

From Family Meeting

by Don Zolidis

MOM

DAD

KAITLYN, a teenager

Lights up on a living room.

DAD and MOM are preparing.

DAD

You ready for this?

MOM

I don't know if I can do this, Bob.

DAD

You can. You can. Remember – we love her.

MOM

We do.

(They grip hands.)

DAD

Sweetheart, could you come in here for a bit? Your mother and I would like to talk to you!

(No response.)

It's important!

KAITLYN *(off-stage)*

I'm kinda busy!

MOM

We need to talk to you! It's very important!

(KAITLYN enters, confused.)

KAITLYN

Can we do this quick because - ?

(MOM leaps to her feet and gets between KAITLYN and her room.)

MOM

A ha!

What? KAITLYN

We've got you! DAD

What? What are you talking about? KAITLYN

Family Meeting! DAD

You could've just said that – KAITLYN (*baffled*)

No no no you're not escaping this time. This time we're having a meeting. DAD

We're having a big meeting. Sit. MOM
(*KAITLYN sits reluctantly.*)

I still don't know what's going on. KAITLYN

Honey would you like to tell her? DAD

I thought you were going to tell her. MOM

We talked about this. It sounds better coming from you. DAD

You need to be the voice of authority, Bob. MOM

What is it?! KAITLYN

Okay, fine. DAD
(*slight pause*)

Your mother is going to begin.

MOM

There seems to be some tension in the house. We've all been feeling it.

KAITLYN

That's your fault, not mine.

MOM

Can I finish please? I have a list here of things that have bothered me lately about you and your behavior.

(She looks at a long list.)

But you know what? I'm going to skip the minor things and get right to the major problem.

KAITLYN

Major problem?

MOM

It's...

(she can't bring herself to say it. She looks to DAD.)

DAD

You can say it honey. Be strong.

(He holds MOM's hand in solidarity.)

MOM

You're my rock.

DAD

And you're my rock.

KAITLYN

Can we get to it?!

MOM

It's... it's your basketball skills.

KAITLYN

What?

DAD

Let your mother speak. Tell her what we've been thinking about.

MOM

Well... I think we all would prefer someone in this family who can dunk.

KAITLYN

I'm five three.*

*(*Or whatever height she happens to be)*

DAD

Spud Webb could dunk. Spud Webb was like four feet tall.

KAITLYN

He was a guy.

MOM

I don't like the way you use your gender as an excuse. A girl can do anything a boy can do.

DAD

When you were young you could dunk. We had that little basketball hoop and you were dunking all the time –

KAITLYN

That was like two feet tall!

DAD

All these excuses from you! Listen to yourself. Don't you even respect who you are? We have high standards for you! And one of them is that we want to see some high-flying jams. Would it kill you to do some windmill 360 thunder dunks on a regulation hoop?!

KAITLYN

I'm a girl!

MOM

Listen young lady, I *never* want to hear you hiding behind your gender again, you hear me?! Your father's heart is breaking because of your lack of a gravity-defying aerial assault. Look at him. Look at him! He is a sick man because of this! You're killing him!

KAITLYN

I'm not killing him, I just can't dunk!

MOM

I don't think I ever taught you the word "can't." I don't understand how this word got into your vocabulary.

DAD

Ninety percent inspiration. Ten percent perspiration. You think LeBron could dunk if he didn't believe he could dunk?

KAITLYN

Yes. Have you seen him?

DAD

Honey – if you believe in yourself... you can do anything.

MOM

We have tried and tried and tried with you. We've tried reasoning with you, we've tried punishing you, we've tried inspiring you – nothing seems to work.

DAD

So... Since this is obviously not working out. We're replacing you.

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