

Try to Act Normal

Fred Sahner





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TRY TO ACT NORMAL

By Fred Sahner

CAST

EDDIE: Dad's son. He's worried about his girlfriend meeting his unpredictable Dad for the first time. Eddie struggles to present Dad in the best light possible; which is something that doesn't interest Dad at all.

ASHLEY: The woman Eddie loves. She's trying to decide if Eddie's the man for her. Bright, and outgoing, Ashley wants to meet Eddie's Dad and learn more about the family.

DAD: A widower and lifelong character, he's very down to earth – too much so for Eddie's taste. Dad may be a rascal, but his heart is in the right place - usually. Dad hopes to turn Eddie into a more relaxed, freer spirit; an uphill struggle if ever there was one.

Place

Dad's living room.

Time

The Present

Setting: Dad's living room. An easy chair, small table, lamp and one or two other chairs fill the room. A framed wedding picture of Dad and Mom is in the background.

At Rise: EDDIE hovers over his father. DAD, sits slumped in an easy chair - frowning. EDDIE flicks lint off his father's jacket; then runs a comb through DAD'S hair.

EDDIE: Okay, let me see a big smile...

DAD sticks out his tongue. EDDIE takes a book from the table and hands it to DAD. Dad looks at the title and grimaces.

DAD: Is she supposed to think I'm reading this junk?

EDDIE: It's a great book...It's all about living in Siberia in the middle of winter.

DAD: Yeah, that's just what I've been dying to read about...And why don't you get me a few more?...Make it look like I sit around all day reading Plato and Aristotle, and thinking deep thoughts about the universe. I bet that would impress her.

EDDIE: Shhh,...She'll hear you.

DAD: How long does it take her to 'freshen up' anyway?...We could have been at the restaurant by now.

EDDIE: Just remember, she's very important to me...She wants to meet you, which is an extremely good sign. It means she's thinking of taking our relationship to the next level.

DAD: The 'next level'...What is this a game show or something?...I wish you didn't talk like that. All that corporate bologna, where words don't mean what they should, because all the blood has been sucked out of them. If it were up to me...

EDDIE: *(interrupting)* Let's just get you ready to meet Ashley.

DAD: *(scornful)* Ashley?...The last one was Tiffany....Don't they name anybody Mildred or Florence anymore?...There was a girl on TV named Venus, and some movie star who named her baby 'Apple'...Now, if she can't tell a baby from an apple, then what kind of mother is she gonna make anyway?

EDDIE: I want her to like you, Dad. I'm begging you, please for once...try to act normal.

DAD: Oh, so you're ashamed of me are you?

EDDIE: Of course not. It's just that sometimes you say things and...Oh, you know what I'm talking about.

DAD: (*testy*) Try to act normal! Well, okay, if that's what you want, but it goes against my better nature; I can tell you that. You think she'll ever come out of there?...or maybe she escaped out the bathroom window. (*checking his white shirt*) I hope I didn't put on this clean shirt for nothing.

(*kneeling, EDDIE pulls up DAD'S socks.*)

DAD: Will you please stop fussing with me? I'm surprised you didn't make me get a face-lift.

EDDIE: (*groaning as he looks at Dad's socks*) Aw, now look at this...A red sock and a yellow sock.

DAD: I can't help that...I get dressed in the dark, it cuts down on my electric bills...But I agree, it does look kind of weird.

EDDIE: Why do you do this?...Can't you ever just get with the program?

DAD: No I can't get with the program, and you know why?...Because you gotta have some fun in life...It's okay to be different from everybody else. You know, raise your head, bang a drum...Let them know you're here, for cryin' out loud. This is your once in a lifetime life, Kiddo...So, make the most of it...Don't be afraid to raise a little hell....You'll see, it feels great!

EDDIE: (*slow to answer*) Okay, so maybe you have a point...I do hold back sometimes. I guess I'm thinking about what people will say.

DAD: Who cares what they say?...As long as you don't scare the horses or frighten the children...Don't live for others, Eddie...Live for yourself. And if you're having fun, the people around you will have fun too. Now, should we send a search party to go look for your girlfriend?

ASHLEY enters. EDDIE takes her hand. DAD starts to get up.

ASHLEY: (*to Dad*) Please don't get up.

DAD: I always stand to meet a lady.

EDDIE: Dad this is Ashley. Ashley, Dad.

ASHLEY: It's nice to meet you...Okay Eddie, can we leave now?

EDDIE and DAD are stunned

ASHLEY: (*smiling*) Only kidding (*to Dad – pointing at Eddie*) He's been so nervous about us meeting...I needed to shake him up a bit.

DAD: (*beaming*) Well, he got shook, alright.

EDDIE: I could have had a heart attack.

ASHLEY: Sorry, I took so long. I dropped one of my contacts and had to crawl around looking for it....Eddie, I left my sunglasses at that store we stopped at. Would you please get them for me?

EDDIE: You sure that's where they are?

ASHLEY: Positive.

EDDIE: (*to Dad, as he exits*) Remember what I said.

DAD: And you remember what I said.

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