FATHERHOOD

By

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CHARACTERS:

MARK

LIZZY

DAVE (VOICE OVER)

DAD (VOICE OVER)

SYNOPSIS:

Mark just wants to watch the football but is unexpectedly left to look after his crying daughter. Untrained and inexperienced; He will do anything to get her to sleep. What will this eventful afternoon teach him about fatherhood, and will he get to watch the cup final?

ACT I

SCENE 1

MARK (28), A SMILING DAD, SLOUCHED ON THE SOFA WATCHING THE TV.

COMENTATOR: And what an exciting match this is today; the cup final is finally here.

LIZZY (30), IS THE OTHER SIDE OF STAGE; A KIND, CARING BUT TIRED LOOKING MUM. SHE IS HOLDING A BABY THAT SHE SWAYS BACK AND FORTH AND THEN PLACES CAREFULLY IN A COT. LIZZY WALKS OVER TO MARK.

LIZZY: Right Mark, I have put Sarah to sleep. Please could you go out and get that shopping?

MARK: But the match, babe. I can’t miss this one. I missed the semi-final when at work last week.

LIZZY: (STARTS TO LOOK ANNOYED) Fine, I will go again! You will have to watch Sarah.

SHE GRABS HER COAT AND LEAVES ABRUPTLY. MARK TURNS AROUND IN SURPRISE. A WORRIED LOOK SPREADS ACROSS HIS FACE. MARK SIGHS AND TURNS BACK TO THE TV. THERE IS THE SOUND OF A BLOWING THE WHISTLE FROM THE TV. MARK RAISES HIS ARMS AND LETS OUT A LARGE CRY OF ANGER AT THE TV.

MARK: (SHOUTING) Come on!

THE SOUND OF BABY CRYING ERRUPTS FROM THE COT. MARK ROLLS HIS EYES AND TURNS UP THE VOLUME ON THE TV. IT NOW SOUNDS LIKE THE COMMENTATOR IS TRYING TO SHOUT OVER THE BABY.

COMMENTATOR: And that is a free kick to the away team.

SARAH CRIES EVEN MORE AND MUCH LOUDER. MARK GROANS AND TURNS THE TV DOWN AGAIN. HE GETS UP FROM THE SOFA AND WALKS TO THE COT. HE STEPS FORWARD IN CAUTION. IN A PANIC MARK LOOKS AROUND THE COT TO SEE WHAT HE CAN USE TO PUT HER BACK TO SLEEP. HE FALLS TO THE FLOOR AND SEARCHES UNDERNEATH. MARK PULLS OUT A BOOK.

MARK: The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter. Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their mother got very annoyed at them when they didn’t go to sleep and let her watch the rabbit football.

SARAH LAUGHS AND THEN SLOWLY STOPS. HE LEANS OVER TO SEE SARAH STARTING TO GO BACK TO SLEEP. MARK SMILES, RELIEVED AND WALKS AWAY WITH HASTE. HE JUMPS OVER THE BACK OF THE SOFA IN ORDER TO WATCH THE TV AGAIN.

COMMENTATOR: Centre back passes to left mid-fielder.

MARK REACHES TO THE FLOOR AND GRABS A LARGE BAG OF CRISPS. JUST AS HE IS ABOUT TO EAT ONE THE SOUND OF CRYING IS HEARD AGAIN FROM THE COT. HE TURNS, ANNOYED AND STARES AT THE COT. HE THROWS THE BAG OF CRISPS DOWN IN FRUSTRATION AND GETS BACK UP. AS MARK WALKS CLOSER HE SNIFFS AND PULLS A BAD FACE AT THE SMELL.

MARK: Oh no, not this.

HE APPROACHES WITH EVEN MORE RELUCTANCE. SHE IS STILL CRYING. AS MARK LEANS DOWN, HE QUICKLY PULLS HIS HEAD BACK FROM THE SMELL AND STARTS TO COUGH. HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND GRABS A SPARE NAPPY. MARK PULLS HORRIBLE FACES AND KEEPS HIMSELF AT A DISTANCE. HE ONLY HALF LOOKS AT WHAT HE IS DOING. MARK LOOKS DOWN BUT THEN PICKS HER UP SUDDENLY IN PANIC. SHE IS STILL CRYING. POO IS SEEN SUDDENLY COMING FROM OUT OF HER NAPPY AND IS NOW RUNNING ALL OVER HIS HANDS. HE GETS INTO MORE OF A FRENZY AND GRABS THE COT SHEETS WITH THE OTHER HAND AND STARTS RAPPING HER UP. MARK RUNS ACROSS THE ROOM WITH SARAH AND DROPS HER ON THE SOFA. MARK RUNS OFF STAGE. THE SOUND OF CLATTERING IS HEARD OVER THE CRYING SOUNDS OF THE BABY AND HE COMES BACK WITH A WASHING UP BOWL. MARK QUICKLY PICKS UP SARAH AND PLACES HER INSIDE.

MARK: Okay, stay right there.

HE RUNS BACK OFF STAGE AND COMES STRAIGHT BACK WITH A SMALL BOWL OF WATER. MARK POURS THE WATER OVER HIS BABY. SHE STARTS TO CALM DOWN A BIT. HE PICKS UP HIS DRIPPING WET CHILD AND LOOKS AT HER CONFUSED.

MARK: Drying, drying? How to dry a baby?

HE PICKS UP THE CLEAN SECTION OF THE BLANKET FROM THE SOFA AND BEGINS TO RUB HER HAIR DRY. SARAH STARTS TO LAUGH. HE STOPS AND PUTS THE BLANKET DOWN. MARK BEGINS TO WALK HER CAREFULLY BACK OVER TO THE COT. SARAH CRIES AGAIN. HE GRABS THE BABY BOTTLE FROM THE COT AND NOTICES ITS EMPTY SO PUTS HER DOWN AND RUNS ACROSS THE STAGE. AS HE PASSES THE SOFA, HE STOPS TO WATCH THE TV.

COMMENTATOR: And that was a very near goal!

MARK SIGHS IN DISAPPOINTMENT BUT THEN IS REMINDED AT WHAT HE IS DOING BY THE INCESSANT SOUND OF CRYING. HE QUICKLY RUNS OFF STAGE. THERE IS THE SOUND OF MORE CLATTERING AND THEN THE DING OF THE MICROWAVE. HE ENTERS BACK WITH THE BOTTLE WHICH IS NOW FULL. HE PICKS UP THE CAP FROM THE SIDE AND SEES HIS BEER NEXT TO IT. HE PICKS IT UP BUT SHAKES HIS HEAD AND PLACES IT BACK DOWN. MARK DRIBBLES SOME MILK ON HIS HAND TO TEST THE TEMPERATURE. HE LOOKS UNSURE, SO HE TAKES A QUICK SIP. MARK SUDDENLY SPITS OUT THE MILK ACROSS THE ROOM FROM DISTASTE. HE GOES BACK TO THE COT AND STARTS TO FEED SARAH THE MILK. THE CRYING HAS NOW STOPPED. HE TAKES THE BOTTLE AND PUTS IT DOWN AND WALKS AWAY. MARK ONLY GETS ABOUT HALFWAY WHEN THE CRYING STARTS AGAIN. MARK SCREAMS IN FRUSTRATION AND TURNS A COUPLE OF TIMES TO THINK ABOUT WHAT TO DO. HE GETS OUT HIS PHONE.

MARK: Mum will know what to do.

IT RINGS. MARK HAS TO SHOUT TO BE HEARD OVER THE CRYING BABY.

DAD (V.O): Hello

MARK: Oh, hi Dad is Mum there?

DAD (V.O): No, she’s out, can’t talk the footballs on.

HIS DAD HANGS UP THE PHONE AND MARK LOOKS AT IT IN SHOCK.

COMMENTATOR: And what a game this is today. You would be a fool to miss this.

MARK SCREAMS EVEN LOUDER IN FRUSTRATION AND STARTS TO TYPE ON HIS PHONE.

MARK: Right the internet will have to have some idea.

HE READS IN HIS HEAD AS HE WONDERS BACK TO THE COT. MARK PICKS SARAH UP AND THEN PROCEEDS TO HOLD HER UPSIDE DOWN BY THE LEG. HE LOOKS AT SARAH PUZZLED.

MARK: I think the internet was wrong here.

HE PUTS SARAH BACK DOWN, STILL CRYING, AND CROUCHES NEXT TO HER. HE TURNS AWAY THEN TURNS BACK AROUND WITH A HALLOWEEN MASK ON AND SARAH CRIES EVEN LOUDER. HE RIPS THE MASK OFF AND THROWS IT ON THE FLOOR.

MARK: Stupid. (HE THINKS) I know. Twinkle, twinkle little star. How I wonder what you are?

MARK CAN’T SING AND SO SARAH CONTINUES TO CRY. HIS PHONE RINGS.

MARK: Dave, how’s it going?

DAVE (V.O): You watching the game mate?

MARK SQUINTS A LITTLE TO TRY AND SEE THE TV FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM.

MARK: yeah?

DAVE (V.O): How is it still nil, nil? Just need a goal and we’ll win.

MARK HANGS UP AND THROWS THE PHONE ACROSS THE ROOM. HE TURNS TO THE COT AND SITS DOWN, EXHAUSTED. MARK RUBS HIS EYES AND LOOKS THROUGH THE COT AT HIS DAUGHTER.

MARK: I know I’m out a lot due to my work. Maybe I shouldn’t agree to so much overtime; that would make Lizzy happier. I try my best to be a good father. I’m not exactly naturally talented like your mother is. Will you please go back sleep? For me.

MARK DROPS HIS HEAD. SARAH SLOWLY STOPS CRYING. MARK LOOKS UP. HE DOES A LITTLE CELEBRATION TO HIMSELF SILENTLY. THE SOUND OF SOMEONE OPENING THE FRONT DOOR IS HEARD. LIZZY ENTERS STAGE.

LIZZY: I’m home!

SHE LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM AT THE MESS ON THE SOFA. SHE STORMS TOWARDS THE COT.

LIZZY: What is all this?!

MARK STANDS UP CAREFULLY.

MARK: Shush. I have just got her back to sleep.

LIZZY: Okay. (PAUSE) Looks like the last 5 minutes of the game is on, if you want to watch it you can now.

MARK LOOKS AT SARAH SLEEPING.

MARK: No, it’s okay. I will stay with Sarah.

THE TV CAN BE HEARD FROM ACROSS THE ROOM.

COMMENTATOR: Goal and with only a few moments to spare that must be a win for the home team.

MARK SMILES AND PUTS HIS ARM AROUND LIZZY, BOTH WATCHING THEIR CHILD SLEEPING SOUNDLY.