

Forepaughs
by
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EXT. SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

From above, the town is colored in comic, over-the-top, tones.

A vague, two syllable, sound is heard.

Its muddled quality begins taking on definition, revealing a rhythmic chant:

JASON! JASON! JASON!

...As we slowly descend to:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Odd looking, bizarrely dressed, clay-town-folk line the street.

Behind them sit rows of multi-colored, doll-house-like structures.

The chant quiets as:

A mechanical, marching band moves into frame.

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SADIE, eight, lies limp beneath a half-tester bed with drapes.

Her mother, Sue Sandquist, pleads with her from behind a door.

SUE (O.S.)

Sadie, honey, please. Please open the door. Sammy's here. Honey, you're hurting his feelings.

Sadie, in a quick, unexpected move, rises into a sitting position.

SADIE

(into camera)

Sammy's a boy. Sammy doesn't have feelings.

(correcting herself)

Okay, so he has feelings. But he's still a boy, and ugly too.

SAMMY (O.S.)

I heard that!

SADIE
(shock-faced)
Oh, oh!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Eight year old SAMMY looks up, revealing:

SUE. She sighs in resignation.

SUE
I'm sorry, Sammy. Sadie just hasn't
been the same since Forepaughs
disappeared.

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A small area of Sadie's blanket shifts, settles, then shifts
again.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

SAMMY
It's very, very --

SUE
Sad, Sammy. It's sad.

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bedraggled, clay-cat, FOREPAUGH'S, pops out from beneath
the blanket.

FOREPAUGHS
Meo0o0o0o0o0o0o0o0o0o0oW!

Sadie, quickly, stuffs him back beneath the blanket.

SADIE
(into camera)
You didn't see that! And it's still
sad. Very, very --
(beat)
It isn't, is it?

She says, defeated.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A long, wood paneled, family station-wagon rolls into frame. Inside, sits Sadie's father, thirty year old SID SANDQUIST.

SID
Gotta hurry! Must hurry!

EXT. SANDQUIST RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Sue is positioned outside an old Victorian doll-house. She looks at Sammy.

SUE
She just needs time. Give her a few days.

SAMMY
A week?

SUE
Days, Sammy, days.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The station-wagon rounds a corner, turning onto main street. In front of it, sits the mechanical marching band. They're playing a tin sounding, jazz-like tune.

SID
No! Not tonight! Not tonight!

EXT. SANDQUIST RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Sammy walks off.

Sue calls after him.

SUE
Watch for cars!

Sammy steps into an empty street.

SUE
Both ways! Look both ways!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The station-wagon, still behind the marching band, inches, slowly, up the street.

Sid makes a fist, shaking it at the band.

SID
J's! I hate J's!

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SADIE
Everyone hates J's.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

CLOSE ON:

Sadie's face. It fills the frame.

SADIE
You're a j?!

PULL BACK TO SHOW:

Ten year old Judy.

JUDY
You're not?!

SADIE
No!

The two, jaws dropped, stare, unable to speak.

INT. SANDAVAL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sammy sits, staring at a full bowl of soup.

SALLY, his mother, stands over him.

SALLY
Saul, Sammy's not eating.

SAUL, Sammy's father, enters.

Sally gestures at the soup bowl.

SALLY
Talk to him. Tell him to eat.

SAUL
Sammy, eat.

Sammy lifts his spoon, spilling its contents back into the bowl.

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SADIE
(into camera)
Sammy, obviously, needs attention.
But I can't give it to him, he'll
have to wait.

She moves to the edge of the bed, twiddles her thumbs, and waits.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sid, still in the station-wagon, taps impatiently at the steering-wheel.

INT. SANDQUIST LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sue looks at a wall-mounted clock. Its second hand ticks, picking up where Sid's tapping left off.

A phone rings.

Sue leaps -- picks it up.

SALLY (O.S.)
It's effecting Sammy.

SUE
(into phone)
No, it isn't!

The front door flies open.

Sid staggers in, a gust of wind follows, blowing the clock to the floor, silencing it.

Sue slams the phone down.

SID
Sue, Sue, it's worse than we
thought!

SUE
I know. I heard.

SID
It's --

The phone rings again, interrupting Sid.

Sue looks at it, shakes her head.

SUE
Don't answer it.

The two look at it, frozen.

SUE/SID
The answering machine, Sheba!

It picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE
This is sue, this is Sid, and this
is Sadie. You know what to do...
BEEP.

SALLY (O.S.)
Sue, I know you're there. Sid, pick
up the phone.

SUE/SID
We are not here.

They say, as if saying it makes it true.

SALLY
Fine, you're not there. Right!
Anyway, Selma and Serena both told
Shaina that they heard from
Shannon, that's Sherrel's sister,
that Sheldon saw Sadie with a J.

SUE
She knows.

SID
They know.

SUE/SID
 Everyone knows!
 (beat)
 How could you have let this happen?

SUE
 Me?

SID
 You!

SUE
 No, no, this is your fault.

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SADIE
 (into camera)
 Fault?! That's...

She reaches for a dictionary.

SADIE
 (into camera)
 An F word!

She thumbs through the book.

SADIE
 (into camera)
 Judy, though, is a J.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL (FLASHBACK) - DAY

Sadie and Judy stand, statue-like, staring at one another.

SADIE
 You don't look like a J.

JUDY
 What does a J look like?

SADIE
 I don't know.
 (beat)
 Do I look like an S?

JUDY
 You look like a J.

SADIE
I do?

JUDY
You look like me.

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SADIE
(into camera)
I don't think my parents like each other. I know what they do like. They like to yell.
(beat)
F... A... L... T. That's not even a word! Did I mention - they're dumb?

She shakes her head.

INT. SANDQUIST LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUE
It's your mother's fault!

SID
It is not.

SUE
It is, too.

SID
Is not!

SUE
Is too!

SID
Stop! Let's just not talk about it!

SUE
Right, if we don't talk about it...

SID
...It'll Go away.

INT. SADIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SADIE
(into camera)
Told ya.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A school bus sputters, starting and stopping, jerking its way up the street.

EXT. SANDQUIST RESIDENCE - DAY

Along the sidewalk, at various points, walk children escorted by parents, to a corner bus stop.

Sadie, backpack in hand, exits the house.

SADIE
 (into camera)
 My Grandma told me that things
 aren't ever as bad as you think
 they are.

She moves to the sidewalk.

Parents cover their children's eyes.

The school bus, still sputtering, rolls closer.

The pace quickens.

Legs, feet, move, cutting across frame.

Children are lined up.

One by one, they board, waving their good byes.

Sadie is next. She steps to the door.

It slams shut!

SADIE
 (into camera)
 She's right. They're worse.

INT. STATION-WAGON - DAY

Sid's at the wheel. Behind him, in the back, sits Sadie. She's wedged between stacks of yellow legal paper.

SID
 No, no. I'm sure it had nothing to do with you. The driver, he has a schedule. Schedules are shoulds.

SADIE
I hate shoulds.

THE FRONT END OF THE STATION WAGON

It slams into frame, wheels screeching, stopping.

SID
Listen, missy. Hating shoulds is a
shouldn't. You got that?!

Sadie looks at him, but doesn't respond.

SID
Good.

He inches the car forward.

SADIE
I hate shouldn'ts, too.

THE BACK END OF THE STATION WAGON

Its wheels screech as a line of motorists begin honking.

SID
Shouldn'ts are shoulds!

SADIE
But you said we shouldn't do
shouldn'ts.

SID
We shouldn't!

SADIE
But they're shoulds. You said
they're shoulds.

SID
They are!

Sadie, frustrated, throws her hands up.

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

A FISH

It's eyes blink. It looks at the camera, examining the audience.

A gurgling noise is heard. The fish turns away, embarrassed.

Behind it, we see a trail of bubbles. It's farted.

We follow as it swims to the edge of the tank, panning across it to a third tank, then a fourth. Each filled with colorful fish.

Widen to show GRANDMA, an old woman with a crazy, rainbow-like, up-do.

She's seated in a rocking chair, holding her nose.

The phone rings.

GRANDMA

Oh, my!

She says, giggling, looking around the room.

GRANDMA

Someone, yes, someone farted. And now the phone's ringing. Perhaps I should wait to answer it, until the air clears.

She waves her hand about, then drops it on the phone.

INTER CUT:

GRANDMA

Hello?

SUE

I want you to stop!

GRANDMA

Stop what, dear?

SUE

You know what. You introduced them!

GRANDMA

Introduced who?

SUE

Them. Sadie and that, that J.

GRANDMA

Judy?

SUE

Yes, Judy.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

A ridiculous number of busses surround a small, one room school.

Students, hundreds of them, make their way inside.

Sid's station-wagon pulls up along side a bus.

Sid and Sadie continue to talk.

SADIE

Maybe I should stay home.

SID

Sadie, honey, are you thinking again?

SADIE

Yes.

SID

Stop.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

The TEACHER, an old hag-type, takes attendance.

TEACHER

Sand?

STEVEN SAND

Here.

TEACHER

Sanden?

SARA SANDEN

Here.

TEACHER

Sandgrin?

SHELDON SANDGRIN

Here.

TEACHER

Sandinsen?

SHELLY SANDINSEN

Here.

Sadie enters.

TEACHER
Sandaval?
(beat)
Sammy Sandaval?

Sadie eyes the room, looking for Sammy.

TEACHER
Sammy's not here?

SARA SANDEN
Sammy's always here.

STEVEN SAND
Always.

He says, panicing.

A second kid takes a hit off an inhaler.

A third kid looks at Sadie.

THIRD KID
It's her fault!

Sadie looks at him, then at the class.

SADIE
It is not!

She shakes her head.

SADIE
It isn't. I...

TEACHER
Sadie, office!

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Grandma's still on the phone with Sue.

INTERCUT:

GRANDMA
Sadie should know --

SUE
-- She should know what Simon
says. That's what she should know.

Widen to show Judy. She's on the floor, coloring.

GRANDMA

Well, I know what I know and what I know is that Judy is a good kid. I'm taking her to the parade tonight.

SUE

Parade? Another parade?!

GRANDMA

In honor of --

SUE

I know, Jason!

GRANDMA

She is a J.

SUE

Sadie doesn't wanna see a J. She doesn't wanna see Judy!

GRANDMA

Doesn't wanna see Judy?

A DIAL TONE, then:

JUDY

I don't wanna see her either.

EXT. OFFICE OF SHOULD AND SHOULDN'TS - DAY

A massive, excessively ornate structure.

INT. OFFICE OF SHOULD AND SHOULDN'TS - DAY

An older man, Sid's BOSS, is talking, screaming.

BOSS

You're late! Late!

He picks up a book, a thick hardcover.

BOSS

Tardiness...

He thumbs through the book.

BOSS
...is not tolerated! You, Sid,
should know this.

SID
Yes, I should have arrived on time,
but my daughter, she --

BOSS
You've been here how long?

SID
Twelve. Twelve years.

BOSS
And how many times have you arrived
late?

SID
Once. Just once.

BOSS
And will you ever be late again?

SID
No.

BOSS
And why not?

SID
'cuz it's a shouldn't?

BOSS
No.

He shakes his head.

SID
No?

BOSS
No.

INT. SANDQUIST LIVING ROOM -DAY

Close on Sue. Her face fills the frame.

SUE
Fired?!

PULL BACK TO SHOW

Boxes, stacks of them.

Sadie looks out a window.

A semi-size moving truck is parked in front of the house.

SADIE
Are we moving?

SUE
No. We're just... We're thinking
about it.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Sue, Sid, and Sadie, look, staring at their reflections in
the windshield.

INT. SANDAVAL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sally busies herself closing curtains, one after another
until each is drawn shut.

SALLY
He shouldn't see this.

SAMMY
See what?

SALLY
Sadie, she's moving.

SAMMY
Moving?!

SALLY
No. No one moves.

She looks at Saul, appealing to him.

He lifts a can, half-grunts. Then, mumbling, says,

SAUL
No one moves.

SALLY
Look at that.

We see a clock that tell us it's 8:30.

SALLY
It's Nine O'clock. Bed time.

SAMMY
Five more minutes, please!

SALLY
No.

SAMMY
Ten more minutes?

SALLY
No.

SAMMY
An hour?

SALLY
No.

SAMMY
Just an hour! Just two hours!
Please!

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

A hand drops onto the stick-shift.

It grinds.

The semi moves, jerking forward.

INT. SAMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A loud boom -- first one, then another, as colorful flashes of light illuminate the room.

Sammy, in bed, sits up, moves to an open window.

Outside, the sky is ablaze with fireworks.

Sammy, as if hypnotized, crawls out.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

SUE
I thought we agreed not to tell
anyone. Not anyone.

SADIE
Tell anyone what?

SID
Nothing.

SUE
You know what Simon would say.

SADIE
What, what would Simon say?

SUE/SID
Shut up!

Sadie sinks, slipping off the seat -- then, rising, says:

SADIE
Forepaughs! Where's Forepaughs?

SUE
Honey, we've posted flyers.

SADIE
Flyers?

SUE
On light poles.

SID
And in stores.

SUE
And at the airport.

SADIE
The airport?

SID
Cat's like trees.

SADIE
So?

SID
So they like big trees. Really big trees.

SADIE
So?

SID
So the big trees, the Redwoods are
where?

SADIE
I don't know.

SID
California. And how do you get to
California?

SADIE
Fly?

SID
No.

He says, shaking his head.

SID
You drive.

SADIE
We're driving to California?!

SUE
To find Forepaughs.

SADIE
But --

SID
You want to find him, don't you?

SADIE
Yes, but --

SUE
Then no buts.

SADIE
But Forepaughs isn't in California!

SUE
Do you, young lady, know where he
is?

SADIE
No.

SUE
Then how do you know he isn't in
California?

SADIE
 'Cuz dad said you get to California
 by driving, and cats can't drive.
 They're cats!

SID
 Honey, that's why we posted flyers
 at the airport.

Sadie, defeated, again sinks -- slipping off her seat.

The semi turns onto main street. In front of it stands the
 mechanical marching band.

SID
 J's! I hate J's!

SUE
 We should tell her.

SID
 No.

SUE
 She's gonna find out.

SID
 Fine. Sadie, we're moving.

SADIE
 Moving?! Because I met a J? I
 didn't even like her. She's a J! I
 hate her ... See -- so we don't
 hafta move.

The sidewalk is lined, three deep, with J's. Candy, buckets
 of it is thrown from a float.

SID
 Honey --

SUE
 Is that Sammy?

INT. SAMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SALLY looks at Sammy's empty bed, then the open window.

SALLY
 Saul!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A large, red candy rockets toward Sammy, hitting him in the eye, knocking him to the ground. He stands, stepping on it.

SADIE
Candy! I want candy!

Sadie jumps, leaping over Sue.

SADIE
(Into camera)
I'm running away...
(beat)
...Don't tell anyone!

She pushes at the door, grabbing the handle, struggling to open it.

A big, burly J, JACK, yells.

JACK
Your blocking the parade!

SUE
Sadie!
(to Sid)
We need to tell her.

SID
No!

JACK
Move it!

SUE
She thinks it's her fault.

JACK
Jason's behind you!

The door swings open, pulling Sadie out of the truck. She's hanging, holding on to the handle.

The street, it appears, is thousands of feet beneath her.

SADIE
Sammy! Sammy!

Sammy looks at her.

SADIE

Help!

She sways back and forth.

SAMMY

Oh, you wanna talk to me now?

SADIE

Just please, please help me.

SAMMY

I'm busy.

He says, peeling the piece of candy from the bottom of his shoe.

SADIE

You're not gonna --

He stuffs it into his mouth.

SADIE

(Into Camera)

Okay, that was just gross!

She drops, screaming -- four feet.

SAMMY

Drama queen.

She grabs Sammy, dragging him the length of the trailer.

THE TRAILER'S BACK DOUBLE DOORS

Sadie throws 'em open -- boxes tumble out, knocking her to the ground, landing on her.

A crowd of J's surround the truck.

J #1

You're blockin' Jason!

J #2

Let 'em through!

The crowd chants:

JASON! JASON! JASON!

INT. TRUCK CAB

SID
Damn, J's!

He says, stepping from the cab.

Sue follows.

JACK
Ya gotta move this thing!

Sid pushes past him.

Sadie and Sammy are in the back of the semi, stumbling over boxes as they look for Forepaugh.

SADIE
I gotta find him. I can't leave
with out him!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sally and Saul make their way through more throngs of J's.

SALLY
Sammy!

She yells, looking for him.

SALLY
Who knows what they've done with
him!

Saul grunts.

SALLY
They're J's, Saul, J's!

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Sid looks into the trailer.

SID
Sadie, honey --

SUE
-- It's not your fault.

More J's approach.

J #3
Move it!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sally spots the trailer.

SALLY
Look, look, it's the semi. Sid's
semi.

She grabs Saul's hand, pulling him to the truck.

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

SADIE
It is my fault.

SUE
No, it's that, that J's fault.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

SALLY
Look at 'em, they're looting the
truck. They're gonna riot.
(beat)
That's what J's do.

A J, hearing this, steps toward her.

JIM
Riot? Is that what we do?

SALLY
Yes.

JIM
Soccer, I'll have you know, is an S
word!

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

SADIE
I hate J's!

J #3
She hates J's.

SADIE
I hate Judy!

J #3
Did ya here that?

He says, shouting.

Another, anonymous, J yells:

S's suck!

The J's inch in closer.

Grandma's crazy up-do is seen bobbing above the crowd.

Sadie, crying, continues to look for Forepaughs.

SADIE
Help me find him.

She says to Sammy.

Sid, outside the truck, attempts to hold back J's.

Grandma makes her way through the crowd. Judy stands next to her.

GRANDMA
She doesn't hate J's.

SADIE
Yes, I do!

Sally approaches.

JACK
She hates J's!

SADIE
I hate Judy!

Judy, hearing this, drops back into the crowd -- disappearing.

Sammy lifts a shoe box to his ear.

SAMMY
Forepaughs, are you in there?

He shakes it.

SAMMY

Are you?

SADIE

Sammy, c'mon, he wouldn't fit in a shoe box.

Another, smaller box, bounces up and down.

Sadie looks, but doesn't see it.

It's bounce becomes more pronounced. More obvious.

SADIE

Sheba!

SAMMY

It's him!

It shoots up, bounding, then rebounding, ricocheting off various objects.

The two, excited, race after it.

It cuts a crazy path. They jump and dive, crash into walls, trying to catch it.

Finally, exhausted, they stop.

Outside, Jack continues to stir up the crowd.

JACK

She's an S!

The box, after another bounce, slows, then stops.

SADIE

Forepaughs?

The box is still. Lifeless.

Then it moves, slightly.

SADIE

Forepaughs?!

It bounces in places.

A ball, a glob -- a furry mess, bursts up, out of the box.

SADIE
Forepaughs!

He expands, popping back into shape.

Disoriented, he looks around, then leaps out of the trailer.

SADIE
No!

Sadie and Sammy attempt to follow, but the crowd stops them.

SADIE
Let me through!

She pushes, but the crowd is too dense.

SADIE
I hate you all.

GRANDMA
She doesn't know what she's saying.
She's just a little girl.

J #5
An S girl!

GRANDMA
Yes, she's an S and you're a J. Who
cares?!

J #6
We do!

SALLY
And so do we!

SADIE
Hating J's is a should!

GRANDMA
It shouldn't be.
(at Sid)
Tell her!

SADIE
Tell me what?

GRANDMA
S's are no better than J's.

J #6
That's right!

GRANDMA
And J's are no better than S's.

J #6
What?!

The crowd is furious, shaking their fists -- shouting.

GRANDMA
What does it matter if --

Grandma continues to speak, but we can't hear her. The crowd is too loud.

Sadie is slumped over, crying.

GRANDMA
Please! Please!

A loud, booming, voice is heard, followed by hushed murmurs, then silence.

The crowd parts.

A short, unassuming man, JASON, steps forward.

J's bow.

SALLY
You're Jason?

She says, unimpressed.

JASON
Let her speak.

Grandma clears her throat.

GRANDMA
(at Sid)
Tell her.

Sid swallows.

GRANDMA
Or I will.

SID
Sadie, honey, you shouldn't hate
J's.

SADIE
But you said hating J's is a
should.

SID
It is.

The crowd grows angry.

Jason looks at Sid.

SID
But it shouldn't be. You shouldn't
hate J's.

SADIE
I do!

GRANDMA
Tell her!

SID
Or Judy. You shouldn't hate Judy.

SADIE
Why?

SID
Because ...

GRANDMA
Tell her!

SID
Because she's your sister.

SADIE
My sister?!

Sadie looks at her mother.

SUE
Yes.

SID
I was with someone, someone else --

JACK
A J?

SID
-- before I was with your mother.

JACK
So you don't hate J's?

SID
No.
(to Sadie)
And neither should you.

SALLY
Well I, I still hate --

SAUL
Shut up!

Judy steps forward, holding Forepaughs.

SADIE
Forepaughs!

The two girls stand, looking at one another.

SADIE
My sister?

JUDY
Your sister.

JACK
Hate's a bad word.

SID
A four letter word.

Sadie and Judy Hug.

Grandma smiles, beaming.

JACK
Maybe we should ban four letter
words.

SID
Yes, I think we should.

Sadie rolls her eyes.

THE END