

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

LOLA, a mermaid stuck inside 13-year-old Chelsea's body, sits at the dining room table -- set with plates of FISH STICKS.

Lola picks at the FISH STICKS, her discomfort palpable.

LOLA

I just can't eat these poor little
mushed up fish. I'm not a murderer!

DANNY, 10-year-old, forks FISH STICKS onto his plate.

DANNY

Why were you nicer when you had
performance anxiety?

MOM shoots Lola and Danny a concerned glance.

MOM

Kids, please. Boundaries. Chelsea,
I know you're still getting over
falling off the boat.

Lola smiles fondly at her new mom.

DANNY

We always eat Fish Sticks on
Friday, Chelz. We do it for dad.

LOLA

Well, dad's not here, so I propose
Seaweed Saturdays. For shiny hair.

Mom is speechless. Danny eyes his sister.

DANNY

It's Fish Sticks Friday. Not freaky
Friday. You're acting like you
don't care.

LOLA

I care, Danny! But maybe Dad's the
one who doesn't care.

MOM

Dad hates being at sea away from
the family. Your father loves you.

Lola cradles a fish stick in her hand like a baby.

LOLA

But he loves killing fish, too.

DANNY
Yeah, well, he's a fisherman.

BEAT.

MOM
Oh, I know. I know what's up with
you, young lady. You can't fool me.

FREEZING, Lola holds her breath, squeezing the FISH STICK.

MOM
Did those crazy Instagram
influencers turn you into a vegan?

Lola presses her lips tightly.

MOM
You're smarter than social media.

Mom snatches Lola's PHONE -- Lola PANICS!

LOLA
Hey! I need that phone to help save
the humpbacks from dying.

Mom and Danny stare, bewildered by Lola's cryptic behavior.

MOM
A growing girl needs real protein.

DANNY
Yeah, even the whales know eating
fish makes you smarter.

Lola's jaw drops -- she pushes her plate away.

DANNY
What are you afraid of, sis?
Kissing Morris Max with your smelly
fish breath?

MOM
Do you plan on kissing Morris Max
at the eighth grade Jam tonight?

LOLA
We're just singing our duet.

MOM
Your songs are all you need to
raise awareness about the
humpbacks. Come on, eat up.

LOLA
No! I can't. I won't.

The dining room temperature rises.

MOM
Then help me to understand why. And
if you don't, no phone. No Jam.

Lola GULPS. She hesitates --

MOM
Tell me the truth! This is hard for
me. Your father leaves me alone. I
do all the parenting, I'm only
human, and I'm so concerned about
you, Chelsea. Why won't you eat
Fish Sticks Friday? You've been
eating them since you were born!

Lola bites her clenched fist -- wonders what to do.

LOLA
The truth is...mother, I love fish.
All fish sizes. All fish shapes.
Even mangled up fish rectangles.

BEAT.

TEARS roll down, as Lola stuffs the FISH STICKS in her mouth.

LOLA
(mouth full)
Mm. Tastes like...Burger King.

Danny slaps Lola on the back and laughs.

DANNY
Good to have you back, sis.
(to Mom)
Hey, can I go to the Jam, too?

LOLA
No. MOM
No.

Danny takes the rejection in stride.

DANNY
Cool. I got research to do.
(under his breath)
On the mermaid invasion.