

All Grown Up
By Dana Hall

Characters:

Dad: Steve is a recent retiree. He is a bit out of touch with technology but sincerely wants to connect.

Diana: Diana is in her 20s or so. She has gotten her life started and her father has not been present in her life.

Janice: Open age, even though she works in the restaurant she isn't jaded on people.

Synopsis: Steve invites his daughter Diana out for a dinner in the hopes of reconnecting. Has too much time passed for these two to connect?

Location: A diner on the southside of Chicago, Il.

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At Rise: Dad and Diana are at a restaurant sitting in a booth across from each other.

DAD: You know they have the best shakes here.

Diana does not look up from her menu.

DIANA: Ok.

DAD: You should get the banana one.

DIANA: Gross.

DAD: No, no it's really good. It's smooth and creamy- no chunks of bananas either.

DIANA: (Disinterested) Great. Glad to hear it.

JANICE: Welcome to Lucky Burger where it's always your lucky day. My name is Janice and I'll be your server this fine evening. Can I start you off with a drink?

DAD: Hi. Janice- was it? I'm Steve and this is my daughter Diana/

DIANA: Dad! No one cares.

DAD: We haven't talked in a while so I thought it would be nice to grab some shakes and you know just/ (catch up)

JANICE: Uh-huh. Are you ready to order?

Dad looks at Diana.

DAD: I think we might need a few minutes.

JANICE: I'll grab you some waters for the table and be back.

DAD: She seems nice.

DIANA: Whatever.

DAD: What do you mean ‘whatever?’

Diana puts the menu down.

DIANA: She makes less than minimum wage and depends on tips- of course, she’s *nice*. You’re a terrible judge of people.

DAD: Well- with that kind of sweetness I guess I can skip dessert.

DIANA: Why are we here dad?

DAD: To talk.

They both sit in silence.

DIANA: About what? You could just text like the rest of the world.

DAD: Text? Don’t people sit and chat anymore?

DIANA: No. Not really.

JANICE: Well, here you go. Two glasses of water. Are we ready to order?

DAD: Oh you mean I should tell you *in person* what I would like to eat?

JANICE: (To Dad) That *is* how it works.

DAD: I see. *Interesting*.

JANICE: (to Diana) Is he not from around here or something?

DIANA: You would think so- wouldn’t you.

DAD: I just mean, you don’t want me to *text* my order, right Janice?

JANICE: I’m sorry- did I interrupt something-

DIANA: Not at all/

JANICE: I see. Maybe I should just come back/ (and give you some time)

DAD: No- I'm ready.

Janice takes out her notepad.

JANICE: Ok. Go ahead.

DAD: One mozzarella stick.

JANICE: Ok. One order of mozzarella sticks/

DAD: No, one single mozzarella stick.

DIANA: Why do you always do this?

DAD: Do what?

DIANA: Just order what's on the menu.

DAD: Oh, I'm sorry, does my order seem *ridiculous*?

DIANA: Yes.

DAD: Does it seem like I should do the natural thing and order an entire mozzarella stick appetizer?

JANICE: I could come back/

DAD: Janice, are you wondering why someone would want just one lousy unfulfilling stick when they could have 6 delicious cheese-filled fried sticks?

JANICE: I just take down the orders sir.

DIANA: (upset) Oh I see. Is this one of your many life lessons?

DAD: Lesson? No, I just want to do things *my* way even if it is *inconvenient* and *ridiculous* for everyone else.

DIANA: So it is a lesson - damn it, dad! Always trying to prove a point.

JANICE: Am I putting this order in or/

DIANA: You know what Janice? I'm ready to order too.

JANICE: Ok.

DIANA: I'll take a banana shake.

JANICE: Great. What size?

DIANA: The largest.

DAD: But you hate bananas/

DIANA: What's your point?

JANICE: Got it.

DIANA: Oh and Janice- make sure there are huge chunks of bananas in it.

DAD: Oh I see! Now, who's giving out lessons?!

DIANA: Can't a girl order something she really hates and force herself to drink it just to make someone else happy?

Father and daughter awkwardly and aggressively stare at each other.

JANICE: Ok. So- one jumbo 'Lucky Joe' extra chunky and one singular mozzarella stick. I'll go put that in for you both.

DIANA & DAD: (**staring at each other**) Thanks *Janice*.

JANICE: I'll just take these out of your way.

Dad reaches to hand Janice the menu and knocks over his water.

DAD: Damn- sorry- sorry-

DIANA: You spilled it all over my new phone! You did that on purpose.

DAD: Honey- I swear I didn't/

JANICE: Here, let me get that for you.

Janice takes the kitchen towel from her shoulder and dries Diana's phone and the table. Diana frantically checks to see if her phone is ok.

DIANA: (to Dad) You're lucky it still works.

JANICE: Great- glad to hear it. I'll be back with your orders.

DAD: (Under his breath) Expensive paperweight.

DIANA: What did you say?

DAD: Nothing.

Diana is on her phone checking messages.

DAD: Hey- this dinner might have gotten off to a rough start. Can we start over?

DIANA: Fine.

DAD: I do miss spending time with you.

DIANA: Uh-huh.

DAD: I know I haven't been as good as I should be with coming to see you. How's that guy you've been dating?

DIANA: Ted?

DAD: He seems nice. I have season tickets to the Bears. Maybe I should invite him- get to know the fella.

DIANA: We broke up three months ago. Didn't mom tell you?

DAD: Oh yeah- sorry to hear that...*again*.

DIANA: Thanks.

DAD: What happened?

DIANA: He was a jerk.

DAD: Not with him- with us Diana.

DIANA: I don't know what to say, dad.

DAD: The truth.

DIANA: Fine. I graduated from college and moved into the city and you act as if I moved across the country. You can't seem to drive 25 minutes up north to see me but you can make it to the stadium -huh? Listen, I'm not going to chase you around to have a relationship with you. I'm not some little girl that you can invite out for ice cream and buy her a Barbie doll and she forgets that you aren't around.

DAD: That's fair. I deserve that.

DIANA: Is that all you can say?

DAD: I don't know how to fix this/

DIANA: Me either.

Diana goes back on her phone.

DAD: Could you stop with the phone and just look at me?

Diana ignores him. Dad takes out his phone and starts texting.

DIANA: Did you just text me?

DAD: (**proudly**) Maybe.

DIANA: What's this? A poop emoji dad? Nice- real nice/

DAD: What? No.

Diana shows him her phone.

DIANA: You texted me a piece of poop- real mature.

DAD: I thought it was chocolate ice cream honey I swear. Remember we used to get a scoop of chocolate ice cream and you'd tell me all about your week.

DIANA: Dad I was 9.

DAD: I know. I was trying to be sweet and modern. Stupid phone.

DIANA: I get that you're trying dad. Maybe too much time has passed- you know?

DAD: Maybe.

DIANA: I only agreed to come out with you because mom said I should *be the bigger person*. But I'm tired of being the bigger person. Now that you're retired I thought I'd see more of you- guess not- guess work was just an excuse all these years.

JANICE: Ok. Here is your symbolic Mozzarella stick and one Lucky Joe Banana Shake meant to prove a point. Enjoy. Oh and here is your scoop of chocolate ice cream.

Janice places a double scoop of chocolate ice cream between them.

DAD: No one asked for this/

JANICE: Oh- hmmm my mistake. You want me to take it back/

DIANA: Uhhh no. It's ok. You can leave it.

JANICE: Great. Anything else?

DAD: No, thanks.

DIANA: (Eating the ice cream) This isn't half bad.

DAD: Let me be the judge of that... mmm yeah it is good/

DIANA: I remember sitting out there on the patio every Friday with you at our special table. Then it just stopped/

DAD: Hey, I think I saw some open tables outside when I pulled up/

DIANA: Dad.

DAD: Do you want to sit out there? Recreate old times?

DIANA: Dad. It's fine- look/

Diana gestures to the window.

DAD: It's raining again. How is it raining again? Geez- it's coming down sideways. Guess that's why they call it the/

DIANA: Windy City.

DAD: Hey that's my line.

DIANA: You need to write some new material.

DAD: Sorry hun.

DIANA: (smiles) It's ok.

(Beat)

I'd rather be in here anyway.

DAD: Me too.

(pause)

Hey, a little birdie reminded me that someone's birthday is coming up.

DIANA: Was it, mom?

DAD: No, actually it was my calendar reminder on this damn cellphone thing. Guess it's good for something.

DIANA: You aren't going to pull out a Barbie are you dad?

DAD: Why? Did you want one?

DIANA: Daaaad.

DAD: Anything for my baby girl.

DIANA: Dad?

DAD: Yeah, Peanut.

DIANA: Can I ask you something?

DAD: Oh boy- sure.

DIANA: When are you going to see me as a woman?

DAD: (nervous) What do you mean?

DIANA: Dad, I'm all grown up. I'm a professional. I have my own condo.

DAD: I know.

DIANA: Don't look at me like that/

DAD: Like what?

DIANA: Like I'm breaking your heart because I grew up.

DAD: I don't do that/

DIANA: Ok Dad.

DAD: I brought you something. It's just a little gift for your birthday. I promise it's not a toy.

DIANA: I don't even know if I should believe you.

DAD: Do you remember when you were a little girl and you would play dress-up/

DIANA: Oh god/

DAD: Hear me out. You'd try on your mom's dresses and heels and you'd invite me on dates to the living room.

DIANA: How many times did we watch *The Little Mermaid*?

DAD: (chuckles) A lot. Diana, you're right I do miss those days. I miss the way you would look at me back then- I felt like I knew how to be your dad- I could protect you from monsters and tuck you in at night and keep you safe from the world. As you got older I felt useless- you needed your mother more and I understand that but selfishly I missed you- us. It's my fault, not yours that we got distant. You did what every child does- grow up. You've grown up to be a beautiful, intelligent, obstinate/

DIANA:Hey/

DAD: *Woman.* I love you, Diana. I'm sorry. Thank you for being the bigger person when I couldn't be.

DIANA: Dad- stop. I'm gonna cry.

DAD: Serves you right for wasting all those bananas in that milkshake.

DIANA: It really was horrible. I never knew you felt like this/

DAD: I guess we both learned *lessons* today.

They eat ice cream for a bit then JANICE breaks the silence.

JANICE: How are things going?

DAD: Ok.

DIANA: Pretty Good.

JANICE: Excellent. Looks like you're about done with the ice cream. I'll just get that outta your way.

DAD: (Sincerely) Thanks Janice. You've been a lot of help today.

DIANA: Thanks for the ice cream.

JANICE: (Smiles) Of course. Thanks for coming in. I'll have your check up at the counter when you're ready.

Janice exists.

DAD: Here.

Dad slides a box towards

Diana.

DIANA: What? What is this?

DAD: A birthday present. Go ahead and open it.

Diana opens the box to find an old-fashioned perfume bottle.

DIANA: This looks just like Grandma's.

DAD: Uh-huh. She would keep it way up top on her shelf in her bedroom.

DIANA: When I would come to visit she'd let me play dress-up with her things - even her make-up but never her perfume. She said-

DAD: It was only for grown-ups.

DIANA: Ya-

DAD: You would stare at that bottle every time we visited her.

DIANA: You remembered? You saved this for me?

DAD: Yes, when grandma passed I put it away. You were still little but now you're all grown up. I want you to know I see you Diana- even though I have my faults I love you. I want to be more involved in your life- if you'll let me.

DIANA: Dad.

DAD: Do you like it?

DIANA: It's beautiful - thank you.

DAD: I've missed you.

DIANA: I've missed you too.

(Pause)

Do you think you'd be free for another date soon?

DAD: I'd like that.

He reaches across the table and holds her hand.

-End Play-