

MANNERS

(short film)

Written by

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Synopsis

Little, Jamie plays in the backyard. His dad (Terry) is building him a cubby house. Terry accidentally swears as he hurts himself and Jamie is curious about what that word means. Terry improvises and makes up a different meaning. The next day, Terry swears two more times and has to make new meanings for them as well for Jamie.

That night, two important people (Mary & Jim) visit to have dinner. Mindy (Jamie's mom) & Terry change upstairs, while Jamie is forced to answer the door. He greets the people, with the swear words. The people leave in disgust and are appalled by Jamie's manners. Jamie tells Mindy that they've left and she is left ashamed of the visitor's manners.

FADE IN:

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

A toy truck SMASHES into another. A boy is making "collision" noises when they smash. This extremely cute boy is JAMIE (5) who plays in a sand pit.

Opposite side of the backyard is Jamie's dad, TERRY, who WHACKS nails into a half built cubby house.

With a clear view of the backyard, Jamie's mum, MINDY-- cooks in the kitchen.

MINDY

Boys, lunch is ready.

Jamie leaps up. He's COVERED with sand and SHAKES it off like a dog, but still is dirty. Jamie walks to the house but is stopped on the spot by Mindy.

MINDY (CONT'D)

(notices uncleanliness)

Jamie, you're all dirty. Go to daddy and he'll clean you up.

Jamie proceeds to Terry. On arrival, Terry SMASHES his thumb with the hammer.

TERRY

Oh shit!

JAMIE

Daddy, what's shit mean?

TERRY

(didn't see Jamie)

Ah... ah...

Terry attempts to improvise but fails. He then stares at the kitchen and accidentally blurts out...

TERRY (CONT'D)

Food.

(confident)

It means food.

Terry hops off the cubby house relieved.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(authoritative)

I don't ever want to see you say that word, okay?

JAMIE

Okay.

TERRY

Good.

(re: thumb)

Looks like no more nailing for me today.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Next day-- it's late afternoon and the sky has little shine left. Terry continues to build while Jamie mimics the truck noises he did yesterday. Terry feels remorse as he is yet to finish the house.

TERRY

Don't worry, buddy. This cubby house will be finished soon.

Mindy is cooking once again. She calls out to Terry.

MINDY

Terry, don't forget we have very important business partners coming tonight. I want you and Jamie on your best behavior.

Terry pokes out of the cubby house.

TERRY

How can I forget? You've been nagging me this entire week about it. Just let em get back to building.

Mindy turns away from Terry. Then a plank of wood COLLAPSES on Terry's head.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(rubs head)

Bastard!

Jamie FREEZES.

JAMIE

Daddy, what's bastard mean?

TERRY

(dragging along)

Um... it means...

Terry searches... The neighbors over the fence are having a water bomb fight. Terry grinds his teeth at them.

TERRY (CONT'D)

It means people. I don't want to hear you say that word, okay Jamie?

JAMIE

Okay.

Jamie starts to CLANK the trucks together again.

TERRY

I'm going to have to pick up the
pace tomorrow. Shit, I can't
believe I'm not finished yet.

Truck noises STOP. Terry pauses and slowly turns to Jamie
who's stopped playing. Terry slaps his forehead.

JAMIE

Daddy, what's fuck mean?

TERRY

(To himself)
Oh, you got to be shitting me.
(To Jamie)
It means...

MINDY (O.S.)

Boys, time to get changed.

Terry uses that response to fuel up another FALSE MEANING.

TERRY

It means change.
(sign of relief)
I never want to hear you say that
as well, okay?

JAMIE

Okay.

Jamie runs into the house. Terry stares at the poor attempt
of a cubby house.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A MIDDLE CLASS SEDAN parks beside the kerb. Slowly getting
out are oldies, JIM and MARY. They stroll and press the door
bell.

INT. HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jamie is dressed in a little cute ensemble. He draws pictures
with crayons in the hallway.

MINDY (O.S.)

Jamie, hunny, can you please open
the door. Tell them Mummy and daddy
are still getting dressed and the
food is on the table.

JAMIE

Okay.

Jamie UPS and grabs the front door handle...

EXT. HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

... and opens the door. Mary and Jim BEAM at Jamie's CUTENESS.

MARY

(Condescending)

Hello, you must be Mindy's little son, Jamie. Aren't you the cutest little thing.

She SQUEEZES Jamie's cheek.

JAMIE

Hi, bastards. Shit's on the table, mum and dad are fucking upstairs.

Mary and Jim are speechless, they stand as if they were a STATUE.

MARY

(Shocked)

Well... I... not in the million years have I heard such...

(frustrated)

Humph. Let's go.

Jim frowns at Jamie. Mary and Jim turn around and STORM off.

MARY (CONT'D)

(to Jim)

Young people these days, no manners at all.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Jamie shuts the door and runs to Mindy and Terry's bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They are still not ready. Mindy is adding the final touches to her make up and Terry is struggling to make his own tie. Jamie knocks on the door.

JAMIE (O.S.)

Mummy.

MINDY

What is it, baby? We're not finished yet.

Jamie opens the door, anyway.

JAMIE
They went back home.

MINDY
(surprised)
What? What, did you say to them?

JAMIE
That you were changing and the food
was on the table.

Terry throws his hands up in the air in relief. He CHUCKS
the untied tie on the bed. Mindy puts her make up down.

MINDY
I can't believe this. What nerve.
Old people these days, no manners
at all.

FADE OUT.

THE END