



FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY

Episode 4. Sidney's Struggle

FAN/HFLE - ASHE PROJECT

EXT. EVENING THE MYRIE HOME

GRANNY B.

Strange things happen in a funny kind of way. Bad things happen even on a good day. You can't live your life on the things people say. If you fall, get back up on your feet right away. My dears, when children are not nice someone pays the price.

There is the sound of a car driving to a halt then a door slamming and footsteps running.

MARTIN

Sidney stop the running with all those things in your hand. You will fall down.

MARIE

What is wrong with her today though?

ROGER

I know Mrs. Myrie. I know.

There is the sound of keys rattling and then a door opening then shut. Things are being put on a counter while the conversation continues.

MARTIN

What you know Roger?

SIDNEY

Shut up. You don't know anything.

MARTIN

Excuse me young lady.

MARIE

Sidney, apologize to Roger. He is your friend.

SIDNEY

No. Roger chat too much.

MARIE

Excuse me Miss Sidney. Correct yourself and don't let me have to say it again. Apologize to Roger.

(There is a little bit of a pause.)

We're waiting.

SIDNEY

I apolo...gize, for... for saying you chat too much... although is true.

(The sound of footsteps indicate that Sidney has run off.)

MARTIN

Sidney. Sidney Myrie come back here.

MARIE

I will go talk to her.

MARTIN

Hold on a bit. Roger, what is going on?

ROGER

Sidney say she not going back to school... because... because... because she got a question wrong today in front of the entire class.

Sidney's voice calls out from her room.

SIDNEY

Yuh see why I say you chat too much?

ROGER

But I never did say anything yet.

A door opens and footsteps signal that Sidney has returned to the room.

SIDNEY

But I just know you were going to chat too much and I was right. See?

MARIE

Sidney love, nothing is wrong with getting something wrong in class once in a while. That's just how things work. You just study harder and it gets better.

ROGER

Yes. Better like me. I got my answer correct when the teacher asked me...

MARIE

Roger, that's not nice. That's not

helping.

ROGER

I was trying to help her but...

MARIE

And sometimes, when we are learning new things, it is even good when we get things wrong and fail sometimes because when we correct ourselves, the right thing sticks in our mind in an unforgettable way. You understand Sidney?

SIDNEY

Yes mom. I hear what you are saying...

MARTIN

Your mother is right Sidney. The truth is that we often learn more from our mistakes than if we just get it right, right-away.

SIDNEY

I hear what you're saying dad but I'm not going back to school and that's that.

MARTIN

Excuse me young lady...

SIDNEY

Daddy, they were making fun of me afterwards and calling me a 'dunce-bat black-rat.'

ROGER

Maybe they were just playing and joking...

SIDNEY

But it wasn't funny.

MARTIN

You are right. Nobody likes being laughed at, but sometimes it happens.

SIDNEY

I hate it daddy. I already feel bad for getting the answer wrong and then they just make it worse.

ROGER

Yea, like real bad. Like it was embarrassing. I feel it for you.

MARIE

Roger, that's not helping.

SIDNEY

You see why I say him chat too much?

MARIE

That's not helping either Sidney. Do you understand why?

SIDNEY

No.

MARIE

Well, you are doing the same thing to him, that those other students were doing to you.

SIDNEY

I'm not teasing him.

MARIE

What are you doing then?

SIDNEY

Just telling the truth.

MARIE

Just like somebody could say it's true that you are a 'dunce-bat black-rat.'

SIDNEY

I am not a...

MARIE

Exactly. And that is the point. Nobody likes teasing and it is a horrible thing. And it's also sad that children think it's ok to tease people about being black, in this day and age.

SIDNEY

Especially when dem black too.

MARIE

You know Sidney, we in the Caribbean have come through a lot of stuff and

one of them was slavery. And unfortunately it happened for hundreds of years and it affected how we see ourselves as black people. So some of us hate ourselves and our own skin and is like we don't even know it. We push that onto other people who look like us cause we hate ourselves.

SIDNEY

You don't hate yourself mom.

MARIE

No Sidney.

(laughing.)

No. I don't hate myself. At least I don't think so. But I say we because it's us as caribbean people who need to look at ourselves in the mirror and find the good stuff to talk about and find ways of loving all skins and colours and hair texture. We in the caribbean can teach the whole world about that. But we have to learn the lesson well for ourselves first. And teasing people about being black and calling them a black rat is not helping.

SIDNEY

I know mom. I felt so bad.

MARIE

But remember that black is beautiful. And let me be more specific and say African is beautiful. And Indian is beautiful and Chinese is beautiful and European is beautiful. Can you see that?

SIDNEY

Yes mom. Is just that the brown kids and the mixed kids... well... is like everybody thinks they are better and prettier just because they are brown-skinned.

MARIE

I'm not going to lie to you Sidney, some people act like brown skin is better than dark skin, but they are

wrong. No skin is better than any other skin and there is nothing better than loving your own skin. Just because some people don't know better, doesn't mean we have to agree with them. You understand?

SIDNEY

Yes mom.

MARIE

What is most important is that you know who you are and don't allow them to get to you and stop you from going to school.

SIDNEY

Is not them stopping me. I just... I just don't want to go.

MARTIN

Whose little girl are you, Sidney?

(Sidney doesn't respond right away.)

Sidney...?

SIDNEY

I'm mommy and daddy's little girl.

MARTIN

And what does that mean?

SIDNEY

It means that I am smart, strong and pretty.

MARTIN

Exactly. And can a smart, strong and pretty girl handle a little teasing...?

SIDNEY

It was BIG teasing.

MARTIN

But can a smart, strong and pretty girl like my Sidney handle Big teasing?

SIDNEY

Yes Daddy.

MARTIN

Exactly. The truth is that 'You can handle it.'

MARIE

And you have other people to help you handle it Sid. So you are not alone in this.

SIDNEY

Thanks Mommy.

MARIE

Not just us Sidney.

ROGER

I am your friend Sidney. Even though... I sometimes... talk...

MARIE

You don't talk too much at all Roger...

SIDNEY

Yes he does.

MARTIN

Well, if he never talked up today, you wouldn't be feeling better about it all. Agreed?

SIDNEY

I guess.

MARIE

But what is most important is that you know you have people who care for you. You know that right?

SIDNEY

Yes Mommy.

MARIE

Good. And tomorrow, bright and early we have school. But tonight, we are going to go through the questions you got wrong and work it through so that you understand it properly. Agreed?

SIDNEY

Yes Mommy.

MARIE

If you want to get things right, you have to prepare and do your homework. You are not a dunce bat at all, even if you get one or two questions wrong. Even if you get ten questions wrong you're not a dunce bat. Just work harder and get the help you need.

MARTIN

And Sidney... don't ever forget you are Mommy and Daddy's little girl ok.

SIDNEY

Yes Daddy. Love you mommy and daddy.

ROGER

So you don't love me too?

SIDNEY

No.

ROGER

Myrrrr...

SIDNEY

But you alright.

MARTIN

Another thing Sidney, are the children always teasing you? or was it just this one time?

SIDNEY

No. They are not always teasing me.

MARTIN

Ok. Good. You should always feel free to tell us when things like this happen at school ok? If we put all our heads together we can solve anything. And just remember that some things are better with help.

SIDNEY

Yes mommy.

GRANNY B.

There is an African proverb that says: If you want to go fast go alone but if you want to go far go together. We are

really better together forever. People who love each other help to make life better when they solve problems by talking with one another.

END OF EPISODE