

Pieces of April

(Comedy) (2003)

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Major Characters

April Burns.....Katie Holmes
A young woman living alone in New York City, who decides to make a Thanksgiving dinner for her family in her small and poor apartment, despite the fact that she has never gotten along with them.

Bobby.....Derek Luke
April's sweet African-American boyfriend, who is very much in love with her.

Joy Burns.....Patricia Clarkson
April's mom, who is very sick with breast cancer, who is very hesitant to go to April's home because she has been so angry at her for so long.

Jim Burns.....Oliver Platt
April's father, who has real hope that April and the rest of the family can have a nice Thanksgiving dinner together.

Timmy Burns.....John Gallagher, Jr.
April's younger brother, who loves to take pictures of everything going on in his family.

Beth Burns.....Alison Pill
April's younger sister, who feels the family should not even try to have dinner with April, since that would be too stressful for her mom.

Grandma Dottie.....Alice Drummond
April's grandmother and Joy's mom, who is both very sweet and losing her memory.

Wayne.....Sean Hayes
April's very strange upstairs neighbor who agrees to let her use his oven after her own oven stops working.

Plot Summary

This film is the story of a young woman of about 20, who is living on her own in a small run down apartment in New York City. April has never gotten along well with her middle class family, who live in a suburb of New York, but one day she decides to invite them all over for a Thanksgiving dinner that she will prepare herself, even though she doesn't really know how to cook (Thanksgiving is probably the most popular holiday in America because almost

everyone goes to a large turkey dinner, in which extended families and friends come together from all over the country. It is held on the last Thursday of November, and, in theory, celebrates the meal that the first white Americans had with the local Native Americans, in the colony of Massachusetts, in 1621).

April's family is very hesitant to travel to her apartment, because none of them get along with her. Joy is the most nervous, partly because she is already very weak from fighting cancer, and partly because she doesn't believe she can ever understand her out of control daughter. Beth is also very much against going to New York, but Jim feels there is always hope for a new beginning, and Timothy would simply like to take photos of whatever happens. Meanwhile, April is going to try and make it work, and with the help of Bobby and various neighbors, she's determined to show that any family, no matter how dysfunctional (broken), can join together for at least one warm and special meal.

Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

April's family heads for New York as she and Bobby begin preparations for the big Thanksgiving meal.

Come on, this is gonna be your big day.

"Come on" is the most versatile and widely used phrasal verb in English, though it is only used in the command form. Note that "going to" ---> gonna in rapid speech.

Would you knock?!

The verb to use when you tap on a door with your fist or hands closed, in order to announce that there is someone there.

OK, everybody. **Let's move it!**

A common and colloquial way of saying "Let's go!"

Who got an 'A' in Home Ec?

A short way of saying "Home Economics," which is an interesting term for a high school class in which students learn about cooking and other practical things around the house (An 'A' is the best possible grade).

Could you zip me up, please?

"To zip up" a dress is to move the zipper up so that it is closed shut.

Screw the neighbors! Honk the goddam horn!

"To screw" is a colloquial word meaning to have sex, though here it is used as a vulgar insult word. Still, it's less crude than fuck. "To honk" a horn is to push on it so that it makes a warning sound. "Goddamn" is a vulgar filler word that is used to express emotion such as anger.

Nauseous, dizzy? :: I feel great.

If a person is “nauseous,” they feel sick to their stomach, and might even throw up or vomit. If a person is “dizzy,” they feel like they’re going to fall down, usually because they have a spinning sensation in their head.

You know, mom, all you have to say is
“I don’t feel up to it” and we’ll all understand.

If you “don’t feel up to” doing something, you don’t have the strength, ability or desire to do it.

Oh, Jesus, where’s your tie?

A common filler word, even for non-religious people, to show emotion such as frustration, or in this case, worry.

So no numbness or discomfort?

“Numbness” is the sensation of not being able to feel anything in a particular part of the body.

Do you feel sweaty, clammy? Are your fingers tingly?

If a person feels “clammy,” they feel wet and cold, and if their fingers are “tingly,” they feel as if lots of tiny (but not painful) pins or needles are being gently stuck into them.

You can never have enough silverware.

“Silverware” refers to forks, knives and spoons. This is one common way of saying “One can always use more silverware”

A hammer I was holding fell on them.

A metal tool for driving nails into wood. This is April’s silly way of saying she broke them intentionally, or on purpose.

They were 50 cents. :: You got yourself a deal.

“To get a deal” is to pay inexpensively for something that’s worth more.

At 375 degrees and fully stuffed, a 15 pound turkey will take five hours to cook.

If a turkey is “stuffed,” it is filled with food, such as celery, onions and a mixture of small pieces of bread (which is called *stuffing*).

If you figure 20 minutes a pound.

In this case, a word for guess or estimate (It often means to think).

Mashed potatoes, gravy, sweet potatoes.

If potatoes are “mashed,” they are crushed into a soft and smooth texture. “Gravy” is a sauce for meats and vegetables, and “sweet potatoes” are a very sweet vegetable that is often served at Thanksgiving dinners.

Sprinkle on brown sugar.

“To sprinkle” on sugar or a spice is to pour it gently, so that it comes out of the container in small bits and pieces.

Green bean casserole made with green bean **stuff**.

A "casserole" is a dish made with vegetables and cheese or bread, that is baked in an oven. "Stuff" is an overused word for things in general, and it sounds especially silly here (with 'green bean' as an adjective!)

Another dish made with crushed crackers and oysters.

If a food is "crushed," it is smashed into little pieces. "Crackers" are a type of salty snack food that is small, thin and crispy, and made from a bread product. "Oysters" are an expensive type of shell fish.

Right before baking, barely cover it with hot milk.

"To bake" a food is to cook it in an oven.

Cranberry sauce; Open the can, pop it on a serving dish. How simple is that?!

"Cranberry sauce" is a much loved food at Thanksgiving dinners, usually made from fresh (and not canned!) red cranberries. "To pop" something on a plate is a slangy way of saying to put it there quickly. "How simple is that?" is a way of saying "That's so simple that anybody can do it!"

Waldorf salad made with apple, celery, nuts, grapes. The dressing is made with mayonnaise thinned with milk or cream and sweetener.

"Waldorf Salad" is a favorite salad, described above, that's popular at expensive restaurants. "Dressing" refers to salad dressing, and "mayonnaise" is a type of popular American dressing made from egg-yolks that is used on a lot on sandwiches. If a dressing is "thinned" with milk, it is made more liquid.

Pumpkin pie. Store bought from a very, very expensive store.

The classic American Thanksgiving dessert, made from fresh orange pumpkins (Note that most people would much prefer to have it made fresh, rather than bought at a store!).

Aren't you a love!

Grandma's gentle way of telling Timmy that he is a very sweet and gentle boy.

Timmy's your grandson. :: Well, **you don't say!**

A common and sweet way of expressing surprise or disbelief.

Welcome to Krispy Kreme; May I take your order?

"Krispy Kreme" is a popular fast food doughnut restaurant. The second sentence is how waiters and waitresses ask what you'd like to eat (Note that the noun---"an order"---is not as aggressive as the verb).

I'll have a vanilla covered cream filled, please, and two glazed crullers.

Two types of doughnuts. Simple "glaze doughnuts," made with a type of liquid sugar, are the most loved and popular.

What do you think about cloth napkins?

A fancy washable napkin that is more expensive than paper ones.

How can anyone not believe in God?

A funny question to ask if the speaker is saying this simply because they can't believe how delicious a good glazed doughnut is!

They don't deserve decorations.

In this context, a word for colorful balloons, ribbons and other types of coverings that make a place look more like a party is happening.

Nobody wants your opinion. :: **Stay out of it!**

If you tell a person to "stay out of" an argument, you're telling them to stay quiet and not get involved. A common and aggressive expression.

I'm the excited one, now. I have fritos, cheetos.

Well known brands of potato chips.

Not when she called to check out the ingredients of a certain recipe!

The "ingredients" of a dish are the individual foods that go into it (such as eggs and cheese for an omelet). A "recipe" is a list of foods to make something, along with the instructions for how to prepare it.

I'm nipping this in the bud right now!

"To nip something in the bud" is to stop it or kill it before it becomes too big or powerful. "To nip" is pinch something between one's fingers so that it is cut off or severed, and the "bud" of a plant is the middle part that has not yet grown or developed.

I bet she called collect. I would never call collect. :: Aren't you the most perfect ever?

"To call collect" is to make a long-distance phone call in which the person who answers the phone is the one pays for the call.

Honey, that is so wasteful.

If an action is "wasteful," it leads to the misuse, throwing away or waste of important resources, from water to money.

Well, you're a better man than me.

A fun way for the speaker to tell a person that they are braver or wiser than the speaker himself (Though note it's usually said only between two *men*. Otherwise, you should say *person* !)

Don't get me wrong. I'm glad we're going.

"Don't get me wrong" is a way of saying "Don't misunderstand what I'm trying to say." If a person is "glad," they are happy or satisfied.

Instead of April showing up with some new piercing, or some ugly new tattoo, and, God forbid, staying overnight...

A “piercing” is a piece of jewelry that is stuck through a piece of skin (like earrings, though it’s now become more common to pierce all kinds of body parts, including one’s tongue!). A “tattoo” is a drawing that is permanently marked on a person’s skin. “God forbid” is a common way of expressing the hope that what is being discussed will never happen.

We get to show up, experience the disaster that is her life, smile through it, and before you know it, we’re on our way back home!

“To show up” is to arrive. A “disaster” is a catastrophe or something that happens which is truly horrible and destroys both lives and property.

“Before you know it” is a way of saying that time will pass very quickly.

Miss me? :: You bet!

One way of saying yes, or absolutely.

Eddie the drug dealer is history....and she’s met this new guy.

A “drug dealer” sells illegal drugs, often on street corners. In this context, if a person “is history,” they are no longer considered important or may not even be around or near anymore.

This guy sounds promising. :: Is that so?

If a person is “promising,” they are considered attractive because they have a lot of potential to do good things in the future.

April’s neighbors help out as her oven fails to light, and the family gets closer to the city.

She’s white, she’s got her youth, her whole privileged life ahead of her—I am looking forward to hearing about her problems.

A person’s “youth” is the status or quality of being young. If a person’s life is “privileged,” they have been given great advantages compared to other people, such as wealth, education, or in this case, white skin.

I can’t imagine! Eugene here could be chewing on his supper and choke to death on a turkey bone this very day!

“I can’t imagine” is a way of saying something is so horrible it’s hard to accept or understand. “Supper” is another word for a meal, especially dinner. If a person “chokes to death,” they die after food gets caught in their throat and they can no longer breathe.

You don’t get along, do you? :: No, never have.

“To get along” with a person is to both like them and enjoy passing time with them.

That will give you two hours to find another oven. How’s that sound?

A way of asking “Is that OK with you?”

Yo, I got a message from you. Tyrone's looking for you.

"Yo" is a very slangy way of greeting people that is common among teenagers.

It's a nice gesture.

An important word for anything that is done out of politeness or kindness to show other people your good intentions (for example, April's cooking a big Thanksgiving dinner is a nice gesture to her family).

You haven't been back? :: Hell, no.

A slangy and somewhat crude way of saying "absolutely not!"

I'm the first pancake.

A "pancake" is a popular flat cake that is served with syrup for breakfast. In this case, April is saying since she was the first child, she was treated like the first pancake that a chef throws away, before they learn to cook the pancakes for just the right amount of time.

Has the bird been stuffed?

"To stuff" a turkey is to fill it with food such as vegetables and bread crumbs.

A stalk of celery. Mostly it's just the mix from the box.

A "stalk" is the main part of a piece of celery. "Mix" refers to any kind of foods that are mixed together (in this case, bread crumbs and spices for turkey stuffing). If food is "from the box," it is sold in a box from a store, rather than freshly made.

You used store-bought stuffing? :: Yeah, is that a bad thing?

Again, if food is "store bought," it's sold in a box or can or frozen, and is not freshly made at home (For Thanksgiving dinners, everyone prefers food that is made fresh at home!)

I'm sure it's a great brand. A fine brand.

An important word for the name of a company that produces a product, from food to cars (If a product is a good brand, it has a good reputation).

The meat's all pink. No flavor whatsoever.

"Whatsoever" is another way of saying none at all, or absolutely none.

I want to take an alternate route.

An "alternate route" is a different or alternative way to get to where you are going (perhaps a less known but faster street).

Back roads. See things we've never seen.

"Back roads" are streets that are often in the country and not very well known, so that there are few drivers or people on them.

You can either let me study the map or you can rely on my **uncanny** sense of direction.

“Uncanny” is an excellent adjective that means incredible or way beyond what is expected or even thought humanly possible.

Sweet potato soup with buttered pecans, herbed oyster stuffing, giblet gravy, rosemary green beans, sautéed red Swiss chard with garlic...

“Pecans” are a delicious type of sweet nut. “Giblet gravy” is a sauce made with chicken organs such as stomach intestines. If food is “sautéed,” it is fried in some fat or butter. “Chard” is a type of leafy green vegetable.

...hickory ice cream and maple pumpkin pie.

“Hickory” is a nutty flavor, and “maple” is the sweet and delicious syrup found in trees, that is often used on pancakes.

It was a squirrel. Or a very small raccoon.

Two types of wild animals, often found on city streets.

Hop to it! :: Mom’s looking for a spot.

“Hop to it” is a way of saying “hurry up.” In this context, a “spot” is a particular place or piece of land.

While we’re waiting for it to dissolve, you stir.

If food “dissolves,” it melts into tiny pieces. “To stir” food is to mix it with a spoon while turning in a circular motion.

Yeah, you go, girl!

A ridiculously slangy but ever more popular way of encouraging a female friend to continue to be determined and fight for what they believe in.

We let it simmer until it becomes a lovely texture.

“To simmer” is to cook over a low heat. “Lovely” is a popular British word for pretty or attractive, and the “texture” of something is its structure, quality or smoothness.

Don’t worry about Eugene. :: He always gets a little **fussy**.

If a person is “fussy,” they are very demanding or hard to please, like a spoiled cat that won’t eat its food.

Then the oven or the stove...I don’t know what it’s called.

Note that the “oven” is the part of a cooking device where food is heated inside, while the “stove” is the part above, where food is heated in a pan, which is on top of a natural gas flame.

The truth is that she’s a **rotten** mother, so I don’t know why you’d want to help me anyway.

If a mother is “rotten,” she’s bad and incompetent, and even mean, ill tempered or abusive (If food is rotten, it is spoiled because it’s too old).

There wasn't a nice bone in her body.

One way of saying a person is mean, nasty, abusive or unpleasant.

You can keep the mints. :: Everett, where's the strainer?

A "mint" is a plant flavored candy. A "strainer" is a device that is filled with holes that lets liquid pass through it (It's often used to separate food from cleaning water).

I never eat anything that has a face.

A wonderful line for a vegetarian!

But for me, to know that there was once a living, breathing soul.

The "soul" of a person (or animal!) is the non-physical or spiritual part that lives on, at least in theory, after the person dies.

I'm a vegetarian, I understand. :: Yes, but I'm a vegan.

A "vegan" is a person who does not eat any animal products, including eggs and dairy food like milk and butter (Obviously, it is much harder to be a true vegan than to be a vegetarian!).

Even the smell of flesh cooking. I don't think I can help you.

"Flesh" is a word for skin, or more generally, any kind of animal meat.

April meets the Wayne, Bobby goes looking for just the right clothes, and Joy warns the family about April's cooking.

Technically, it's a self-cleaning convection oven.

"Technically" is a common way of saying specifically, or "if you want to be totally accurate..." A "convection oven" blows hot air evenly around the food.

It has an automatic meat thermometer, audible pre-heat signal, dual bake element, hot surface lights, roasting rack...

A good line for an oven salesman! A "thermometer" measures temperature, and if something is "audible," it can be heard. "Dual" means made of two parts. "To roast" food is to cook it in dry heat, and a "rack" is a steel framework for placing food in an oven.

...and my favorite, the frameless glass oven door, with deluxe big view mirror.

An important word in advertising which means expensive or of the best quality.

Be my guest. We'd be delighted.

"Be my guest" is a common way of telling a person to do whatever it is they asked to do (such as entering a closed door or helping themselves to the food on the table). If a person is "delighted," they are very happy because of what has just happened.

Latrell, where you at, man?

A very slangy way of saying "Where are you?"

You got to be **kidding** me! You said you worked in retail!

"To kid" a person is to lie to them or tell them something that isn't true or serious, perhaps because they're trying to be funny. "Retail" refers to stores that sell goods to the public, such as clothing or jewelry stores.

You told me you could **get me a deal** on some quality men's clothes.

"To get a deal" on a product such as clothes is to pay a very good or inexpensive price for it. As an adjective, "quality" means very good or excellent.

I had you all wrong...cause I thought you was the type of brother that ain't really need no fancy labels or no Armadi Prada **bullshit**.

"To have a person wrong" is to misunderstand what they are saying or what kind of person they are. Note that "brother" is a very common way for black men to refer to other black men. A "label" is a cloth tag that has the name of the company that made the product. "Bullshit" is a vulgar but common and wonderful word for lies, half-truths or nonsense in general (You should never say the word 'ain't,' which is used to (mis)conjugate the verb to be, and Armadi Prada is an expensive brand of clothes).

Get out of here, man!

An interesting expression, which in the right context, is a way to say that you do not believe what has just been said (Some people, upon hearing a ridiculous and unbelievable statement, will simply say "Get out!").

As long as people that we love can wear it, it's going to be on that rack.

In this context, a "rack" is a clothes hanger in a clothing store.

Pull over, Tim.

The words to use when you want a car to stop and move to the side of the road.

Are you woozy? Do you feel sick?

If a person feels "woozy," they feel a bit sick to their stomach or nauseous.

We need to discuss how each of you...in your own way, is going to handle discarding food without letting our hostess know.

In this case, "to handle" something is to deal with it. "To discard" food is to throw it away.

Joy, really.

When said in a certain tone, "really" is a way of expressing great cynicism or disapproval.

Take a bite out of whatever it is—Let's say the green bean casserole. Pretend to chew, cough, spit food into napkin, excuse yourself. Drop food in toilet. Flush.

A "casserole" is a meat or vegetable dish that is cooked in the oven. "To spit" something is to force or eject it out of your mouth. "To flush" is the verb one uses when operating the toilet.

Have I heard of Smack Daddy? :: He's a black singer, dad. You wouldn't know him.

A popular rap or hip-hop singer.

Oh no. I haven't heard of James Brown, Barry White, Puffy the Dog.

Well known black singers (Though the last one is probably a reference to Snoop Dog, since it's not clear there is any singer named Puffy the Dog).

You know with him, it's no one-night stand, that it's forever.

Millions want him, but it's as if he's only singing to me...baby.

A "one-night stand" is a common expression for when two people who usually don't know each other have sex one time, and then often never see each other again. "Baby" is a very common filler word that is often used to address other people of the opposite sex.

He doesn't care that I'm old and sick and falling apart. He sees my soul. He's not fickle.

If a person is physically "falling apart," they are becoming extremely weak and sick. A "fickle" person is one who is always changing their mind, or a person who can't decide what they really want.

He's there for me. :: Like dad.

If a person is "there for you," this means you can always count on them when you have problems.

Smack Daddy, man alive is he sexy.

An interesting way of expressing great excitement ("He is *so* sexy")

It does bring up some sort of nice memories.

If something "brings up" some memories, it causes them to suddenly appear.

I was knocking on a lot of doors looking for you. Yours was ajar.

If a door is "ajar," it is slightly open.

No foreseeable problems.

If a problem is "foreseeable," it can be seen or predicted before it arrives, usually from just thinking logically about the present situation.

Didn't want to presume. :: That's fine. Whatever.

"To presume" something is to assume that another person will think what you're about to do is OK. "Whatever" is a widely used and slangy way of saying "It doesn't matter" or "It's not important."

It's a common misperception that you can just stick a turkey in the oven.

A "misperception" is a good word for a misunderstanding, and one that is often mistakenly believed by a lot of people.

Turkey needs to be tended to. It needs to be cared for lovingly.

"To tend to" something is to take care of it with serious attention.

One must pay close attention to poultry.

A useful word for chicken, turkey and the various birds that people eat.

It can be undercooked, which is a health hazard, and what about basting?

A "health hazard" is anything that can be dangerous to your health.

"To baste" a turkey is to occasionally cover it with butter or a liquid while cooking it.

Tick tock.

The sound that a clock makes as it moves forward, second by second.

Bernadette has a very small bladder.

The organ in the body that stores urine, before going to the bathroom.

Can't I just pop my head in? :: I'm afraid not.

"To pop your head in" is to quickly take a look at something (In this case, the turkey in the oven). "I'm afraid not" is a long way of saying...no!

Do you know that good feeling that often comes from being helpful?

A useful word for a person who is always helping others or who has done something that has truly helped a person get out of a problem.

I ask myself "It's very clear what you are doing for her, but what are you getting out of this?"

In this case, one way of saying "what are you receiving for your efforts?"

Later, you can help me understand what I am getting for this exchange, if we could call it an exchange.

A very useful word for the trading of one thing for another.

All crap, Latrelle!...Those are pimp clothes!

"Crap" is a crude word meaning of very poor quality, or in the right context, lies or nonsense (like bullshit). A "pimp" is a very negative word for a man who works as the manager of prostitutes.

Velvet?! Hell no!

"Velvet" is a type of smooth, dense and expensive cloth or fabric.

"Hell no" is a very colloquial way of saying no, or absolutely not.

I was saving this little number for myself, but I think it's more your size.

In this case, a slangy way of referring to a piece of clothing.

All of our children are talented.

Another word for skilled, or for having a natural ability in a particular field, such as music, writing or business.

You ever heard the phrase “Beware the occasion that warrants a new suit”?

A “phrase” is another word for expression. “Beware” means be careful of, and an “occasion” is a particular event or celebration. “To warrant” a particular behavior is to deserve or merit it, and a “suit” is an expensive outfit with a set of pants and a jacket.

My mama, God rest her soul... :: Lord, not another mama story!

“God rest her soul” is a way of asking God to treat a dead person kindly, or to let them be at peace. “Lord” is another word for God.

You didn’t even know my mother and I pity you for that.

“To pity” a person is to feel sorry for them.

The car flipped over and I was trapped underneath the car.

If a car “flips over,” it turns completely over, with its roof now on the bottom and its underside on top.

Bullshit! :: She lifted up the car and pulled me to safety.

A crude but excellent word for lies, half-truths or nonsense.

*April gets her turkey back, the Chinese neighbors save dinner,
Bobby returns, and after almost turning back, the Burns join
their daughter for a very special Thanksgiving.*

Bravo, encore!

Two words that audiences often scream after a singer has given a much appreciated concert. “Bravo” is a way of yelling appreciation, and “encore” is a request that the musician continue to sing more songs.

Who are you? :: Don’t start with that, you know who I am.

A short way of saying “Don’t start speaking that way.”

My daughter is kind and sweet and soft spoken.

“Kind” means nice, sweet or gentle, and if a person is “soft spoken,” they speak in a gentle or quiet manner, instead of in a loud or angry manner.

I am so critical. It’s one of my worst faults.

In this case, a “critical” person is one who is always criticizing others or who is very judgmental, though in other contexts, it can simply mean very important or necessary. A person’s “faults” are their bad traits or qualities, such as being too judgmental or angry.

Why am I so hard on, for instance, you, Beth, who for years has been the daughter of my dreams.

To be "hard on" a person is to treat them poorly or unfairly. If a person is the daughter "of your dreams," she is the best daughter that you could have hoped for.

Apart from your weight problems, we're practically the same person.

One way of saying "Except for..." If a girl has "weight problems, she's probably too fat, though she might be too thin.

I've trying to think of nice April memories and I can only come up with one.

In this case, "to come up with" a memory is to be able to think of it.

One vivid, beautiful memory. :: There's gotta be more.

"Vivid" is a nice little word that means bright, clear or easily remembered. Note that "have got to"----> "gotta" in rapid speech.

It's not important. :: Like hell, it's not!

A slangy and passionate way of saying "Yes it is!"

She was just gazing out the window, and she turned back to me, and she said "Oh mother, don't you just love every day?"

"To gaze out" a window is to stare out, or look out with a steady focus.

What about the crayon flower she did of the Mayflower? The one you had framed?

A "crayon" is a colored pencil for drawing pictures. "The Mayflower" is a famous ship that carried European settlers from England to America, in 1620. If a picture is "framed," it is surrounded or bordered by wood or other material, to make it look better.

That was me, too. :: Cut it out!

An excellent colloquial expression which means "Stop it!"

I'm sorry, but it's important that we're accurate here.

To be "accurate" is to be completely truthful, precise or exact in telling what happened in the past.

She's absolutely right. God freaking dam it.

"Freaking" is a less vulgar filler adverb than fucking. "Dam it" is a common and vulgar filler that is used to express anger or frustration.

Just off the top of my head, I have one.

To think of something "off the top of your head" is to think of it quickly, without giving it much thought or effort.

She was wearing a pink nightgown.

A type of pajama or clothes that women wear to bed.

She was sleeping in her crib, and it was lovely.

A “crib” is little bed for babies, and “lovely” is a much loved word in England for pretty or attractive.

It’s just what came to mind.

If something “comes to mind,” you start to think about it.

It’s shity, Jim. All I can remember is the petulance, the shoplifting, the fire in the kitchen.

“Shity” is a vulgar but common word for bad, horrible or of poor quality. “Petulance” is the quality of being rude, disagreeable or loud and obnoxious. “Shoplifting” is the act of stealing things from stores.

Was it an accident the way she used to light matches and throw them at Beth, or the time she used a lighter to trim Timmy’s bangs?

A “lighter” is the small device used to light cigarettes. “To trim” a person’s hair is to cut it back just a little. A person’s “bangs” refers to the part of their hair that has grown a bit longer than the rest of their hair.

I mean, the drugs, the ingratitude.

A word for complete absence or lack of appreciation or thankfulness.

She bit my nipples whenever I tried to breast feed.

On women, the part of the breast where babies feed to get milk.

Mom needed to stretch her legs.

“To stretch” one’s legs is to extend them, or make them as long as they go, often in order to relax them or make them feel more comfortable.

I’d like to report a kidnapping...He’s taken my turkey hostage.

A “kidnapping” is the act of forcefully taking a person prisoner, often in order to demand money for their release. A “hostage” is a person who is being held forcefully against their will, often by people who are making a political demand for their release (such as the freeing of prisoners being held by the government).

Please give me my stupid fucking turkey!

Here, an excellent use of a very crude filler adjective, said to show anger.

Once there were people here called Indians. Native Americans. Whatever.

“Native Americans” is the way many liberal and ‘politically correct’ people refer to the American Indians who were living in America before Europeans arrived. In this case, “whatever” is a very slangy way of saying the speaker is not exactly sure what she is saying.

This was long ago, before we stole most of their land, and killed most of them, and moved the rest to reservations.

“Reservations” are the large, enclosed areas of land where many of the Native Americans were forced to live after white people took their lands.

Before they lost their languages and customs.

“Customs” is an important word that refers to the common practices of a society or culture, such as the way they eat meals or the games they play.

It carved dough.

“To carve” a turkey is to slice it or cut it. “Dough” is the raw flour that is used to make bread.

Hey babe, they’re here.

A common term of endearment, like dear or sweetheart.

You need first aid.

This refers to any kind of medical assistance after a person has been injured or hurt.

Maybe they went and ran an errand.

A small job or task that is done outside the house, such as mailing a letter or buying milk at the store.

Don’t be hard on yourself. We did the right thing.

In this case, if a person is “hard on themselves,” they blame themselves for something bad that had just happened.

French, Russian, Blue Cheese, Thousand Island, Vinaigrette, Italian, Ranch.

All of these refer to various kinds of salad dressing!

They’re all made on the premises. We got a great Black Forest cake. We also got great pies.

If a cake is made “on the premises,” it is made fresh in the restaurant or hotel where it is served. A “pie” is a type of dessert that is baked with a bread-like or pastry crust, with fruit or cream in the middle.

Do you have whipped cream with that pumpkin pie?

A type of light sweet cream that is popular with pies and other desserts.

Pieces of April

Possible Topics for ESL Class Discussion

1. Is your family as dysfunctional as April's? In fact, are most families somewhat dysfunctional, in that family members always have trouble getting along with each other?
2. From what you could see, was April a bad daughter or Joy a bad mom, or both, or neither?
3. Is there a similar holiday to Thanksgiving in your culture? Can you understand why many people feel conflicted, or mixed, about Thanksgiving? How would you feel about it if you were a Native American? Vegetarian? Without anyone to celebrate it?
4. How is this film about the diversity of American culture?
5. What did you like and not like about this movie?