

"STORIES FOR A SUMMER BEACH PARTY"

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## STORIES FOR A SUMMER BEACH PARTY

FADE IN:

EXT. WATERFRONT RESORT AREA - NIGHT (DUSK)

A Summer resort with the works: Clear water, a sandy beach lined by a treed camping area, along with shops and hotels.

Sailboats dot the horizon on the placid waters. A striped hot air balloon looks frozen above, suspended at 500 feet.

But with the Sun in descent, things have begun to slow down.

An unoccupied pier juts into the water, which now supports only two dozen silhouetted swimmers, or kids on inflatables.

Yet, as the big daytime crowds for this popular place move inland in the dimness of the sunset and cooling temperature, the beach itself remains busy. Over its length, hundreds of people of every age and size and shape still saunter along:

A guy with a metal detector converses with a lifeguard below his tower. Kids do final touches on sandcastles. The noise from paddle-ball players and early fireside parties vies with bronzed volleyballers who hold last-minute tournaments.

Racket from a fairground echoes at the far end of the beach, to compete with a din of change-rooms and plazas nearer us.

For much of the length of the sands, the lighting is now mostly from flashlights and lanterns, and a few campfires that have sprung up on a grassy treed zone ahead of tents, RVs and trailers parked there, with the hotel strip beyond.

But as we move closer, decorative municipal light standards pop on along the full length of the beach at the grass line.

Closer yet, we come upon one particular campfire and figures who move between it and the tents and vehicles alongside.

EXT. THE VALENTINE CLAN'S COMPOUND - NIGHT (DUSK)

A growing campfire is groomed by two men who are part of the Valentine family reunion, being held at the beach this year.

Three tents, a tent trailer, camper van, a couple of cars, and a motorcycle are positioned on the grassy strip beyond.

This multigenerational group consists of two pre-teens seen here playing cards at the fireside, two late teens roasting marshmallows on sticks, four adults (later, another with her baby), and two seniors - the matriarch and patriarch.

We'll meet them as we go, but here's a quick overview:

- GRAMPA Dudley and GRANNY Mildred, both 75. Their three offspring, below, will often refer to them as Mom and Dad, or as Grandpa or Grandma for their own kids' sake, along with other terms of endearment such as "Grumpa":
  - Son SCOTT, 45 (married to ROSANNE, 40)
    - Children: MICHELLE, 17, and RYAN, 15
  - Son LUKE, 40 (married to ZOE, 35)
    - Children: KEVIN, 10, and KIRA, 7
  - Daughter LAUREN, 35, arriving a bit later on
    - Children: A sleeping, unnamed baby girl

First up, SCOTT saunters over to the half-open door of the camper van, and peeks inside.

INT. CAMPER VAN/DOORWAY - NIGHT (DUSK)

Scott watches his dad, GRAMPA, zip up as he leaves the bath at the rear of the vehicle. [In this main story, and except for GRAMPA/GRANNY, character IDs include ages - for clarity]

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
You coming, Gramps? Gran's all set  
on her deck chair at the fireside.

GRAMPA  
Yea yea. Lemme get my binoculars.

Scott's wife, ROSANNE, peeks around the door beside him.

ROSANNE<sup>40</sup>  
Why do you need binoculars at the  
campfire?

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
(snorts)  
To check out the water babes.

GRAMPA  
Yea ye... what?

EXT. CAMPER VAN/DOORWAY - NIGHT (DUSK)

Rosanne and Scott help old Grampa out and down.

ROSANNE<sup>40</sup>  
Watch your step, dad. It's dark.

GRAMPA  
Sure sure, thanks.

ROSANNE<sup>40</sup>  
The kids have already started to  
roast marshmallows, Scott. Is  
Lauren coming? She said --

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
From what I heard. We can't wait  
too long though, eh Grumps.

EXT. CAMPFIRE SITE - NIGHT (DUSK)

The campfire is about three feet in diameter. It's securely  
set-up, in a shallow pit with flat stones around.

The youngest kids, pre-teens KIRA and KEVIN, pack up their  
card game and join RYAN and MICHELLE, Scott's and Rosanne's  
teens, to poke marshmallows into the flames.

GRANNY already sits under a blanket on a deck chair opposite  
to watch. Alongside is an empty chair that awaits Grampa.

The second adult couple arrives: ZOE and LUKE are parents  
to the two youngest kids. She has a tray of hotdogs and  
buns. He wields a cooler full of drinks, and a guitar.

ZOE<sup>35</sup>  
Oh look at the fire! Nice.

LUKE<sup>40</sup>  
Good one, guys. Who did it?

RYAN<sup>15</sup>  
Dad showed me.

MICHELLE<sup>17</sup>  
I did a lot of it, Ryan!

RYAN<sup>15</sup>  
Didn't say you didn't.

ZOE<sup>35</sup>  
It's so professional. We should  
leave it for the next campers.

LUKE<sup>40</sup>  
Good idea.

RYAN<sup>15</sup>  
Where's the volleyball. Kev?

Kevin and Kira are getting testy around the marshmallows.

KEVIN<sup>10</sup>  
Huh? Kira, move your stick over!

KIRA<sup>7</sup>  
Your marshmallow got stuck to mine.  
It... that one's mine!

KEVIN<sup>10</sup>  
No! Do your own, over further.

MICHELLE<sup>17</sup>  
Kids! Ryan? It's too dark to play  
with the ball, with the fire going.

RYAN<sup>15</sup>  
All right. Story-time then?

Scott and Rosanne arrive with Grampa, for the deck chair  
beside Granny. She pats her husband's hand as he plops in.

GRAMPA  
Food time, you mean.

GRANNY  
They have a hotdog coming, dear.

With the patriarchs settled in their deck-thrones, the other adults go cross-legged at the fire to prepare the dogs, as Kira munches a mallow and Kevin strums at Ryan's guitar.

MICHELLE<sup>17</sup>  
Can we not have all ghost stories  
this year? They're boring.

ROSANNE<sup>40</sup>  
They're not always. Zoe, you had  
that good one, last year.

KIRA<sup>7</sup>  
Kevin only wants to hear about  
serial killers.

Kevin groans, and Kira sticks out her tongue at him.

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
We got Gran and Gramps here this  
time: For their fiftieth  
anniversary! So we gotta do at  
least one story for them.

Light applause for the seniors, who respond with grins.

EVERYONE  
Yeah! That's amazing, mom and dad.  
Five-oh! Wow! Five decades, eh?

Rosanne arches her head back toward the parked vehicles.

ROSANNE<sup>40</sup>  
Uh, are we waiting for Lauren?

ZOE<sup>35</sup>  
She called. No babysitter, so  
she's bringing the baby.

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
What? We could have picked her up.

ZOE<sup>35</sup>  
She's fine. Lauren likes her  
independence, as you all know.

Scott hands the first hotdogs to his mom and dad, on plates.

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
Okay, who else wants one?

He counts nods all around, as Rosanne readies more plates.

LUKE<sup>40</sup>  
I want mine burnt to a crisp.

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
So what's coming first, for  
stories: Scary or funny?

ZOE<sup>35</sup>  
Ketchup? Chopped onions, great.

LUKE<sup>40</sup>  
Start with something for the kids.

ROSANNE<sup>40</sup>  
Where's the cheese. Scott?

RYAN<sup>15</sup>  
That one about the car accident?

MICHELLE<sup>17</sup>  
Which one, "The Girl"?

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
Everybody got a drink?

RYAN<sup>15</sup>  
Uh, no, the one about the guys who  
find a zombie in the car wreck.

Kevin grins, with big eyes. Kira gives her brother a shove.

LUKE<sup>40</sup>  
I said for the kids, not the teens.

SCOTT<sup>45</sup>  
It wasn't a zombie, anyway.

ZOE<sup>35</sup>  
Oh, now I remember. No, not that  
one. You told it last year and it  
scared the sh... crap out of me.

LUKE<sup>40</sup>  
Fine, something for the "children"  
then. How about my old story?

KEVIN<sup>10</sup>  
The killer appliance?!

He moans, Kira smirks, and the teens laugh. But Scott and Rosanne, not familiar with it, just start in on their dogs.

GRAMPA  
Wait!

Everyone reacts. Zoe drops a dog in the fire and shrieks.

GRAMPA (CONT'D)  
We need a rule. What's the story  
about first, so I know whether or  
not I can just go to bed right now.

LUKE<sup>40</sup>  
You've heard them all, Dad!  
Anyway, "Toaster!" is one of your  
own stories. Sort of.

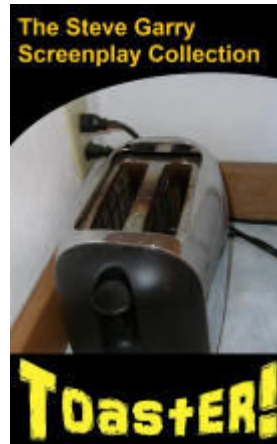
Grampa groans, as he recognizes it. But Granny chortles.

LUKE<sup>40</sup> (CONT'D)  
Okay: Toaster! "Even if it is  
hard to pass up a good deal, surely  
nobody means for the toaster-from-  
hell to be handed down from victim-  
to-victim in an endless curse."

They all snicker and go wide-eyed in anticipation, as we...

FADE OUT.





FADE IN

EXT. SHACK/DUMPY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY (STORY #1)

A brilliant sunrise bathes a tiny brick bungalow, nestled among dissimilar but equally old shacks in a poor suburb.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Toaster!"

From inside come the familiar domestic sounds of breakfast: Cutlery tinkles, a tap runs for a few seconds, a chair squeaks over tile, and a teapot spout clinks against a cup.

INT. SHACK/ONE-ROOM - DAY

Throughout the tour to follow, indistinct contented murmurs somewhere accompany a budgie chirping in a cage elsewhere:

The MCGILLVARY home is dowdy to say the least: Cramped and cluttered, doilies on the armrests, and colors everywhere - mostly mismatched and bright, and in mixes of patterns.

Framed pictures cover every tabletop and every second square inch of wall. Old rounded appliances occupy a wee kitchen that's between one door to a bathroom and one to a bedroom.

Now to a tiny table for two where, with quaint mugs and bowls before them, a 75-year-old couple mumble in that soft, indistinct way that comfortable, satisfied married folks do.

EVEY and DAN, are tiny and bowed. He wears plain and humble. She wears flowery and humble. He has almost no hair on top. She has fine silvery threads, possibly a wig.

And as he exchanges a cereal box with her, and she offers milk in return, we see something more important pass between them - a peek that affirms a lifetime of love and devotion.

Also between our quaint hosts sits an old two-slice electric toaster. A warm orange glow emanates from inside its slots.

Originally in reflective chrome, this ancient appliance had its best days two decades ago: Charred and stained, grunge you'd need a pile driver to chip off, wrinkled plastic residue from a bread bag placed too close, and on one end a Niagara Falls sticker that's brown, curled and illegible.

Still, from it pop two perfect pieces of toast with a happy squeak. This provokes the couple to coo with joy, before each takes a piece for buttering - scrape, scrape, scrape.

LATER

Evey stands alongside to wipe the toaster, but has no luck. She grunts and sighs, as she works with a damp tea towel.

EVEY

Dan? Ruthie's so dirty.

DAN

Time I fixed that, Evey. Gimme.

LATER

Dan plunks himself onto a chair at the window. As Evey stands behind to watch, he paints the toaster with what's left in the bottom of a small tin of pukey brown lacquer.

EVEY

I wish it were a nicer color.

DAN

All we have. Remember the mailbox post I did last Spring?

EVEY

Oh yes, that's right. Well, whatever's best for our Ruthie.

He glimpses back with a smile at their sweet inside-nickname for the toaster, before he resumes and applies more strokes.

EVEY (CONT'D)  
It won't always smell like that,  
will it?

DAN  
No, no. But it'll last forever.

All done, he holds it up in his palm for Evey to coo at.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Ta-da! All set for tomorrow, Evey.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHACK/ONE-ROOM - DAY (DAWN)

As the budgie pecks its bell over yonder, sunshine as bright as yesterday sprinkles through leaves just outside a half-open window, from which musical sounds of nature pour in.

Over at the table, Evey takes a seat to watch Dan plunk the bread guides down in their puke-brown, spruced-up toaster.

CLOSE-UP - RUTHIE THE TOASTER

Unfortunately, unknown to Ruthie the Toaster's sweet owners, heat makes its newly-painted surface release a toxic vapor that makes the home appliance a virtual chemical weapon:

The paint at the edge of the red-hot toaster opening bubbles ever-so-slightly. Heat waves visibly distort the air above. An odd crackling sound, like a Geiger counter, rises and rises to overwhelm even the budgie bell over yonder.

ANGLE ON the couple, sitting here as the crackles play over.

While Evey casually sugars a tea, it's Dan who lowers a newspaper from his face when he's first to detect something.

Finally, Evey wiggles her nose, but remains silent even as her eyelids flutter. She takes an old tissue from inside her sleeve for a quick wipe of her nose. In a search, Dan leans to and fro, then right over the crackling appliance.

Seconds pass, before the seniors cough, moan, and rise and run about - and the budgie furiously pecks at its bell!

Even still, perfect toast pops up from the devilish toaster!