

“Where are you headed, kiddo?”

Allow me to clarify, because in the last few months of him shifting into working from home more often, I’ve become semifluent in Dad. In this case, *Where are you headed, kiddo?* loosely translates to *I’m pretty sure you haven’t finished rewriting that English essay you tanked, and I’m 100 percent using this as a loving, yet still deeply passive-aggressive way to bring it up.*

I tighten my grip on my helmet, keeping my eyeballs as still as I possibly can even though resisting an eye roll right now might actually be pressurizing something in my brain.

“Leo’s.”

My dad pulls one of those affable, apologetic smiles of his, and I brace for the usual segue into the routine he and my mom have been perfecting since the start of junior year, when my GPA first took a swan dive.

“How’s the old Abby Agenda?”

Ah, yes. The infamous “Abby Agenda.” This chipper turn of phrase includes, and is not limited to, all the exhaustive tutoring sessions my parents signed me up for, the student-run test prep meetup for the SATs they keep making me attend, and a giant running list of all my homework assignments put on a whiteboard in the kitchen (or as I like to call it, the Board of Shame). I will give them points for creativity, if not subtlety.

“Dad. There are like, five days before summer vacation. I’m good to go.”

He raises his eyebrows, and just as he intended, there’s a fresh wave of guilt—not because I care all that much about anything on Abby’s Annoyingly Alliterative Agenda, but because he looks straight-up exhausted.

“I’ll *be* good to go,” I correct myself. “But it’s Saturday. And it’s illegal to talk about homework on Saturdays.”

“Says the kid with two lawyer parents.” His smile is wry, but not enough to let me know I’m off the hook.

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