

Baby Fight Club

By

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Cast of Characters

: Pete, a new dad
:
: Cooper, a new dad

Time

Saturday morning

Lights up on two men. A bell rings, signaling the start of a session.

PETE

(looking straight ahead)
Do it... do it... do it...

Pete stares straight ahead at the "action" while Brad looks at Pete.

That's it... that's it... yeeeeesssss.... creep up on him....

COOPER

(extending his hand)
Hey there, I'm Cooper. What's your name?

PETE

(continuing to look straight ahead)
Sorry man, I don't do friendly banter during a match. Distracts the fighters.

COOPER

The...?

PETE

Aw, come on, you pansy!

COOPER

Oh my, I-

PETE

Get IN there and make your move! We don't have all day!

Cooper watches the "action", confused. It's silent a few moments. Suddenly Pete claps thunderously.

PETE

YES! That's it! That's IT! Atta boy! You destroyed him!

COOPER

I'm a little confused. I'm new in town and I heard this was a great place to meet other-

PETE

What the- Ref! Ref! Are you crazy? That was a totally valid play! Well, if the kid doesn't tap out, he deserves what he gets!

COOPER

Excuse me, um-

PETE
That's some bullshit right there, that's what that is!

COOPER
Oh wow-

PETE
(making a lewd gesture)
Screw you, ref!

COOPER
Hey! Pal! Could I ask you to go easy on the expletives please?

Pete finally looks at him. He looks him up and down.

PETE
You could. But I don't know what good it would do ya.

Beat.

COOPER
(extending his hand again)
Cooper Donnelly. I live on Oak.

PETE
Pete Simmons. I live on your mom.

Beat.

COOPER
That- doesn't make any sense to me. Help me out, this is the New Daddy's playgroup, isn't it? Organized by the mothers at La Leche League?

PETE
Don't play innocent with me Cooper. This is Baby Fight Club. And you know it.

Beat.

COOPER
Oh man! That's funny. That's really- (he laughs) OK, I can get down with that-

PETE
You have attended our orientation, correct?

COOPER
Oh, correct! Yes sir, I am well-oriented with Fight Club!

PETE

Good! The first rule of Baby Fight Club is-

COOPER

You do not talk about Baby Fight Club!

Cooper finds this very amusing.

PETE

How the hell did you know that? Who you been talkin to?

COOPER

No one, I just... I've seen the movie.

PETE

You think this is some kind of joke, Cooper? Baby Fight Club will bury you.

COOPER

Gotcha! OK! Bury me baby! You guys are a hoot. I was wondering why those Daddies over there looked so serious. (he waves) Hey fellas! It all makes sense now. So, which "fighter" is yours?

PETE

That one. Goes by "Thicklegs McGee." Yours?

COOPER

That's my little guy right over there. Name's Caleb. (to Caleb) But if we're gonna play this game with all the other boys, I guess we need to get you a neat nickname too, don't we sweetheart?

Pete takes a serious look at Caleb.

PETE

May I suggest Razorface Screwhead.

COOPER

Uh... sure! It's all in good fun, I guess. Hey bunny boy, do you like that tough nickname? Aw, you're looking around at all your new friends, huh? They're nice boys, aren't they? Yes, they are!

PETE

No Cooper, they are not "nice boys." They are the furthest thing from "nice boys." You have a lot to learn. Second Rule of Baby Fight Club! "Infants left to their own devices will become home-wrecking, wife-stealing Mama's Boys. Therefore, they must be trained to fight! As a result of this training, they will morph into a hardened people, abandoning the sissy behavior that has come to define them, and becoming

PETE
independent enough to leave our wives the hell alone,
restoring our marriages to what they once were."

COOPER
Oh man, you guys have really dreamed this thing out,
I'm impressed!

PETE
You will find that a crucial first step in this
transformation is the abolishment of breastfeeding.

COOPER
Hmm. Really? Oh hey, this may be a bit TMI, but it
was so cute I have to tell someone. The other day,
Caleb was latching on to breastfeed, and he looked up
at me- with Becky's nipple still clamped between his
little gums- and he giggled. Never heard him do that
before. Cracked me up. He's such a cutie. Aren't you
big guy?

PETE
He was mocking you.

COOPER
Aw, come on...

PETE
Oldest trick in the book. That's how they weasel their
way in. Take over the household. Replace you. You have
stay very alert in those first few months Cooper.

Beat.
Let me ask you this. Would you allow any other man to
fondle your wife's breasts like he did?

COOPER
Well- no-

PETE
Would you allow any other man to literally put them in
his mouth and suck?

COOPER
Of course not, but he's a baby-

PETE
(overlapping)
Then why do you tolerate it from him?

Beat.

COOPER

Wait, are you serious?

PETE

I'll ask you again. Why do you tolerate it from him?

COOPER

Gee, I guess because our doula Darlene says that breast milk is the best way for babies to get their nutrients-

PETE

Third rule of Baby Fight Club! "Doulas are assholes. Keep your wives away from them. They are extremely dangerous." Seriously Cooper, put the kibosh on that breastfeeding nonsense right away. Puts a rift between you and your wife. No good. Best thing you can do for your kid is give him a solid set of parents, and there ain't nothing solid about sharing a woman with your son. That's some scary Oedipal shit right there that you best be avoiding. Next time he lunges for your wife, you just give it to him straight. Say "Hey! Step off, son. Those fun bags are mine. Enjoy your bottle my friend."

COOPER

Huh. Interesting advice, though I don't know if that approach would really work for us. I like the fact that Becky breastfeeds Caleb. I mean- Razorface! Certainly beats feeding him formula. Bleh!

Beat. Pete stares at Cooper.

I'm guessing you feed Thicklegs formula then?

PETE

Yeah. Your point?

COOPER

No point. I would just worry that he wasn't getting the proper nutrients...

PETE

Look at my kid's thigh. It's the size of Razorface's entire scrawny body. My kid could eat your kid. So, yah, I think his nutrient intake is just fine.

COOPER

Fair enough. I just wonder if you've considered that- possibly- you're overfeeding your child with processed sugars and you might want to-

PETE

(getting in his face)

Do you want to take this outside? Because I can process some sugars directly into your face!

COOPER

No, no, I don't have anything to say and I most definitely don't need you to take me outside. I apologize if anything I've said sounded like a judgment. We all do what we feel is best for our children. Let's just leave it at that.

Beat. Pete is silent. He stares at Cooper menacingly.

So... this has been... fun, but I think Caleb and I are going to hit the road. It waslovely... meeting you. Best of luck to you and Thicklegs.

Cooper moves to gather his diaper bag.

PETE

Can't help but notice that your kid has quite a mop of lustrous, blond curls, Cooper.

COOPER

Yeah, he's my little Curly Q! Gets those curls from his pretty Mommy. Don't you buddy?

PETE

Disrespectful if you ask me.

COOPER

What, his curls? How so?

PETE

Look around. You'll see that most of these kids are bald, showing some solidarity with their aging fathers. Your kid however, throws his curly girly locks in your face like he's saying "Hey Dad, look, I have hair and you don't!"

COOPER

Nah... he can't help that. I'm happy for him that he has hair.

PETE

Alright.

COOPER

What?

COOPER

I just wouldn't trust the guy if I were you. I mean, look at him. He's so entitled. See how all the other babies are crawling around holding their heads up high? Your guy just lies there on his back like his shit don't stink. And- news flash- it does!

COOPER

Yeah, he can be quite the mister Stinkypants, can't you bubba! But he's only 3 months old, what can ya do?

PETE

Oh there's plenty you can do. You can start by cutting off the gravy train you've no doubt been providing. Let me guess, he's the kind of guy that expects you to do everything for him. Am I right? He's all like, "Oooh grant me full access to your wife at all hours of the day no questions asked! Oh, foot all the bills for my joyrides in the overpriced carriage my mommy HAD to have! When I wake up in the middle of the night screaming? Come into my room willingly and hold me! Oh, oh, oh, and one more thing... when you're done with all that? How bout you wipe my ass every time I soil myself!"

COOPER

Yeah... he does do all those things. How did you know?

PETE

This is my second time around this block, kid. I let my 4-year old walk all over me and now he thinks he's god's gift. I'll be damned if I make the same mistakes with Thicklegs.

COOPER

Wait. Now that you mention it, he's got me wiping his ass three times a day!

PETE

I don't doubt that he does! Don't do it anymore! He can do it! He's just being lazy. Tell him warriors don't get their asses wiped for them. They reach for whatever leaf or mossy patch of ground they can find. He's not looking hard enough.

COOPER

I think I will tell him that, thank you. That's actually very helpful.

Cooper turns again to gather his things. He stops.
Do you really believe those other things you said too? About him trying to replace me with my wife and about him purposely disrespecting me by sprouting hair prematurely?

PETE

No man, I was totally kidding about the hair.

COOPER

Oh good!

PETE

He's definitely performing sexual acts with your wife though.

COOPER

What?

PETE

Did you know that 40.5% of nursing mothers report feelings of arousal during breastfeeding?!

COOPER

Excuse me, what?!

PETE

Arousal. During breastfeeding. 40.5% of women. And those are just the ones brave enough to speak out. We have no way of knowing what the real numbers are.

Beat.

COOPER

You gotta be kidding me!!

PETE

I know. It's some creepy stuff. You're a new father and these are things they don't tell you. But you're at Baby Fight Club now and Baby Fight Club gives you the raw deal!

COOPER

Thank you Baby Fight Club! Thank you for giving me the raw deal! So what the hell is this arousal stuff about?!

PETE

Well, when the baby latches on to the woman's breast, Oxytocin is secreted- that's some female lactation hormone thingy- and it causes a tingling sensation in the mother that many of them liken to an orgasm.

COOPER

You're telling me my wife is having orgasms with my kid?

PETE

You bet she is! She had them during labor too.

COOPER

WHAT????

PETE

Yep! The oxytocin lady-hormone thing is released during labor too. Having a baby is just one big pleasure-fest for her.

COOPER

She made me think she was in pain! Oh, she put on quite a show! You should have seen it, the yelling, the moaning, the crying!

PETE

I bet it hurts a little. But on the whole, yeah it's a pretty blissful thing for women. I'm sure you've heard that letting your wife give birth naturally is the "best thing for mother and child?"

COOPER

Sure!

PETE

Well what about what's best for the fathers?

COOPER

Yeah, what about us???

PETE

Do we really deserve to see our happy place torn to bits just so our wife can have a crunchy, little estrogen dance party out of her hoo-hah that ends in 6 weeks of abstinence for us?

COOPER

No we don't deserve that!

PETE

C-section. That's the way to go. Easy, breezy, no hiatus from doing the sleazy.

COOPER

I'm seeing everything so clearly now! My wife gave birth to Caleb in an inflatable pool in our living room and up until now, I thought it was one of the most powerful experiences of both our lives. But now! Now I'm realizing what an ultimately selfish act that was! She did make me wait 6 weeks afterward. What a fool I've been! I had no idea that whole time that I was waiting patiently, she was just, just- getting off-with Razorface over there!

PETE

If it makes you feel any better, I've been watching him pretty closely, and that has to be the 10th time I've seen him slap himself in the face with that plush elephant. Self-flagellation.

COOPER

He's guilty.

PETE

He's making amends. I think he's sorry.

COOPER

Yeah, I'm not falling for that. Look at him. Amazing, I used to think that open-mouth dopey look of his was adorable. Now I see him for the superciliousness, ungrateful bullshit artist he is.

PETE

Oh, hey, that's a little harsh. I'm not saying the kid's a jerk, he just needs some work, that's all.

COOPER

No he is, he's a jerk! He is! You're a jerk!

Caleb begins to cry.

PETE

(dropping the act)

Whoa, Cooper? I think we've taken this as far as it needs to go, yeah?

The bell rings, signaling the end of the session.
And there ya go, time's up, so...

Caleb continues to cry.
Maybe you should pick him up.

COOPER

What, I'm gonna comfort him after all he's done to me!?

Caleb cries louder while Cooper makes disparaging faces at him.

Oh, wah, wah, wah. Cry me a river kiddo.

Cooper's cell phone rings.
Oh look who it is! It's your girlfriend!!!

He picks it up.

PETE

Cooper, I don't think it's wise to speak to your wife right now. You're upset, you seem really confused... I'd like to explain some things to you.

COOPER

Shhh. I got this.

(into the phone)

What do you want. Don't you "sweetiekins" me. You've been caught Becky, caught! Caught cheating that's what! With who? She's acting as if she doesn't know who.

PETE

Hey pal, I need you to put the phone down right now.

COOPER

(into the phone)

As if you don't know who! Here's a clue "sweetiekins." I'm looking at him right now. Name's Razorface. Though he moonlights as Caleb. Yes, our son! You've been cheating on me with our son! Oh, oh, oh, I'm ridiculous! I'm ridiculous?

PETE

Yeah man, you are ridiculous, please stop!

COOPER

I know all about your Eddi-pul issues... your... Lacteecian hormones and your, your.... Oxytorkson-releasing! You two have made quite a devious pair, I have to say! Well, consider me cuckolded! Consider me humiliated!

Beat.

Consider me through!

Cooper throws the phone to the floor. He is breathing heavy. He is completely juiced.

PETER

Cooper.

COOPER

That went well I think.

PETE

You know what? I don't know that it did. I think you should call your wife back right away and apologize.

COOPER

Hell no!

PETE

OK, it's becoming increasingly apparent to me that you did not actually make it to a Baby Fight Club orientation did you?

COOPER

Um. No. When you asked that before, I thought you were asking if I had oriented myself with the movie, Fight Club. Which of course I had. Who hasn't?

PETE

'Course. Great flick. Pardon me a moment.

Pete whips out his walky talky.

Guys! This is unacceptable! I have yet another gentleman here who slipped through the cracks without a proper orientation! Goddamnit, it is crucial that everyone who walks through these doors attend an orientation!!! Lives are at stake!

(listens a moment)

Yeah, I thought it was a great session this morning too. Mmm-hmm. I agree. We've really created something special here.

He hangs up.

Sorry bout that.

COOPER

No problem.

PETE

So, let's clear some things up. You do know my kid's name isn't really Thicklegs McSlobbertown, yeah?

COOPER

Oh no? What is it?

PETE

Friedrich. Old German name. After my grandfather.

COOPER

That's nice.

PETE

Yeah, we like it. Here's the thing Cooper. Parenting involves some icky shit sometimes. Those first few months are a bear. For both parents. But no one ever talks about what we guys go through. It's always "oh the woman and her scars, and the extra weight, and the post-partum depression!" I wanted to create a place where guys could vent a little. Let off some steam. Doesn't mean we don't love our kids. Doesn't mean we don't adore the ground our wives walk on. We do.

Beat.

And you do know that no babies actually get hurt here, right?

COOPER

They don't?

PETE

No, man. Because that would be sick.

COOPER

Right. Absolutely.

PETE

I mean, occasionally somebody gets beaned in the head with a teething ring, but nobody actually "fights". The kids just basically flop on the mats and mindlessly flail their arms and legs around while we Dad stand around and talk shit. That's pretty much the extent of it.

COOPER

Oh. Well that's- that's-

PETE

I'm sorry for the confusion. This is a powerful program we run here, and some guys just don't know how to shut it off once it's grabbed hold of them. They think they're strong, but let's face it, Baby Fight Club will always be stronger.

COOPER

Seems so.

Beat.

PETE

So. I hope it all works out for ya.

COOPER

Me too, me too.

PETE

Good then. You're welcome back anytime, if you want a do-over.

Beat.

COOPER

I think I'm all set, thanks.

PETE

(overlapping)

Yeah, I think that'll be all for you.

Beat.

Pete exits. Cooper slowly and tentatively moves toward Caleb and squats down in front of him.

COOPER

Hey there bunny boy. Did we have an adventure today or what? Hey. Why are you looking at me like that? Don't be scared bubba, it's me, Daddy. Daddy loves you...

Lights out.