

Vomit Concerto

Written by

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Based on a true story.

1. INT. SMITH KITCHEN

Typical kitchen/dining area. All kitchen amenities are on one half of the room (oven/stove, microwave, sink, etc) and the dining table is on the other.

We see MOM, a mid-50s woman with short blonde hair, dressed in a nice evening outfit. We zoom in on an empty ravioli package to see "EXP. DEC.2017". We see the date for only a moment before Mom's hand comes into frame to grab the empty package and throw it away. She then pours ravioli from the pot it was cooked in to a serving bowl.

MOM

Dinner!

DAD, a mid-50s man with short gray (but not thinning) hair gets up from doing work in the family room and walks into the kitchen. He is also wearing nice evening clothes. VICTOR and CLAIRE enter from the hallway, also dressed nicely. Maybe they fidget with their clothes because they're uncomfortable.

CLAIRE

I can't believe we're eating dinner before a *dinner* party.

MOM

You know the Jones's use the term "dinner" very loosely.

DAD

Remember their New Year's dinner party?

CLAIRE

That was supposed to be a dinner party?

MOM

Mhm. Eat up.

Mom serves ravioli to everyone.

CLAIRE

What a way to ring in 2018: hungry.

And that's how we (the viewers) find out the ravioli is expired, if we were paying attention.

VICTOR

Where's Trevor?

MOM

He's meeting us there after choir practice.

DAD

Tell him to pick up something to eat on the way.

MOM

Claire, can you text him?

CLAIRE

Yeah.

Claire gets out her phone to text Trevor, then puts it away and they all start eating.

DAD

Victor, you apply for any summer jobs yet?

MOM

Doug, not right now.

DAD

What? I'm just asking.

VICTOR

Dad, you know I haven't. I literally started summer vacation yesterday.

Another hint at the time...

DAD

Well, a year of college experience under your belt, jobs like that kind of stuff.

CLAIRE

Oh yeah, I heard all the jobs are just dying for all that undeclared experience.

Victor rolls his eyes. We know Claire's comment didn't hurt his feelings. Just typical sibling banter.

VICTOR

Yeah? And what are you doing this summer? Oh, wait, high school still makes you do summer reading, right?

And there's the playful clapback.

MOM

Alright, enough of this, eat fast,
we're late.

We hear and see the scraping of utensils on plates as they shovel down the ravioli.

2.EXT. JONES HOUSE

We see a closed door. As someone opens it (MRS. JONES), we see the Smith family (minus the brother we haven't met yet) waiting with posed smiles on their faces.

MRS. JONES

The Smiths! Oh how wonderful!

She greets each of them as they come in with a hug.

MRS. JONES (CONT'D)

Victor, Claire, the kids are all
downstairs playing games if you want
to go find them, I think Trevor's down
there too. Wanda, Doug, I have some
friends I want you to meet.

3. INT. JONES BASEMENT

Claire and Victor walk down the stairs and see about a dozen kids from ages 10 to 18, the neighborhood kids. Some are playing air hockey, some playing billiards, some just talking. As we pan around the room, we stop on kids playing video games. One of them is TREVOR.

CLAIRE

Hey Trevor.

TREVOR

(Looks over briefly from his game
to see his siblings)
Oh, hey guys!

Claire sits down next to him on the floor.

CLAIRE

So how was choir practice?

TREVOR

Ugh, same as always. Are you coming to
the Spring showcase?

CLAIRE
You know Mom is making me.

TREVOR
Haha, of course.

CLAIRE
So what'd you grab for dinner?

TREVOR
Oh, I got a ride here from Mr. Jones,
so...

CLAIRE
Oh, right, I forget he has kids in
choir.

TREVOR
But they actually have some food here,
so I got some of that.

CLAIRE
They do?

TREVOR
Yeah, catered by Balducci's.

CLAIRE
Really? Man, we ate at home.

4. INT. JONES LIVING ROOM

We hear some kind of climactic opera music playing in the background. Mrs. Jones is leading Mom and Dad over to an hors d'oeuvres buffet table.

MRS. JONES
Catered by Balducci's! Picked it up
this afternoon. Dig in!

She walks away. A pause.

DAD
The one time we eat before.

MOM
The one time!

Another pause. Then they grab plates and pick up a little bit of everything.

5. MONTAGE-INT. JONES HOUSE

The background music of the previous scene becomes the foreground music as we see montage of clips of Mom and Dad talking to adults, Mom and Dad eating, Claire talking to some girls, Victor talking to some boys, Trevor playing games and eating. A little check in with each of the Smith's. We end with a clip of Dad talking to some other neighborhood dads. We zoom in on his stomach and hear some unpleasant gurgling. Cut to his face. It is not a happy face.

6. JONES BASEMENT

The Smith siblings have found themselves talking together.

CLAIRE
(to Victor)
Hey, did you know there's food here?

VICTOR
Yeah, catered by Balducci's, just found out.

CLAIRE
Yeah. Go figure. The one time we eat before.

TREVOR
It's pretty good too. Sushi, crab cakes, fruit salad.

CLAIRE
Oh I could so go for a crab cake right now.

We see Mom come about halfway down the stairs.

MOM
Victor, Trevor, Claire, time to go.

The Smith kids are startled slightly at the sudden exit, but they aren't complaining. They walk up to meet Mom on the stairs.

MOM
(Somewhat whispering)
Dad is sick.

TREVOR
What? Is he okay?

MOM

He'll be fine, we just need to make a swift exit. Act like nothing is wrong.

7. INT. JONES BATHROOM

Dad is keeled over the toilet, pale-faced, gasping for air. A knock at the door.

MOM (O.S.)

Honey, we're all set.

We see Dad muster up all the strength he has, flush the toilet, splash some cold water on his face, and maybe swish some in his mouth. He takes a deep breath as he opens the door.

8. INT. JONES LIVING ROOM

The camera follows the Smiths from in front of them, watching them try to make a b-line for the door but keep getting approached by other neighbors. They try to dismiss them all with one line. They never stop moving towards the door. All the while, Dad is trying his best not to look sickly. This dialogue is somewhat overlapping.

MRS. JONES

Leaving so soon?

MOM

Oh, yes, the kids are all so tired, you know.

NEIGHBOR 1

Trevor! So nice to see you! How is choir going?

TREVOR

Really good, thanks.

NEIGHBOR 2

Wanda! Have you started the new book club book?

MOM

Oh, no, but I really must start it soon, thanks for reminding me!

NEIGHBOR 3

Victor, how was your first year of college?

VICTOR
Great, happy for summer, though.

NEIGHBOR 4
How have you been Claire? Feels like
forever since I've seen you.

CLAIRE
Sure does! Catch up with you later.

NEIGHBOR 5
Doug! Are you still down for fishing
next Saturday?

Pause. No one was expecting for Dad to have to say anything.
Look of suppressed fear on all of their faces as Dad slowly
turns around.

DAD
....Sure am!

A sigh of relief. He said a sentence without puking.

NEIGHBOR 5
Haha alright, I'll email you.

DAD
Alright!

They shuffle quickly out the door.

9. INT. SMITH HOUSE HALLWAY

We hear Dad puking off screen.

MOM
(To the closed bathroom door)
Honey, just yell if you need anything,
okay?

More puking.

MOM (CONT'D)
(To herself)
Okay.

10. INT. SMITH FAMILY ROOM

Victor, Trevor, and Claire are sitting on the couch.

TREVOR

I wonder if he caught something from work.

VICTOR

Yet another reason I shouldn't get a job this summer.

CLAIRE

Very funny.

Mom enters

MOM

Whatever it is, it doesn't sound pretty.

Zoom in on Mom's stomach. We hear the same gurgling noise we heard coming from Dad. Mom has a puzzled look on her face.

MOM

I'll be right back.

She runs out of the room. A pause. The three kids don't know what just happened. Then, they hear her puking.

CLAIRE

Uh oh.

VICTOR

Mom caught it too?

TREVOR

There's no way I can sleep with both of them hurling all night. Going to have to put in earplugs.

Dad walks in, pale-faced, sweaty, maybe wiping his upper lip or forehead.

VICTOR

(Referring to Dad's state)

Jeez, are we all going to end up like that?

A little foreshadow for you.

DAD

No, kids, this is not something you catch from someone else. This is something I have only experienced one

other time in my life. This...is food poisoning.

Whatever over-dramatic effects you feel suit the moment. Dad continues through the family room and into the kitchen.

CLAIRE
Food poisoning? From what?

DAD (O.S.)
It must be from all those crazy appetizers at the Jones's...

He re-enters with a bottle or glass of water. We hear Mom puke again.

DAD (CONT'D)
...Guess sushi doesn't sit well with macarons.

TREVOR
Oh no.

DAD
What?

TREVOR
...I had the appetizers at the Jones's.

A pause. They know his fate.

DAD
...Well, I'm going to try and get some sleep now.

Dad exits.

CLAIRE
Night, Dad.

VICTOR
Goodnight.

They look at Trevor. As they each get up to leave, they give him a sympathetic shoulder pat or hair tousle.

11. INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM

It is the middle of the night. In our establishing shot, we see Claire's digital clock reads 4AM. All of the sudden, we

hear someone puke the gnarliest puke noise you've ever seen, like they rose from the dead...or from the dead of their sleep.

Claire's eyes shoot open. She stumbles quickly to her light switch, disoriented. She turns around to look at her room. We see from her perspective that her vision makes everything look swirly. She is unwell. We hear the familiar stomach gurgling. She looks down at her stomach, then back up. Then, it hits her.

She puts her hand over her mouth to stop the flow as best she can. She runs out to the hallway bathroom and swings the door open, but Victor's already puking in the toilet, a slight trail of vomit leading from his room. She runs to the nearest empty bathroom and lets loose.

12. VOMIT CONCERTO

Whatever opera music was playing over the Jones party montage plays again as we have yet another montage of the four sick Smith family members puking in their respective bathrooms. At a climactic moment in the song, someone starts to feel the effects of the other end of food poisoning, if you know what I'm saying. If you don't, I'm talking about diarrhea. No need to get too graphic with the images here though.

13. INT. SMITH FAMILY ROOM

Later that same day. Mom and Dad are sprawled on the couch with their own puke receptacles. Victor is sitting in the kitchen trying to drink some water. Claire is in the fetal position on the floor, clutching a blanket or two. A soap opera plays on the TV in the background. No one is watching it.

Trevor enters.

TREVOR
Morning, family!

Collective groans.

TREVOR
Woah...what happened here...

VICTOR
We all have food poisoning, dumbass.

TREVOR
Hey, no need to be so hostile.

CLAIRE
Why is he fine?

TREVOR
Maybe I just have a stronger stomach.

Someone throws something at him. A pillow, a tissue box, something.

TREVOR
Okay...sorry.

We follow him into the kitchen. He starts making breakfast. Something easy. He opens the trash to throw a paper towel or something away and we see the ravioli packages.

TREVOR
Oh, Mom, you finally threw out that ravioli. That shit's been in the fridge for months.

Claire, Victor, and Dad slowly turn their heads to face Mom. Ken-Burns-effect in on her face. We see another urge to puke overcome her. Blackout.