

A GOOD TALK

By

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She's 30 years old now. Her dad is selling the house she grew up in; she came back to clean out her room.

Her mom moved out 15 years ago, and still lives a few blocks away. Her dad is remarried. Her sister lives far away.

She is sitting alone on her childhood bedroom, looking at the photographs and crafts she poorly hooked and taped onto her wall many years ago. The room is painted grey and orange, and the bed has an obnoxious green and blue comforter, which she has hated for years.

She leans back on her bed, remembering when she re-painted and re-decorated the room with her mom almost 17 years ago.

She closes her eyes, and sinks into a dream.

FADE IN - SWITCH FROM CURRENT STATE OF THE BEDROOM TO HOW IT WAS PAINTED AND DECORATED AS A CHILD

INT. [WE ARE IN HER DREAM, IN HER CHILDHOOD BEDROOM] - DAY

HERSELF AT 22 YEARS OLD, 16 YEARS OLD, AND 10 YEARS OLD ARE SITTING IN CHILDHOOD BEDROOM BEFORE IT WAS REMODELED. ALL THREE OF THEM ARE SITTING ON HER TWIN BED. THE ROOM IS JUNGLE THEMED. THE WALLS ARE GREEN, THE BED HAS A RED PAINTED WOOD FRAME. THERE IS A SWING HANGING FROM THE CEILING IN THE CORNER, A CUSTOM DESK BELT INTO THE WALL, AND LOTS OF MONKEY STUFFED ANIMALS.

22 is sitting at the top of the bed, leaning against the head board; her legs are straight in front of her, and crossed at the ankle. She is dressed in jeans and a nice top. She is holding and looking at an off-white blankie.

[22]

I still sleep with her at college. Although, recently I have stopped taking her on short trips, like when I just go away for the weekend.

16 is laying sideways across the middle of the bed. She is dressed in running shorts and a t-shirt from a sports tournament.

[16]

Makes sense. I've definitely thought about it multiple times, but still haven't been able to leave her.

[22]

I tell myself I don't have enough room to pack her, but let's be honest I made room for her in my bags for like 20 years. Maybe I'm

just subconsciously trying to prove to myself that I can be okay without her? Or something like that.

22 holds the blankie to her face, and smells it.

10 is in an Adidas outfit -- basketball shorts and a jersey like tank-top that match too much. She is sitting with her legs crisscross at the end of the bed.

[10]

Wait. Why'd you leave Bankie! She needs us, we need her. Did you forget the Great Tragedy of 2005?

[22]

No, no. I remember. (lightly chuckles to herself) But now I refer to it as the Great Meltdown of 2005! Trust me it will get funnier with time.

[16]

(laughing in agreement) Yes! Twas a rough time, and the funniest part is no one else seems to remember it except Sam. I mean they had to mail Bankie all the way from the British Virgin Islands for Christ's sake!

[22]

(to 16) Hey! Language.

[16]

Crap! Sorry! ... I mean, ugh, never mind.

22 gives 16 a sharp look, but also smiles in consolation.

[10]

This isn't funny. You shouldn't leave her.

22 and 16 straighten their faces, remembering how serious this is for 10.

(10 Cont.)

You forgot the pain, didn't you?

[22]

No, no. I remember the pain. I am not denying it. I just have other moments of pain to compare it to now. The Great Melt-uh-Tragedy was bad. If I still remember it now, then I know it was real pain.

[10]

10 looks at the blankie in 22's hands, then bites her nails.

The fact I forgot her still keeps me up when I try sleeping. It was scary.

[22]

I know.

[10]

At least Sam was there. She always helps. I could barely see. My eyes were puffy from crying.

[16]

Yeah we are messy criers, that's for sure.

[10]

We got to the airport and I realized I didn't have her. Mom and Dad said to search my bags. I dumped EVERYTHING out. But I didn't need to look. I knew I left her on the boat. She was bunched up, she blended in with the off-white sheets and pillows.

[16]

It's okay, 10. You don't forget her again, I promise.

[22]

(looking at 10, trying to make eye contact with her) 16 is right, you know? I think about that day all the time, especially when I don't

pack Bankie. My point is that one day taking her becomes a choice, not a necessity. One day you will be able to close your eyes at night without her. And it's okay.

[16]

BUT you don't need worry about that yet. You've got plenty of time till you even start to think about that. I still don't go anywhere without Bankie. So, for now, continue to hug and smell her. Her smell will never leave you.

[22]

22 hands the blankie to 10.

Yes. Just hold onto her. Don't worry about what hasn't happened yet.

[16]

That's the worst thing you can do.

22 and 16 pause and sigh.

[10]

Okay, I guess so... I need a snack.

10 EXITS THE ROOM

22 smiles and looks at 16, who smiles and shrugs.

[22]

So, you have driven by the North Pole again by now right? That shit was hilarious.

[16]

Oh my god! Yes. (laughing) I was so confused. At first I thought mom was lying when she pointed it out. I was like there is no way that is the same place we went to.

[22]

(nodding and laughing in agreement) It was near Colorado Springs, right? Good god I still think about how unsafe those rides looked! I mean even the ground looked dirty, and it's dirt!

[16]

Oh god yeah! Plus, I am pretty certain Santa was high or drunk. There is no way that dude sits there all summer without some sort of substance in him.

[22]

Oh yes, definitely! I can't believe Mom took us there more than once, plus Dad absolutely hates anything resembling an amusement park! Especially, if it's hot out.

[16]

I mean he hates crowds, especially with other people's kids! It's hilarious thinking about him being there.

[22]

I would love to go back and ask Mrs. Claus if she needed help escaping.

[16]

Or just a splash of vodka in her hot cocoa!

[22]

Wait, do you even drink yet?

[16]

Nope, doesn't really sound fun the way my friends do. Plus, I need to focus on school and field hockey. I actually am thinking I'm gonna play in college! (laughs) Well I

guess you already know that don't you.

[22]

Okay, good. And yep (laughs) funny how that works. I know everything about you! (makes childish ghost sounds)

22 and 16 laugh.

10 ENTERS THE ROOM.

[10]

Okay, I'm back! I couldn't find the peanut butter. Dad hides it I swear. So, what we talking about? What's so funny?

[16]

Uh, just the North Pole.

[10]

Oh my gosh! I LOVE that place! Mom said we might go again this summer if we have time.

22 tries to hold back a laugh and 16 has a tight sarcastic smile.

[22]

Uh, yeah. I'm glad you like it!

[10]

Guys you don't have to hold back your laughs, I know Santa isn't real. I did some research a long time ago. I haven't really discussed it with mom because I still want the presents and stuff but I'm pretty sure she knows that I know that it's a scheme. Either way I love that place! Even if Santa isn't real the magic is.

[16]

Good plan. But yeah, actually. You're right.

[22]

Never forget the magic.

10 continues eating peanut butter and crackers.

[16]

(to 22) Okay so I gotta know.
Please tell me you still have the
Booger.

[22]

Unfortunately no one got on board
with that name - I know people are
lame. Most people call it the
Green Bean Machine, and they think
they are super clever and the
first ones to come up with the
name, so I just smile and give
them the satisfaction. But to
answer your question, yes it's
still alive and well. I'm hoping
to keep it until we have kids one
day, so we have a fun car for the
beach, mountains, or sunset rides
and such.

[16]

Yikes. Kids. Let's not and say we
did. Glad you still got the Booger
though!

[10]

What's the Booger?

[16]

Nothing.

[22]

It's a surprise.

[16]

Yup. But let's see... what else do I
want to know?

[10]

Ooh! I have a question.

[16]

Hold on, kid. It'll be your turn in a minute. (pause) Okay, I know! So, don't tell me where we go to college, but did you find a place to see the stars wherever we end up?

[10]

Oh! Good question. I was just looking at the stars with Dad the other night when he came to say goodnight. You know how he does? When he comes and lays in bed, and takes up most of it, and we talk about the people in the world and the moon?

22 smiles at 10.

[16]

Yes, yes. We lived your life already remember? But you gotta let her answer the question.

[22]

It's okay. I like hearing from 10's point of view again. But, yes I did find a spot. You have to drive a little bit, kind of like you do now, but you make it work. You'll need the escape too, like how you need it now, but also in some other ways--

[16]

(interrupts 22) No, no don't tell me. Please. But I'm glad to know we find a spot.

[10]

Do the stars look like the ones when we see them in Colorado? When they take up the whole sky and are bright?

[22]

Nothing will compare to those stars. But don't worry, it's not a bad thing. It makes the view in Colorado more significant.

[10]

I like the Colorado stars. They make me feel how I feel when Mom holds me.

[16]

That's a really good way to describe them. They are like Mom's hugs.

[22]

Yeah, she is good at making you feel wrapped up brightness, or buried in safety. Either way everything always feels okay.

[16]

True, just remember sometimes you need to make her feel that way too. Make her feel at home. Parents like hugs too.

[22]

(to 16) Let's not go there yet. Mom and Dad are still together and never splitting up in her mind.

[16]

(to 22) Sorry. I know, I know. Um, 10, it's your turn. What's your question, bud?

[10]

Oh, yay! Okay, so do we still go to Colorado every summer like we do now?

[16]

(glaring at 22) Um, well, kind of. Traveling is harder to plan once you get older.

[10]

How?

[22]

(to 16) It's okay we got this. (to 10) Well, when you get older, you and other people have more commitments and things to do during the summertime. Like school, sports, and jobs.

10 bites her nails.

[16]

But we still go to the cabin, fish, ride ATVs, hike, get ice cream and burgers at Freeman's, and all that. Just not as often or necessarily with the same people every time.

[10]

I always knew the Pisano's wouldn't come as often. At least Mom, Dad, Sam, and Shirley and Vernon are forever.

22 and 16 look at each other.

[22]

(to 16) You can say something, but be careful.

16 nods in affirmation to 22.

(Cont.) She has like four more years before it should even cross her mind.

[16]

(to 22) I know, I know. (to 10) So, Shirley and Vernon get older and big trips are harder for older people. Mom and Sam go sometimes. Dad still goes a lot, but we don't really all go together, like at the same time.

[10]

Guys, I'm 10. I'm not dumb. Why are you being all weird? Even if things with Colorado are a little different at your age, it won't be like that for long. Family is forever. Sam told me. And she said we would always go to Colorado, and be together. Not like the family down the road that fights over their cabin, or that other family who left one summer and never came back.

[22]

(sighs) Well, yes. I think what we are trying to say, and are doing a really poor job of saying, is that sometimes things change, and sometimes promises don't have the same value as when they are made.

[16]

I think I can help here. 10, do you remember when you wanted to get the goldfish at the fair a little while ago? When Mom and Dad made you promise that you would keep them alive? You promised you would feed them and clean the tank, and no one else could help.

[10]

Yes. I told Mom sorry over and over. I really tried my hardest! But I had sports and things to do, and then Mom said she'd help me. But I don't know how it happened. I think I over fed them. I may have forgotten to feed a few times too.

[16]

It's okay, it's okay. We aren't mad about the fish dying. I'm just using it as an example that sometimes we make a promise with

really good intentions. We truly mean the promise, right? But then things happen, for reasons we can't explain, which lead to us breaking that promise, even though we never meant to.

[22]

(smiling at 16) Very well explained. Exactly. So even though we said we would always return to Colorado as a family, that doesn't mean that our circumstances don't change and prevent that from happening.

[10]

Okay, I guess that makes sense. It just doesn't sound right. We always go. Mom, Dad, Sam, and me. Everyone loves it.

[22]

I know. It's hard to understand. I still can't quite wrap my head around it.

[10]

Sam and I promised we would not let something ever separate us though. I just don't see it happening.

[16]

Hey, nothing happens between you and Sam. I can guarantee that. You and her will always be a team, no matter what.

[22]

Yes. You and her are forever. She is and always will be the best big sister. Don't ever doubt your relationship with her.

[16]

It will always be you and her
against the world. We just don't
want you to be too reliant on
family promises, okay?

[10]

Okay, I guess so.

[22]

Sorry if that was a lot to put on
you, are you good?

[10]

Yeah, I'm gonna get another snack.

10 EXITS THE ROOM.

[16]

Well, shit. That was almost a
disaster. Hell it might have been!
We don't know what she is gonna
take away from all that.

[22]

Calm down, it will be fine. She is
only ten. She won't read into it
much. I mean I'm not saying that
wasn't a mess, but I think she
will be fine.

[16]

Well, while she is away, I wanted
ask, where do we live? Not for
college, I mean in terms of a
house. Like where do Mom and Dad
live?

[22]

They are both still in San
Antonio. Dad is still in the same
house, and Mom lives close by.

[16]

Is it different? You know, when
you come home? Being with them?

[22]

Yeah, it is. It's weird though. They both are living their own lives; they just don't seem to live the way they told us to.

[16]

So it's not different then?
(chuckles sarcastically)

[22]

Hah. But no, really, it is different. And you can't split your time however you want anymore. You have to split your time more evenly and plan things according to their plans, not yours. Basically, everything because more rigid.

[16]

What about a home?

[22]

Honestly? We don't have one yet. I mean they each live in separate houses, and it's nice coming home and staying with them, but neither feels like a home.

[16]

Damn. I really wanted that.

[22]

Me too. But it's better than you think. You learn to love new places. Don't get me wrong it makes living in one place during college really difficult. You can't just get up and move out every week or so. But you learn to find what makes you feel at home, rather than find a singular structure that is home.

[16]

Like the way I feel at high school?

[22]

Yes, exactly. There are moments when you feel elated to be yourself, and the people around you like you the most when you are being yourself. It's better than a house ever could be. It's a mobile home. You find it whenever you find people who bring it out in you.

[16]

Not to knock you down, but this sounds super cheesy.

[22]

I know. (smiles in acknowledgement) But one day you will feel it. It actually happened recently for me. You'll laugh till you cry, you'll make people laugh till they cry, and none of it will feel forced. And you'll be able to tell them about the divorce without feeling guilty or afraid, or like you're complaining. The moment it happens, you will know exactly what I'm talking about.

[16]

Okay, I trust you.

[22]

(laughs) Pff! Well I'd hope so! I am you after all! (pause) Now, where is 10? Is she eating the whole kitchen or something?

END SCENE

FADE OUT - SHOW HER AT 30 YEARS OLD, LAYING ON THE BED IN THE CURRENT STATE OF THE BEDROOM, AFTER THE REMODEL.

She wakes up when she hears a knock on the door, it's her dad telling her to get back to cleaning because the movers will be there soon.

THE END

