

DAD - M, 40s/50s - Positive; warm; silly

Scene 1. Finley and Dad sit at the kitchen table and eat dinner together.

DAD
(fading in)
Finley? Hellooo?

FINLEY
Sorry.

DAD
Earth to daughter.
(radio static noise)
Please return from Planet Weird.
(radio static noise)
For dinner.

FINLEY
Yeah, I'm the one living on Planet
Weird...

DAD
Ah, there she is! So, Saturday?

FINLEY
...is a day of the week?

DAD
I saaaaid, I was thinking we should take
advantage of the weather on Saturday
and get the kayaks out.

FINLEY
So, about the weather and Saturday. I'm
actually signed up for a service trip
to clean up the grove with some kids at
school. I guess it got pretty beat up
with the storm.

DAD
Ooohh, I see. Would any of those kids
at school happen to be named Tyler?

FINLEY
Dad!

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DAD

I'm just asking! I have to get all "dad" about something, don't I?

FINLEY

I think you covered that with that scholarship you're always bugging me to apply for. Which, by the way, these service hours will count toward.

DAD

I'm happy to hear it. Just be safe, OK? It may be good kayaking weather, but there's a lot of debris from the winds.

FINLEY

Like, big sticks? So scary. Good thing I don't have a tripping problem.

DAD

(trying to sound hip)

You're tripping if you think it's not a problem! Giiirl!

(sigh)

OK, just be careful so I never have to do that again.

FINLEY

(laughs)

Yep. Planet Weird is definitely your home, Dad. Sorry I won't be around Saturday.

DAD

We'll try kayaking next weekend. Assuming you can set aside some time for your old man.

FINLEY

Oh, stop. You know I love hanging out with you. And...it's only going to get worse, you know. I won't even bring up the "c" word. Don't want you getting all misty-eyed.

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DAD

Nonsense. I look forward to the opportunities you'll have to continue your education. The only "c" word I want to talk about right now is cookies. Want me to whip some up?

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Scene 2. Fin's room. Dad enters.

DAD
What's wrong?

FINLEY
What? Nothing's wrong.

DAD
Lies.

FINLEY
I'm fine.

DAD
Lest you think your old man is completely out of touch, I refer you to this piece of wisdom: no one who is fine ever says they are fine.

FINLEY
Perhaps I'm the first.

DAD
Eyeroll emoji.

FINLEY
Ugh. How did you know something was wrong?

DAD
I haven't seen you eat dinner in your room alone since the latest season of Stranger Things hit Netflix. And also the locked door. And also your recent admission that something's wrong. All major clues.

FINLEY
It's...I'm just...so you know that philosophy project we talked about?

DAD
Wherein my super daughter is a literal superhero?

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FINLEY

Yeah. What would you say a hero should do if they can't stop a villain?

DAD

You mean like if the villain were too powerful to defeat?

FINLEY

No. Like if the villain couldn't be arrested or put in prison.

DAD

Ah. An influential villain who has the law in their pocket? Or maybe one who could just break out of prison with their superpowers.

FINLEY

Yeah.

DAD

That's a tough one. Some of the comics have super prisons that can hold even the most powerful villains.

FINLEY

Sounds like a cop out.

DAD

Some heroes end up killing villains they can't otherwise stop. You've got characters like the Punisher. Or Wolverine. Or even Superman in that one bad movie. But I would argue that they're not really heroes.

FINLEY

Because they killed someone?

DAD

Because that's their response when the question is a hard one. Instead of trying to solve it, they just kill. I know action movies might not make it look that way, but taking a life isn't something people just get over.

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FINLEY

Yeah.

DAD

Does that help?

FINLEY

I mean...it doesn't really answer the question.

DAD

That's true. I guess because it is a hard question. I don't really know. Rehabilitation? I guess it would be silly if Batman tried to reintegrate the Joker into society. "Hey, Joker. Here's your new job at the Footlocker. Don't murder anyone."

FINLEY

So then what does Batman do?

DAD

He locks up the Joker. Every time. Knowing he'll get loose. Because killing isn't worth it.

FINLEY

Even if the Joker hurts more people each time?

DAD

Even if. Because it's one thing for the villain to kill someone. It's another for the hero to do it. A very, very different thing.