

Find My Family

by

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INT. KITCHEN - DAY

SARAH (16) walks through the back door, tosses her backpack on the floor, and kicks her shoes off. She walks to the pantry and opens the doors, surveying the contents.

Sarah's MOM (45) follows her in, hanging the backpack on a hook and neatly lining her shoes up.

SARAH
(mid-conversation)
I'm just saying, I don't know why
you can't just talk to him about
all this.

Sarah grabs a box of cookies.

MOM
I've tried, Sarah. He insists
nothing's wrong and then accuses
me of reading too much into
things.

Mom deftly replaces Sarah's box of cookies with a banana she's grabbed from the kitchen counter.

SARAH
(spluttering)
Mom! What-

MOM
Healthy habits, sweetie. Do you
want some milk?

Mom walks to the fridge. She goes to open the door and stops, noticing a hot pink Post-It note stuck to it. A note is scrawled on it, reading "WENT OUT. BE BACK FOR DINNER."

MOM (CONT'D)
I wonder where he is this time.

SARAH
(absentmindedly looking
at her phone)
Hmm? Probably at Uncle Greg's,
right?

MOM
(sarcastically)
Oh, sure. He just loves going to
Uncle Greg's.
(sighs)
I wish I knew where he was
actually going.

An idea strikes Mom.

MOM (CONT'D)

Sarah.

Sarah looks up from her phone, annoyed.

MOM (CONT'D)

Is there- Could you- Is there a way to track his phone?

SARAH

(flat)

Are you kidding? You're gonna track Dad's phone?

MOM

Not me. You.

SARAH

Me? Mom, what?? Are you hearing yourself? If you're gonna track Dad, leave me out of it, please.

Sarah starts to walk away. Mom rushes in front of her and blocks her way.

MOM

Sarah, please. You could do it without him knowing, right? You could install an app or something? You know how phones work. Sweetie, I'm desperate. I need to know where he's going. Can you just give me the peace of mind?

SARAH

(a little unnerved)

Um, I mean, I don't know how I could get to his phone without him seeing.

The sound of the garage door opening.

MOM

(quieter)

Please?

Footsteps approach the back door. A key slides into the lock. Sarah looks past Mom nervously.

DAD (49) walks in the door, wearing casual clothes and carrying his keys and phone in one hand and a plastic bag in another.

DAD
I'm home! Got some new light
bulbs.

Dad absently accepts Mom's kiss on his lips, sets his phone and keys on the counter, and walks past Sarah, talking as he makes his way to a door at the end of the hallway.

DAD (CONT'D)
Hey kid, how was school?

SARAH
It was good. Dad, where-

A door opens, then closes. Sarah stops talking.

DAD (O.S.)
I'm gonna replace some lights in
the basement, so get dinner
started and I'll be up there soon.

Sarah and Mom look at his phone on the counter, then at each other.

MOM
Sure thing, honey!
(to Sarah, whispering)
Please!

Sarah looks to where Dad exited, then quickly moves to his phone, picks it up, and messes with the settings, looking at her own phone as she sets it up to track his.

SARAH
(whispering)
You owe me big time!

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Sarah is sitting in class, absently listening to her TEACHER (36) standing in front of the class, lecturing off a PowerPoint.

TEACHER
(droning)
...and that's when the US decided
to stay out of affairs in the Old
World - Europe, basically -
because they were tired of -

While the teacher is talking, a text tone sounds from Sarah's backpack. Sarah immediately straightens up and looks at her bag.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 - having to take care of issues in
 other countries. After the
 Depression, many American citizens
 felt we were better off focusing
 on our own country -

Another text tone goes off.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 (without missing a beat)
 I don't care whose phone that is
 but if you don't turn it off now,
 I will take it from you.

Sarah scrambles to open the flap on her backpack and picks up her phone, fumbling with the volume buttons. On her screen, there are two text messages.

ON SARAH'S PHONE SCREEN

Mom: "Dad said hes going out to store"

Mom: "Can u see where he really is"

BACK TO SCENE

SARAH
 (mouthing)
 Fuck.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Sarah is sitting at a table with her friends CASEY (15), a skinny, bookish boy with glasses, and NOELLE (16), a girl with a bold style to match her personality.

SARAH
 No, it's so stupid, she really
 just won't leave me alone about
 it!

NOELLE
 (through a mouthful of
 sandwich)
 But do you think he's actually
 cheating? I mean, I would love to
 be given permission to spy on my
 parents. You kidding? They say
 they're going out, I invite some
 people over, I can track where
 they are the whole time, see when
 they're coming home...

Sarah laughs, unconvinced.

SARAH

It's one thing to do it for your own purposes. But I'm basically a PI for my mom now!

NOELLE

Well, yeah, but you don't think you can turn it around on them? Where was your dad when she texted you today anyway?

SARAH

He was at Aldi, like he said. I told my mom that and she texted back-

Sarah looks at her phone.

SARAH (CONT'D)

-the eyes emoji.

CASEY

Maybe you could ask your mom to back off?

SARAH

I can't do that to her. She's desperate and I just... I feel bad. It's not her fault my dad is acting like a dick.

NOELLE

I mean, if she's nagging him as much as she's nagging you...

Sarah rolls her eyes at Noelle. Casey laughs.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

I'm for real! What if your dad is just annoyed at your mom and is trying to get some space?

SARAH

I don't think that's it, I-

She is interrupted by her phone screen lighting up. She looks at it to see a text from "Mom".

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh my GOD.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Sarah stands by herself near the entrance to the school, watching cars and buses pull up and leave. Casey walks past and nods at her.

CASEY

See you later.

SARAH

See ya.

Sarah's phone pings. She makes a face and groans. Casey laughs and turns away, jogging to a nearby car.

Sarah pulls out her phone and checks her texts.

ON SARAH'S PHONE SCREEN

Mom: "Where is he now??"

Sarah closes her messaging app and taps on the app "Find My Phone". A map slowly loads on the screen. Sarah zooms out and pans on the map until a tiny green dot appears. She zooms in. The dot is located near a building with a gas station icon.

Sarah closes that app and reopens her messaging app.

Sarah: "He's at the Stop-N-Go."

Mom: "Ok"

Mom: "👁️👁️"

Mom: "I'm omw to pick u up"

INT. CAR - DAY

Mom is driving, Sarah is in the passenger seat, staring dead-eyed out the windshield. Quiet '60s music plays on the radio.

MOM

I think it all started when I went on that work trip last fall, do you remember? I was gone for almost a week and when I got back your father wouldn't even look me in the eye. At the time I thought he was angry at me for going on a trip without him, but I bet that's when it started. Did you notice anything weird that week?

SARAH

No, Mom, I don't really pay attention to what Dad does.

MOM

I was reading up about it and apparently this is common for married men his age. It's like a form of midlife crisis. A man will meet some younger, funner girl who doesn't remind him of his responsibilities.

SARAH

I'm sure he's not-

MOM

(continuing, ignoring Sarah)

And it's not like I'm getting any younger! I'm the ol' ball and chains to him, and you know your father's always liked younger women.

SARAH

Ugh Mom, gross. Have you-

MOM

And I keep asking him what's wrong and he keeps saying he's fine, he just wants to be alone sometimes, and I get that! I don't want to spend all my time with him either! But he can't even be in the room with me for more than a minute nowadays.

SARAH

I don't know if it's that bad-

MOM

We've been together what, 19 years? And he's never acted this distant before. Not even when his father died. Sure, we've had fights, especially right after you were born, but at least when we fought there was some emotion there. I don't know Sarah, I-

Mom's voice breaks. She looks over at Sarah, eyes wet.

MOM (CONT'D)

I just don't know what to do.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah is lying on her side on the couch, laptop open in front of her, headphones in, chuckling to herself occasionally. Mom is sitting in the recliner, reading a book.

Dad walks through the room. Mom watches him until he's almost out of sight.

MOM
Where are you going?

Dad doesn't stop or look back.

DAD
Headed to Greg's.

He continues walking out of sight.

MOM
This late?

DAD (O.S.)
He's having a poker night.

The sound of the back door opening, then closing. The garage door opens, a car pulls out, the garage door closes.

MOM
(muttering)
I didn't know Greg played poker.
(louder)
Sarah.

Sarah, oblivious to this conversation, takes a headphone out.

SARAH
Yeah?

MOM
Your father says he's going to
Uncle Greg's.

SARAH
Okay.

Sarah goes to put the headphone back in. Mom sighs.

MOM
Can you see where he actually is,
please?

SARAH

Oh my god, Mom, really? I can't watch an eight minute YouTube video without you bugging me about this? You have a phone, why don't you track him?

MOM

You know I don't know how!

SARAH

So text him. Or call him, if you're so worried! I don't know, can't you just fucking ask him?

Beat.

MOM

I've been trying, Sarah. He doesn't listen. He doesn't respond to me. What else am I supposed to do?

Sarah gets up and picks up her laptop.

SARAH

I don't know, but keep me out of it, please!

Sarah walks out of the room.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah walks to her bed, still holding her laptop. She nestles in and resumes the video she's watching.

After a few seconds, she pulls out her phone and opens the "Find My Phone" app. She idly continues to watch the video as the map loads. When it does, she glances down and watches a green dot move slowly across the streets of the map.

Sarah squints, puzzled. She pauses the video she's watching and zooms in on the green dot. It waits at an intersection, then continues. She follows it until it stops outside a building.

She waits for the dot to move again. When it doesn't, she zooms in further. The building has a bed icon on it and the words "SUPER MOTEL 5".

Sarah zooms in as far as she can on the green dot. It is right next to the motel, no other businesses around. She stares at the dot.

Her eyes snap to her open door as footsteps sound up the stairs. Hurriedly, she closes the app. Just before Mom arrives at her door, Sarah wipes a frustrated tear off her cheek.

Mom hesitates at Sarah's door.

MOM

Sarah? Is it okay if I come in?

SARAH

Yeah, sure, I- yeah.

Mom comes in and sits next to Sarah on her bed. Sarah takes out her headphones and closes her laptop.

MOM

I'm sorry, sweetheart. I shouldn't be burdening you with my problems. And I'm especially sorry for coercing you into spying for me.

SARAH

Mom, you didn't coerce me. You just asked me a favor, or whatever.

MOM

I crossed a line I shouldn't have. I'm the parent, and I haven't really been acting like one.

Mom puts her hand on Sarah's leg.

MOM (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have gotten you tangled up in this. You're off the hook, and I'll stop bothering you with my marital problems.

Mom chuckles dryly. Sarah looks down at her phone.

SARAH

But-

MOM

Sweetie. You're not responsible for your dad, or me, for that matter. Don't worry about us. I'll get through to him somehow.

Sarah looks up at her mother.

SARAH

Are you sure? I could show you how to install the app on your phone.

MOM

No, you've done enough. More than enough. I don't want you to have to think about it any more.

SARAH

Okay. Thanks Mom.

Mom stands up and walks out the door. Sarah stares after her, holding her phone in her hand. She reopens the "Find My Phone" app and sees the green dot still outside the hotel.

She clenches her phone in her hand for a second. Then she closes the app and uninstalls it. Her phone locks to a black screen, showing her reflection.

THE END