

**DAD.** Your mother called – she wants you to check on the ham.

**BETH.** Whataya mean, “check on the ham”?

**DAD.** I don’t know, sweetheart – I guess check to see if it’s done.

**BETH.** Who am I, Martha Stewart? I don’t know anything about ham. I don’t eat meat.

**DAD.** Since when?

**BETH.** Aaaaaah, I swear! You never listen to a word that I say. I told you months ago that I was becoming a vegetarian.

**DAD.** Stop swearing – and could you go back to your roots and maybe pretend you’re checking on *last year’s* ham?

**BETH.** DAD, I DON’T KNOW A THING ABOUT THE READINESS OF HAM!!!

**DAD.** Fine. We’ll just give the whole family salmonella as a Christmas present.

**BETH.** Can I choose which ones to poison?!

**DAD.** Beth, don’t start.

**BETH.** I’m just speaking the truth. Don’t pretend that there aren’t certain family members that you’d just love to smother in their sleep.

**DAD.** (*sarcastically*) It’s easy to see that you’re filled with the peace, love, and joy of the Christmas spirit.

**BETH.** *Christmas*, I love. But when our relatives come, there’s no peace and thus: no joy!

**DAD.** There are folks that would kill to be in a family like ours.

**BETH.** And others who want to *kill* a family like ours.

**DAD.** Just what is it about our family that you don’t like?

**BETH.** It’d be faster to tell you what I *do* like.

(*Dad’s cell phone rings and he pauses to answer.*)

**DAD.** (*to BETH*) Go get the ham and sit it on the dining room table – and don’t forget to put down a trivet.  
(*to his wife*) Hello...Hi. Sweetheart...no, not yet...

yes...Well, we’re working on it. Mmm-hmm. She says she doesn’t know...Okay. (*to BETH*) Get out the meat thermometer.

**BETH.** The what?

**DAD.** The MEAT THER-MOME-E-TER.

**BETH.** I’m not an immigrant – I speak English. I just don’t know what a (*mocking him*) MEAT THER-MOME-E-TER is!

**DAD.** (*into phone*) Hang on sweetheart – I need to get the thermometer. Here, talk to your mom.

(*He hands her the phone and goes into the kitchen and we hear him digging through the drawers. He re-enters and grabs the phone.*)

(*to his wife*) Where is it?...Well, why in the world do you keep it there?

(*to BETH*) Go in the kitchen, open the cabinet and get the Crisco off the second shelf – the thermometer is in the Crisco can.

**BETH.** Why’s it in there?

**DAD.** Because your mom is neurotic – just go.

(*BETH exits, less than enthused.*)

Yes honey, we will...no...yes, I did...sweetheart, the ham may be overcooking ‘as we speak...Great... All right, I love you too. Have a safe flight – we’ll say prayers for you. Okay, bye.

(*BETH enters carrying the thermometer.*)

**BETH.** Here.

**DAD.** (*writing info down on a tablet*) Just jab it in the ham and give me a reading.

**BETH.** Eeeeeew, I am not “jabbing it in” – that’s disgusting.

**DAD.** What’s disgusting about it?!

**BETH.** Because I told you – I HATE MEAT!

~~**DAD.** You’ve always eaten meat. Since when is meat suddenly so horrid that you can’t suck a thermometer in it and tell me the temperature?~~

①

DAD

+

BETH