

## Say Goodnight, Gracie

Interior, Shabby apartment. Jerry enters, has an 8x10 headshot with him.

JERRY: What next?

STEVE: *(He has been hiding behind the sofa. He is wearing a gorilla mask and brown derby. Jerry has not seen him)* Excuse me, do you know what time it is?

JERRY: Holy shit!

STEVE: Wait. Before you say anything. I've got something wonderful to tell you!

JERRY: What are you doing in my apartment?! You trying to give me a heart attack or something?!

STEVE: Oh, it's okay, Ginny let me in. She went to pick up her dress at the cleaners. How'd the audition go?

JERRY: What are you doing in my apartment, Steve?!

STEVE: You weren't right for the part, were you?

JERRY: Never mind!

STEVE: Jerry, it doesn't matter! Wait till you hear what-

JERRY: Not now! Please.

STEVE: No, no, just wait till you hear what I've got to tell you! Come on: ask me what it is. I haven't told anybody yet-Ginny'll be right back, Bobby'll be here, we'll be leaving for the reunion- Come on!

JERRY: *(turning around holding empty pot)* Where's the chunky turkey soup?

STEVE: Soup? Soup? Who cares about soup?

JERRY: Where's the chunky turkey soup?

STEVE: I at it! It was delicious! I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

JERRY: You ate the chunky turkey soup?

JERRY: Yes! I was all alone, I was excited and hungry and I wanted to celebrate and here was this little can crying out: Take me, open me, eat me, I'm yours!

JERRY: In *my* cabinet, Steve, in *my* kitchen, in *my* apartment, there are the following items-

STEVE: And do you know why I was so excited???

JERRY: 3 cans of chunky beef soup, 3 cans of chunky vegetable soup, 3 cans of chunky split pea and ham soup, and 7 family sized cans of Franco American Spaghetios. Are you listening?

STEVE: What are you doing? Rehearsing a monologue!

JERRY: Early this morning, as I was about to leave *my* apartment, I paused for a moment in *my kitchen* and looking in *my* cabinet, and I made certain that hidden away behind all those other items, there was still on remaining can of chunky turkey soup. Why did I do this?

STEVE: (*checks imaginary watch*) 10.....9.....8.....7.....

JERRY: I did this because Chunky Turkey soup, as you know, for some mysterious reason, has become almost impossible to locate in this part of the city, and because I like it very much. In fact, I love it! Why do I love it? I don't know. I can't honestly tell you why I love chunky turkey soup. All I know is-

STEVE: Hey, thanks *so* much for coming. We would have preferred hearing something from Shakespeare, but this gives us a damn fine idea of your talents, and believe me, if a part *should* turn up-

JERRY: All I know is: I love it! It is dependable. It is there. It is the last thing I can be certain of in a world filled with uncertainty; and in any case I don't believe that an emotion such as love has to be explained. Do you agree?

STEVE: Are you all right?

JERRY: *Do* you agree?

STEVE: My God, it was only a can of soup!

JERRY: It was only a can of soup. Was that what you said?

STEVE: Yes.

JERRY: Guess what word you left out?

STEVE: I have no idea.

JERRY: Guess.

STEVE: I don't know!

JERRY: Take a guess!

STEVE: But I don't know!

JERRY: What's the word?!

STEVE: (*As Groucho*) Hmmmm....it wouldn't be "swordfish," would it?

JERRY: My! The word is "my." My, my, my, my, my! It was only *my* fucking can of soup!

STEVE: You are really angry.

JERRY: Oh, yeah? How can you tell? Seriously. As an actor, it's important that I be able to recognize such things. Come on. How can you be sure I'm angry?

STEVE: All right, put down the pot.

JERRY: You want me to put down the pot? Okay. I'll put down the pot, Steve. Oh, I'll put *down* the pot. Are you sure you *really* want to see me put down the pot??

STEVE: Oh, stop it. You sound just like Jackie Gleason!!

JERRY: DON'T YOU EVER TELL ME I SOUND LIKE JACKIE GLEASON!!

STEVE: I'm sorry. That was the wrong thing to say.

JERRY: Don't you ever say that again!

STEVE: I'm sorry.

JERRY: Now I've got a headache.

STEVE: It's my fault.

JERRY: I know it's your fault.

STEVE: I said-

JERRY: Don't say another word!

STEVE: But-

JERRY: Don't say another word! (*Closes eyes*) I've got to relax. Dear God, I've got to relax. Don't say another word. Just let me relax...

STEVE: May I make an observation? Do you know why you have so much trouble at auditions? It's because you're tense. It's very hard to feel at ease in the presence of someone who's unnaturally tense. Do you know what your body says to the average person? It says: Tension. Do you realize what the-

JERRY: Why don't you ever listen to me?

STEVE: Because I'm your friend. What's the matter? Did your boss give you more static about taking off to go to auditions?

JERRY: Can't you see I've got a lot on my mind? And it's more than just an audition or a job that's bothering me?

STEVE: Of course I can see that. I'm not insensitive. Do you want a beer? Yeah you do, cause I want on. We're getting beers...Awww, only one left...ah well... I'm playin'. Here you go.

JERRY: Thanks.

STEVE: You're welcome. Now, are you ready for this? You know that girl with the red hair who comes in the bookstore where I work? Angie? Well, she know I'm a writer, and she said she didn't know why she never thought of it before, but this morning she tells me if I ever come up with an outline for a situation comedy pilot, she's got contacts with Norman Lear and can get him to read it! Can you believe it?! Norman Lear?! Producer of *All in the Family*; *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, right? Ok. Now, by a strange coincidence, what do you suppose I've been working on in secret for the past two months? A completely original TV series in which—now, hold on to your seat!—I have modeled the central character on you! I even gave him your name! His name is Jerry! One day it just comes to me: a situation comedy about a group of people who are members of the very *first* TV generation, born and raised during the dawn of the Atomic Age, whose lives have gone nowhere, whose dreams have been shattered, who see themselves as hopeless failures, or, at best, historical curiosities, and who do not have the slightest idea what to do about it! I mean: I firmly believe that the time is ripe for something like this: it can't miss! Do you see what I'm getting at? You'll never have to work in an office again. When the show is picked up, guess who I'm going to recommend for the part? Enh?! There is no way they can turn you down! Well, what do you think?

JERRY: Steve, I hate to tell you this.

STEVE: Tell me what?

JERRY: You're fantasizing again.

STEVE: No, no, no. I'm, not fantasizing again. You're wrong! What I'm writing now is the cumulative result of everything that has happened to me in the last ten years: this is it! Ok, ok, so maybe it sounds a little pretentious, but I'm convinced that I have finally achieved some form of maturity as an artist.

JERRY: (*Holding up gorilla mask*) Maturity, Steve?

STEVE: Don't you appreciate what I'm trying to do for you? I was trying to cheer you up. I thought it would make you laugh!

JERRY: It was a great success, Steve. Thank you.