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Thesis Excerpt

This is an excerpt from a longer project on Theodore Roosevelt and American expansion in the early twentieth century. This scene takes place in 1895. Roosevelt is the President of the Board of Commissioners of the New York City Police Department. His brother, Elliot Roosevelt, has returned from an extended stay in India and enters the family home in the middle of the night.

INT. DAY - SAGAMORE HILL

Elliot enters through the front door. The hall is dark.

ELLIOT

Theodore! Theodore! Where are you?

Roosevelt runs to the bannister in robe and pajamas.

ROOSEVELT

Elliot? What are you doing here?

ELLIOT

I've returned, brother. The  
prodigal son returns.

ROOSEVELT

You're drunk.

ELLIOT

I am. I have fed on honeydew and  
drunk the milk of paradise. I have

much to tell you of the east.

ROOSEVELT

Be quiet, you fool! The children  
are asleep.

ELLIOT

Come down here, brother. Share a  
drink with me. A toast to the  
United States. It's so very good to  
be home.

ROOSEVELT

I'll do no such thing.

Roosevelt descends the stairs.

ROOSEVELT

You must stop this behavior at  
once. I had heard word from Corrine  
about the state of you, but to see  
it with my own eyes...

Roosevelt pushes Elliot toward the kitchen.

ELLIOT

You sound just like father.

ROOSEVELT

There are worse men to emulate.

Roosevelt grabs a glass from a cabinet. He fills the glass at the sink.

ELLIOT

Ha.

Roosevelt turns, looking over his shoulder.

ROOSEVELT

What was that?

ELLIOT

You always did buy into his shit.

ROOSEVELT

I don't want to hear you when  
you're like this. Drink this water,  
help yourself to anything that you  
like, and get some rest.

Roosevelt hands the glass to Elliot and turns to leave.

ELLIOT

He was a coward.

Roosevelt turns back to him.

ROOSEVELT

What did you say?

ELLIOT

I said he was a coward.

ROOSEVELT

He was not!

ELLIOT

He was. He sat comfy and warm in  
that armchair just over yonder  
while men died in his place in the  
South. Don't pretend it isn't true.

ROOSEVELT

Take it back.

ELLIOT

I won't.

ROOSEVELT

You know as well as I do that it  
was mother. She wouldn't let him  
go.

ELLIOT

A convenient excuse.

ROOSEVELT

Say that again and I'll lay you  
out.

ELLIOT

Coward.

Roosevelt punches Elliot in the face. He falls to the ground.

ELLIOT

Very good, Theodore. Very good.

Quite a punch you have.

Elliot stands and winds up a haymaker. He swings and flies by  
Roosevelt.

ELLIOT

We aren't children anymore,  
Theodore. I'm not afraid of you.

(rights himself)

I hunted tigers in India. Tigers!  
Have you ever seen the flashing of  
a tiger's eyes. Heard the rumble of  
its growl. I have.

He takes another swing. Roosevelt dodges and puts him in a  
headlock.

ROOSEVELT

Be quiet. You must calm down.

ELLIOT

While you sat here in your mansion  
I explored the jungles. I slew  
great beasts. You are nothing to  
me.

Roosevelt tightens his grip. Elliot wheezes.

ELLIOT

I remember as a child you were  
always so sick. Poor, poor  
Theodore. Everyone always doting on  
you.

ROOSEVELT

Be quiet, Elliot. You're  
embarrassing yourself.

ELLIOT

She used to carry you around like a  
little doll.

ROOSEVELT

Shut up.

ELLIOT

Theodore, the little doll. The  
little doll that dreamt of being a  
man. Ha!

ROOSEVELT

Shut up! Shut up!

ELLIOT

You can try to hide what you are,  
Theodore. But I'll always know.  
I'll always remember.

ROOSEVELT

I've had enough. You aren't welcome  
here. Leave at once. I will have  
your things sent along.

Roosevelt releases Elliot. He pushes him in the direction of  
the door.

ELLIOT

Good. I'm sick of you and your  
hospitality. And I'm taking your  
booze.

Elliot storms out.