

From **PASSENGERS – A Novel of Corporate Greed** by Michael J. Laurence & Thomas G. Foxworth. PP 220 -221.

His son wiped the side of his eye and Guy watched him struggle to stifle the moan building in his throat.

“Come on, Jamie.” Guy’s tone was gentle. “It must hurt to try to do everything by yourself up here...” He leaned across the sill, on tiptoes, ignoring the ladder’s sway, thrusting his head into the room.

The boy faced him and wiped his nose on the shoulder of his T-shirt. He took a deep breath and held it and wiped the other side of his face.

“Let it go,” Guy urged.

The boy struggled. He looked intently at the floor, hoping that the coming moment wouldn’t happen. The words exploded with a terrible pain.

“I miss Mother.” His voice shook loose, he let the anguish fill his throat as the sobs came.

Guy felt the sweat on his neck being dried by the breeze and he stood on the ladder peering through the small open space, unable to reach in. His mind groped and his stomach churned and softly he offered, “It’s been pretty rough without her, hasn’t it?” He felt the pain when he said it but it came out not as sympathy but as a statement of fact. He faced away toward the neighborhood searching for something else to say. The terrible irony was that the boy’s mother would have known precisely how to handle it. Guy put his face close to the window. “Jamie, open the window for me, will you?” Guy grabbed helplessly onto the dormer. “Son, listen, I’m going to rip this goddamn window out because I love you.” Jamie was looking down at his smeared shirt.

“Jamie, I loved your mom when I hadn’t met her yet and when we were introduced the first time, we talked about you and we hadn’t met you yet. You see, a lot of times I don’t want to look at the bridge down at the pond over there because that’s the way she used to come home. Can you hear me? And once, when we had an argument – she took a walk by her self out there and she looked very small and I felt like a creep and I went out and told her I was and she laughed.” Guy looked down at the front of the lawn, struggling to remember. “She used to stand in the front here in the evening working on her flowers until it got too dark because she knew there wasn’t much time left. She planted most of those fir trees and you insisted on wearing her orange backpack and she told you you were doing miles.” Guy was smiling but there were tears in his eyes. “And you weren’t around but when she left for the last time to go to the hospital, as we were crossing the bridge out there in the car, she asked me to stop and she looked back at the house and she waved at it.” Guy had to stop to bite his lip. “Oh, my God, kid, huh? You see, Jamie, I loved her very much. We should have moved but I didn’t want to say goodbye.”

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