

MR GRUMPY

Written by:

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INT. BOY'S HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

Jack 13, long floppy hair and big bright blue eyes makes his way up the staircase his arms bundled with snacks, a DVD gripped onto tight in his right hand.

He's got a big dopey grin on his face.

As he approaches the open door to his bedroom sister, 16, tall, slim and pretty appears behind him. She roughly grabs a hold of him and shoves him inside his bedroom. Slams both hands hard into his back.

He stumbles inside, drops his snacks and DVD. All of them spill to the floor.

He spins around to face her, his happy smile is gone.

She stands in the way, blocks the doorway and won't let him come out.

She's got an oversized happy birthday badge pinned to her chest. She points towards his bed.

BECKY

You're going to stay in here
alright.

He looks back at her, confused.

JACK

What?

BECKY

I want you out of the way alright.
Stay hidden. I've got a lot of
friends coming today and I don't
want you talking to them. Just stay
in your room.

JACK

I was coming in here anyway. You
didn't have to hit me in the back
like that.

BECKY

I don't want to see you today. Just
stay in your room.

JACK

It's my house too. All my life
you've been like this. Bossing me
around, I hoped you'd grow out of
it but you won't.

She shakes her head.

BECKY

And it's my birthday and these are my friends and you're a freak.

JACK

I get to go anywhere I want.

Jack steps forwards, goes to move past her. Tries to shove her out of the way. Becky grabs a hold of him and punches him in the arm as hard as she can.

Jack yelps out in pain and instantly breaks down into tears.

Becky slams the door shut in his face and seals him inside.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

Becky moves back down the staircase, composes herself and forces a smile.

The hallway is decorated with happy birthday banners and balloons.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Jack sits on the edge of his bed with tears in his eyes. Rubs his arm where Becky had hit him.

He stares down at his spilled snacks, dvd and closed bedroom door. Feels sorry for himself.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Harry, 45, bald with a beard watches as Becky enters and walks past him. The kitchen table is covered in food and drink for the party.

HARRY

Becky, you know I heard all of that. Everything that happened upstairs I heard.

She rolls her eyes. Stuffs a cake into her mouth before she gestures to Harry, acting like she can't talk because her mouth is full. Harry shakes his head at her, annoyed. He sees to leave.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - JACK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Harry let's him in. Sees Jack still on the edge of his bed.

Jack is startled, jumps up and wipes the tears away with the back of his hand.

JACK

Does no one in this family care
about my privacy anymore?

Harry comes over, stands in front of him and shakes his head
disappointed.

HARRY

You need to stand up for yourself.

JACK

I don't want to talk right now, I
just want to be left alone.

HARRY

I know she's your big sister but
you can't let her push you around
like that. You need to stop being
such a pushover.

Jack forces out a short sharp laugh.

JACK

You do whatever Becky tells you.
It's like everyone in this family
is scared of her.

Harry gestures down to the bed.

HARRY

Sit down, I want to talk to you.

Jack moves around Harry and heads out of the bedroom.

JACK

I'm not talking. You want me to
stand up for myself then fine
that's what I'm doing.

Jack exits. Harry watches him go smiles as the door slams
shut behind him, hopeful.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN- DAY

Becky hurries around the kitchen, inspecting what's been laid
out for the party more closely.

Liz, 40, long blonde hair and her right arm in a cast follows
on closely behind her with Harry.

Becky points at the food on the table, bites at her
fingernails.

BECKY

I need more than this, it's not
enough. You have any idea how many
people are going to show up?
(MORE)

BECKY (CONT'D)

I've invited my whole class. What are they going to do, share a sandwich each?

Liz and Harry share a look, shrug. Liz hurries over to the fridge and pulls out all she'll need to make more. Harry then takes over, starts to make more sandwiches but he's under pressure.

BECKY (CONT'D)

There's not enough chairs, there's no music playing. Where's that playlist I gave you?

LIZ

We're trying honey.

BECKY

This isn't what I asked for.

HARRY

How about been a little grateful?

BECKY

You said I could have the birthday party of my dreams and this isn't it.

She again bites at her fingernails. Liz reaches over and gets her to stop.

LIZ

It'll be OK.

BECKY

Give me what I want or just cancel it.

Again Liz and Harry share a nervous look.

Harry quickly finishes the sandwich, adds them to the table. He plays the music and puts a happy birthday hat on his own and moms heads.

HARRY

Anything you want.

Becky smiles let's out a deep breath takes another look around the room.

BECKY

Good. But this still isn't what I want. Everything has to be perfect.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Becky walks in and sees piles of birthday presents on and around the sofa. She frowns. Takes a good look around but as she shakes her head it's obvious something isn't quite right.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Liz grabs a hold of Harry and pulls him over into a corner of the room. Her eyes wild with panic.

LIZ

It's not here. The one present she wanted and it's not here. And when she see--

HARRY

--what do you mean it's not here?

Harry is panicked too now.

LIZ

She's going to freak out.

HARRY

Special delivery. It has to be here.

He takes out his phone and shows her an email.

'Your package has been successfully delivered'

LIZ

Look at the address.

He takes a closer look at the email, frowns.

HARRY

Well that's not right who's house is that?

LIZ

Twenty minutes from here.

Harry let's out a sigh of relief.

HARRY

Well that's alright then, dodged a bullet. She really would have exploded.

LIZ

If you go now you can be back with it before she's even noticed you've left.

His face changes.

HARRY

Go, I'm not going.

She waves her broken arm at him.

LIZ

Well I can't drive and I've still got cupcakes to ice. Drinks to make. A birthday girl to keep happy.

HARRY

And I've got about thirty of her school friends to pick up. A one man taxi company I should have left already.

LIZ

It's the one thing she asked for.

HARRY

I can't go.

LIZ

Neither can I.

HARRY

Well someone is going to have to get it, it's the god damn focal piece of the whole party.

They're both afraid, fearing the worst.

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE - DAY

Liz and Harry each with a hold of Jack's arms drag him outside.

LIZ

You need to go and get it.

JACK

Me?

HARRY

It's for your sister. She needs it.

JACK

Oh really.

HARRY

It's the one present she wanted.

JACK

Oh no, the poor thing.

HARRY
You can do this.

JACK
Sure I could do it but I'd rather
do just about anything else.

Liz and Harry share a look, they both nod.

HARRY
We're not asking you, we're telling
you.

JACK
She really does get whatever she
wants doesn't she.

LIZ
It's her birthday, she needs this.
You know we'd do the same for you.

Jack rolls his eyes.

JACK
Yeah whatever.

Jack turns his back on them and walks away down the street.

Liz and Harry share another look, both even smile excited.

LIZ
So that's done?

HARRY
Yes.

LIZ
He'll really do it?

HARRY
He will.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

The front lawn is a mess, the grass is overgrown and the
flower-beds are all dead.

Jack stops in front of the house, all of its curtains are
closed impossible to see inside.

Jack checks his phone, makes sure this is the right address.

JACK
Oh great, delivered to a haunted
house.

Jack takes in and let's out a long deep breath. He pushes out his chest and tries to be brave. He reaches up and presses the doorbell hands on hips, he waits. No answer. He rings the buzzer again.

Steve, 60, long unkept grey hair but dressed smart finally answers.

Boy recognizes him.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh it's you.

Steve frowns.

STEVE

Who the hell are you?

Jack swallows hard gets himself focused.

JACK

You've got my parcel. Can I have it please?

STEVE

No.

Jack is taken aback confused.

JACK

You do you have my parcel, today it was delivered here.

STEVE

Yeah I've got it.

JACK

Well can I have it?

STEVE

No.

Jack's face drops his eyes now sad.

JACK

What do you mean no?

STEVE

Can't you speak English? Get away from my house.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Steve walks away from the Front door and further inside the house. Jack follows him inside, leaves the front door open behind him.

Steve glances over his shoulder to make sure he's still there.

STEVE
You're coming across as desperate.

JACK
I am, give me my parcel.

Steve stops, turns around to face him. Jack stops too, almost bumps into him.

STEVE
I'm not just going to give it to you.

JACK
But it's mine. If you want me to leave you alone I'm happy to. Just give it to me and I'll go.

Steve shakes his head, determined.

STEVE
I'm not just going to give it to you, no way. You're going to have to work for it.

Jack smiles, relieved.

JACK
And then you'll give it to me?

STEVE
You'll have to work.

JACK
I just want my parcel, then my parents will leave me alone. And then I can just sit in my room and be happy. The sooner this is over the sooner I can be on my own again.

STEVE
Follow me.

Steve heads for a door. Jack speeds up, walks alongside Steve. An optimistic smile.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY.

Jack follows Steve, stays close. Leads him through the pristine room, sparkling clean. Not a thing out of place, a show kitchen.

Jack looks worried as Steve opens the back door and leads them outside into the messy garden. It's an absolute tip.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

Steve moves out into the middle of the back garden. Overgrown and dirty.

STEVE

I want you to tidy all of this up.
And then you get your parcel.

Jack looks around him in horror.

JACK

You're out of your mind I can't do
this.

INT. GARDEN SHED - DAY

Steve opens up the shed, unlocks the heavy padlock. Filled with all sorts of gardening equipment. Big and small. Steve gestures to them and Jack's eyes get big, excited.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

Jack is armed with a heavy duty industrial leaf blower. He blows the dead fallen leaves, trash and just about everything else he can around the garden.

Jack laughs his head off, has huge fun. Loves it.

Steve watches him with a scowl.

STEVE

This is supposed to be hard work. I
don't like having random packages
coming to my home. This is meant to
be a punishment.

Jack keeps laughing. Still has the best time.

JACK

And it is. A terrible punishment.

INT. GARDEN SHED - DAY

Steve now too with a smile of his own rips open the shed and pulls out a roll of heavy duty trash bags.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

Jack now blows the leaves up into the air, Steve tries to catch them inside the trash bag. Both smile and laugh, both have a great time.

A fun game. Jack blows a bunch of leaves right into Steve's face.

Steve replies by picking some leaves off from the ground and throws them back at her.

JACK
You're laughing?

STEVE
Am I not allowed?

JACK
But you're MR grumpy. You're famous. Well at my school you are.

Steve comes to a sudden stop. Lowers the bag.

STEVE
What did you call me?

JACK
Grumpy. MR grumpy. Everyone knows you as that.

He let's out a long deep breath, annoyed.

STEVE
Oh they do, interesting.

Jack blows more leaves into his face but Steve doesn't even react.

JACK
I've not hurt your feelings have I?
I didn't think you had any.

Steve takes the leaf blower off of him. Nods towards the back of his house.

STEVE
Fun is over, time to go.

JACK
But I need to finish this.

STEVE
Come on, go.

JACK
I need my parcel and we made a deal.

STEVE

And I want you to get lost.

Jack frowns, shakes his head totally confused.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Steve guides Jack quickly through the kitchen and out through the opposite door. Jack glances across at him, smiles happy.

JACK

Does that mean I finally get my parcel?

At the other door Steve stops. He decides against trying to open it, instead he guides Jack over to the table and gets him to sit down.

STEVE

Are you hungry?

Jack shrugs.

JACK

Maybe. Depends what the food is?

STEVE

Are you thirsty?

Again Jack shrugs, smiles.

JACK

Maybe.

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Steve goes through his neat and tidy fridge. Pulls out food and juice. He dumps it all down onto the table in front of him.

Joins Jack at the table, sits opposite.

STEVE

My wife used to call me MR. Grumpy. She died a few years ago. I still love her so very much. Loved to garden. I always hated it. When you called me that it brought it all back.

JACK

That's why it's such a mess out there?

Steve nods.

STEVE
And the kids around here call me
that too?

Jack nods.

JACK
Yeah.

STEVE
I didn't know. Do the kids at your
school say anything else about me?

Jack fidgets, feels awkward.

JACK
I don't really want to talk about
this.

STEVE
But I do.

Jack fidgets even more.

JACK
I guess you're not very liked.
People are scared of you. You're
MR. Grumpy.

Steve just stares at him blankly.

STEVE
Keep going.

Jack shakes his head. He really doesn't want to.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - UNDER-STAIRS CUPBOARD - DAY

Steve reaches inside and pulls out a large unopened parcel.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Steve hands the parcel over to Jack who takes it gratefully,
hugs it lovingly to his chest.

STEVE
There, you finally got what you
wanted.

With a big smile he reaches out to shake Steve's hand.

JACK
Thanks, my parents are going to be
super happy to see this.

Steve sees his outstretched hand but refuses to shake it.

STEVE

Well, I'm never going to see you again but at least you taught me that every kid in the neighbourhood thinks I'm terrifying.

Jack again reaches out to shake Steve's hand, tries to force him to take it. Steve is bigger and stronger. Pushes Jack backwards towards the front door. Opens it up and moves Jack outside.

Jack looks back at him with sadness. Steve slams the door shut in his face.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jack drops the parcel to the ground, he can't help but laugh. He reaches out and presses the buzzer.

Steve down on his knees lifts up the letter box slot, looks out at Jack from inside the house.

STEVE

Go away.

Jack jumps back startled. He laughs again, seeing Steve like this really is amusing.

JACK

What are you doing?

STEVE

Go away.

JACK

I don't understand? I thought we were becoming friends. I want to stay.

STEVE

Well you can't. Go home.

JACK

The only thing going on at my home is my bratty older sisters birthday party. And I'm not invited. It's at my house and I'm not invited. Can you believe that?

STEVE

Yes, I'm not invited anywhere. Go away. And don't come back here.

Steve closes the letter box slot. Jack presses the doorbell again over and over but there's no answer and there won't be one.

Jack kicks the door, angry. He picks the parcel back up and walks away.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Jack continues to walk, he glances back at Steve's house. His eyes filled with sadness. Doesn't understand what went wrong.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Becky opens the door and let's Jack inside the house. He gives her the parcel. She takes it from him and squeals excited.

JACK

Here's your present. The one mom and dad promised you. Happy birthday.

BECKY

I'd like you to stay.

He shakes his head, he couldn't care less.

JACK

I can't.

She hugs him, giggles excitedly.

BECKY

Thanks so much for getting this. It's the only thing I asked for. Come and get something to eat. Something to drink. It's a party. Join in.

He walks past her and heads into the kitchen.

JACK

I'm not joining in with anything. It's your party so enjoy it.

She turns to watch him go, annoyed.

BECKY

I'm inviting you to my party.

He glances back at her.

JACK

And I'm telling you I couldn't care less.

He disappears inside the kitchen.

Becky is left just standing there, fuming.

Jack has finally learned to stand up to her.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Liz and Harry are sat at the table they watch as Jack hurries over and cuts a slice of the birthday cake, then wraps it up inside a napkin.

He's preoccupied, in a bad mood.

Liz and Harry share a look and a knowing nod.

LIZ
Are you OK?

Jack let's out a long deep breath through his nose.

JACK
I'm fine, I'm just in a hurry.

HARRY
Thanks for getting the parcel.

LIZ
You want something to eat?

JACK
Why does everyone keep asking me that? I'm fine.

Liz pushes out a chair at the table with her foot.

LIZ
Sit with us.

He shakes his head, keeps a hold of the napkin and heads for the door.

HARRY
Where are you going?

JACK
To see a friend.

HARRY
Jack you can't just leave. It's your sisters birthday. What do you think you're doing?

Jack smiles to himself, proud.

JACK
What you told me I should do. I'm
standing up for myself.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Steve opens the door to Jack. He hands him the slice of
birthday cake. Steve opens the napkin and inspects it.

STEVE
What's this for?

Jack shrugs.

JACK
I thought you'd like a slice?

Steve takes a bite.

STEVE
It's nice. I also thought I told
you not to come here?

JACK
I want to be your friend, because I
like you.

STEVE
Can't you just go and leave me
alone?

JACK
No. And if you send me away again
I'll just keep on coming back again
and again. Everyone else might know
you as MR. Grumpy but that's not
who you are to me.

STEVE
Then who am I?

JACK
A friend who needs his garden
tidying up.

Steve smiles.

STEVE
You want to help me finish it?

He smiles back at him.

Steve opens his front door wide and steps to the side. Lets
Jack inside. Jack enters.

Steve takes another bite out of the birthday cake and closes
the front door shut.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END