

Dinner with the Brayfords

By

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INT. CARAVAN - NIGHT

Four people awkwardly sit around a dinner table with the news weather warnings playing in the background. There is a crack of THUNDER outside and the rain can be heard hitting the caravan roof.

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 begins to talk with his mouth full of food.

MARVIN

Eat your food James. Before it gets cold.

JAMES

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

MARVIN breathes a heavy SIGH of frustration and tops up his drink.

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? It must be nice to have a week off. You must be in year...four now? -

JAMES

Please can I be excused?

MARVIN

No you 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. This

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARVIN (cont'd)
weekend was supposed to be a nice
break for us. It's what families
are supposed to do.

JAMES
(laughs)
I wouldn't call being stuck in a
grotty old caravan a nice break.
Mum takes us to Greece for a
fortnight. That's a nice break.

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

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

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 slams his cutlery down.

The RAIN starts to lash down.

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. Interference and
crackling can be heard on the radio.

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! We all are!

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 slams his fists on the table.

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MARVIN
I SAID YOU'RE EXCUSED!

The Caravan suddenly shakes as another roll of THUNDER is heard. The trees outside are swaying against each other and hitting the caravan. The RAIN becomes torrential.

KATIE
Daddy look! I can see water
outside.

MARVIN
Yes, it's raining...listen.

KATIE
I am listening. It's like a
swimming pool. Please! I want to go
swimming!

A chair scrapes across the floor as Stacey goes to have a look.

Stacey stutters.

STACEY
M-m-m...Marvin, your daughter's
right. The sites flooding!

A CRASH can be heard from outside. A power line plummets to the ground outside the caravan.

INT. WRECKAGE - NIGHT

GASPS and HEAVY breathing. The radio cuts out.

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?!

JAMES
Nanna?! Are you ok?!

STACEY
(sobbing)
Oh...I'm fine.

(CONTINUED)

MARVIN

We need to get out of here! The power line's barricading the door.

Marvin kicks the wall and GRUNTS in frustration. 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 and we will be back home soon enough.

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

MARVIN

It looks like all the power's gone out over the caravan site. I'll see if my mobile's got signal.

STACEY

In all my years this is the worst weather i've ever seen. Those weather warnings were right. We should have listened.

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

MARVIN

I can't get any signal. Damn it!

STACEY

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

INT. WRECKAGE - NIGHT

The four sit around a trivial pursuit board game.

STACEY

What is the capital of Nicaragua?

KATIE

mmm...London!

STACEY

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

(CONTINUED)

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 caravan door. He tries to push the door open but it will not move. He GRUNTS.

MARVIN starts to shout for help.

The trio ignore him and 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.

JAMES

Oedipus.

STACEY

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

KATIE

Insects!

Stacey laughs with pride. Marvin stops shouting for help and slides down the door to sit in a ball on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

STACEY

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

Marvin MUTTERS to himself.

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 MUTTERING to himself.

INT. WRECKAGE - NIGHT

JAMES

Dad, please just come and play the game with us.

Marvin snaps angrily.

MARVIN

No. We need to get out of here, the weather's only going to get worse!

JAMES

We just need to be patient. I'm sure help will get here soon. The whole site's affected it's not just us.

MARVIN

It's been hours James and help hasn't arrived. Stop being so naive. If help was going to arrive it would have come by now. So if we want to get out of here we all need to try to unbarricade the door.

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 and TAPS his foot in anticipation.

JAMES

Trying to move it isn't safe Dad. Water and electricity isn't a good combination. You're putting us all in danger.

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 shifting a power line at her age.

STACEY

(laughs)

My age...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 - NIGHT

All four are trying to push the door open. The sound of wind can still be heard gusting around the trees outside. 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 heaving at the door. James stops.

JAMES

That's it, enough is enough.

MARVIN

James keep working!

JAMES

No Dad! We've been at this for ages! It's hopeless. We just need to wait for air help to come!

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.

Katie starts crying. Marvin continues and is PANTING by now. 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?

(CONTINUED)

MARVIN

What?!

JAMES

See, none of us want to be stuck here. I didn't want to come on this holiday in the first place. 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 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!

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

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MARVIN

I'm the only one who gives a damn about getting out of here! Even my own family start turning on me! Move! Goddamn it! MOVE! LET ME OUT OF HERE!

Suddenly the door opens and water gushes into the caravan. The wind HOWLS.

KATIE

DADDY!

MARVIN

I'm going to get help, are you coming?

There is silence.

MARVIN

Fine, i'll go on my own. Some family you are. Am I the only sane one?

We hear a splash as Marvin jumps in.

KATIE

(sobbing)

Daddy!

JAMES

It's going to be ok, Katie. Just remember what mummy said. Count to ten. Remember? Help me shut the door to stop the water coming in.

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

STACEY

(shocked)

My son...What do we do now?

JAMES

There's not a lot that we can do. Help will come. Going after Dad would just put us in more danger. Let's just go back to what we were doing, do we still have Trivial Pursuit?

INT. WRECKAGE - NIGHT

The group all sit, playing trivial pursuit.

STACEY

What is the capital of Nicaragua?

Suddenly the caravan shakes. There is a WHIRRING noise.

JAMES

YES, YES! I can see a helicopter.
See I told you help would come. Dad
never listens to me.

James jumps up and goes to bang on the window.

JAMES

There's three of us, Please hurry!

KATIE

I get to go in a helicopter!

STACEY

We're going home darling. We're
safe.

KATIE

Will Daddy be there? Will he be ok?

JAMES

(sniggers)
It's his own fault.

STACEY

I don't know sweetie...I just don't
know.

She embraces Katie and James.

FADE OUT