

## *Are You Really Sure?*

Written by Alexis Zaccaria

### **Characters:**

**Samson Johansson-** The main character and father. He is clumsy, outspoken, and is someone who usually takes things too far. He also has a burning hatred for sitcoms.

**July Johansson-** The daughter who had just landed a lead role in a new show (or so she says). She is very sweet but also can be very good at lying and is defensive.

**Matilda Johansson-** Teenaged daughter who is very grumpy and straightforward. She doesn't take anyone's nonsense and likes to be taken seriously.

**Stone Johansson-** Younger brother who is very goofy but also has the ability to take things seriously. He also has an essence of innocence.

**Gladys Johansson-** Wife of Samson. She is a "boss-like" type and has authority over her household. Despite her authority, she is a wise-cracker.

**The lights illuminate. As the lights illuminate, there *could be* a sitcom-like tune playing. Samson is sitting in a loveseat reading a newspaper. Matilda and Gladys are sitting on a nearby couch. Stone is lying on the floor playing with legos.**

SAMSON

Oy! Would you look at this! Channel 4 is reviving sitcoms again.

MATILDA

And that's important... because?

STONE

Yeah dad, why is that important?

GLADYS

Your father hates sitcoms, dears.

**Stone turns his head and looks at Matilda. She looks awkwardly back at him.**

SAMSON

Well, I don't necessarily hate them, per say... I just think they're annoying... and valueless... and ineffective. Oh, and tasteless!

MATILDA

So, you strongly dislike them?

SAMSON

Yes, I strongly dislike them.

GLADYS

Well dear, all you have to do is not watch them and I think you'll be just fine.

SAMSON

Easy for you to say, Gladys. You don't work with a bunch of writers that constantly remind you of their existence!

GLADYS

It's your choice if you want to pay attention.

MATILDA

It's such a weird thing to hate.

SAMSON

Dislike! I hate nothing.

MATILDA

Whatever! Same difference.

SAMSON

Are you really sure about that?

GLADYS

That's enough now. Matilda, I know his hatred is ridiculous but he can't help it. He's had quite the past with the medium... That's why he writes newspapers now instead of things that will be actually seen by the public. Maybe one day he'll let his contempt go.

**A laugh track ensues. Samson's face drops. He rolls his eyes, and sighs. Matilda narrows her eyes in curiosity. Then, July enters in from the right.**

JULY

Faaaamillly! Guess what!

STONE

What? Wait. Did you get the-

JULY

Yes! Yes, I did!

**Gladys, Matilda and Stone stand up and walk over to her. They celebrate her announcement. Then, they bring July to the middle of the stage/living room and congratulate her. Samson stands up from the loveseat and walks closer towards them.**

SAMSON

Might I ask what we're-

**As Samson walks towards them, he steps on Stone's legos. He yelps and awkwardly struggles in pain. Another laugh track plays, this time a little more hysterical. Stone starts to laugh hysterically.**

STONE

S-s-sorry dad!

SAMSON

Oh... It's... er, okay.

**Samson groans then grabs his foot and holds it for a moment.**

JULY

Oh my... are you okay, dad?

SAMSON

Oh, mmm... yeah. I'll be fine. Just hurts... a lot. Now, could you tell me what we're celebrating?

GLADYS

You didn't tell your father? July...

JULY

I mean, I thought I told you? Are you sure I tell you about my audition? I'm certain I did.

**Samson stands up straight and faces July.**

SAMSON

No. No. I'm really, really, sure you did not tell me.

GLADYS

Well, tell him.

JULY

Oh... Well. I got an audition for a new TV show and I just landed the lead.

SAMSON

You did not mention that to me, but congratulations. What's the show called?

JULY

The show is called 'Just Released'. I'm playing an ex-convict. It will premiere on XYX.

SAMSON

XYX? Didn't they use to produce sitcoms?

**Samson's tension grows. July raises her eyebrows and hesitates back a little.**

JULY

Maybe at one point and time. But not... now.

**Samson gives her a weird look. Awkward silence is casted over the family. Stone steps in between July and Samson.**

STONE

Hey guys... Maybe we should go into the kitchen and celebrate July's role!

JULY

Great idea! I like that idea.

GLADYS

I second that.

STONE

Let's go to the kitchen then!

**July nods at Stone and walks off to the right. Gladys follows her, then Samson begins to exit. Matilda stays. Stone begins to follow behind him, until Matilda whispers:**

MATILDA

Psst! Stone, come here.

**Stone walks back to Matilda. Samson notices him walk back and looks behind to watch him. He steps back into the shadows more. Stone and Matilda are oblivious of him.**

MATILDA

I didn't think it was that bad.

STONE

I know, right? I didn't understand why it was such a big deal, but now...

MATILDA

No kidding. And mom almost sold her out!

STONE

If dad found out in that moment, we'd all be dead.

**Matilda sighs.**

MATILDA

No wonder July made us swear secrecy. He's a lunatic who can't just let it go.

**Stone picks up a lego from the floor.**

STONE

Heh. Let it go, Le-go. Heh heh.

**Matilda slaps the lego out of his hand. The laugh track plays again.**

MATILDA

Stone! Take me seriously!

STONE

Okay, okay. You know it's gonna be impossible to hide this forever. He has to find out sooner or later, and what's gonna happen then?

MATILDA

Not my problem. I'll leave that to July to figure out. Now let's go before he begins to wonder what we're still doing here.

**Stone and Matilda exit to the right. Samson is still lurking in the shadows, but steps out to the middle of the living room, visibly upset.**

SAMSON

Matilda! Come back here.

**Matilda enters from the right again.**

MATILDA

I thought you were in the kitchen... What do you want?

SAMSON

I'm obviously not. Be honest with me. Is your sister lying to me?

**Matilda is quiet for a moment.**

MATILDA

About what?

SAMSON

Don't play dumb. It's about the studio. The studio that's producing her show. The studio that once made sitcoms.

MATILDA

She... said they don't anymore! Case closed. I don't understand why this has to be an actual discussion! And, what's worse? I'm taking part of it.

**Another subtle laugh track plays.**

SAMSON

She's lying to me. It was clear on her face, and now it's clear on yours! All of you are hiding the truth from me. That studio still does sitcoms and there isn't a doubt in my mind that the show she's landed is in fact, *A SITCOM*.

MATILDA

This is ridiculous. If you're so concerned about it, why don't you confront her yourself?

**Matilda storms off to the right.**

SAMSON

Matilda! Don't walk away from me-!

**Samson steps forward as he talks, but steps on the legos again. A boisterous laugh track plays again. He lets out another yelp and kicks them away so they scatter across the stage. He collects himself but anger surges in him again.**

SAMSON

July! Please come here.

**July walks in from the right and stops. She looks at the ground full of scattered legos, confused. Then, she looks to Samson.**

JULY

Yes, dad?

SAMSON

I want you to be honest with me.

JULY

Okay.

SAMSON

Is this show of yours a sitcom?

JULY

No...

SAMSON

Are you sure?

JULY

Yes! I am sure.

SAMSON

Are you really sure?

JULY

Yes! I am really sure!

SAMSON

Are you really, really sure?

JULY

*Dad.*

SAMSON

I won't leave you be until I'm sure of an answer.

JULY

Fine. *Fine. FINE.* I landed a role in a sitcom! Are you happy now?

SAMSON

I knew it! You were lying through your teeth! ... Why, July? Why? How could you!

JULY

Woah, woah, woah. You're being dramatic. This is why I didn't tell you, I knew you would react like this. I only took it because an actress needs to take any role she can get sometimes.

SAMSON

But, a sitcom?

JULY

*YES.* If that's what I could get, it's what I got! I said that already. I really don't understand your hatred. It's just a genre of a show. Why... why do you hate them so much?

SAMSON

Dislike!

**July rolls her eyes and shakes her head.**



SAMSON

Fine... I wrote for a company that used to make them. I submitted one idea they didn't like and they shamed and fired me for it.

JULY

That's why?... What was the idea even about?

SAMSON

Oh... it was about a man who gets a job at an information kiosk at a zoo, and every episode was supposed to embody a new person or group of people he encountered and how it would result in a wacky situation.

**A track plays with a chuckle. July's eyes open wider and she blinks a few times. She looks towards the audience for a moment, then back at Samson.**

SAMSON

Is it really that bad?

JULY

Yes. I think you need a new word for how bad it is. No wonder they fired you.

SAMSON

Hey! Come on! Even if it was that bad, I shouldn't have been fired for it. They knew how hard I worked on that idea and they didn't even give it a chance. There were even worse ideas that went through the studio. Those people deserved to be fired! Not me!

JULY

It seems that you haven't let it go. How long ago was this?

SAMSON

Mmm... I'll say... Twenty years ago. Soon before you were born.

**July's jaw drops. Then, she looks down and presses her head to her hand. A laugh track plays again.**

JULY

Twenty years ago...? If you can't let something go in that time then... I don't know what to tell you.

SAMSON

I don't know what to tell me either. I became irrelevant and I figured the anger would just wash itself away in time but it never did, so I kept holding onto it.

JULY

That's... the exact opposite of what you should do. If it ended up becoming so irrelevant to you, then what's the purpose of a grudge? That's the way I see it.

**Samson stands and thinks quietly for a moment.**

JULY

I know you don't want to admit I'm right.

SAMSON

It's not it's just... it's just... Okay. You are right. I'll admit, you make a really good point.

JULY

Thank you.

SAMSON

I know my opinions on it will still be strong but... I can coexist. And maybe I'll even tune in for yours. But just to support you.

**July smiles. A track plays with a an "awwww".**

JULY

It's a start. Thank you dad. Now... do you wanna go join the rest in the kitchen? They'll be wondering what's taking us so long.

**Samson nods at July and they begin to walk off the stage to the right. Samson steps over all the legos as he walks. They continue to talk until they fully exit (this dialogue:)**

JULY

Are you even the slightly angered that we lied to you?

SAMSON

No. I think I deserved it a little.

JULY

Are you really sure?

SAMSON

Yes, I'm really, really sure.

**They fully exit and the lights dim. The play ends.**