


# The Diary of: Summer Royal

Personal & Confidential. Unless you are Summer Royal, do not read this!

March 14, 2021

I can't believe this. I can't! My dad got fired. **FIRED!** Just like that. Not let go, laid off, job eliminated, budget cut. No. Fired! His supervisor, Irene, called him in for a one-on-one today—and that was that. March 31st will be his last paycheck. March 31st!?!? Yes, this March 31st. This March 31st—when he knew I just committed to my dream school with a tuition statement that would have been hard to handle with two paychecks. Twenty-eight grands. I CANT believe this! I'm gonna throw up. He knew this was coming, he said she would fire him, yet he couldn't keep his pichole shut at work, he had to keep pushing Irene's buttons. The writing was on the wall, but—Noooo!—he couldn't pull himself together and turn that sinking ship around. All he had to do was ask her to sit down, confess to being out of line, promise to wipe the slate clean, and restart with a fresh attitude. All he had to do was what anyone has to do ... and it's ... Not. That. Hard. Seventy-five-thousand dollar bills are now burning in hell. 

Of course [insert sarcasm here], he is blaming Irene, his supervisor, for the fallout. "Huh! Listen to the stupid thing Irene said today!" "She is the dumbest person, I swear!" "I've been doing this for 20 years; she has never attended one hearing, never wrote a decision in her life, and she goes around correcting me?"

ME? I've never been overturned! None of my decisions have been overturned by the Supreme Court." [Bravo, Dad!] "She is constantly checking what we are doing with our time, accusing me with not working enough, now, that she sent us to work from home, but when her damn dog needs his bloody toenails clipped, she can disappear for a day or two without a problem! Well, screw that! I'm not gonna be her 'you-know-what!' Except he doesn't say 'you-know-what,' he says the word. For the last three years, all I heard was ... Irene this and Irene that. Irene's muddy name trampled on by a stream of un-consciousness. From what I gathered, the woman doesn't trust any of her hearing officers managing their own time, probably because she is not managing her time ethically, either. One's nineteen, the other is one shy of twenty, as they say. She micromanages everyone—which is something most people who appreciate keeping their job will tolerate just fine—but my dad won't have any of that. Nope. Nu-huh. No way he will subjugate himself to a "dumb\$##!\$." Not happening. He'd "rather starve than take some dumb woman's \$r@%," he claims with voracity, voracity that makes his claim best left unchecked. Which would be fine IF he didn't have a kid, a kid he has. He "doesn't need this job," his broken record says every chance it gets. He doesn't need this. It never occurs to him that I do. I need a parent with a paycheck. I can't believe he went on taunting Irene for months instead of sucking it up and just focusing on his job like the other hearing officers do. I can't believe he got himself fired like that! I can't even! [Now, I sound like a 2021 Valley Girl.]

Or maybe I can. He never considers how others feel about the words he says, the cutting words that can fell not a person but a sequoia tree. These sardonic, biting remarks he lets out with more ease than a Valley Girl peppers her speech with "it's like you know." Don't you, can't you, I can't believe you wouldn't, couldn't, haven't done this-that-and-the-other—faithfully followed by "You know what? I don't want to hear it. I told you a million times, but you just won't listen, do ya, so don't come telling me about it. Got it?" Same words, same knife, same cut, same hurt, same song, and if I never hear his voice again, I swear to God I will be fine.

He has taunted me my whole life, and—if you ask him—I should be thankful to him. "It's for your own good, Summer." Sure. It did me a lot of good to be called "stupid" when I left my lunchbox at home. "Retarded" when I forgot that I had to weigh in for my jujitsu competition the night before. "Dumbass" for not knowing how to get to that classmate's house. (I see you, dumb Irene, I know how you feel!) You called me a "loser" for missing the cut to go to NHD nationals, or for coming in second at the Triple Crown. It never occurred to you, Dad, that you made us both losers, huh? The only difference is that I can't drink away my sorrow. And you'll never have your daughter back. Nicely done!

You're already taking it out on mom, telling her that she can pay your rent or else you are moving in with us; never mind that I am heading into my AP tests and finals. Six APs, to be exact. Never mind that mom has been sick and tired of your ultimatums that so cleverly present two alternatives: both benefitting you and you, alone. She would have to be retarded not to see that. Now, you want to come here and destroy what the two of us built for the two of us. You want to lecture us, on the daily, with your arrogant, acerbic voice that not even Irene could take another day, another month, another year until you can collect retirement. All for our good. So mom and I can get thick-skinned and not stay pansies. 'Cause without you, pansies we are.

You know, I almost sent you a text to tell you I was sorry you got fired. Almost. I don't know why I couldn't. I don't know why you couldn't tell me you were sorry you got fired, and you won't be able to pay for my college tuition. And don't tell me, again, that Kapiolani Community College is down the road, your road, not my road. Don't tell me I don't need to go to a better college. That you "went KCC" and UH, and you turned out A-OK—no, you didn't. [And that's "went to KCC" and "went to UH"... your batched pigeon is killing me!] Don't tell me to get a student loan to drown me in alcohol like your payments drowned you because your parents didn't help you, either. You've never asked me, once, what dreams I have woven for my life, so don't tell me, once more, about the picture you painted for my future because that's your picture you painted, and you never learned to color within the lines and hate is a strong word but I really, really don't like the color of your crayons. Your. Crayons. All you've ever wanted to do was 'teach me a

lesson.' And teach Irene a lesson. You are a judge, by profession, you have always said. Strike that! You are a judge, paid to be right, and I know, I heard it one too many times: you have never been overturned; you are officially always right. Well, you got it! You are the teacher, the judge, un-overturned. Unfortunately, there are no claimants, no students left in your room. ① One caustic quiz, one nasty drill, one snide remark at a time, you have alienated us, all.

I wish I could tell you that I am sorry for you. That I hope you find another job before the bottle finds you. In the meantime, whatever you do, do not move in with me and mom (⇒ your moronic, dumbass daughter and wife). It's for your own good. Got it? Good.