

STEPMOM

Anna and Ben, the two children of Jackie and Luke, have to cope with the fact that their parents divorced and that there is a new woman in their father's life: Isabel, a successful photographer. She does her best to treat the kids in a way that makes them still feel at home when being with their dad, but also loves her work and does not plan to give it up. But Jackie, a full-time mother, regards Isabel's efforts as offensively insufficient. She can't understand that work can be important to her as well as the kids.

INT. JACKIE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The clock reads 8:10. Isabel and the kids enter. Annabelle's hair is brushed forward, hiding her face. Ben is ebullient. Jackie's edgy, ready to snap.

JACKIE

How do you hold down a job? It's 8:10.
You were supposed to be here at 7:00.
She's missed her sunrise Groom'n Ride.

ISABEL

This is Friday, her riding lesson is
on Tuesdays.

(pulls out post it)

I got it right here...

JACKIE

Every Tuesday except the 3rd Tuesday of
the month when it's switched to Friday
except in April when she rides on
Thursday. It's not that hard. Didn't
you have a mother?

ISABEL

(flinching)

Can I please have a cup of coffee?

JACKIE

We don't have any coffee.

ISABEL

What is this? The Betty Ford Center?

JACKIE

Annabelle, how's your video rep...

Annabelle RUSHES past her. Ben saunters off after his sister.
Jackie turns to ~~Rachel~~, accusingly.

Isabel

JACKIE

What happened with Annabelle? Has
nothing I said gotten through to you?

ISABEL

Maybe you could back off just a little
bit --

JACKIE

What did you do?

ISABEL

Nothing. Look, I want to talk to you about...well...Luke said to ask you...

Jackie's edge sharpened by ~~Rachel's~~ ^{Isabel} unease.

ISABEL

See, the place where I can connect with Annabelle is my photography. Because she loves video and all...

And...?

ISABEL

She's been talking about this little editing machine, it's only...

JACKIE

...a ridiculously expensive and inappropriate item, which her father and I have already told her she is far too young to own. But you apparently want to buy her forgiveness, with...

ISABEL

(had enough)

Forgiveness? For what, exactly?

Silence.

JACKIE

How much time have you got? Let's start with this morning. Why did she run from this room?

Long beat. Then, ~~Rachel~~ looks dead on at Jackie.

~~Isabel~~
ISABEL

Luke was in the shower this morning and Annabelle sort of walked in without knocking.

JACKIE

I'm sure that didn't upset her. Everyone in our family takes showers.

ISABEL

I was in there in him.

The air is thick with tension.

JACKIE

Did you or Luke talk to her about it afterwards?

ISABEL

No. I thought it might be uncomfortable for her --

JACKIE

You mean for you. A 10-year-old girl is coping with the fact that her father is never coming back to live with his family. She sees her father naked with another woman for the first time. And you think it's best for her if everyone pretends it didn't happen?

(turning away)

This isn't going to work out.

ISABEL

You're damn right. I'm gonna sick of your imperious bullshit. I never said I was Betty Fucking Crocker. If every time life hits her in the face you want to have a 12 hour talk every third Friday or the month -- go ahead! I have a life!

JACKIE

Oh and I don't because I have a children?! The problem is you're too self-involved to ever be a mother.

ISABEL

Maybe the problem is your kids. Maybe they're spoiled, coddled brats!

JACKIE

Get out!

ISABEL

(holding up Post Its)

But it's not on the schedule!

JACKIE

You got to hell!

Jackie turns away, storming out of the room.

ISABEL

Ah Ah Ah! You owe me a quarter --

END