**The Call**

**First Voice: Daughter**

It was the perfect day. Sunny, with clouds, but not the dark gray clouds that suggest rain. The ones that you could look up to and see funny shapes. Today, I saw a shockingly realistic face that was smiling. Except I didn’t see it from below. I was right next to clouds, patiently awaiting my well-deserved vacation in New Zealand.

I had only just gotten off the plane when my mother called. At the time, I did not expect this at all. Sure, my parents call me regularly (sometimes when I’m in an important business meeting, which is a little **aggravating**, but I get used to it) and most of the time, I like that. But not this time.

I was looking for a relaxing weekend on my own while my husband was on a business trip and the kids were at summer camp. I was *not* planning to spend my weekend with my mom. And if she was calling, there was a seventy-three percent chance that she knew I was available to come over. My being in the city that she and my dad live in wasn’t helping.

Don’t get me wrong, I love my parents. But if I were to go over, they would make me ‘my favourite meal’, mac and cheese for dinner (I’m forty-two years old). Then they’d get me bottles and bottles of apple juice, the drink I used to love when I was a kid.

I clumsily got my phone out of my pocket. My hands were so shaky, the phone was pretty much dancing in my hands. When I regained control of myself, I hesitantly pressed the ‘pick up’ button.

We said hello to each other, and then my mom dropped the bomb: She said that someone told her I was in town! Was it my husband Michael? Who else would know I’d be here?

We were both silent for a moment until I let out a small “grhmm”. I could hear my mother smiling on the other end of the line. Then she started going on about how she’d make me mac and cheese and get me a surprise which was no doubt more bottles of apple juice.

I have to say, she sounded so cheerful and desperate for me to visit at the same time. I realized that I’d end up going no matter what.

So, when she asked if I wanted to stop by and have dinner with her and my dad I said I would. My mother let out a massive ‘yippee’ and then quickly hung up.

As I walked out of the airport, I looked back up at the clouds, and I saw the smiley face I had noticed earlier. Only now, it was winking.

**Second Voice: Mother**

It was a **wretched** day. There were clouds swirling around my house at all times. I got a text from my only daughter saying that she was going to be in town in a couple of days. She sounded so excited. I was *not* planning to spend the weekend with my daughter. Instead I was planning on going to California to visit my friend, but it turns out that my daughter chose her time to visit me and my husband during that same week! Ugh, she’s pretty annoying sometimes.

The thing is, I always knew that she missed me, but was too embarrassed to say so. And she never visits me. Obviously, I was the reason she was coming to New Zealand. So I couldn’t let her down.

I called my friend that day to tell her that I’d be a couple days late for my visit. She understood once I told her my reasoning.

Finally, it was the day I should’ve been on my plane to California. According to the weather forecast, it was going to be twenty-three degrees and sunny there. But, today in New Zealand, it was fourteen degrees and cloudy. The clouds were so dark and they seemed to reflect how I felt: a bit angry and a little disappointed.

I decided to call my daughter to tell her that I knew why she was coming and reluctantly invite her to dinner.

She took forever to answer the phone. I bet she’d just got off the plane. She seemed so excited for me to call, I almost felt bad about feeling bad.

I told her that I heard that she was in town. I don’t think she remembered it was herself, but she stayed silent.

When I asked her if she wanted to come over, I don’t know why, but I didn’t even try to hide the bitterness in my voice. Unfortunately, she didn’t pick up on the cue and replied with a cheerful ‘of course!’.

At the end of the call, I let out an obviously fake ‘yippee’, so that she wouldn’t hang up thinking I was hoping to change her mind about coming, which was my initial goal.

Right after I said that, my slightly irritating daughter quickly hung up before I could do any more convincing.

I looked back up at the clouds, and noticed that it had started to rain. I knew it wasn’t raining in California.