

OATMEAL AND A CIGARETTE

By George Sapio

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Run time: Approx. 65 min.

Cast

Claire: Male, 40s

Billy: Male, 30

Babysitter Jane: Female, 20s

Set: Living room of Claire and Billy's apartment

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SCENE I

[CLAIRE enters from kitchen with a bowl of oatmeal. He crosses to BILLY's crib and sings softly]

CLAIRE

Mockingbird, little Mockingbird
Gonna buy my baby boy a mockingbird
And if that mockingbird tries to fly
Gonna sit on him and make him cry
If he don't cry and tries to sing
Gonna tie him up in my apron string
And if that apron string don't hold
He's gonna surely break my heart of gold

*[SFX: Clock: Seven ayem!
Time to help Farmer Bob milk his cows!]*

CLAIRE

Seven ayem, Billy! Time to wake up and face a brand new day!

[BILLY, dressed in a large sleeper onesie, sits up. He yawns, stretches his arms, smiles.]

BILLY

Good morning, Mommy!

CLAIRE

Good morning, little Billy boo-boo. Guess what we have for breakfast?

BILLY

Oatmeal!

CLAIRE

Is it oatmeal? I don't know...

BILLY

Oatmeal! Oatmeal! Oatmeal and raisins!

CLAIRE

Well, let's see...it's hot...it's drippy...

BILLY

Oatmeal!

CLAIRE

Oh, no...I think it's soggy corn flakes.

[BILLY's face draws into a disappointed frown]

CLAIRE

Nooo...it's oatmeal!

BILLY

[Face lights up, he claps] Oatmeal! Yayy!

[CLAIRE gives BILLY the oatmeal bowl, which is devoured in one long gulp.]

BILLY

More!

CLAIRE

Well, Billy, you know what happens when you eat too fast.

BILLY

Fwow up?

CLAIRE

Let's just see how that bowl sits in your tummy before I get you another.

BILLY

Still hungry!

CLAIRE

Mommy has to go to work now. Maybe Jane will get you some more.

BILLY

Still hungry!

CLAIRE

Why don't you count to five minutes and then we'll see. Just look at the clock on the wall and count five minutes.

BILLY

Can we play the game for five minutes?

CLAIRE

Mommy has to finish getting ready for work.

BILLY

But I wanna play the game! I wanna play the game!

CLAIRE

Billy, Mommy has to [get ready.]

BILLY

Play game! Play game!

CLAIRE

Okay, Billy.

[BILLY runs to window]

BILLY

Come on, Mommy! Come on!

[CLAIRE follows BILLY and sits by window]

CLAIRE

Okay, Billy. Here we go. I spy with my little eye...something that begins with T.

BILLY

I spy with my little eye...umm...a tree!

CLAIRE

And what do we say about trees?

BILLY

Trees have leaves and trees have bark
Lots of trees live in the park
With lots of birds all green and red
That make filthy poop on Billy's head!

CLAIRE

That's right, Billy, bird poop is icky filthy yuck.

BILLY

More! More!

CLAIRE

I spy with my little eye...something that begins with D!

BILLY

I spy with my little eye...[something that begins with]...doggie!

CLAIRE

And doggies...?

BILLY

"Doggies have hair and carry fleas
And pee on fire plugs and big tall trees
They have big sharp teeth you should take note
Just waiting to tear out Billy's throat!"
I'm glad we don't have a doggie.

CLAIRE

Doggies are dangerous, Billy. They look all nice and friendly, but they're really vicious. Mommy has to finish [getting ready for work.]

BILLY

One more! One more! Please!!

CLAIRE

All right, Billy. Last one. I spy with my little eye...something that begins with C!

BILLY

I spy with my little eye...something that begins with...car!

CLAIRE

And what do cars do?

BILLY

"Cars go vroom and cars go fast;
As you can see when they go past;
You should never walk into the street;
'cause cars will mash you into bloody meat."

*[SFX: Car horn from
outside window]*

BILLY

Honk, honk! Honk, honk! Car horn!

CLAIRE

That's right. It's a car horn.

BILLY

Honk! Honk! Wanna go for a car ride!

CLAIRE

Whoa, no car rides for Billy. What did we just say?

BILLY

But I wanna go inside the car! I wanna honk the horn!

CLAIRE

Car rides are dangerous, Billy. Remember what Mommy told you?

BILLY

I wanna honk the horn!

CLAIRE

You have your own car horn, don't you?

BILLY

I want a real one! I want a real car horn!

CLAIRE

Here, honk your car horn. *[Brings toy]*

BILLY

[Honks the feeble squeak toy. Gets bored, throws toy] This sucks.

CLAIRE

What kind of word is that? Where did you learn that language?

BILLY

I don't know.

CLAIRE

You learned that somewhere. Where did you learn it?

BILLY

I don't know!!

CLAIRE

I should wash your mouth out with soap, Billy. You want me to do that?

BILLY

No!

CLAIRE

Where did you hear that? Was that from babysitter Jane?

BILLY

No! Babysitter Jane never says bad words!

CLAIRE

Then where did you hear it? I'm getting the soap!

BILLY
No! No soap!

CLAIRE
Where did you hear that?

BILLY
I heard it...I heard it...out the window!

CLAIRE
You heard it out the window?

BILLY
From Mr. Scary Man With the Paper Bag!

CLAIRE
What were you doing listening at the window? You know the window is supposed to be closed when Mommy's not home...Do you remember why the window is always closed?

BILLY
Because Billy could fall out and smash his head open and his brains will leak out all over the sidewalk.

CLAIRE
That's right. So no more open window and no more listening to Mr. Scary Man with the Paper Bag, is that clear? Billy?

BILLY
I made a poopy.

CLAIRE
Well, then we'll just clean you up. Billy made poopy. Billy's oatmeal goes in one end...

BILLY
And out the other! Oatmeal goes into Billy and comes out poopy!

CLAIRE
Go to your crib and I'll get you a new diaper.

[CLAIRE exits offstage]

CLAIRE (OS)
And no finger painting with poopies!

[Apartment door opens, BABYSITTER JANE enters]

BILLY
Babysitter Jane! Mommy, babysitter Jane is here!

CLAIRE (OS)
I'll be there in just a second!

JANE
Good morning, Billy!

BILLY
Good morning! How are you today?

JANE

I'm just fine, Billy. Are you looking forward to us spending the afternoon together?

BILLY

Mommy getting me a new diaper. 'Cause I made poopy in mine.

[CLAIRE enters]

CLAIRE

Good morning, Jane. How are you today?

JANE

I'm just fine, Claire. And you?

CLAIRE

Fine as a frog's hair. And running late for work. *[Gives Jane the diaper]*
Take care of this for me? Thanks.

[CLAIRE crosses to front door; maybe she dons a coat, maybe not. How cold is it where you are?]

CLAIRE

I don't know if it's me or not, but it seems like we use fewer diapers on the days when you're here? How often do you change Billy?

JANE

How often? I don't know. I don't count.

CLAIRE

Guess for me.

JANE

Two, maybe three times. More when you give him oatmeal for breakfast.

CLAIRE

Well, it certainly seems strange. It seemed Monday he didn't poop at all. Never mind. Just keep an eye on his backside, okay? We don't want a pileup, do we?

JANE

Of course not, Claire. No problem.

CLAIRE

Good. Like I said, it's probably the wind blowing through the trees of my mind. Now you have a good day, Billy.

BILLY

I will!

CLAIRE

I love you!

BILLY

I love you too, Mommy!

CLAIRE

I'm going to miss you.

BILLY

I'll miss you, too!

CLAIRE

Oh, and Jane...

JANE

Yes?

CLAIRE

I'm sure I'm mistaking it, but you don't ever smoke in the apartment, do you?

JANE

Of course not!

CLAIRE

Because normally I can smell it on your clothes. I don't particularly mind it; it's impossible not to reek of tobacco when you smoke, but I thought there had been a stronger than normal smell the last few times.

JANE

I can assure you, Claire, that I do not smoke here.

CLAIRE

Good. Well I'm just a mass of worries today it seems. Between the poop question, the smoking stench and the new strange and somewhat vulgar words coming out of Billy's mouth which I'm sure he did not hear from you, well, I'm just at a loss for explanations. I just hope it's not going to be one of those days.

JANE

You have nothing to worry about, Claire. I assure you—

CLAIRE

Yes, I'm sure. And I'm not worried. Just running late, that's all. Well you be a good boy Billy and I'll see you tonight at dinner.

BILLY

Bye, Mommy!

[CLAIRE exits. JANE goes to the window and watches]

JANE

And there she goes, out the front door...down the street...and down the subway entrance. Hallelujah.