignore them.

Brother Simon Cooper wants the Dogs to get busy and divide up Hanan's assets so he can go Back East.

Sister Mariah wants to see her father humiliated and debased, his business sold to his rival Isaac Dodd before his eyes. To this end, she wants the Dogs to stay the hell out of the families private affairs.

Jared Cooper wants the Dogs to be heroes to him.

Brother Benjamin wants the Dogs to make his father forgive him for squandering his education, and he wants them to free him from his obligation to take over the business. He also wants them to stop him from lusting after Leah.

Sister Dinah wants the Dogs to show her the good in the Faith and honestly convert her. She's sick of pretending. Then, she wants them to annul her marriage to Benjamin, who clearly - and sickeningly - loves Leah.

Brother Isaac Todd wants the Dogs to be kind to Hanan, for whom he bears no ill will. He wants them to understand the reality of the situation and help him buy and dismantle King of Life Cooperage, but in a way that will not hurt Hanan. But Liberty is in trouble - business is business.

## WHAT DO THE DEMONS WANT?

The demons want Hanan to die or (better) be shipped off as an invalid, and for his children to divide his estate amid acrimony. They want the cooperage to be shut down and Liberty to be ruined.

## WHAT DO THE DEMONS WANT THE DOGS TO DO?

Bluster in and "fix" things like they are wont to do, pack off Hanan to Bridal Falls City, divide up his assets among the children, destroy the town without realizing it.

## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE DOGS DIDN'T COME?

Pretty much what the demons want - Mariah would lead the charge in getting Hanan declared unfit, and Samuel would sell off the cooperage in a heartbeat. The children would be at each other's throats over the money, and the illegal loan would come to light. Half the town would be out of work and the local economy would collapse.

## WHO'S WHO

Brother Hanan McCourt

(First wife Tess, mother of Samuel, Mariah, and Benjamin, dead)

Sister Carmel, second and current wife of Hanan

Sister Leah, "cousin", illicit daughter of Hanan and Carmel

Brother Samuel, eldest son of Hanan

Sister Temperance, daughter-in-law of Isaac

Micah, Peter, and Eve, children of Samuel and Temperance

Brother Simon Cooper, husband of Mariah and son-in-law of Hanan  
Sister Mariah, daughter of Hanan  
Jared, son of Simon and Mariah, 15

Brother Benjamin, younger son of Hanan  
Sister Dinah, pregnant wife of Benjamin, daughter-in-law of Hanan

Brother Isaac Todd, Hanan McCourt's business rival and former lover of Carmel

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