

Dinner with the Brayfords

By

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INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Four people awkwardly sit around a dinner table. There is a crack of THUNDER outside. James, a fifteen year old boy stares vacantly at the plate of food in front of him. The sound of cutlery hitting plates can be heard.

MARVIN

Eat your food James. Before it gets cold.

JAMES

I don't like it. You know I don't like broccoli.

MARVIN breathes a heavy SIGH of frustration.

MARVIN

Just...eat it, please. Look! Your sister doesn't have a problem with it.

KATIE

I think it tastes good!

There is a continued silence around the table, broken only by the sound of cutlery on plates.

STACEY

So, Katie, how is school at the moment? You must be in year...four now? -

JAMES

Please can I be excused?

MARVIN

No you bloody well can't!

There is another crack of THUNDER outside. Marvin takes a deep breath and calms himself.

MARVIN

We've just sat down James. Finish your food first, it's polite.

There is silence around the table, eventually broken by KATIE, a nine year old girl.

KATIE

School is ok thanks Nanna. I'm in year five at the moment.

(CONTINUED)

STACEY

And what's your favorite subject? I always liked art when I was your age.

KATIE

Mmmm...I like music.

STACEY

Of course that's right. You have a beautiful singing voice! Can you sing us something now?

KATIE

...No. I only sing when mummy is around.

STACEY

Oh.

There is a continued silence around the table. James COUGHS.

STACEY

And how is your mother now?

MARVIN

Can we change the subject please?

JAMES

(annoyed)

Why? Mum's doing fine thanks Nanna. She just got a promotion actually.

STACEY

That's good to hear.

JAMES

Yeah, she seems really happy at the moment. Really happy. Happier than I've seen her in a long time.

MARVIN

You're excused.

JAMES

What?

MARVIN

You heard me. You wanted to be excused and you're excused.

There is complete Silence around the dinner table. Another Crack of THUNDER can be heard from outside.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Don't you like talking about mum  
dad? Why is that? Why can't you  
stand to hear she's doing well for  
herself?!

MARVIN

That's enough!

JAMES

Why can't you accept that she's  
better off without you!

Katie starts to CRY.

STACEY

Stop it now James. You're upsetting  
your sister.

JAMES

Why are we even here?! It's not  
like you give a damn about us!

MARVIN

I SAID YOU'RE EXCUSED!

The house suddenly shakes. The whole world QUAKES and  
GROANS. It's as if all natural disasters happen at once.  
TORNADOES, EARTHQUAKES, ERUPTIONS, TSUNAMIS. Walls of the  
house crumble and glass SMASHES. Stacey screams.

INT. WRECKAGE - NIGHT

Dust settles. The last of the earthquake SHAKES, then  
SUBSIDES. After a while, the sound of James coughing is all  
that can be heard.

JAMES

Katie? KATIE?! Are you ok?

KATIE

Yes I'm fine. It's really dark  
James...I'm scared.

MARVIN

What the hell was that?!

Stacey CRIES OUT in anguish and pain.

JAMES

Nanna?! Are you ok?!

(CONTINUED)

STACEY

(sobbing)

Oh...I'm fine. All my Toby Jugs  
have smashed.

MARVIN

Damn it woman! Forget your  
collection, we need to find a way  
out of here!

STACEY

Don't talk to your mother like  
that!

Katie starts crying. James comforts her.

JAMES

Shhh...shh. It's going to be ok,  
sis. Just do what mum says, count  
to ten. Everything will be ok.

Her crying subsides to a quiet whimper. She quietly starts  
counting to ten.

MARVIN

It looks like all the windows have  
collapsed and there's a pile of  
rubble over the door. I'll call the  
fire brigade.

STACEY

Was it an Earthquake? In all my  
years I've never heard of an  
earthquake happening in Lincoln.

Marvin checks his phone. It makes an ERROR noise when trying  
to connect.

MARVIN

It looks that way. I can't get any  
signal. Damn it!

STACEY

I suppose that means we're stuck  
here for a while? Whose up for a  
game of Trivial Pursuit?

INT. WRECKAGE - DAY 3

The four sit around a trivial pursuit board game. James is COUGHING.

STACEY  
What is the capital of Nicaragua?

KATIE  
mmm...London!

STACEY  
No...but that was a good guess  
sweetie.

KATIE  
Paris!

STACEY  
Not quite.

JAMES  
Pass.

MARVIN  
This is a waste of time. We should  
be trying to get out of here.

STACEY  
Now now...don't get annoyed because  
you don't know the answer. It's  
Managua. Is that how you pronounce  
it? MAN A GOO A? MANA GWA?

JAMES  
MAN A GOO A I think.

MARVIN  
I've had enough of this.

Marvin stands and walks to the rubble. He begins to heave and shift rocks away from the wall. He GRUNTS under the weight of some of the rocks. The trio continue the game.

STACEY  
Ok, next question. What is the name  
of the tragic Greek hero, who kills  
his father and marries his mother?

KATIE  
Ewww...that's gross.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Oedipus.

STACEY

That's correct James. Well done!  
Ok, here's another. Etymology is  
the study of what?

KATIE

Insects!

Everyone is silent and stares at Katie. Marvin stops shifting rocks in shock. Stacey laughs with pride.

STACEY

That's correct! This girl's a  
genius! Sweetie, how did you know  
that?

KATIE

We've had that question before  
Nanna. I think they're repeating  
now...

STACEY

Oh...we've gone through them all  
already? Well that is a shame.  
We'll have to find a new game then.

Marvin SIGHS in annoyance and carries on shifting rocks.

INT. WRECKAGE - DAY 12

Marvin is trying to lift the rubble away from the wall. He is GASPING for breath and is exhausted. Eventually he stops and controls his BREATHING.

JAMES

Dad, we won't be able to shift all  
that rubble.

MARVIN

Do you see any other way of getting  
out of here?

JAMES

We just need to be patient. I'm  
sure help will get here soon.

MARVIN

It's been 12 days James and help  
hasn't arrived. Stop being so

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARVIN (cont'd)  
naive. If help was gonna arrive it  
would have come by now. So if we  
want to get out of here we all need  
to help lift this rubble away.

Katie starts crying. Stacey comforts her

KATIE  
I miss mummy...

STACEY  
Oh it's going to be ok sweetie. I'm  
sure your mummy will be waiting for  
you as soon as we leave here.

Marvin TUTS. He carries on lifting rocks away from the wall.

JAMES  
How do you know this is even safe  
Dad?! For all you know that rubble  
could be holding up the ceiling!

MARVIN  
James, I've worked as a contractor  
my entire career. I know more about  
this than you. Now listen to me,  
all of you. Nobody wants to be a  
hardass here, but somebody needs to  
be. So let me say this straight. We  
ALL need to help with this work, or  
none of us will leave here.

Katie starts crying again.

JAMES  
Dad! You're upsetting Katie.

MARVIN  
If I have to upset her to keep her  
alive, then so be it. Sweetie, i'm  
gonna need you to help Daddy get us  
out of here. Can you do that?

KATIE  
...uh huh.

MARVIN  
Mum. I'm gonna need you to help as  
well.



JAMES

You can't be serious! Nanna can't be lifting rocks!

STACEY

James, It's ok. I can help.

MARVIN

Well maybe if you'd been helping me so far she wouldn't need to! You're 15 for christ sake, James! You need to be a man about this!

James stands in stunned silence.

MARVIN

Now everybody, lets get to work.

INT. WRECKAGE - DAY 15

All four are lifting rocks away from the door. The sound of rubble TUMBLING can be heard. Suddenly, Stacey YELPS in pain, and clutches her back.

KATIE

Nanna!

STACEY

It's ok. I'm fine sweetie, just a slight pain in my back.

Marvin carries on moving rocks. James stops.

JAMES

That's it, enough is enough.

MARVIN

James keep working!

JAMES

No Dad! We've been at this for days! Any time we move the rubble, more falls down! It's hopeless. We just need to wait for help!

MARVIN

Help? HELP?! Why can't you get this into your thick skull James? Help. Isn't. Coming! We can't stop. If we stop we'll never escape here.

(CONTINUED)

Katie starts crying. Marvin carries on lifting rocks away from the wall. James pauses to think and then chuckles in realisation.

JAMES

I get it now. I finally understand.  
This is your version of hell isn't it?

MARVIN

What?!

JAMES

See, none of us want to be stuck here. But for you it's not about getting out of here...It's about getting away from us, isn't it?

MARVIN

What are you on about?!

JAMES

Of course it is. Even when we're not trapped together you don't want anything to do with us. That's why we only see you every other weekend and why you walked out on mum.

Everyone stops in stunned silence.

STACEY

You told me Sandra left YOU.

MARVIN

How dare you talk to me about that!  
You have no clue what you're on about about James!

JAMES

I know you left her for someone called Sarah.

STACEY

You told me Sarah was your attorney!

MARVIN

Shut up! All of you! SHUT UP! You have no idea what you're talking about! Am I seriously the only one who wants to get out of this hell hole?! Well FINE! I'll get us out of here myself!

(CONTINUED)

Marvin starts moving rocks with increased ferocity. Katie is crying. He mumbles angrily to himself all the while.

MARVIN

I'm the only one who gives a damn about getting out of here! Even my own family start turning on me!

He starts angrily KICKING at the door.

MARVIN

Move! Goddamn it! MOVE! LET ME OUT OF HERE!

Suddenly the ceiling begins to CRUMBLE above Marvin's head.

KATIE

DADDY!

The ceiling collapses. It crushes Marvin, burying him under a mountain of rubble. Everyone stands in stunned silence. Katie bursts into tears.

KATIE

(sobbing)

Daddy!

JAMES

It's going to be ok, Katie. Just remember what mummy said. Count to ten. Remember?

Katie starts counting to ten. Her sobbing eventually subsides. Stacey seems in a state of shock.

STACEY

What do we do now?

JAMES

Do we still have Trivial Pursuit?

INT. WRECKAGE - DAY 16

The group all sit, playing trivial pursuit.

STACEY

What is the capital of Nicaragua?

Suddenly a JCB smashes into the side of the building, knocking down one of the walls. It reverses making a BEEPING noise. A FIREMAN calls out;

(CONTINUED)

FIREMAN

Hello?! Is anyone in here?!

JAMES

YES! There's three of us!

KATIE

MUMMY!

A woman runs across the rubble.

SANDRA

Those are my children!

She embraces Katie and James.

SANDRA

Thank god you're both safe.

FADE OUT