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# Smitty

By Michael Baumgarten

(woofs)

Here, boy.

(bell ringing)

Hi. I'm Tia.

So you're new, huh?

I'm always new.

Wow, that sucks.

Yep.

It does.

Here's what you gotta know

about Lincoln Junior High.

Tuesday's Salisbury steak.

You're gonna wanna

bring a lunch that day.

Oh, and, stay away

from those guys.

Why are you telling me

all this?

(bell ringing)

'Cause everybody

needs a friend.

See you, Ben.

Suck up.

Hey.

Tia told you I was a punk, huh?

Dude. She's just mad

because I broke up with her.

Chicks! They play you, man.

One day, someone's gonna

teach her a lesson.

So let's try this again.

Hey!

I'm Peabo.

I'm Ben.

Hey, wanna chill tonight?

-Cool.

Dude. We're golden,

he's clueless.

He's in.

(Glass breaking)

**BEN:**

What are we doing here?

**PEABO:**

We're having fun.  
You do know how  
to have fun, right?  
Try me.  
Wanna try?  
Sure.  
Come on, try it again.  
This is pretty cool.  
I like that. Hey, Tyler!  
Tag the walls.  
Ben, you hungry?  
Why?  
-Come on.  
Are you sure?  
-It's a restaurant,  
they keep all the food  
in the freezer.  
Hey, Ben.  
Dude, wait! Hey!  
Let me out!  
Hey! Let me out!  
-What an idiot.  
Let me out!  
It's really cold in here!  
Yah!  
Tyler!  
Put that on the wall.  
What are you guys doing?  
(cash register dinging)  
See you, sucker!  
Have fun in jail!  
(sirens blaring)  
Felony vandalist.  
Breaking and entering.  
All of which is bad, but nothing  
compared to grand theft.  
I didn't  
steal anything!  
Then where's the thousand  
dollars from the cash register?  
I didn't take it.  
Then give me names.  
Have it your way.

Sit down.

What are you doing here?

This is my family's  
restaurant, Ben.

Hi, Mom.

Here's his summons.

It's all in there.

In the car, now!

**MAN:**

the Honourable Judge Green.

Be seated.

Good morning, Benjamin.

Hi.

You move around a lot, huh?

We've-- We've had to, um--

But I'm in, I'm in  
school now, night classes.

I'm studying to be a nurse,

and I'm a waitress,

and I've just taken on

a part-time job.

Which explains why

there's no adult around

to keep Benjamin from committing  
multiple felonies.

I'm trying

the best that I can.

The sentencing guidelines say

you should go to

juvenile detention

for three to five years.

Five years?!

Don't talk back.

Did you think

you'd be going to Disneyland?

Now, I get the feeling

that you would be trading

some bad friends for

a set of even worse ones.

So, what to do?

Where's Benjamin's father?

The last contact I had with him

was the day that he left.

I was pregnant,  
and he had other plans.  
Any other family?  
No.  
Well my father, but--  
Benjamin, how do you and  
your grandfather get along?  
They've never met,  
Your Honour.  
Ever?  
No, Your Honour.  
That's unfortunate.  
He and I don't get along.  
Is your father  
a convicted felon?  
No.  
A drug addict?  
Alcoholic?  
No, Your Honour,  
he's a farmer.  
He lives in Summit Town, in Iowa.  
When was the last time  
you spoke?  
Since right before Ben was born.  
It seems to me that if you had  
someone to look after Benjamin,  
you could concentrate on school.  
Maybe even graduate early.  
Yes, Your Honour.  
-Here's the choice.  
Benjamin spends three years  
in juvenile detention  
or three months in Iowa.  
Mom, what's the matter?  
Everyone makes mistakes, Ben.  
It's just that some people  
never let you live them down.  
What does that mean?  
Never mind.  
One day you'll understand.  
All right, come on.  
Dad.  
You're late.  
This is your grandson, Ben.

You gotta go to the bathroom?  
What?  
Do you have to  
go to the bathroom?  
No.  
Why you got  
your pants down, then?  
'Cause I like it like that,  
it's my style.  
I'm not going in there.  
Oh, yes, you are.  
No, I'm not. There's something  
wrong with that guy.  
He's your grandfather.  
You can't make me.  
Oh, really?  
Wanna watch me?  
What's that for?  
I didn't even do anything wrong,  
and you're gonna beat me?  
Here, put that on.  
Pull your pants up.  
My house, my rules.  
This ain't summer vacation.  
You okay with that?  
Yeah.  
I already told you  
I'm not going in there.  
I know that you didn't  
have a father, okay?  
And maybe that is why  
I've been way to easy on you.  
But that's what they're like, okay?  
So you're just gonna deal with it.  
So that's why you are  
the way you are, Mom.  
'Cause your dad's a redneck,  
gun-toting jackass!  
You watch your mouth!  
Do you realize if I had ever  
spoken to him that way,  
do you know how far he would  
have put his boot up--?  
All right.

No, no, I dare you.  
I dare you to talk to him like that.  
You see what happens!  
Give me your cell phone!  
Now!  
I'll give it back  
at the end of the summer, maybe.  
Now get in there!  
You behave yourself.  
No more sass.  
You remember where everything is?  
Yeah, I think so.  
Good.  
'Cause nothing's changed.  
Take your bag, come on.

**BEN:**

What?  
It's exactly like I left it.  
So, what?  
I just figured he would have  
gotten rid of all my stuff.  
Okay.  
Can you promise me one thing  
while you're here?  
Try to think of someone else  
besides yourself.  
It's not all about you.  
What's not all about me?  
Life.  
I love you, okay?  
All right, get ready for bed.  
(rooster, farm sounds)  
"I had to get  
an early start,  
"I'm sorry  
I couldn't say goodbye.  
Please be good  
for your grandfather."  
Yeah, right.  
(radio with  
Farm Report in background)  
What?  
Where's mine?

I'm not your cook.  
You want breakfast,  
you make it yourself.  
But I can't make anything.  
I believe you.  
You know, fine,  
I'll just have cereal.  
No, you won't.  
Why not?  
'Cause I don't have any.  
I hate cereal.  
Then what  
am I supposed to eat?  
What do you eat at home?  
Hot pockets, pizza rolls, you  
know, anything that can nuke.  
Nuke. There's a microwave  
right behind you.  
Fine.  
Have at it.  
Fine.  
Okay. Dozen eggs,  
four potatoes,  
chow down--  
(microwave button beeps)  
Ah!  
(splattering)  
All right.  
Clean that up.  
And when you're through,  
meet me outside.  
We got work to do.  
(sizzling)  
(chickens clucking)  
What am I  
supposed to do?  
Find the fattest one  
and catch it.  
Why?  
Dinner.  
This sucks!  
Hot pockets and pizza rolls.  
How they working out for you?  
Ugh.



Mow this.  
But I'm only here  
for, like, three months.  
Better get started, then.  
Ah!  
What are those for?  
Apparently,  
your grades suck.  
Summer school starts  
now.  
(sobbing)  
Here.  
Blow your nose.  
You hungry?  
Yeah.  
Finish that.  
Then hit the sack.  
We got  
an early day tomorrow.  
Were going into town.  
Really? Why?  
'Cause you need a friend.  
(dogs barking)  
I guess that one's  
kind of cool.  
(growling)  
Sit.  
No, not that one.  
How about that one?  
Speak!  
No, not that one neither.  
That one!  
Why?  
He's a mutt.  
It's what's on the inside  
that counts.  
Now, this is a farm dog.  
They've got big hearts.  
Sit!  
Up.  
Speak.  
(barking)  
Come.  
He's smart.

And, uh,  
he'll look after you.  
Thought that was  
your job.  
I'm your grandfather,  
not your friend.  
(barking)  
But I've never  
had a dog before.  
It's okay.  
He's had a boy before.  
Somebody taught him.  
Then we should try  
to find his owner.  
There's four million acres  
of farm land in Iowa, good luck.  
Hey, Jack.  
Smitty.  
Need a dog collar  
and a leash.  
(Door opening)  
Who's that?  
My Grandson, Ben.  
Ben, this is Mr. Smith.  
But my friends  
call me "Smitty".  
Smitty.  
You call him  
"Mr. Smith".  
Mr. Smith.  
Come here.  
Give me five.  
Whoa!  
Hey, hey.  
I like this kid.  
There you go.  
We'll need  
a nametag too.  
What you gonna name him?  
Huh?  
What do you want  
to name him?  
You know what,  
I don't even want this dog.

You're the one  
who made me get him,  
so you should name him.

Fine.

This will be his name until you  
come up with something better.

Dog?

D.O.G.

This straight?

Uh, no, no, no, no.

That is

a genuine antique.

What!

Pick up the stuff, kid.

Dog.

I think I got carpal tunnel  
syndrome in the feet.

Can you get carpal tunnel  
syndrome in the feet?

Um, no, you can't,

but what you got

is plantar fasciitis.

See there's a long flat ligament  
on the bottom of the foot,

and when it gets

stretched improperly,

like from waitressing

all day,

it gets inflamed.

Just ice it and rest.

You'll be fine.

You're like

some kind of doctor.

No, I'm actually

like some kind of nurse.

Well, I will be, anyway.

What is...?

That is not funny.

It's not funny.

Amanda,

what is wrong with you?

I've got school, you know,

and Ben and--

Ben's with his

grandfather, right?

Right.

When was the last time  
you've been on a date?

Let's see.

I don't know, you know.

Ben is 13, so--

**BOTH:**

Thirteen years?

All right, I like my life.

Ben and me were doing just fine.

(barking)

Stop looking at me.

You're smart, big deal.

You're not mine, I don't like  
you, so stay away from me!

Time to get to work, Ben.

Dog, you're  
his watchdog.

Watch him.

Don't let him slack off.

Keep him out of trouble.

Stick to him like glue.

All right?

Okay.

You can't make him follow me.

That's not fair.

Fair is at Fort Dodge.

Oh...my mom says that  
all the time.

She does?

Really?

Yeah, it's stupid.

I don't even know what it means.

Of course you don't.

Let me know

when you figure it out.

Fine, he can follow me.

He's just some stupid dog.

It's not like he can tell on me.

Oh, he sure can.

He's a farm dog.

He's the eyes

in the back of my head.

(barking)

School of life, Ben.

Class is in session.

Whatever.

Did my mom have to do this

when she was my age?

Yeah, she didn't

whine about it though.

(barking)

Stupid dog.

(barking)

Good boy.

Did you feed Dog?

No.

Why not?

I'll tell you why.

'Cause I'm not his cook.

He wants food,

he can make it himself.

He's a farm dog, right?

Someone told me they were smart.

He's smarter

than some people I know.

But he don't have thumbs.

So make him dinner.

Fine.

(burping)

Come on, boy.

Good boy.

Good dog.

I got something for you.

You want it?

Oh, you know you want it.

If you want it,

all you gotta do is fetch.

Guess you're not so smart

after all, duh.

What a dumb dog.

(barking)

Come on, move!

Real silver.

I can see that.

What happened

to the nameplate?  
Fell off.  
Silver is worth  
at least a grand.  
How many times  
have you been in here?  
Let me tell you something.  
Nothing in life  
is worth anything  
if you don't work for it.  
I'll tell you  
what I'm going to do.  
I'm going  
to call the police.  
You got ten minutes.  
You don't have to do that.  
Yes, I do.  
Now you got nine minutes.  
It's cool, man.  
We'll be back.  
You got a lot  
of nice things in here.

**BEN:**

Dog?  
How did you--?  
This your dog?  
Not really.  
Bites me and it's gonna be  
the worst day of its life.  
Out of my way, mutt!  
(whimpering)  
Hey!  
I don't ever want to see you  
in this place again!  
You hear me?  
Yeah, yeah.  
Who were those guys?  
They're just some kids.  
They want what they want  
when they want it,  
and they want it now.  
And they are ready  
to steal for it.

Those boys  
are on a road to nowhere,  
and you don't  
want to be on it.  
Trust me.  
So now, tell me, Ben,  
what can I do for you?  
I want to see that guitar.  
Guitar?  
All right, coming right up.  
Beautiful Gibson.  
Do you play?  
No.  
I want to learn though.  
Whose was it?  
Uh, name's on the back.  
"Lightning Lihtz"?  
Ben!  
How did you know  
where I was?  
What are you doing,  
Smitty?  
What?  
Don't what me.  
You're giving him the guitar.  
I'm not gonna  
just give this kid a guitar.  
If he wants a guitar he's going  
to have to pay for the guitar.  
Kid says  
he wants to see a guitar.  
It's a good guitar.  
Let him see the guitar.  
You know  
what I'm talking about.  
Yeah, I know  
what you're talking about.  
But he doesn't know what  
you're talking about.  
What are you talking about?  
No, he doesn't know  
what we're talking about.  
I don't think  
much about it, either.

Ain't your decision.  
Look! I want it!  
How much you want  
for the guitar?  
I'll let it go  
for \$700.  
Pretty decent.  
Pay him.  
I don't have \$700.  
Didn't your mama  
leave you with some money?  
Yeah. Twenty bucks  
for the whole summer.  
You're a tad light, kid.  
But I want it!  
So, what?  
Buy it for me.  
Why?  
Because I want it!  
(Laughing)  
And you think that just because  
you want something,  
somebody should  
give it to you?  
Duh!  
What kind of grandfather  
are you, anyway?  
What'd you say?  
You missed 13 Christmases,  
Easters, and birthdays.  
I figured that adds up  
to a lot more than \$700.  
Are you invoicing me?  
Exactly.  
Boy, you got a big mouth  
for being such a little man.  
If you want to know why  
I missed 13 Christmases,  
13 birthdays,  
13 Easters.  
Ask your mama.  
No wonder  
my mom hates you!  
You're a jerk.



If I said that to my old man  
when I was your age,  
I wouldn't be able to sit down  
for a week.  
Lucky me,  
I don't have a dad.  
You want the guitar.  
Wow, you're going to earn it.  
Smitty?  
I could use some help  
at my place.  
I could pay the kid,  
uh, ten?  
Eight?  
Seven?  
Five, five?  
Five dollars an hour.  
He can--  
Hold on.  
Are we talking the stump?  
Yes, the stump.  
Man, you ain't never gonna  
get that stump out of there.  
I'm going to finish it  
this time.  
I'm not one of those people who  
never finish what they start.  
All right, that's it.  
Dog, take him out to the truck.  
(Barking)  
I'll see that he arrives  
at your place really early.  
I know you will.  
Uh-oh,  
your boyfriend is back.  
Just ask Maureen to seat him  
in your section.  
Oh, now he's going to pretend  
to look at the menus  
while looking for you.  
Uh, here comes the smile.  
How did you know  
he was going to do that?  
He does it every time

he comes in.  
There are, like,  
50 better restaurants  
within two blocks of this place,  
but he's here every day.  
You take my table, Stevie.  
Sure, he's cute.  
Uh, you find another guy.  
Here's how it's going to go.  
I'm going to order  
30 minutes' worth of food.  
Okay. Yeah.  
All right?  
That should give you  
enough time  
to work up the guts to ask out  
the pretty waitress.  
Your waitress  
will be right over.  
All right, here she comes.  
Show time, tiger.  
Could we just not with  
the tiger thing, please.  
Hello, Amanda.  
Hello.  
I would like the double stack,  
please, with extra mayo,  
the side of bacon cheese fries,  
the personal pan pizza  
with the sausage,  
mushrooms, onions--  
Do you have the pimentos?  
Never mind.  
Chicken fingers  
with a side of ranch  
and the French dip  
with the au jus on the side.  
Oh, and a diet Coke.  
And for you?  
My name is Russell.  
I think you're really pretty,  
I would love  
your phone number.  
Oh, my...

Amanda.

You better say yes.

Um, are you

a professional musician?

Uh, no.

I'll call you.

You're so dead.

Stop staring at me.

(Barking)

What are you going to do, bite

me if I don't do my homework?

Just so you know,

I didn't like you,

I didn't want you,

and now I hate you.

(Barking)

(Fly buzzing)

Yuck.

(Honking)

Jack.

Smitty.

Now, listen to me.

I got pigs that have

more manners than you.

When you want something,

you say "please".

When you're given something,

you say "thank you".

Manners, they put a smile

on your face.

(Barking)

Why?

'Cause I said so.

Thank you.

There you go.

Come on.

Well.

What am I supposed to do

with that?

Dig it out.

The whole thing?

Yep.

That will take all summer.

Probably.

Most likely.  
I would think so.  
Yep.  
You want that guitar?  
That's how  
you'll get it.  
One shovel full  
at a time.  
(Barking)  
Smitty.  
Jack.  
Dog, don't let him  
slack off.  
(Barking)  
What time  
are you picking me up?  
I'm not.  
But that's, like,  
two miles.  
Three.  
But what if I'm tired?  
You will be.  
(Laughing)  
That's it.  
(Barking)  
Shut up, stupid dog.  
Should have  
gone to juvie.  
Sucks.  
(Barking)  
Bark all you want.  
I'm tired  
and I'm gonna take a break.  
Stop it.  
I said, "stop".  
Dog's thirsty.  
Cup your hands.  
You just made  
a friend for life.  
Oh, look at that.  
Dog likes you.  
Well, I don't like him.  
What do you know  
about the dog?

Nothing.

Well, that makes you even.

Give the dog a break, kid.

Give him a break.

So, what happened

to this thing?

Lightning.

Big elm tree.

Used to have a canopy  
that covered this whole yard.

I use to come out here  
and have a big pitcher  
of sweet iced tea and the chair.

I'd listen

to the baseball games.

It was my favorite thing.

All of a sudden, pow!

Lightning took  
the whole tree down.

That sucks.

Yeah.

Well, you see  
that tree over there?

I grew that tree  
from a seed  
from this tree here.

I'm gonna plant it right here  
as soon as I get rid of this.

Your going to plant it  
in the same place  
the lightning

hit the big tree?

Sure, lightning never  
strikes twice in the same place.

But what if it did?

Well, that's a message  
from the big man upstairs.

And you better listen  
and do what he says,  
because if that happens, I would  
pay attention if I was you.

So, what's up with the thing  
about you and my grandpa?

You know,

about the guitar.  
Well, uh, you better  
ask your grandfather about that.  
Like he's really  
gonna give me an answer.  
I mean all he ever says  
is "Get to work,"  
and "I'm not your cook."  
He hates me.  
No, no, no.  
Your grandpa loves you.  
He's just an old dog  
who's set in his ways.  
But I kind of feel that he's  
trying to make up for something.  
What?  
Oh, look at this.  
It's quitting time.  
There you go.  
Thanks.  
You're welcome.  
See you tomorrow, Mr. Smith.  
Come on, Dog.  
What are we doing here?  
He's got all that nice stuff  
at the antique shop.  
Can you imagine  
what he has at his house?  
Oh, he's home, man.  
Isn't that that kid?  
Yeah  
You know what?  
Forget about the house.  
Why?  
I got a better idea.  
Cool.  
Lightning Lihtz?  
You have got  
to be kidding me.  
Is that my dad?  
Yeah.  
Yes, it is.  
What was he like?  
Ask your mom.

I'm asking you.  
You don't want to know  
what I think about him.  
Trust me.  
Well, thanks.  
For nothing.  
Stop following me.  
I said, stop following me.  
Hey, kid.  
What's your name?  
Ben.  
I'm sorry about the other day.  
How about we start over?  
I'm Carl.  
This is Austin,  
this is Travis.  
What are you doing?  
Um, going to work.  
Work. Dude, you're a kid.  
There are laws against that.  
Were going to the lake.  
You wanna come?  
Yeah, I want to but  
I gotta get to Mr Smith's house  
so I can't today.  
City kid, listen.  
This is the country, the clock  
works a lot slower out here.  
Everyone knows it,  
and it's cool.  
If you're  
a few hours late,  
nobody is gonna care.  
Come on.  
It'll be fun.  
Yeah!  
Come on.  
You do know how to have fun,  
don't you?  
Yeah, why not?  
Uh, dude,  
no muts in my truck.  
What is he?  
Your babysitter?

All right, sit.  
Stay.  
Sit, stay.  
I know  
that my grandpa said  
you're supposed  
to be my watchdog.  
But you don't have to  
be anymore.  
Because you're my dog now.  
So you are supposed to  
do as I say.  
And what I say  
is sit and stay!  
Wait, if we're going fishing,  
then where are the poles?  
Dude, work smarter,  
not harder.  
What's that mean?  
Just watch.  
What's that?  
Ain't you ever seen  
a quarter stick before?  
Quarter stick?  
Of dynamite?  
Get down!  
There ya go, city boy.  
This is our version  
of fast food.  
Have a good time,  
city boy?  
Yeah.  
Boom, fish, right?  
You did good  
for your first time.  
Wanna do it again?  
Yeah!  
But I got to go.  
See you guys.  
You're five hours late.  
Yeah, but it's cool, right,  
because, you know,  
the clocks out here run slower.  
My watch,



right on time.  
I'm sorry.  
You talk  
to your grandpa?  
He wouldn't  
tell me anything.  
Well, your grandpa...  
He's a different kind of man,  
you know.  
Pretty big man  
back in the day.  
He used to  
play great guitar  
He did?  
Yep, played lots of places.  
Then one night,  
a man came to watch him play.  
Offered him  
a recording contract.  
Told him he was going  
to take him to the city,  
make him a star.  
I never heard of him.  
Because  
on that very same night.  
He met the most beautiful woman  
he had ever seen in his life.  
And that was your grandma.  
Well, she was  
a country girl.  
She couldn't be running around  
the big city all that time.  
He didn't want to leave her  
out of his sight.  
So he had  
a decision to make.  
He decided to stay home,  
and buy the farm.  
He had a choice,  
and he chose family.  
Shows character.  
(Thunder rumbling)  
Wow, looks like  
were getting into a storm.

Hey, come here, quick, quick,  
quick, quick, quick, quick.  
Go, go.  
Weather's turning, thought  
I'd come and get you early.  
Oh, I, uh--  
I went, uh,  
fishing in the pond  
this afternoon  
while Ben was working.  
I'm having  
fish fry tonight.  
You're welcome to come.  
Rain check, Smitty.  
All right.  
We gotta go.  
Good looking out.  
Power to the people.  
I like this guy.  
Where is Dog?  
I don't know.  
(Whimpering)  
(Whimpering)  
I can't believe  
he stayed.  
You told him to,  
didn't you?  
Yeah, but,  
it's cold outside  
and its raining,  
and he's been here  
all day.  
He stayed  
because he loves you.  
He's your dog, Ben.  
And you're his boy.  
You know  
what that means?  
That I own him?  
No.  
It means  
he's your responsibility.  
He'd do anything for you.  
Anything.

Now, after the way  
you treated him,  
you think  
you deserve that?  
No.  
He would have  
stayed here forever,  
even if  
I never came back for him.  
Yep.  
And he could have died.  
Yep.  
Well,  
aren't you  
going to say it?  
I'm really,  
really sorry, Dog.  
I'm so, so sorry.  
(Sobbing)  
All right, Ben, that's fine,  
that's enough.  
Not okay.  
I'm sorry, Dog.  
All right, Ben.  
That's enough.  
No, it's not.  
Dog, I'm so sorry.  
I didn't mean it, I swear.  
(Barking)  
Everybody makes mistakes.  
It's how you make up for them  
that counts.  
Oh, yeah, right.  
Like you've ever  
done anything this bad.  
No. I, uh, I did something  
much worse.  
And I've been paying for it  
for 13 years.  
And your mom finished  
her first year in college  
at the top of her class.  
Then she, um, she met him.  
Lightning Lihtz, a musician,

like her old man.  
And she threw it all away.  
She ran off with him,  
the same week that  
your grandmother passed on.  
And I couldn't find her,  
for weeks.

She got pregnant.  
And when it came time  
for her boyfriend  
to choose between  
family and himself,  
he chose himself.  
But that was her mistake.  
Yeah.

My mistake was  
when she tried  
to come back,  
I took all the pain  
of losing my wife,  
and my daughter  
running away,  
and I told her  
that she had  
ruined everything.  
I told her I didn't want  
to see her again.  
I turned my back  
on my own daughter.

You did that?  
Yeah.

Dude, I'm only 13,  
and I've done really bad things,  
but that's like the worst thing  
I've ever heard.

Really bad.

No, no, no, no.

That's really, really bad.

I know.

I've never even done anything  
half that bad.

I know.

You know,

I feel better now,

because compared to you,  
I'm not so bad.  
So thanks for telling me,  
Grandpa.  
You're welcome.  
All right,  
get to bed.  
And take your milk.  
(Ringing)

**(Recording):**

Hey, you've reached Amanda.  
Please leave me a message.  
(Beeping)  
Ben.  
Yeah?  
Get your jacket,  
we need a milkshake.  
Hi.  
Hi.  
I am so sorry.  
When did you get here?

**Uh, at 7:**

like you said.  
You've been waiting for me  
for three hours?  
You didn't get my text?  
I left my phone  
at the office.  
Oh, God!  
Wow, that is so sweet,  
or desperate.  
Yeah, I guess probably  
a little of both.  
Wait, you brought me  
ice cream?  
Well, it was ice cream.  
Now it's a little more like  
a lab experiment.  
Gee, I'm totally messing this  
up, aren't I, already?  
It's been a long time  
since I've been on a date.

I bet it's been longer  
for me.  
No way.  
How long has it been?  
No.  
It's too embarrassing.  
Okay, we'll say it  
at the same time. Ready?  
One, two, three.  
Eight months.  
Thirteen years.  
That is just not true.  
It is.  
You?  
Thirteen years?  
No way.  
Is that a compliment?  
Well, yes,  
it's a compliment.  
I figured guys would be  
hitting on you all the time.  
I don't know.  
I guess I push them away.  
So!  
What do you do, Russell?  
(Phone ringing)  
Well, actually, I--  
Sorry.  
Hang on a second here.  
Is everything okay?  
I missed a call.  
(Ringing)  
Everything all right?  
(Ringing)  
My dad called.  
Oh, that's nice.  
No. He only  
would've called  
if there were something wrong  
with my son, Ben.  
I'm sorry.  
I'm gonna have to go.  
I'll drive you.  
No, it's an all-night drive.

Well, I can't let you  
do that by yourself.  
You can't let me?  
I didn't  
mean it that way.  
I'm saying it's already late,  
and it's a long drive.  
We'll get coffee.  
Get to know each other  
a little better.  
You owe me three hours.  
I guess you're right.  
All right.  
All right.  
Come on.  
I've got my driver's license  
and everything.  
Grandpa  
and the Rambling Hearts?  
(Rock music playing)  
He could've been a star.  
(Record scratching)  
(Music playing loudly  
over speakers)  
Ben?  
Is that you?  
What do you think?  
(Whining)  
Everybody's a critic.  
(Barking)  
What are you doing here?  
What's wrong?  
What? Nothing.  
You called me.  
Yeah.  
So, what's wrong?  
I, um,  
I just wanted to talk.  
Where's Ben?  
In the kitchen.  
Awkward.  
Ben!  
Mom?  
What are you doing here?

Are you all right?

Yeah.

I'm fine. Why?

Who's he?

Hi, I'm Russell.

Who's he?

Oh, that's my dog.

Dog.

(Barking)

That's a really cool name.

No, really.

I've heard much worse.

Anyways, are you guys  
hungry?

Because I made  
plenty of food.

Sure, it's been  
a long drive.

Sure, honey.

This looks delicious,  
honey.

Thanks.

You did  
all this yourself?

Yeah.

Dig in.

Come on, Dog.

Hey, Ben.

Hold on.

I was going  
to do this tomorrow,  
but because  
your mother is here,  
we're going  
to do it today.

We're going to  
take a day off.

Seriously?

Yes.

We're gonna have some fun.

I know  
how to have fun.

Russell?

Yeah.



Can you hang with Ben and Dog  
for a little while?

I need

to talk with my father.

Sure, absolutely.

I can definitely do that.

Absolutely.

Okay, thanks.

And, um, relax.

You're doing great.

Okay. Got it.

Okay.

How many tickets

do you want?

A hundred and fifty.

A hundred and fifty?

Yeah.

We ride everything around here

25 times if you do that.

Exactly.

You know, this used to be

my favorite thing

that we would ever do

when I was a kid.

You used to take me here

one day a year for the fair.

Watch me ride all the rides

and buy me cotton candy,

and hold my hand all day.

I remember.

I do.

I want

to ask you a question.

Am I a jerk?

(Laughing)

Maybe.

A little.

You hurt me.

You really hurt me.

You see, I had this dream

about what you'd be.

My little girl left me.

And when she came back,

I was just

so angry and sad  
that I couldn't  
look her in the face.  
Dad, do you have any idea  
how hard it was for me  
for those 13 years?  
I had to do everything alone  
without having you.  
I know I made  
a really big mistake.  
I know that.  
But Ben is no mistake.  
He's the best thing  
that ever happened to me.  
I love him with all my heart  
and all my soul.  
And Dad,  
I love you  
for helping him.  
All right, then.  
Okay, um...  
That was a good talk.  
Good.  
And, uh,  
are we through here?  
Yes, Daddy.  
Boy, I sure would like  
some of that cotton candy.  
I think I could  
wrangle some of that up.

**BEN:**

Good night, Mom! Glad  
you're feeling better, Russell!  
Good work.  
He puked twice.  
Go team!  
I told Ben that roller coasters  
were not my thing.  
So why did you go on  
so many of them?  
A shameless blackmail.  
But mostly because  
he wanted to.

Thank you.  
No problem.  
He really likes you.  
I can tell.  
And I do too.  
I'm suddenly feeling  
a lot better.  
A whole lot better.  
Thank you for the tea.  
You're welcome.  
(Laughing)  
(Engine puttering)  
(Engine stalling)  
(Puttering)  
So, Rusty.  
Actually, it's Russell, sir.  
Oh.  
Russell.  
What exactly do you do  
for a living?  
Uh, actually, I--  
Russell, should we hit the road?  
Sure.  
You take care of my girl.  
I sure will.  
I sure will.  
Ben, it was great to meet you.  
Even though you got me sick.  
Nice to meet you too.  
I'll, uh, have the shirt  
sent to you.  
Thanks so much.  
Bye, sir.  
Hey, Dad.  
You were wrong.  
About what?  
Everything's changed.  
I love you, Ben.  
See you in a couple weeks.  
Well, time to get to work.  
Come on, Dog.  
Don't you want a ride?  
No, I'm leaving early.  
I should be good.

Thanks for taking me  
to the fair, Grandpa.  
You're welcome. I'll pick you up  
at the same time.  
Well, we did it.  
Come on, Dog.  
What are you doing?  
I'm taking a break.  
We're almost done.  
It'll keep.  
So how much you got  
so far?  
680 dollars.  
Well, all right.  
This stump can wait  
till tomorrow.  
Here you go.  
You go into town  
and pick up your guitar.  
You earned it.  
And you remember,  
always finish what you start.  
Thanks, Mr. Smith.  
What the--?  
"Mr. Smith",  
We're friends now.  
It's Smitty.  
Okay, Smitty.  
There you go.  
Get out!  
Get out! Go!  
Go on!  
(Barking)  
Stick the money  
in the register.  
Okay, I will, Smitty!  
Okay, Mr. Stump.  
It's just you and me now.  
(Barking)  
(Grunting)  
(Barking)  
Come here, mutt.  
Don't hurt him!  
Austin,

get the guitar.  
Hey! That's mine!  
I worked all summer for it!  
I don't care.  
I got what I want,  
you guys get what you want,  
and let's get out of here.  
Stop it!  
What are you  
gonna do about it?  
Please, stop.  
Don't hurt him!  
Wait! I have money.  
It's \$700.  
Give me back my dog.  
Travis,  
get the money.  
Give me back my dog!  
He's a mutt anyways.  
You tell anyone about this,  
we'll kill your dog  
and then we'll kill you.  
Help!  
Somebody, help!  
Smitty! Smitty!  
Smitty?  
Mr. Smith?  
Smitty?  
Smi--?  
You okay?  
How long do dogs live?  
Ten or 12 years.  
Well, how old  
do you think Dog is?  
Oh, about four.  
So I have about eight years left  
with him, and that's it?  
Try thinking about it  
this way.  
Every year for us,  
is seven years for Dog.  
So 56 years is how long  
he's gonna live?  
Could be.

Hmm.  
Fifty six years.  
Thanks, Grandpa.  
You bet.  
Promise we'll be  
best friends forever?  
It's worth  
at least \$700.  
Call the police.  
Tell them you've got  
a man in your store with a gun.  
I get it now.  
I gotta go finish  
what I started.  
For Smitty and for me.  
Stay here, Dog.  
Grandpa!  
We got somewhere to go.  
And you can't say no.  
Grandpa, look!  
It struck twice!  
What?  
The lightning,  
it struck twice.  
Smitty said, if lightning struck  
in the same place twice,  
He's trying  
to tell you something.  
You better listen.  
He's right.  
Okay!  
You're gonna drive.  
What?  
It's just like  
the lawnmower.  
When I say "go",  
you stomp on that gas.  
Yeah? Okay!  
Let's get this done.  
Start the truck!  
Okay!  
Put it in drive! "D".  
All right!  
Go!

Okay!  
Hit the brakes!  
Punch it!  
Whoa, whoa, whoa! Stop!  
Punch it!  
Go, go!  
All right!  
For you, Smitty!  
Rest in peace,  
my friend.  
I love you, Grandpa.  
I love you, Ben.

**GRANDPA:**

He's a farm dog,  
right?  
He doesn't know anything  
about cities.  
Traffic, stop lights,  
they don't mean anything to him.  
So never  
take him off his leash.  
Yes, sir.  
I'll take care of him.  
(Barking)  
I'll call you  
as much as I can, Grandpa.  
Good.  
Come on.  
Here's your phone back.  
You earned it.  
Thanks, Mom. Now I'm gonna  
call you every day.  
All right!  
Oh, Ben,  
almost forgot.  
What's that?  
That's your \$700.  
That's a lot of money, Dad.  
He earned every dollar  
of it.  
Thanks, Grandpa.  
You're welcome.  
Thanks for everything, Dad.

You bet.

See you soon, Dad!

Bye, Grandpa!

See you soon.

Bye.

I'm gonna show you the city,  
so when school starts,  
you'll know where me and Mom are  
all day, and you won't worry.  
This is my school.

**I'm here till 3:**

be home after that every day.

This is where  
my mom works.

Food's good,  
and it's free.

And this is where  
I got into a lot of trouble.  
Which is weird,  
'cause if I didn't,  
then I never would've  
met you.

I'm getting a part-time job  
to pay the rest when I can.

I hope you guys  
can accept my apology.

Thank you.

Hey, you wanna  
go play at the park?

(Barking)

Cool, because I have  
something to tell you.

You wanna know  
what it is?

**PEABO:**

Hey, loser.

Quit spreading rumours.

Don't flatter yourself.

You're an idiot, and a vandal,  
and everyone knows it.

Sit and stay.

I'm gonna be right back.



So you have nothing to worry about. Stay there.

**PEABO:**

We're going to settle this.

**BEN:**

Leave her alone!

Hey, I said,

leave her alone!

Hey, convict,

how was juvie?

I didn't go to juvie,

and neither did you

because I kept

my mouth shut.

You were the guy that trashed

my family's restaurant?

Heck no! He's lying.

Come on, Tia,

I'll walk you home.

She ain't going nowhere

with you.

Now you walk away,

juvie. Come on.

(Barking)

Let her go or

I'll tell the police everything.

Dog! Dog!

(Brakes squealing)

I didn't see him.

He's a farm dog.

He knows nothing

about the city.

I'm sorry, kid.

Dad!

Amanda!

I'm so glad you came.

How bad is it?

I don't know yet.

You're a doctor.

A veterinarian.

Good.

Very good.

How's Dog?  
He's pretty bad,  
but I'll try to make him  
as comfortable as possible.  
Where's Ben?  
He's in the back with the dog.  
If you'll just  
follow me.  
How long  
has he been there?  
For hours  
since before I called you.  
He won't leave his side.  
God, I know  
that lightning strikes twice  
and bad things happen,  
but it wasn't his fault.  
And I'm asking you  
for a favour.  
A really big one,  
and I know I don't deserve it,  
but he got hurt  
because he's my dog  
and he loves me.  
And I love him.  
We promised that  
we'd be friends forever.  
And if you die,  
we can't be.  
You're the best  
and only true friend  
I've ever had.  
I figured out  
a name for you.  
I hope you like it.  
Smitty.  
You've done  
all that you can do.  
Wait.

**RUSSELL:**

We should let him rest now.  
Smitty?  
Smitty!

Mom!  
Grandpa! Russell!  
It's a miracle.  
We need to watch him carefully  
and check his progress  
but I think...  
He's going to be  
just fine.  
(Barking)

**AMANDA:**

So this is it.  
Oh, my goodness!  
Can you believe it?  
Oh, darling,  
I'm so proud of you.  
Give me a hug.  
Your mother  
would've been so proud.  
Thank you, Daddy.  
Hey, Ben.

**Saturday, 8:**

I'll be there.  
Thanks for the job,  
Russell.  
What job?  
It's just part time.  
It's great experience, Mom,  
because I'm thinking  
about being a veterinarian.  
That's great, sweetheart.  
Thank you, Russell.  
No problem.  
He's a great kid.  
Yes, he is.  
Look what I found.  
Whoa.  
Where'd you get this?  
Well, when the police  
were done with it,  
they gave it to me.  
Now it's yours.  
And here's

lesson number one.  
You should play.  
Oh, no.  
Will you get up there  
and play, please?  
Only if Ben comes up  
to play with me.

**MAN OVER PA:**

It's open mike night  
at Stella's.  
Go on, Ben.  
What?  
You can do it!  
You can do it!  
Yeah.  
Let's go.  
(Cheering)  
Smitty!  
(Barking)  
Come on, baby  
and rescue me  
Come on, baby  
and rescue me  
'Cause I need you  
by my side  
Can't you see that I'm lonely?  
Rescue me  
Come on  
and take my heart  
Take your love  
and conquer every part  
'Cause I'm lonely  
and I'm blue  
I need you  
and your love too  
Come on and rescue me  
Come on baby  
and rescue me  
Come on baby  
and rescue me  
'Cause I need you  
by my side  
Can't you see

that I'm lonely?  
Rescue me  
take me in your arms  
Rescue me  
I want your tender charms  
'Cause I'm lonely  
and I'm blue  
I need you  
and your love too  
Come on  
and rescue me  
Come on, baby,  
take me baby  
Hold me, baby,  
love me, baby  
Can't you see  
that I need you, baby?  
Can't you see that I'm lonely?  
rescue me  
Come on  
and take my hand  
Come on, baby,  
and be my man  
'Cause I love you  
'cause I want you  
Can't you see  
that I'm lonely?  
Take me, baby  
love me, baby  
Need me, baby  
Can't you see  
that I'm lonely?  
Rescue me  
rescue me...