

I GROW TOMATOES

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INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Two couples - Sarah (early 30s) and Michael (mid-30s) and Claire and Rob (both early-30s) - are sat at a dining table in a lovely, rather middle class kitchen/dining area. Each has a delicious fresh pasta dish in front of them. Rob sits at the table, while Claire pours wine.

SARAH

This looks really delicious. Thanks so much, Rob.

ROB

Ah, my pleasure. Gave me an excuse to try out the new pasta machine!

MICHAEL

Oh, I've got a pasta machine, too.

SARAH

Do you?

MICHAEL

Yeah. I use it all the time.

SARAH

Oh, okay. I didn't know that.

Michael looks at Rob and Claire on the other side of the table and laughs, looking like Sarah is behaving a bit strangely.

MICHAEL

Of course you did! I made you fresh pasta.

CLAIRE

You know, Rob even grew the tomatoes for the sauce himself, too.

ROB

Yeah, we've had a really good year for tomatoes this year. We had more than we knew what to do with!

MICHAEL

Yeah, I grow tomatoes, too.

SARAH

What?

MICHAEL

I grow tomatoes, too. Loads of them.

SARAH

No, you don't...do you?

Michael looks extremely uncomfortable. Rob and Claire look at each other, then return their focus to their plates.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I do. Every week.

SARAH

Where do you grow tomatoes?

MICHAEL

In my home. In the home garden...the garden area of my home is where I grow my tomatoes.

SARAH

I've never seen any tomatoes in your house.

MICHAEL

Well, they're not in the house. They're in the garden.

SARAH

But you never have any in the house.

MICHAEL

I just said I grow them in the garden, Sarah! I'm not lying.

ROB

Let's not stress about it.

CLAIRE

So Sarah, have you seen your brother recently?

MICHAEL

It's not just tomatoes I grow. I grow loads of other vegetables, too.

SARAH

Tomato's a fruit.

MICHAEL

What?

SARAH

Just, if you grow tomatoes, you would surely know that they're not a vegetable? They're a fruit.

MICHAEL

No, they're not.

CLAIRE

Yeah, they are. It's one of those technicalities about seeds on the inside. Cucumber's also a fruit.

ROB

And peppers. And I remember reading something about aubergines - technically they're berries or something!

CLAIRE

That's mad!

Michael stares at them all, looking utterly desperate.

MICHAEL

No, I mean I know tomatoes are a fruit. I knew that. And about those other ones. The aubergine berries. I know all that.

ROB

That's okay, mate. No stress.

MICHAEL

But I *did* know.

CLAIRE

We believe you, Michael.

SARAH

Perhaps we should change the subject?

MICHAEL

I said I grow tomatoes *and* vegetables. Because I grow loads of stuff. Tomatoes are a fruit, and I grow them. And I grow vegetables, so I grow fruits *and* vegetables.

Michael looks at everyone with a slightly wild expression.

SARAH

It's just that I've never seen you growing anything.

MICHAEL

Well, I wanted it to be a surprise.

SARAH

A surprise?

MICHAEL

Yes.

SARAH

We've been dating for five months, and I've never seen any hint of anything homegrown in your kitchen.

MICHAEL

I don't keep them in the kitchen, Sarah!

CLAIRE

Where do you keep them?

MICHAEL

I...sell them. At market. I bring them to market on a Tuesday. On a Tuesday. I sell them at market on a Tuesday. Every Tuesday is when I sell them.

SARAH

You sell tomatoes at a market on a Tuesday?

MICHAEL

I've told you that.

SARAH

You've never said that before.

MICHAEL

I absolutely have.

SARAH

I know I'd remember that if you'd told me.

ROB

What else do you sell?

MICHAEL

Excuse me?

ROB

I mean, what else do you grow and sell?

Michael looks rocked.

MICHAEL

I sell...well...you know about the tomatoes already. They're a fruit. I also grow kiwi fruit. Is it kiwi fruits or kiwis fruit? Or kiwis fruits? That must be one of those American English/British English things. Kiwis fruits. Kiwi...kiwis.

Everyone is staring at Michael.

CLAIRE

Kiwis?

MICHAEL

Yes, kiwis. You know the hairy fruit?

CLAIRE

Yes, I know what kiwis are.

MICHAEL

Well, I sell them. After I grow them, I take them to market and sell them to people.

ROB

You grow them?

MICHAEL

What's that?

ROB

You grow kiwis?

MICHAEL

Of course. Yep. Yes, yeah, I grow kiwi fruits in my garden as well as tomatoes and other fresh produce. I do.

SARAH

Michael, I don't think you can grow kiwis in the UK.

MICHAEL

You absolutely can, because I grow them and they are *delicious*, and people buy them from me every Tuesday.

ROB

Wow. Well, that's a new one on me.

MICHAEL

Well, it's true.

CLAIRE

That's...very cool, Michael. I didn't know that. So, uh...Sarah, how's your brother's baby?

MICHAEL

But I also grow vegetables.

SARAH

Michael, can we leave this now?

MICHAEL

No, I just...I said I grow fruits *and* vegetables, but I've only mentioned the fruit so far. Because tomato's a fruit, and the kiwis fruits. Kiwi fruit...s. But, I also grow vegetables.

Everyone is sat in tense silence, while Michael looks at them all, almost challenging them to ask.

ROB

What vegetables do you -

MICHAEL

Frozen peas.

SARAH

Frozen peas?

MICHAEL

Uh huh.

CLAIRE

Do you mean just 'peas'?

MICHAEL

No, I grow *frozen* peas.

ROB

But Michael, I think people just grow peas, then freeze them. I don't think you can actually grow *frozen* peas.

Rob and Claire laugh a little nervously, but Sarah looks uncomfortable. Michael continues to look desperate, backed into a corner. He weakly tries to laugh along.

MICHAEL

No, obviously...obviously they're not frozen when I *plant* them.

SARAH

But -

MICHAEL

No, when I *plant* them, they're not frozen. They're defrosted. Defrosted. You defrost them, then plant them. Then, when they grow, they're frozen on the branch.

CLAIRE

The branch?

MICHAEL

Yes, frozen peas on the branch. Then you pick them and you quickly have to get them to the fridge. The freezer. The freezer part of the fridge. It's a fridge freezer. And you freeze them.

ROB

But they're already frozen?

MICHAEL

Yes, Rob. They're still frozen. They stay frozen in the freezer. Then you defrost them to eat them.

SARAH

Or plant them?

MICHAEL

Uh huh. Yep.

Stunned silence.

ROB

Right...well, there we go.

CLAIRE

Sarah, how's -

MICHAEL

But I don't sell those.

SARAH

Oh Christ.

MICHAEL

There's no market for those. I mean, there's no room at the market for those. No freezer. So I can't sell frozen peas. Because there's no freezer at the market. So I can't sell them there.

CLAIRE

Right...so what do you -

MICHAEL

I eat them. I eat the frozen peas.

SARAH

You eat *all* the peas that you grow?

MICHAEL

Frozen peas.

SARAH

You eat *all* the frozen peas?

MICHAEL

Yes, I do. And they are delicious.

ROB

Wow.

MICHAEL

So, I've got to take off.

SARAH

What?!

Michael lifts his napkin and dabs delicately at the sides of his mouth, pushing his chair out.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I've got to go.

CLAIRE

But we've just served up...

MICHAEL

Yeah, sorry. I've got to be up early for business tomorrow.

SARAH

Business? Michael, you work in a bookshop.

MICHAEL

That's right. I'm going on a book business trip.

SARAH

Wait, you're going away?!

MICHAEL

Yeah, I have to be up early for the flight, so I have to leave right now. For packing. For to pack for my business trip tomorrow.

Michael stands up, while the others look confused. Sarah looks incredulous.

SARAH

Where are you going?

MICHAEL

Where?

SARAH

Yes, Michael. Where are you going on your trip?

MICHAEL

I've got to go to Bermuda.

SARAH

Bermuda?!

ROB

Where in Bermuda?

Michael looks totally shaken.

MICHAEL

Do you...*know* Bermuda?

ROB

Well, not really. But my uncle actually -

MICHAEL

Well, I'm going to the triangle area. The Bermuda Triangle. That's where I have to travel on business.

CLAIRE

Book business?

MICHAEL

Largely, yeah. Business about books. Book. A book. One book...that I'm writing about Bermuda. About the Bermuda Triangle. It's one of the only naturally occurring triangles in nature, so I'm writing a book about the Bermuda Triangle, and that's why I've got to go to Bermuda.

SARAH

Michael, what are you -

MICHAEL

So, yeah. I'm actually going to be away for a while, so I've got to pack very much things. Very many things. Lots. I have a lot of packing to pack. So I should go home right now.

SARAH

Wait, how long are you going to be away?

Michael thinks.

MICHAEL

Uhhh...probably around three, I think.

SARAH

Three weeks?

MICHAEL

Years. Three years in Bermuda. I have to do lots of research, so I'll be away for three years researching the Bermuda Triangle. One year for each side of the...yeah. So -

SARAH

Hold on, you're going away for three years?! When were you going to tell me?

MICHAEL

I'm pretty sure I told you last Thursday.

Rob and Claire look very uncomfortable.

CLAIRE

Maybe we should give you guys a moment?

MICHAEL

No, it's okay. Honestly, I've got to go now, but thank you for *such* a lovely evening. It was great to finally meet Sarah's friends. And Sarah, I'll call you about things. About watering my plants. My kiwis. I'd love you to water my kiwis fruit.

Sarah is stunned. Rob and Claire look very uneasy. Michael kisses Sarah on the cheek, then picks up his jacket and turns for the door.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll see you all soon. Have a good rest of your meal. Okay, bye. Thanks. Bye.

Michael exits. Sarah, Rob and Claire sit in silence. Eventually, Claire speaks.

CLAIRE

He seems great.

SARAH

So great.

They pick up their forks and resume eating.

THE END