

Traffic Lights

- Move over.
- No, you move over.
- What? You're the thinner one!!
- But I'm way taller than you! And more buff.
- Yeah, right.
- I know I am.
- *Both of you* move over.
- But I don't want to sit in the middle!
- Stop fussing! We're going to be late if you two keep fighting!
- Your sister's right, you know. Anyway, first off – did you remember to bring the tickets?
- Mum! For the thousandth time, *yes!* So let's leave before we miss the concert!
- Ha! You don't have to worry – since that time we missed our flight to Nagoya, she hasn't done something irresponsible ever again.
- See? So stop harrying me...*ha!* No pun intended; really. But I'm old enough to not do something so stupid again, so there.
- Really? I thought it was because of the grounding, banning from TV and no allowance for a month that straightened you out, not your age. Mentally, I think you're still around...five?
- *Hey!* Muuum, he's being mean again!
- See? Still five.
- Come *on*, you know that I was just pretending! But for that, I'm gonna up the interest to 10% per week of not returning the money you borrowed.
- Hey, wha – ? I was just kidding! Come on, bestest-little-sister-in-the-world. 10% is insane – even Shark Loan and black market moneylenders don't have such a high interest rate!
- Fine. Then 9.99%. That okay with you?
- I give up.
- Ha! I win again!
- Keep it down, you two! Your father needs to concentrate on driving. You know what happens when he gets too distracted.
- What? Hey, my driving skills aren't *that* bad.
- Uhhh...
- Uhhh...
- Yes, they are. Why didn't you let mum drive? Or me?
- There should be a law against kids turning on their own father...
- There should be a law against letting you drive. Remember the time you braked so suddenly that I dropped my KFC meal onto the floor? It took *weeks* before the smell wore off. You set off numerous unwanted and definitely unnecessary cravings for junk food. Heinous crimes like that make me seriously question what kind of passing system the driving association in America has.
- "Heinous crimes"? HAHA! Burn!
- That was an accident, okay? And it wasn't completely my fault either – the car in front of me forgot to signal! And what's burning?
- ...Anyway, you're just too chivalrous to let mum drive.
- More like possessive.
- Maybe Dad's trying to be all macho...
- Nah, I'd say sexi –
- AHEM! I'm still here, you know.
- Don't tease your father. He's improved a lot more than you know...

- You're the one who started it. And now you're implying something even worse.
- Ah, um, I didn't mean it in *that* way...oh dear, don't be upset. The truth hurts but I love you anyway...
- Thanks...like I needed that speech...
- I don't know – I'm impressed that mum's still alive.
- I still have feelings, you know.
- Ah, sorry Dad. But it's kinda fun to tease you. Besides, you do it to us all the time anyway.
- Cold as ever.
- Anyway. What were we going to watch again?
- Wow, what a Dori.
- Hey! I was busy doing my homework at that time!
- More like facebook. Or MSN.
- That's more you than me!
- Sure, sure. Anyway, we're going to watch the orchestra perform movie scores by John Williams.
- Who's that?
- Who's...you don't know who John Williams is?!
- Um, I wouldn't have asked if I didn't know, now would I?
- For all your brains...
- Shut up. Don't tell me if you don't want to.
- He did the music score for 'Star Wars', 'Memoirs of a Geisha', 'E.T.' and more. He's won several Oscars already as well. We should try to get his autograph...
- Oh. Well, you should have said so earlier.
- Whatever. And I thought you said you weren't coming because you had a project to do.
- I did. But I managed to trudge through it with Mara and Carly. We shared research notes so it wouldn't take as long.
- Cheater.
- Hey, at least we didn't hand in the exact same projects! Nor copy nor plagiarise. We're not going to do an 'Emma'.
- You mean that girl you were talking to us about who handed in the exact same thing as another person in the class?
- Yeah. Totally stupid thing to do, especially when the person she copied was a non-native English speaker. It was so obvious, even after correcting most of the grammatical mistakes.
- Kids these days...if I had done that when I was in boarding school, the teacher would whip me good before sending me to bed without dinner. In the worst-case scenario, expulsion. Plus hell from my own father. And mother. Now that is worse than anything your teachers could ever do to you. By the way, how was she punished?
- She failed that subject.
- Ah. Lucky.
- Not really. Now she won't get her diploma no matter how hard she works in her other subjects.
- A destroyed future versus physical pain. Hard choice...
- You forgot 'versus nothing'. That's why it's best to avoid it altogether – I hope all of you don't ever do what this 'Emma' did, okay?
- We're not that stupid.
- ...Maybe you are.
- *Hey!*
- Well, maybe not stupid, but I think you'd be desperate enough to do it. Remember that time when –

- I already told you, that was ages ago when we were 7th graders!
- So you admit it.
- You're incorrigible.
- Am I supposed to be afraid, just because you used a big word for once?
- ...Shut up.
- Haha. I win again!
- And you! Aren't you going to say anything?!
- What is there to say?
- HA! Double victory!
- We're guys! We've got to stick together!
- That just sounded so cheesy that I think I'd rather not.
- Ugh...why is everyone against meeeeeeeeeee...
- I dunno. Because you're whining like a girl? Ow! What was that for?!
- Who's the girl now?
- ...Was that supposed to be an insult?
- Ow! Hey, what the – ?
- Ohhh, catfight! Catfight!
- Don't encourage them! And you two, what did I say about your father losing his concentration?
- He started it...
- Five-year-old.
- *Ahem.*
- Sorry.
- Are we there yet?
- No.
- I feel kinda hungry...why did we have to eat such a small dinner? I'm a growing boy!
- Because *someone* was running late.
- There should be a law against kids turning against their own mother too. Besides, we can always eat after the concert.
- Can I pick the restaurant?
- Hey, no fair – you picked it out last time!
- That's because I know the most about good restaurants. Tell me – when was the last time you went out with your friends to eat?
- Last week, I think?
- See?
- But that's besides the point – and you're out so often that we hardly see you after school anymore.
- Meaning I've got a bigger and better knowledge about which restaurants are good.
- It's all opinionated. And we all know your weakness to curry.
- What's wrong with curry? You like it too!
- But I'm not obsessed about it. There's a huge difference there.
- Whatever. What I'm saying is that I have the most experience with dining out, so can't you trust me? And last time when I picked out 'La Fleur', you all loved it!
- Fine, fine.
- As long as you make sure that it's not too expensive. I'm not made of money, you know.
- Really?
- Ha, ha.
- Hey mum, what was all those phone calls about today? I was going to go crazy answering all

- of them and 99.9% of the time, I was mistaken for you. There was even this one lady who just kept talking and talking, thinking that I was you until I had to forcefully end the conversation.
- Sorry about that, but there's a huge event I'm organising right now for work. And the couple plus their families are the anxious, indecisive types.
 - Ah. That explains some of the desperate people I was hearing. I thought that maybe some sugar-high adults were passing our phone number around. There was also this one guy who kept calling again and again, even though I told him that I would tell you to call him back. And why is it always me answering the phone?? You two could do it once in a while as well! What are the landline phones in your rooms for? Decoration??
 - Private purposes.
 - Translation: girlfriends.
 - What – Stephanie and Grace are just my friends! And what's with the plural? You don't actually believe that I'd two-time, do you? And this is a stupid discussion because I don't even have a girlfriend.
 - Yet. No, wait – I take that back. With *your* behaviour, maybe the only woman who'll love you is mum. And maybe, just maybe, me too – but only at certain times. If you're lucky.
 - You're mean.
 - And you're in my debt so you can't do anything about it. So bite me.
 - ...I don't even know you. Why do I have a sister like you?
 - Aww, come on, you know you love me deep, deep down inside somewhere.
 - So deep that it falls down to hell.
 - Love doesn't exist in hell.
 - But they say that "all's fair in love and war". So if love's so similar to war, then there must be something 'down there'.
 - Don't get all philosophical on me. I don't know if your brain can take it.
 - Stop insulting my intelligence! We share half of the same genes, right? So you're half insulting yourself too!
 - What kind of logic is that?
 - She's right there, you know.
 - And why are you always on her side??
 - Not *always*. But it's usually because she makes more sense than you.
 - Ah, feel the love...
 - Feel the pain.
 - Ow! Hey! I was just joking!
 - You know, I think that you three still act like you were five, six and eight. Makes me feel young again.
 - Okay, we get it. We'll shut up now.
 - Dad can get pretty scary when he wants to.
 - I heard that.
 - Oh look, we're here already.
 - Look out for a parking spot. The place should be packed today.
 - Do you have the tickets?
 - Shall I deign you with a reply?
 - Look, that guy over there is leaving.
 - Dad! Watch that van on your left!
 - And your right!
 - You suck at parking. Do you want me to do it?
 - You guys...
 - Right, right. Let's go!