

Pranks For Nothing

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FADE IN:

SUPER - VACAVILLE CALIFORNIA APRIL 2018

EXT.STREET - DAY

A quiet suburb. Leafy streets, neat lawns, well kept family homes. The house at number twenty five is a two story Craftsman, newly renovated. Residence of the STEELE family most of whom are in the...

INT.FAMILY ROOM - DAY

RACHEL(40) a tall vivacious woman, checks her handbag. Her husband MIKE(also 40) well built with graying hair, deals with their son JAKE(16)a lean youth with dreadlocks.

MIKE

Sorry son, but we can't take your little brother with us. Adults only for this wedding.

JAKE

Aw Dad, come on. Its Aunt Lauren's third marriage! Each one to a bigger drunk than her. No one will even notice Toby amongst all the alcohol.

RACHEL

He has a point, Mike. About your sister.

MIKE

Ha ha. Ok she does have a tiny bit of a drinking problem but, you know...she means well! Spoils you kids rotten!

Jake throws his arms up in frustration. He points to the date thats displayed under a large digital wall clock:
SATURDAY APRIL 1

JAKE

Look at that. You see what day it is?

Rachel and Mike peer at the clock then give each other a coy smile.

RACHEL/MIKE

Pinch and a poke for the first of the month!

They pinch and poke each other playfully. Its actually kind of cute but creepy...

JAKE

I...no, its April Fools Day! A prankster's Christmas and birthday rolled into one. Toby will...

RACHEL

Oh, Jake please. Your brother is ten years old! Pranks and good-natured hijinks are part of his growing up.

JAKE

Good-natured hijinks? Every week he's up to something. What about when Grandpa Joe was here in January? The stretch wrap across the toilet seat?

Rachel and Mike giggle.

MIKE

That was hilarious, right honey?

RACHEL

Exactly! Jake, you need to loosen up.

JAKE

What, like Grandpa's bowels? Toby had slipped laxatives in his food before hand. I had to clean that mess up!

Rachel tosses the car keys to Mike.

RACHEL

You did? Where were we?

JAKE

At Aunt Lauren's second wedding. That was just the tip of the 'Toby prank' iceberg. He...

Footsteps on the nearby stairs. TOBY(10) appears. He's a quiet looking boy with blue eyes and spiked hair.

TOBY

Hey Mom and Dad! Running off without saying goodbye?

Rachel's face melts as she pats his head. Mike slaps his shoulder.

RACHEL

Of course not, sweetie. We knew you were busy with your homework and didn't want to disturb our wittle Toby Woby.

(beat)

Wight dear? I mean, right, dear?

MIKE

Yeah. The ol' Tobester...studying away like a champion.

TOBY

It was just algorithmic algebra. Nuthin' special.

He gives them the cutest grin, all dimples and perfect teeth.

RACHEL

Oh, isn't he adorable?

JAKE

What the? He's about adorable as finding my underwear drawers full of dozens of fuzzy caterpillars that itch like hell! He needs to be...

MIKE

Maybe he needs to help you with your homework, Jake?

JAKE

Maybe my foot can help his ass right back up the freaking stairs!!

TOBY

Oh, is that the time?

He points to the clock which reads '1130 AM'.

TOBY

Mom, Dad, you should be going, right?

RACHEL

Yes we should. Now Jake honey, you settle down, ok? What time is Sam coming round?

The doorbell rings at that same moment.

JAKE

That will be him.

He moves to the front door, opens it. SAM(17) is a compact young man with a crew cut and glasses. He carries a laptop in a leather case.

RACHEL/MIKE

Hello Sam!!

SAM

Hey, hi Mr and Mrs Steele. Have fun at the wedding.

Mike high-fives him. Rachel pats his cheek. Sam blushes at her touch.

RACHEL

We will. Jake, call me if you need to, ok? And I've left some money on the kitchen bench so you can get pizza later.

Jake nods. He and Sam head to the large table opposite the TV unit. Jake's laptop is already set up there.

SAM

This is gonna be so cool. Playing together on Battlefield One multi in the same room.

MIKE

Have fun guys! Lets go, Rache honey.

Toby is still on the stairs. He blows Rachel a kiss as they leave.

TOBY

Jake? I'll be up in my room.

JAKE

Yeah whatever. I don't want to hear a peep from you, got it?

TOBY

Sure, sure!

He heads back up the stairs. Meanwhile, Sam has the laptops loaded with the game discs and they are into the mayhem of Battlefield One. Jake sits in front of his laptop.

SAM

Ok, Conquest as usual and...

He waits for the game search to kick in.

SAM

Yeah boy! Ballroom Blitz, our favorite!

JAKE

This is going to kick ass!

SAM

I need a quick drink.

He rushes to the kitchen.

INT.KITCHEN - DAY

Sam pretends to fill a glass. Toby stands quietly up the stairwell. Sam mouths 'all set'? Toby grins, gives him the thumbs up before creeping back up the stairs. Sam nods to himself, heads back to the family room...

LATER

INT.FAMILY ROOM - DAY

The boys are engrossed in their game when Sam's mobile rings.

SAM

Hey, its Brad.

JAKE

Tell the bitch to come over!

SAM(ON PHONE)

Yo buddy, what's up?

(beat)

Yeah I'm at Jake's.

(beat)

The fuck? You're kidding me.

His voice rises. Jake stops playing, looks over.

SAM(ON PHONE)

At the mall? Jesus...

JAKE

What's happening?

Sam holds the phone away.

SAM

He's at the mall. Says there's some mad shit going on. Like, people going crazy, all deformed and...attacking other people. Its like, I dunno, zombie type stuff.

JAKE

What the fuck? Ha, come on, I know what you're trying to do here. Prank the old Jakester, right? Ain't gonna happen!

Sam shakes his head, presses the speaker phone button. BRAD'S voice screeches out.

BRAD (ON PHONE)

Jake? This is no prank, man! Its chaos here. And I've heard its going on across the country! Look on the Net, Sam, check the Net, its going viral. Aargh, fuck!

The sound of screaming, broken glass echo around the room before abruptly ending.

SAM

Brad? BRAD!

He presses buttons but the call is done. Sam opens a browser on his laptop, types feverishly. He finds a site, clicks on it.

SAM

Oh my god, he wasn't bullshitting. Look at this. CNN.

He spins the laptop. The screen is filled with scared people running through streets. Smoke and explosions form a soundtrack of carnage.

SAM

L.A an hour ago. Its major real, Jake.

Jake purses his lips, nods. Then he laughs.

JAKE

Nope, I ain't taking the bait. I'm betting you and Brad have set this up. And its childs play for Toby to have edited that video. He's a whiz on that computer, right?

He sits on the sofa, puts his feet.

JAKE

So I'm gonna sit here and totally ignore all your pathetic efforts! In fact I'm going to order pizza soon too. So if your little buddy Toby wants some, you'll have to get him! He can even play BF One with you.

SAM

Wow, I will. No need to get shirty.

He gives Jake a playful pat on the head as he heads to the stairs.

LATER

Jake watches Sam and Toby play Battlefield One. His mobile rings.

JAKE

Its Mom.

(answers phone)

What's up, mother dearest?

Immediately he takes the phone from his ear. The distorted sound of yelling and screaming can be heard.

JAKE

What the hell..

He presses the speaker button. Rachel's voice comes in mid rant, yelling crazily.

RACHEL(O.S ON PHONE)

JAKE! Oh sweet lord, Jake. There's been some kind of...I don't know...people are going crazy, tearing each other to pieces. Oh god, its like some bad movie

(away from phone)

Mike! Just start the car...I don't care, just START THE DAMN CAR!!

JAKE

Mom? I...we saw it on the news...I thought it was Toby and Sam pranking me. Oh, man...

RACHEL(O.S ON PHONE)

What? I can't hear you...

The crescendo of screams and panic rises. Things breaking, glass smashing.

JAKE

(yelling)

Mom, Dad? Get home now! As fast as you can.

RACHEL(O.S ON PHONE)

We'll...try. I love you, Jakey. Mom and Dad love you.

The call cuts off. The three boys stand in a circle.

TOBY

So you believe us now?

JAKE

I...well, yeah I guess so. Fuck, this is not good.

SAM

How long before they get home you think?

JAKE

I dunno. The reception place isn't that far.

TOBY

Oh boy, it sounded like full on carnage over the phone.

Jake purses his lips in thought. He moves towards the table, grabs the TV remote. Sam and Toby exchange a look of panic.

JAKE

Surely there's some coverage of this shit...

He turns on the screen, starts flipping the channels. Sam is about to do something desperate when there's a knock on the door.

TOBY

Don't answer it. Could be these freaks here already.

SAM

Maybe its the pizza guy.

Jake stares at the door. Another knock. He puts the remote down, goes to the door.

JAKE

(whispers)
You two, be ready.

TOBY

For what?

JAKE

I don't know. Just...be ready
(faces door)
Who's there? Identify yourself.

GRUFF VOICE (O.S)

Pizza.

Jake breaths out, nods, opens the door. He falls back in terror, screaming as two figures with hideously deformed heads yell at the top of their voices:

STRANGERS

APRIL FOOLS!!!!!!

The pair step into the house. Jake's eyes are still shut.

JAKE

Arghhh! Arghhh! Don't hurt please
don't fucking hurt me...

The two creatures stand over him. Their clothes look familiar somehow. Jake opens his eyes. He sees the two things looming, starts yelling again for a moment. Then he takes in the clothes gradually...eventually it clicks.

JAKE

I...Mom? Dad? But you...

He slowly gets to his feet as the pair of 'mutants' hug and laugh together. Yes, beneath the loathsome visages lurks Rachel and Mike.

TOBY

Wow, the makeup is awesome.

SAM

Gotta admit I was really scared
too, even though I knew.

RACHEL

Oh poor Jakey. Did we frighten
you, honey?

MIKE

Helluva prank, hey son?

JAKE

I...well, darn it, yeah! Man, you
guys look great. I pretty much
near shi...well, you know, had an
incident in my pants.

Rachel and Mike high five each other. Their 'masks' look amazing.

JAKE

But..what about the wedding?

RACHEL

Just a ruse. Part of the joke.

MIKE

Exactly. As if anyone in their
right mind - drunk or sober -
would marry your Aunt Lauren for
a third time.

JAKE

Those masks are so life-like. Who
did them for you?

RACHEL

Your cousin Rebecca. She's doing a film-making course and part of it has a special effects and makeup program.

JAKE

Ah, so you went to Aunt Kate's place, Bec did you guys up and then...

Mike is on the sofa now. He turns on the TV.

MIKE

Then we parked out on the street, crept up to the house and boom! Hey, the Giants opener is on soon.

TOBY

Cool, Dad. Pizza should be here too.

RACHEL

And the best thing about this latex stuff? Only takes a few minutes to peel off.

Sam and Jake are back at the table on their laptops.

JAKE

Well, I gotta say...Toby, this was perhaps your greatest ever prank. And it didn't involve any type of mess! No buckets of water, no flour bombs, no caterpillars...

MIKE

Best of all...no excrement!

JAKE

Yeah, how could I forget that.

Laughter all around. Suddenly, another knock on the door.

TOBY

Woohoo! Pizza time.

On the TV, the baseball game has been interrupted by a cross to a news room. Mike gets up to answer the door. Sam and Jake notice the TV.

JAKE

Dad? Can you turn up the volume?

Mike still has the remote in his hand.

MIKE

What's up, son? Where's the ballgame gone?

He increases the sound. The knock on the door becomes more erratic.

SAM
 (yells)
 Everybody hush up!
 (beat)
 Sorry, Mrs Steele. Even you.

He blushes as she smiles coyly at him.

JAKE
 Louder, Dad, quick!

RACHEL
 Ooh, breaking news. Its so exciting!

The sound blares out. The screen fills with scenes of chaos and panic in a city street. Crowds of people running. A NEWSMAN reads from behind a desk.

NEWSMAN (ON TV)
 ...and martial law has been declared in several U.S states including here in California. Reports indicate a type of super virus that turns victims into crazed mutants. These are images from downtown Los Angeles an hour ago...

The TV report dies in mid sentence as the screen goes to blank. A silence fills the house as all electrical appliances stop. The knocking on the door pauses then restarts, very faint now.

JAKE
 Power is gone. Toby, this, um isn't part of the April Fools ah, thing, is it?

TOBY
 Nope. Looks like its the end of the world.

RACHEL
 Oh dear. This could get serious.
 (beat)
 Honey, can you open the door for the pizza man? We'll need food while we discuss these new developments in our lives.

MIKE
 Thank god its a Saturday. Can you imagine the traffic if this happened on a Monday? Sheesh!

He flings open the door. The pizza guy is on his knees, struggling to hold the massive pizza box. He's a mess - his face is a crater of deformity and fissures. He moans, sending green drool from his lips.

MIKE

Aargh! Its here! The zombies are at our door already.

He slams the door shut.

EXT.HOUSE - DAY

The mutated pizza guy keels over on the doorstep, the box flopping to the ground. Suddenly, the door opens again. Mike drops a twenty on the dude, grabs the pizza, slams the door. Raised voices from inside - the door opens again, Mike takes the twenty back, drops a ten down. Slams the door.

LATER

INT.FRONT ROOM - DAY

The remnants of the pizza litter the table as they all sit around it. Cans of Coke and a couple of bottles of strong liquor make up the mess. Rachel and Mike have removed their zombie makeup.

RACHEL

Ok, we'll need to barricade all entry points and secure the windows. I'll do a inventory of the pantry and fridge. Luckily I did a full grocery shop yesterday.

MIKE

Ah guys? No need for any of this. Toby/ Tell 'em

TOBY

Thank you. The last few months, Dad and I have been building a secure bunker in the basement as we were worried about the current state of the world.

The others stare blankly back.

MIKE

Honey, we were going to wait till Mother's Day to surprise you but, ah, now is a good time to use it.

SAM

Wow, that is so cool.

RACHEL

Oh Mike, that is so sweet. Our very own bunker?

TOBY

Yep. State of the art security and seals, six month supply of food, a generator and reverse cycle ventilation. It even has a working toilet!

They all get up at once, excited.

RACHEL

Can we go into it now? How on earth did you afford this?

MIKE

Of course we can. And it was mostly paid for with Jake's university fund.

RACHEL

Hmm, that's hardly fair.

MIKE

Well, look at this way...he won't need it now anyway.

RACHEL

Ah, I see. That's great planning, dear.

JAKE

Well, but...hang on, the zombie outbreak hadn't begun when you...

MIKE

No time for that now!

He goes to a window, peeks out. In the distance, smoke billows over houses. Zombie mutants roam the streets, a group of them heading towards the house.

MIKE

They are almost here.

TOBY

But we'll be safe underneath! Woohoo!

JAKE

Wait! What about Sam? He might want to be with his family during all this! Sam?

SAM

Well, I...I think I should stay here.

He has eyes only for Rachel at this stage of Armageddon.

MIKE

Down to the basement!

He opens a door under the stairwell and they disappear downstairs. Glass begins to smash, doors splinter as the horde arrives outside.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The bunker opening is a metal hatch set in the middle of the cement floor. The voices of the family can be faintly heard:

SAM(O.S)

Mr Steele...uh, Mike, in the event that something happens to you and the earths population is wiped out...

MIKE(O.S)

Yes, Sam?

SAM(O.S)

Well, would it be ok I mated with your wife to repopulate the earth?

JAKE(O.S)

What the? Some friend you turned out to be!

MIKE(O.S)

Hush, Jake. Sam , I think thats a fine and noble idea. Rache? You ok with that?

RACHEL(O.S)

Totally.

A loud fart rips through the bunker.

TOBY(O.S)

Sorry.

JAKE(O.S)

Welcome to the apocalypse...

FADE OUT.

THE END