

Grounded
by
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FADE IN:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

ERIN and HANK RAMIS (mid 40s), midwestern middle-class, enjoy supper opposite of MORGAN RAMIS (12) at the dinner table. Morgan watches her mom, obviously burdened by something.

HANK

Mmm. This is delicious, honey.

Erin smiles. Morgan then puts on an innocuous look.

MORGAN

So, mom, there's this really cool movie playing tonight and Josie asked if I wanted to go. Can I?

ERIN

What kind of movie?

MORGAN

Idunno, but Josie's sister is taking us and she's totally responsible and she doesn't drink or smoke at all. And besides, I'm twelve and a half. I gotta grow up some time-

Erin smiles knowingly, interrupting Morgan's speech.

ERIN

Morgan, what kind of movie?

Morgan sighs at the dreaded question.

ALLIE RAMIS (16), emo mascara and wristbands sits down at the table gazing annoyed into her plate. In her eyebrow protrudes a shiny barbell piercing.

CLANK! Erin drops the cutlery to her plate. Hank stares mouth agape at the chrome decor glistening in Allie's brow.

HANK

What the hell is that?

Allie looks up, uncomfortably.

ALLIE

I paid for it with my own money, all right?

ERIN

No. Not all right. You got a- This is not something you can decide on your own. There are health issues-

ALLIE

I used the tat-shop in the mall. It's not like I went to Mexico and had an appendectomy.

HANK

You might as well have. That place is just teeming with illegals, and you know how those people are with personal hygiene. Germs are like mythical creatures to them. Like unicorns.

Allie huffs out ire, offended.

ALLIE

Oh my God, dad, that is completely racist.

Morgan eyes an opening.

MORGAN

So it's about this guy who's like a doctor and he has these emotional problems and sorta...

She forks a potato into her mouth - very blasé.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

(hurried)

...skins people alive. So can I see it?

Allie glares at her parents.

ALLIE

God, I knew you'd react this way. This isn't even about the piercing. This is about you wanting to control everything I do!

HANK

Damn right it is!

Morgan shifts in her chair, confused.

MORGAN

Mom? Hello?

Erin shoots Hank a stern look, then back to Allie.

ERIN

No, it's not, sweetheart.

(softer)

We just think there are some decisions you're not mature enough to make on your own. Like stapling your forehead.

Allie scoffs, wildly insulted.

ALLIE

It's a Mayan symbol of fertility, mom.
Google it.

The word "fertility" shatters Erin's composure and she pulls her hands over her mouth.

ERIN

Oh God...

Hank lifts his fork and points it menacingly at Allie.

HANK

I'll tell you one thing, young lady,
you're not gonna symbolize fertility
as long as you live in this house! Is
that clear?

Allie rolls her eyes. Morgan looks around the table.

MORGAN

And the killer is, like, a satanist or
something 'cause he eats the hearts of
his victims, and it gives him powers,
like he can make people do stuff with
his mind.

Morgan shoots Erin an anticipating look. No reaction.
Instead she looks motherly at Allie.

ERIN

Is this about boys? Is this how you
think you get boys to like you?

ALLIE

Oh my God! We're so not having this
conversation again!

Morgan furrows her brows, distraught with being
ignored.

ERIN

It's that Billy Marsh kid, isn't it?

Allie gives her a look, as if her soul just threw up.

HANK

Who?

ALLIE

Yeah, mom, I'm doing Billy Marsh. The
kid who drank toilet water to get out
of PE.

(MORE)

ALLIE (CONT'D)

We're gonna have lots of cross-eyed,
toilet-drinking babies and sell
crystal meth on Ebay to get me through
stripper-school.

Erin's face contorts, almost sobbing now. Hank SLAMS
his fist into the table, which from the look of it is
more painful than he imagined.

HANK

Don't you take that tone with your
mother. Now you're gonna stop seeing
this Billy Bart kid starting right
now, or so help me God, there's no TV
for a month!

Erin sniff, defeatist.

ERIN

Well what kind of threat is that,
Hank? She's never home anyway.

HANK

Two months!

Morgan clears her throat, desperate to matter.

MORGAN

Also there's a lot of nudity, like
they show everything, right? Blood
orgies all over the place-

ALLIE

I don't see what the big deal is. It's
my body, feminism is about the right
to choose!

Hank leans back and just stares at her.

HANK

Are you on drugs?
(to Erin)
Do her pupils seem dilated to you?

ALLIE

I'm a vegan, dad! And FYI, I've seen
pictures of you and mom from LIVE AID,
so save your speeches-

Hanks blushes, as his body language goes on the
defensive.

HANK

That was completely different. We were
ending world hunger. REO Speedwagon
were on.

Morgan scuffles her fork across her plate, disappointed with the lack of attention.

MORGAN
(under her breath)
I'm probably gonna need therapy for
years if I watch it.

Erin breathes in composure and gives Allie a grave look.

ERIN
Remember Cathy Millner's daughter? She
got mixed up with the wrong crowd too
and got one of those things in her...
(nods uncomfortably
downwards)
And now she's in a wheel-chair.

Allie winces, completely slackjawed.

ALLIE
She was in a car-accident!

Hank jumps at the opportunity to lay down the law.

HANK
Because you don't drink and drive,
Allie!

Allie throws her hands up and bolts from the table towards the hallway.

ERIN
Where do you think you're going? Sit
down. We're not done talking!

Allie ignores her and Hank jumps up in a huff of indignation.

HANK
Fine! Go out, be with your "cool"
friends, do drugs, throw your life
away, see if we care!

Erin gets up from the table.

ERIN
Hank!

Allie does a turn-about, disgusted.

ALLIE
Is that reverse psychology? I'm 16,
dad, how do I not know about that!?

ERIN

She's acting out, Hank. She's obviously crying out for some discipline.

Morgan opens her mouth to speak-

ALLIE

Oh that's great. You're like a fascist fortune cookie!

Their voices move into an almost screaming crescendo as Morgan's eyes dart back and forth.

HANK

I will not have you talk that way to your mother! You're gonna apologize right now!

ALLIE

Or what? You'll revoke my breathing privileges?

HANK

I can and I will! And there's no TV until the year 2012.

ALLIE

Fine! There's never anything good on anyway! I wish I were adopted!

HANK

Well that would've saved us all nine months of Lamaze, now wouldn't it-

Morgan screams at the top of her lungs:

MORGAN

I'M PREGNANT!!!

A deafening silence comes over the family and they all turn their dumbstruck faces towards Morgan.

Finally the center of attention, Morgan coolly lets her eyes glide from parent to parent.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

So can I watch it or not?

FADE TO BLACK

THE END