

TACKLING THE FORWARDS

Written by Christine Miller

Theme: **Tough love and setting boundaries.**

Cast:

Ellenor: Mother of three adult children- Troy, Rob and Liz. Grandmother to Ricky.

Troy: Son who likes to give his opinions often, uninvited and 'straight'

Ricky: Grandson of Ellenor.

Grandpa: Husband of Ellenor. An extra. No speaking part.

Rob: Son of Ellenor. An extra. No speaking part.

Julie: Wife of Rob. An extra. No speaking part.

Scene:

Three generations are having lunch together. Grandma, Grandpa, son, daughter in law and grandson. Starts with general laughter as people head towards the table to sit down. The phone rings and it is the other brother on the phone - who was not invited to attend. Grandma gets up to answer the phone.

Props:

Dining table

5 chairs

Telephone

Grandma: Hello its Ellenor Bassman.

Troy: Hi Mum

Grandma: Oh Hello Troy. How are you?

Troy: Fine thanks mum. Look I don't have much time mum but the reason I rang was that I have given some thought to your ideas for retirement. You should buy shares in this new float for Rocket Uranium rather than investing in a managed fund. You'll end up with more - and honestly mum, you won't survive on what you're planning. Come on. Be realistic, inflation and you're not getting any younger. You'd be best to go with the direct share option.

Grandma: Well dear, your father and I have spoken to a number of people and they have given quite different advice.

Troy: Mum. They're your friends. No offense mum, but they're all struggling financially and giving you that advice because they don't want to admit that their dumb choices have left them in a mess.

Grandma: *(Sounding impatient)* Honey did you ever think to ask who it was we spoke to, before assuming they are all useless has-beens?

(Suddenly there's a shout from the table from the grandson)

Ricky: Mum's pie is as good as grandma's pie Dad

(Everyone at the table laughs loudly)

Troy: What was that mum? Was that Ricky? Are Rob and Julie there?

Grandma: Ahh Yes they are Troy. It's Julie's birthday and so we're having a bit of lunch together to celebrate.

Troy: Ohh That's great Mum. Look. Why don't Kate and I come over and join in.

Grandma: Ahh No that's not a good idea.

Troy: Well we won't interrupt your lunch. We'll come for afternoon tea.

Grandma: No that's not...

Troy: What about three-ish.

Grandma: No Troy- that wouldn't work.

Troy: Why not?

Grandma: Because they wanted to have a celebration with us alone.

Troy: That's just silly mum. How can you have a family get together without the whole family?

Grandma: It's not a family get together dear.

Troy: Does Liz know it's on. She'd want to wish Julie a happy birthday.

Grandma: Liz is away this weekend Rob.

Troy: So you spoke with her?

Grandma: Yes I did and she's already caught up with Julie

Troy: So when were we supposed to see Julie?

Grandma: I don't know Troy (*in a 'hello you could ring her yourself' voice*)

Troy: This is silly mum. Kate and I'll be over and then we can do the birthday thing
now.

Grandma: No **don't** come over.

Troy: Mum sometimes you don't make any sense. We'll grab a cake on the way.

Grandma: NO Troy. DO NOT COME OVER.

(Troy is now going to sound annoyed)

Troy: What?..... What is going on with you mum?

*(Mum sighs. Why does she have to be the one who confronts the issues when she's not involved?
Not directly anyway. The issue is between Troy and his siblings. Grandma's also gathering
strength to say the next bit)*

Grandma: I don't want you to come over Troy because you're not welcome.

Troy: What?

Grandma: Rob and Julie have made it quite clear that they will not come to our home if you
are here too.

Troy: That's stupid.

Grandma: I want to see Rob Julie and Ricky. I love them and I will respect their wishes.
That's why they're here without you. And you won't come because they will go
away and I won't see them. And that will make me cross with you.

Troy: Great. So much for family get togethers. What the hell did I do?

Grandma: Well Troy you could start with how you always put your brother down.

Troy: Rubbish

Grandma: I think your ..words.. were.. “You should get yourself a new job Rob. What a.. hopeless future this one gives you. Julie’s got more prospects than you have”

Troy: Well he should mum. They’re poorer than Gandhi.

Grandma: And your comments that they should keep a better eye on Ricky because he’s showing all the tendencies of a delinquent child.

Troy: Mum he was throwing stones. Do you think that’s normal?

Grandma: But I think the last straw was your comment to Julie when she sat down for dinner last time. “Jule’s really. You should see a personal trainer instead of that curves rot. It’s not doing you any good.”

Troy: Mum she’s not getting any thinner.

Grandma: I DON’T CARE. They don’t want to see you again until you’ve learned to speak kindly and to only give your advice when asked.

Troy: How am I supposed to do that if I can’t get together with them?

Grandma: Well you can start practicing on your father and me. And if we see a change in you- we’ll have a full family Christmas here.

Troy: I’m supposed to wait six months before I see my brother again.

Grandma: If you don’t change the way you speak to your brother –it’ll be longer than six months before you see him again.

Troy: I’m supposed to be assessed by my mum to see if I pass the test before I can meet with my own brother? That’s stupid.

Grandma: Fine. It’s stupid. I love you Troy but even I don’t care for your advice on our retirement. For your information our friend Beck Wright is the leading financial planner with Ridgeways and hardly ‘struggling’, and Lionel Simons is the senior financial planner with Matthews and Son. These are people who don’t make ‘dumb choices’.

Troy: What am I supposed to say to that?

Grandma: Nothing! I expect I've given you enough to think about. I'll ring on Monday but now I'm going to hang up. Love you dear. Bye

© Christine Miller