

Breaking Them Up

Damien

17.

Start

EXT. PARK - DAY

Erin inflates balloons at a helium tank, getting ready for her INDIAN STEP-BROTHER'S (5) birthday party.

ERIN

Why would you follow him?

DAMIEN

I was curious.

ERIN

About what?

DAMIEN

Hear me out, ok? So we got my mom and my dad, two people who are all wrong for each other, who at this point are really unhappy, which is understandable given that they only got married cause my dad knocked my mom up with me 15 years ago.

ERIN

You don't know that.

DAMIEN

Oh, I do. So they're unhappy, which in turn is making me unhappy. So what I'm thinking is, what if I can help them out here? I help my mom find someone, she'll be happy. I do the same for my dad, he'll be happy. And then I'll be happy, too. We all win.

Shocked, she inflates a balloon until it explodes.

MOMENTS LATER

Erin gets the grill ready. Damien holds a balloon.

DAMIEN (cont'd)

You should see this guy. He's perfect for my mom. Same cheesy taste in movies. Same politics. He's a history buff. A jock. He's even a dog owner!

ERIN

You don't have a dog.

DAMIEN

Cause my dad's allergic! And he eats Nishati bars. Seriously. Nishati bars? They might possibly be the only two people in the world who can stomach those things. I'm telling you, this guy's got way more in common with my mom than my dad will-slash-ever had. And I'm guessing he's attracted to my mom since I caught him creepily flirting with her.

ERIN

Everyone finds your mom attractive. She's gorgeous.

DAMIEN

Which is why I say we focus on finding someone for my dad first.

ERIN

No. I am not helping you with this.

Erin walks over to get the meat. Damien trails her.

DAMIEN

C'mon, we do stuff like this all the time.

Damien sucks in the helium from the balloon in his hands.

DAMIEN (cont'd)

(helium voice)

I can't do this without you Erin.

ERIN

Damien. I get it. I used to blame myself all the time for my parents' problems, too. But you don't want this. I promise you.

Damien looks away and takes a second.

DAMIEN

Your parents are where I got the idea from. I see how happy your mom is with Kunal. And your dad and Mara also seem really happy. You know I might have to get braces again?

ERIN

What are you talking about?

He removes his retainer and shows it to her.

DAMIEN

See how it's all chewed up? This is my third one in eight months. Apparently I've been grinding my teeth pretty badly when I sleep. My dentist was like, "What do you have to be so stressed about?" I dunno, maybe it's cause I come home everyday and see my parents at each others' throats. And I can't take it anymore. I'm tired of it.

(points)

That's what I want.

He gestures at ERIN'S MOM, with her INDIAN HUSBAND (40s). They playfully toss ice at each other by the beverages.

ERIN

My parents were in much worse shape than yours. They were always arguing and slept in different rooms, and hiding things from each other.

DAMIEN

Hiding things? What do you mean?

ERIN

Like my mom opened her own bank account she didn't tell my dad about. And my dad was seeing a psychiatrist that he never told my mom about.

Erin's mom signals her over.

ERIN (cont'd)

Look, I know you think things are bad between them, but believe me, they could be much, much worse.

End

INT. LAURIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Groceries in the back seat, Damien in shotgun, Laurie scratches off lotto tickets as she drives.

DAMIEN

You know you're more likely to be killed by a 747 that falls out of the sky than you are of winning the lottery, right?

Laurie looks away as they reach the front of the line.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Damien, Laurie, Phil, as well as Uncle Rick and his family eat, talk, laugh, have a good time.

DAMIEN (V.O.)

In May, mom and dad celebrated their 15th anniversary.

INT. LAURIE'S CAR - NIGHT

On the drive home, Damien, with a sombrero in his lap, sits in the middle seat in the backseat, asleep. Phil and Laurie wear almost blank expressions, perhaps exhausted, or maybe they both have something on their mind.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DAMIEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Damien rides his bike home from school.

Start

INT. DAMIEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Damien comes inside, finds Phil and Laurie, not arguing, but sitting in the living room. Something's off.

PHIL

Hey Damien.

DAMIEN

What's going on?

LAURIE

Why don't you take a seat?

DAMIEN

Is everything ok?

He comes and does.

DAMIEN (cont'd)

Is it something with grandpa?

PHIL

No. Grandpa's fine.

LAURIE

So you might have noticed that your father and I haven't been getting along so well for some time now.

DAMIEN

You guys like to argue. I'm used to it. Ask my teachers, I'm the same way. It's part of our DNA.

LAURIE

Well it's a little more complicated than that.

DAMIEN

What do you mean?

LAURIE

Well, so...we've been talking, and we think that it would be best if we took some time apart.

DAMIEN

What?

PHIL

I found a place in Woodside. It's a pretty good deal, and there's a room for you, of course. And I'm going to be moving out there.

LAURIE

We didn't come to this decision lightly. We've been thinking about it for some time.

DAMIEN

Are you guys getting divorced?

LAURIE

Yes.

PHIL

We're not sure yet.

PHIL (cont'd)

(we are)

Yeah.

LAURIE

We both haven't been very happy for a while now.

DAMIEN

What makes you think you'll be happier by yourselves?

LAURIE

Well we might not be at first. This won't be easy for anyone. But we feel it's the best decision in the long run.

Damien looks away and takes a moment. He's angry, hurt.

LAURIE (cont'd)

Honey, we're really, really sorry. We can't even understand how you're feeling right now. Believe me, this is not what we wanted, I promise you. If there's anything you want to say, or ask us, please...

DAMIEN

Why'd you guys ever get married in the first place?

They're surprised by his outburst.

LAURIE

Because we loved each other.

DAMIEN

Bullshit.

LAURIE

Honey-

DAMIEN

May 3rd, 2003. That's when you got married, isn't it? Not 2002. I found your license.

Phil and Laurie exchange guilty looks.

DAMIEN (cont'd)

You were pregnant. That's why you got married.

PHIL

Damien-

DAMIEN

You guys are liars. I hate you both.

He goes straight for his room and slams the door.

End