

Joint Therapy
by
Simon Wiedemann

© 2024

INT. THERAPY ROOM - DAY

DAN sits by a round table, facing a seated THERAPIST (30). JAMES, wearing a pink dress, with a red dot on the tip of his nose and with the words '(expletive) off' written on his forehead in pen also sits facing the THERAPIST. The room is bare.

THERAPIST

Hello Dan and James, thank you for coming and thank you Dan for being patient waiting for this meeting. That's a really striking look you have there James. Would you like to explain what it's about?

JAMES

What do you mean?

THERAPIST

What are you trying to say?

JAMES

Oh, I just threw the dress on.

THERAPIST

You threw on a pink dress and wrote an obscene message on your face without thinking about it?

JAMES

I believe it's called a 'fugue'.

JAMES folds his arms with confidence.

THERAPIST

Wow... I honestly don't know what to say...

DAN

See what I have to put up with?!?!

THERAPIST

Did you have a traumatic childhood, James?

JAMES

Oh very. I have tales that will chill the bone.

THERAPIST

Go on...

JAMES

Well... there was this one time, many years ago now...

The THERAPIST looks intrigued.

THERAPIST

Yes??

JAMES

I guess one time I remember Dan covering my eyes the very moment the year 2,000 came...

THERAPIST

What do you mean?

DAN pulls on his hair.

DAN

He's mad! He's mad!

JAMES

I mean exactly what I said. Imagine looking forward to something your whole damn life and being robbed of the experience.

DAN

I do one thing as a PRANK, and James goes on a lifelong hate campaign!

THERAPIST

I see. That's very unusual.

DAN

I know!!

THERAPIST

James, is there anything else you don't like about Dan?

JAMES

Such as?

THERAPIST

Maybe you're hearing Dan's voice in your head mocking you? Saying things like 'I ruined your special day'?

JAMES

Oh all the time...

The THERAPIST relaxes in his chair.

THERAPIST

Ahhhhh-ha. Can you give me an example of what Dan has been saying?

JAMES

You'll never see that time again.
Never. Ever. Take it.

DAN

Why didn't you say?

JAMES

Because you knew.

THERAPIST

Ok. I see what's going on here.
James, did anyone tell you to wear
where you're wearing right now?

JAMES

It just makes me look pretty, that's
all.

THERAPIST

Ok. And what about the message on
your head?

JAMES

I'm edgy, too.

THERAPIST

You're pretty and edgy?

JAMES smiles.

THERAPIST

You're edgy telling me and everyone
to (expletive) off?

JAMES

Mm-hm.

THERAPIST

Ok. James, have you thought about
taking medication?

JAMES

What kind of medication?

THERAPIST

One to stop the voices.

JAMES

Why not just stop the voices by
telling Dan to stop?

THERAPIST

James, Dan has stopped talking, he hasn't spoken in a while now.

JAMES

He just called me a number not-seeing loser.

DAN

Lies!

THERAPIST

I know. James, do you think Dan has magical powers? Powers that let him mock you even when you're miles away from him?

JAMES

You know Lord of the Rings?

The THERAPIST moves closer to JAMES with feigned interest.

THERAPIST

Yes?

JAMES

Dan has loads of rings at his home giving him various powers, mostly telepathy.

THERAPIST

Is that true, Dan?

DAN

What??? NO!

THERAPIST

I know. Only joking. James, look at this...

The THERAPIST retrieves a clear bag of yellow pills from his pocket and shakes it in front of JAMES excitedly.

JAMES

What's that?

THERAPIST

(smiling)

Sweeties!!

JAMES

Sweeties?

THERAPIST

Yes, but what us in the profession
call 'essential sweeties' that you
must always remember to take every
day, that really is very important.

JAMES

I've never heard of essential
sweeties...

THERAPIST

(with a mysterious
tone)

That's because what are in my hand
right now, are very, very special...

JAMES

Wow... What do they do?

THERAPIST

They make other people quiet.

JAMES

Again, why not give the tablets...

THERAPIST

(interrupting)

Sweeties...

JAMES

Sweeties to Dan if he's the one
talking to me all the time?

DAN

James, the therapist is offering you
treats!

JAMES

Ok, fine. Doctor, hand me the bag.

The THERAPIST does so. JAMES eats a tablet.

JAMES

These taste like ass...

THERAPIST

Yes. Now remember to take two a day,
no more, no less. At least for now.

JAMES

I was really excited...

THERAPIST

I know you were. Look, sometimes we have to do things we don't want in like. I for example, don't like interacting with a grown man dressed as a girl who is clearly trying to offend me. All YOU have to do is take some nasty tasting medications that I amusingly referred to as sweets for the rest of you life.

JAMES

Medications?

THERAPIST

Yes, I must come clean. I would never, repeat never offer someone like you sweeties. Steal them off you maybe, but even I did, I wouldn't eat them because I wouldn't trust what you'd do with them.

JAMES

I'm still hearing voices...

DAN

What are they saying?

JAMES

They're saying 'Ask the doctor why I have to take medication if I'm on meds already?'

THERAPIST

A great question. James, the meds you are currently on are clearly complete trash. They're not working. I'm wondering how it was assessed they were indeed working.

JAMES

I lied.

THERAPIST

Of course you did. Well, I think it's best you come back here in a week or so, and see how you're doing then.

DAN

He won't take the meds!

THERAPIST

But I referred to them as sweeties!

JAMES

Yes, then you said they weren't really.

THERAPIST

Actually... they are!

The THERAPIST winks.

JAMES

I'm SO confused...

THERAPIST

Well, you shouldn't be once the sweets kicks in!

JAMES

You said they were sweeties...

THERAPIST

Sweets and sweeties are the same thing.

JAMES

Oh.

THERAPIST

You didn't know that?

JAMES

Sweeties sound more exciting. The way you said it, anyway.

THERAPIST

Ok. Is there anything else you want to say before you leave? James? Dan?

JAMES

Thanks for the sweets AND sweeties at the same time!

DAN

Yes, I'd just like to say... James has a podcast tomorrow and I worry he'll say something crazy...

THERAPIST

Oh don't worry about that, it will make great listening!

DAN

Eh?

THERAPIST

Looking forward to hearing it, try to get into more arguments with him, they're always great. I hope to hear the Dominant Egg too, I know him well.

DAN

How?

THERAPIST

I'm treating him for depression and 'making love' addiction. Good day.

JAMES and DAN leave the room in a daze.