

OLD

3F, 2M

WHO

FEMALES


Jada
Mom
Steph


MALES

Dad
Jason

WHERE At home. Scene 1: Evening; Scene 2: Morning.

WHEN Present day.

 Listen carefully to how the other actors say their lines and respond to them based on your observations. For example, if another actor says something in a way that annoys you, respond like you're annoyed with him or her!

 Take one feature about you and change it. For example, think about what it would be like to be very, very tall or to have a really long tongue. Then write about it.

Scene 1: Mature

(JASON enters.)

MOM: Where have you been? I thought you were coming right home after school.

JASON: I was with the guys.

MOM: Who are these guys?

JASON: You know, the guys. Same old guys.

MOM: Old guys?

JASON: The guys I've known forever. Will you stop with the questions, Mom?

MOM: Jason, I want to know where you were and whom you were with and why you were not home when you said you would be. These are reasonable questions. Your safety is important to me.

JASON: Fine. I was in Mike's backyard with Mike and Bill and Darren. We were playing baseball. We lost track of time. So I'm late. OK?

MOM: Not OK. I worry about you when you disappear. Do you understand that? You should be a little more considerate. Grow up a little, Jason.

JASON: I'm plenty grown up. Jeez, Mom.

MOM: I'm serious, young man.

JASON: Fine, Mom!

MOM: Next time maybe you can come home first and say, "Mom, may I please go play baseball in Mike's backyard with Mike, Bill, and Derek?"

JASON: Darren, Mom. The other guy is Darren.

MOM: Fine, Darren. Did you hear me, though? Are you listening?

JASON: Yeah, yeah.

MOM: Don't "yeah, yeah" me, young man! This is serious. Next time you ask permission and tell me where you're going to be and who you'll be with, do you understand?

JASON: Yeah, sure.

MOM: Jason, this is no joke. I mean it. Your dad will be home soon. Maybe he can get this through your head. I've got enough on my hands taking care of little Jada.

JASON: Yeah, so I thought you wouldn't care if I played baseball with my friends. You're busy with Jada anyway.

MOM: You know that I still want to know where you are, Jason—

JASON: OK, OK! Can we leave it alone now?

(DAD enters.)

MOM: Oh, good, you're home.

DAD: Looks like it!

MOM: Maybe you can explain to your son why he can't just do anything he wants without consulting us.

DAD: Will do.

(MOM exits.)

DAD: What's going on, son?

JASON: Nothing.

DAD: Nothing? Your mom seems to think it's something.

JASON: It's so boring. I just went and played baseball after school with my friends, that's all.

DAD: OK. That's it?

JASON: Yep.

DAD: Well, that does seem OK.

JASON: See?

DAD: So why is your mother concerned?

JASON: Dunno.

DAD: Honey, why are you cross with Jason?

(MOM enters with little sister JADA.)

MOM: Did he tell you what he did? Jada, stop squirming. Hold Mommy's hand.

DAD: He said he went to play baseball.

JADA: Daddy!

DAD: Jada!

(JADA goes to DAD. She's hyper.)

JADA: Daddy! Daddy! Dad, Dad, Dad!

DAD: Hello, Jada!

MOM: He didn't say anything else?

JADA: Daddy!

DAD: No. What else is there?

MOM: Jada, come to Mommy, honey.

JADA: No!

MOM: Jada, come to Mommy! We're going to take a bath now.

JADA: No!

MOM: Jada, come here now!

(JADA comes to MOM reluctantly.)

JADA: I don't wanna.

MOM: That's a good girl. It will be fun!

JADA: No!

DAD: Honey? About Jason?

MOM: Jason disappeared this afternoon and didn't tell me where he was going or who he was playing with. He doesn't seem to understand that I worry about him and that it's important for him to be more mature about these things.

JADA: Daddy!

DAD: That's a good girl, Jada. Go with Mommy.

JADA: No! Daddy!

DAD: No, honey. Daddy will see you later. Daddy needs to talk to Jason.

JASON: That's OK, Dad. I get it. Go ahead.

DAD: No, we're going to have a talk.

JADA: Jason!

JASON: Hello, Jada.

JADA: Up!

MOM: No, Jada. We're going to take a bath now.

JADA: NO!

MOM: Yes, honey. You can play later.

JADA: No!

(MOM drags JADA out of the room.)

DAD: Now your little sister can get away with acting like that because she's a baby. You're much older, though.

JASON: Duh.

DAD: Jason, don't give me any attitude.

JASON: But I wasn't doing anything wrong! I was playing a sport with my friends. What's so bad about that? Why is this such a federal case?

DAD: Your mom worries about you. I worry about you. We're just concerned about your safety. A lot of things could happen to you just wandering around. You could be kidnapped or in an accident . . . so we need to know where you are. Also something might happen where we need to find you. Like, say, the house catches fire and we don't know where you are. Where's Jason? Is he in his room? Is he in the house?

JASON: I get it, OK? Enough!

DAD: Your mom seems to think this isn't getting through to you. And I think she's right. This isn't a joke or a game. This is serious, Jason.

JASON: Fine! I get it! I was just playing baseball with my friends. I don't see the big deal. But, FINE, I'll tell you from now on every time I'm going to go somewhere or do something. OK?

DAD: OK. But I'd like a little less attitude, young man.

JASON: Argh! Fine!

(STEPH knocks on the door.)

STEPH: Jason!

(JASON opens the door and STEPH enters.)

STEPH: Hey, J, wanna come over to my house and play video games?

JASON: Hold on. Dad, can I go over to Steph's and play video games? Do you need to know the video games we'll be playing?

DAD: What did I say about attitude?

JASON: So, can I?

DAD: Yes, you may.

(DAD exits.)

STEPH: What was that?

JASON: My parents are on this big kick where I have to tell them everything: where I'm going, who I'm going with, when I'll be back . . . Practically everything. Pretty soon I'll have to ask them if I can go to the bathroom. It's so stupid because what do we do anyway? The same old stuff. It's always the same stuff. Play baseball or video games or watch TV or eat or just sit around. So what's the big deal? Why is everything always so dramatic? "We worry about you, Jason!" It's embarrassing. Why do parents have to be like that? Why can't they just take it easy?

STEPH: Dunno.

JASON: They tell me I have to be more mature and grown up. I'm a kid still. Why would I want to do that? Plus, the exact opposite is true. Adults never have to tell other adults what they're doing and all that. If an adult wants to go get pretzels at the store, they just go. They don't turn to anyone who's standing around to say, "Please, may I go to the store? Would it be OK?" A man doesn't call his mom in Arizona to tell her that he's thinking pretzels, is that OK?

STEPH: It would be funny if he did. Can you imagine if adults had to ask us for everything? That would be excellent. "Steph, I was thinking of making chicken for dinner tonight. Is that OK?" "No, Mom, make macaroni and cheese." "OK, Steph. It will be ready at six." "No, I want it now, Mom." Things would be great if we were in charge. We would go on vacation all the time, and I'd never have to explain why I punched my brother.

JASON: Sounds good.

STEPH: I'd make my mom do my chores or at least lay off asking me to do them. And can you imagine them asking our permission for things? "Steph, I'm going to work on my computer now." "What sites will you be looking at, Dad? I need to know the content and the addresses." I can see them getting all whiny and pathetic. Man, we must be annoying!

JASON: But we wouldn't be if *they* weren't so annoying.

STEPH: True. We wouldn't be annoying if we didn't have to be. If they didn't make us. It's too bad parents don't see that.

JASON: Yeah. Too bad. They'll never get it.

Scene 2: Immature

(Next day. JASON enters the kitchen.)

JASON: Hey, where is everybody? Is it Saturday? Hello? What's going on? Can anyone hear me? (Beat.) This is creepy. Mom? Where are you?

(JADA enters.)

JASON: Mom, Jada is in the kitchen. Hello? What's going on here? Seriously, this isn't funny. And I'm hungry. Jada, go find Mommy.

JADA: No!

JASON: Jada, don't be bad. Now go find Mommy. Then we can have breakfast.

JADA: No!

JASON: Jada, you're a brat.

(JADA screams.)

JASON: Jada, shut up!

JADA: Nooooo!

JASON: Jada! Mom! Jada won't shut up! (Beat.) Jada, aren't you hungry? Wouldn't you like some food?

JADA: Yes!

JASON: Well, Mommy can make you breakfast. Go find Mommy!

JADA: Mommy's sleeping. You make breakfast.

JASON: I don't know how to make breakfast.

JADA: Jason! I'm hungry!

JASON: So am I!

JADA: Food!

JASON: Mommy makes food. Go find Mommy!

(JADA sits down and cries.)

JASON: Mom! Help!

(MOM stumbles in wearing pajamas and takes a seat at the breakfast table.)

MOM: What's all the noise about? I'm trying to sleep.

JASON: You're supposed to make us breakfast before school. We're running late.

MOM: So?

JASON: So? Do something!

MOM: I don't feel like it.

JASON: It doesn't matter if you feel like it. It's your job.

MOM: Nah.

JASON: Are you sick or something?

JADA: Mommy!

MOM: Jason, will you get Jada to be quiet?

JASON: What?

MOM: Jada wants something.

JASON: You're the mom here.

MOM: I'm tired.

JASON: What's going on here?

(DAD enters.)

DAD: Jason, I want waffles.

JASON: Me, too.

DAD: Excellent. Waffles it is.

(DAD sits. Beat.)

JASON: You don't expect me to make them?

DAD: Who else?

JASON: How about you or Mom?

DAD: Nah.

JASON: Is this some kind of test? Because I get it, OK?
You made your point.

DAD: Point?

MOM: I'm hungry.

JADA: So hungry!

DAD: So, so hungry.

(MOM, DAD, and JADA all sit looking at JASON.)

JASON: You're kidding, right? *(Beat.)* Well, you can forget about it. Get your own breakfast.

(DAD gets up and takes out a box of cookies.)

JASON: You can't eat that.

DAD: Why not?

JASON: It's not good for you. Plus, they're mine.

DAD: Your name's not on them.

JASON: They're my favorite. Mom bought them for me.

MOM: No, I didn't.

JASON: Yes, you did.

MOM: Well, I want them.

JASON: You can't have them.

MOM: I can do whatever I want.

JASON: No, you can't.

DAD: I'm getting out of here. This place stinks.

JASON: Well, I'm going with you.

DAD: No, you're not.

JASON: So I'm not going to school?

DAD: What do I care?

JASON: Well, you're supposed to care. You usually care.

DAD: Well then, I guess today's the exception. I'm outta here.

JASON: Seriously, are you going to work?

DAD: I don't know. Stop asking me questions! You're always telling me what to do!

JASON: I never tell you what to do. Or at least you never listen.

DAD: Give me a break. You do, too. I hate this place!

(DAD exits, slamming the door behind him.)

JASON: What was that?

JADA: You made Daddy mad.

JASON: Dad is crazy. I don't know what's going on here. If this is a joke, it isn't funny anymore. This is nuts. Things are not supposed to go this way. You're supposed to be in charge. I'm just a kid. I don't want to be in charge. Things are going to go really bad when it's time to pay the bills, I hope you know. And if nobody in this family works, we won't

have any money anyway. So whatever this is, it's got to stop. Mom, you and Dad are going to have to start acting like adults again. You made your point. I see why you're bossy all the time and tell me what to do. I get it. You can stop now. I'm not going to make you breakfast or take care of Jada. That's your job, just like telling me what to do and bossing me around is your job. OK? *I get it. So quit already! Are you even listening to me?*

MOM: I'm hungry.

JASON: The world's turned upside-down!

(STEPH knocks on the door.)

JASON: Mom, aren't you going to answer that?

MOM: I'm not supposed to answer the door.

JASON: Fine! I'll do it. And if it's a kidnapper, I hope you'll be happy.

(JASON opens the door as MOM and JADA eat cookies.)

JASON: I told you those are my cookies!

MOM: Your name's not on them.

JADA: Mmm, cookies.

(STEPH enters.)

STEPH: Sorry I'm late. I had to get everyone dressed and fed and Matthew had to be driven to daycare.

JASON: You drove a car?

STEPH: You say that like I don't do it every day.

JASON: You don't. You've never driven a car in your life.

STEPH: Jason, you slay me.

JASON: Do you want to play video games? Looks like I'm not going to school.

STEPH: You sound like your dad when he comes by to play with Matthew.

JASON: What? My dad plays with Matthew, your little brother?

STEPH: No, your dad plays with Matthew, my dad. They play video games every afternoon. So, want a ride to work?

JASON: Work?

STEPH: You know, the place where we sit behind a desk and do business.

JASON: I don't even know which is worse—you working or you driving a car!

STEPH: I'm an excellent driver.

JASON: Right, right.

STEPH: You realize your mother and Jada are eating cookies for breakfast.

JASON: Yeah. I told them to make themselves something, but they didn't listen. *(To MOM.)* Stop being a pig! Leave some for me!

MOM: You called me a pig! You're so mean!

(MOM runs out of the room.)

JADA: Meanie!

JASON: Shut up, Jada.

(JADA cries.)

JASON: Oh, jeez.

STEPH: Well, it looks like you've got your hands full here. I guess I'll be going.

JASON: Fine, fine, whatever. I hope my parents paid you a lot to go through with this game.

STEPH: You really are acting quite odd today, Jason. Will I see you at work then?

JASON: Oh, yeah. You bet.

(STEPH exits. JASON watches her go.)

JASON: She's really driving!

JADA: Jaaaaason!

JASON: Please tell me I'm dreaming! I don't want to be an adult! I want to be a kid. But I'll be more grown up, I promise! Just make my life go back to

the way it was. Make Mom act like a mom and nag me about where I am and make breakfast and yell at me for being late. I might still complain sometimes about it, but I'll try not to. And Dad can call me "young man" in that really annoying way and expect me to be better at sports and tell me to clean the garage. I probably still won't want to, but I will. I swear. I will. If you please, please, please make things go back to normal. Listen, this whole family will go right down the toilet if I'm in charge here. Jada will starve and her teeth will fall out—

(JADA cries again.)

JASON: —and we won't have any money and the house will be a mess . . . This just really isn't a good idea! So whoever's in charge, make things go back to how they used to be!

(DAD enters, dressed in work clothes.)

DAD: Son, why aren't you ready for school?

JASON: I was trying to find breakfast for Jada and you left—

DAD: Where's your mom?

JASON: Upstairs. She's mad at me.

DAD: Honey?

(MOM enters, dressed for the day.)

MOM: I finally found that black sock you lost.

DAD: Great! Jason says he's trying to make breakfast for Jada.

MOM: Jason, you know she's not supposed to eat cookies in the morning!

JADA: Mommy!

MOM: Mommy's going to make you some nice oatmeal, Jada.

JADA: Yay!

JASON: Sorry, Mom. Really. I'm really sorry.

MOM: OK, OK. Just run upstairs and get ready for school.

JASON: Great! Fantastic! I'll hurry! (*Beat.*) Dad? Do you play video games every afternoon with Steph's dad?

DAD: I hate video games. You know that.

JASON: That is so great, Dad. So great!

(*JASON exits.*)

MOM: You know, sometimes I just don't understand that boy.

TALK BACK!

1. Do you think you should be treated more like an adult? If so, how?
2. What do you hate being nagged about? Do you think it's right? Do you think it's necessary? What would work better?
3. Do you want to be older? Why or why not?
4. What are the advantages of being a kid rather than growing up quickly?
5. How would you change things if you were in charge?
6. Which is worse: being in charge of everything or nothing? Are adult responsibilities a burden?
7. What is stressful about going into your teen years?