

PEAK HEAT HOUR

by

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EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

ANNA MAE opens the front door to her home. There stands her husband WILLARD.

ANNA MAE  
Have my money?

WILLARD  
I came to see Rachel.

Anna Mae motions to slam door but Willard sticks his foot in the door frame wedging it. He winces in pain.

Ahhh, damn.

He falls backwards landing on the front porch and Anna Mae slams the door, locking it. Willard stares at the door.

Anna! Anna Mae!

Willard stands up and hovels. He hits the door with his fist.

Open the door woman! I want to see my daughter! Just because I don't have the money doesn't mean I can't see my daughter.

ANNA MAE (FROM WITHIN HOUSE)  
I don't give a damn!

WILLARD  
Don't make me call the Sheriff.

ANNA MAE  
Sheriff ain't gonna take your part no how anyway, so don't go wasting anyone's time.

WILLARD  
Annie, please...I haven't seen my baby girl in one whole month.

ANNA MAE  
You ain't paid us one red cent in one whole month. I've been borrowing money from neighbors. How embarrassing can that be?!

WILLARD  
I'll have some money next week. I promise. Billy Bob owes me a shitload and you know this and he said he's gonna pay up some scratch in a few days time. He swears by it.

(MORE)

WILLARD (CONT'D)

Things are looking up, which is why I came over. I got myself a job over at the lumber yard. It's bitter sweet cause Jimmy got hurt on the job. You know, Jimmy O'Neill? Well, he got hurt and is gonna be out for some months and I got the call...I was on the waiting list and I got the call early this morning.

ANNA MAE

What you gonna do when those few months of work come to an end?

WILLARD

I have some things lined up. You gonna grill me or let me see my daughter? ...Please.

RACHEL

Daddy?

Willard gets startled as he puts his eyes on his daughter Rachel, standing behind him.

WILLARD

H---Hi sweetheart. Ummm, I just come by to see you, see how you're doing and all...How's things?

RACHEL

Things is good.

WILLARD

Yeah...well, you aren't one to complain like your mother. You take after me...uh, what you doing out?

RACHEL

I was just walking up the road and back.

WILLARD

What for? It's hot as hell out here today.

RACHEL

Just walking. Nothing special. Some time it's cooler outside than it is inside the house.

WILLARD  
Ha ha. That's true, ain't it? Ha  
ha.

RACHEL  
True enough.

WILLARD  
You went for your walk at peak  
heat hour.

RACHEL  
When's it get cooler then?

WILLARD  
About two hours.

RACHEL  
Oh. Next time, I guess.

WILLARD  
You got some dirt on your chin.

Willard licks his thumb and wipes the smudge from his  
daughter's chin.

How does a pretty face like yours  
get a chin smudge of dirt.

RACHEL  
I slipped on a log.

WILLARD  
A log?

RACHEL  
Yeah, there was fungus and I  
slipped stepping on it and popped  
my chin.

WILLARD  
You get hurt?

RACHEL  
...Not too much.

WILLARD  
...I don't see any bad bruising,  
though, maybe you wanna get some  
ice?

RACHEL  
I'm fine, Dad.

WILLARD

Okay. So ah, you hear they're opening up an ice cream parlor two miles from here?

RACHEL

Yeah, I can't wait.

WILLARD

I'll make sure you are first in line. I know the owner. Good friend of mine since I was your age.

RACHEL

Really, Dad?

WILLARD

Sure thing. Day it opens, you will be their very first customer. Promise.

Anna Mae taps window glass from inside house.

ANNA MAE

Get your ass inside this house.

WILLARD

Oh, she's at it again. Go on, listen to your mother.

RACHEL

Dad, when you coming back home?

WILLARD

Oh, I uh, I'm working on it. I'll be coming by again in a few days, gonna buy you and mom a bunch of groceries, okay? Things will get better, don't worry about anything.

RACHEL

Hope you come home soon, Dad.

Rachel hugs her father. She motions to enter house. Willard notices small blood stain on the back of her dress.

WILLARD

Hold on, angel. Uh, you have a, you ah, how old are you again?

RACHEL

Dad, I'm thirteen.

WILLARD

Thirteen. That's right. You uh,  
you went up hill or down hill for  
your walk?

RACHEL

Uphill, Dad...why?

WILLARD

Oh, that's, that's near the Connor  
boys?

RACHEL

Not far....

WILLARD

...Good to know, good to know you  
gettin' your exercise. (he smiles  
warmly)

RACHEL

Yeah....I'm gonna walk downhill  
next time, Dad.

Rachel stares into her father.

WILLARD

...Rachel, don't worry about  
nothing. You hear me? Daddy will  
take care of everything. I  
promise.

Rachel half smiles and enters the house.

Willard stares at the door and then uphill.