

Take it Away Dummy!

By John Cosper

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CHARACTERS

Gary- A TV host

Donna, Pam, Troy - "Helpless" parents

Kelly, Roger, Alex - "Hopeless" kids

Steve- A no nonsense security guard and father

Mid-day chat show theme music plays. Six chairs are lined up on stage with a collapsible coffee table in front of them. Donna and Kelly sit in the two chairs farthest stage right. Gary is in the audience.

GARY: Welcome back to the Gary Enabler Show. Today's topic is, "What's Wrong With My Kid?" Please say hello to Donna.

DONNA: Hello.

GARY: Donna, what's wrong with your kid?

DONNA: Well, Gary, when Kelly here turned ten, she wanted a cell phone with a texting plan. Ever since she got it, she's been on the phone, texting non-stop.

GARY: How many texts does she typically send in a day? Five, ten?

DONNA: Eleven thousand a day.

GARY: Eleven thousand?

DONNA: She currently holds the world record for most texts sent in a minute. How many was it, dear?

KELLY: A hundred six.

GARY: Wow.

DONNA: She never socializes with the family. She never wants to do anything fun. And she never helps around the house. She just sits there, texting.

KELLY: And Tweeting.

DONNA: Whatever.

GARY: Wow, that sounds like a problem. Well let's meet our next guests, Pam and her son Roger.

Pam and Roger enter. Pam pulls Roger along by the shirt. Roger's too absorbed in a hand held video game to look up. They sit beside Donna and Kelly.

GARY: Pam, what's wrong with your kid?

PAM: Well, Gary, my son holds the record for most consecutive hours logged playing the DX3K hand-held video game system.

GARY: Wow. That's quite an accomplishment.

PAM: It is, and we're proud. But we haven't had a meaningful conversation with Roger in over four years. In fact the only time he's spoken to us is when he needs something.

GARY: Food?

PAM: New games. He plays constantly - at school, in the tub, in his sleep. Even during meal times. We had to have a tube inserted into his stomach to feed him intravenously.

DONNA: Don't they put feeding tubes in the arm?

PAM: They tried that, but it didn't work.

Pam grabs Roger's arm. He lets out an animalistic cry and smacks her hand away.

PAM: See?

GARY: Well, let's bring on our next guests. Say hello to Troy and his son Alex.

Troy and Alex enter. Alex has a baseball bat and is repeatedly hitting himself in the face. They sit beside the others on stage.

GARY: Troy, what's wrong with your son?

TROY: Are you kidding?

DONNA: Is he hitting himself in the face?

TROY: Yep.

GARY: How long has this been going on?

TROY: Ever since we gave him the bat two years ago. I tried to show him how to hit a ball with it, but he likes this.

PAM: Doesn't that hurt?

TROY: I don't know. He seems to be happy. But he doesn't do anything else. He just hits himself in the face all day. I wish there was something we could do, but we're just clueless.

GARY: Troy, Pam, Donna, we all feel your pain. We know you miss your kids. And we know you feel powerless to do anything to help them. That's why we invited world-renowned clinical child psychologist Dr. Marvin Melville here to help you.

PAM: Thank goodness!

GARY: Unfortunately, Dr. Melville's plan was delayed, and he won't be here. So our security guard Steve, who has five kids of his own, has volunteered to step in and help.

Steve enters. He looks at the kids. He grabs the phone from Kelly and the game from Roger and tosses them on the coffee table. Kelly is dazed - as if waking from a long sleep. Roger reacts angrily.

ROGER: Hey!!!

Steve grabs the baseball bat from Alex and smashes the phone, the game, and the coffee table - breaking the bat in the process, if you can rig it. Steve storms off with the bat. Alex and Roger begin crying hysterically. Their parents comfort and coddle them.

TROY: How dare you take that toy away from my child!

PAM: Do you know how much that game cost?

TROY: That bat made him happy!

PAM: I'm gonna sue all of you!

TROY: Nobody says no to my kid! Nobody! Not even me!

PAM: You'll be hearing from my lawyer!

Pam, Roger, Alex, and Troy exit. Kelly turns to her mother - as if a blind girl had suddenly regained the ability to see.

KELLY: Mom? Mommy, is that you?

DONNA: Yes, Kelly, I'm here!

KELLY: Mommy, what are we doing here?

DONNA: We're on a TV show. Are you okay?

KELLY: I think so. I feel like I've had the strangest dream. Like I was lost in some other world.

DONNA: *(dramatically holds her daughter)* It's okay, honey. You're back. And we're together again.

KELLY: I'm hungry. Can we get something to eat?

DONNA: Of course, dear. Let's go have a nice, long lunch together.

They stand up. Kelly fiddles with her thumbs as she gets up.

KELLY: Mom?

DONNA: Yes, dear?

KELLY: My thumbs are REALLY sore.

They exit.