

Competitive Eating
Sorta, Sadly,
Like A Dramady

Two Short Plays
by
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from his book
Character Flaws
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Competitive Eating

The Characters

Jerome: 20-30's, corpulent, obese. Main goal in life is to win competitive eating contests.

Rupert 20-30's, slender. Jerome's best friend.

The Scene

Roach infested, filthy, inner-city apartment.

Rupert: (enters apartment): Yo man, you eating again?

Jerome: (sitting on couch watching TV): I eat a lot when I'm depressed and pissed off.

Rupert: (sits on couch): You eat a lot when you're not depressed and pissed off. Jerome maybe you should start worrying about your health. You know...be more health conscious.

Jerome: Fuck health conscious man. I wanna die with a double meat cheeseburger in my mouth. No...scratch that...two double meat cheeseburgers.

Rupert: Just don't choke. I don't know the Heimlich maneuver. Well anyway, what are you pissed off about?

Jerome: It's these skinny Japanese dudes from Tokyo or wherever who should be home eating their sushi, but instead they wanna invade my turf. My TURF. My...KINGDOM! They think they're big badass mother fuckers. Well bring it on! I...mean I've eaten drumsticks bigger than these assholes.

Rupert: Yea Jerome, I remember the time we went to the chicken buffet down on Oak Street. The manager saw you coming and tried to lock the doors. And when that didn't work, they tried to give you \$20 to go somewhere else.

Jerome: Well you know I'm a restaurant manager's worst nightmare. When my six foot five, 480 pound frame comes wobbling in, they start to cry like a baby. Now they escort me to my own room and they keep the plates a comin'.

Rupert: Yea they pile it high for the big fat guy.

Jerome: For me it's not about the 'Guinness Book of World Records'. Although I do hold the record for the number of sticks of butter eaten. Nope for me it's all bidness. Big bidness. I wanna be the cover boy for 'Competitive Eating' magazine. I want those big endorsement deals with Micky D's, BK, KFC, Wendy's...

Rupert: (interrupts): You're starting to sound a little delusional Jerome: Those fast food places use skinny healthy folk like me in their ads. Having a fatass like you for their spokesman would ruin their business. It's people like you who are suing these fast food chains for making them fat.

Jerome: Traitors. Traitors.

Rupert: They're enablers Jerome: They enable you to get fat. You can't deny that.

Jerome: Well they might supply the gun, but it's me who's pulling the trigger baby. And when it comes to food you know I don't mind pulling that trigger.

Rupert: Well anyway...

Jerome: Yep anyway...there's this hot dog eating contest next week in Chicago. But you know for some reason, hot dog eating isn't my specialty. It's my weak event. And that's what these Japanese dudes are killing me on...hot dogs. Let's face it, if it's sticks of butter, fried chicken, corn on the cob or off, apple pie...bull frogs, then I'm your go-to guy. So I gotta practice Rupert. I need you to be my trainer.

Rupert: Trainer? What am I supposed to do as your trainer?

Jerome: You gotta keep me motivated. Show me some love.

Rupert: Now I'm the enabler. Enabling you to get fatter and fatter. (slaps roach off his arm) Damn roaches. Why don't you ever clean up this pig sty?

Jerome: Hey watch it. They're just looking for food.

Rupert: It's a wonder they can find any with you around.

Jerome: Look. Grand prize is a thousand bucks and a BBQ pit. If I win, well...I'll give you the BBQ pit. (Rupert shakes his head in disbelief.) Well Rupert, let's start practicing. Go to the store and get us about six packs of

dogs and buns...uh...and...five gallons of chocolate chip ice cream.

Rupert: (Incredulous): You got any money, Jerome?

Jerome: As my personal trainer, you're in charge of picking up the tab. Look at it as an... investment.

The End

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The Characters

Charlie - Once famous but now down on his luck stand up comic.

Sid - Charlie's vigilant and loyal manager who still has faith in Charlie's comic abilities.

Josie - Waitress at Belly Full Of Laughs.

Club Owner

Bartender

Scene One

Backstage at a comedy club, Belly Full Of Laughs. Small room. Two chairs.

(Charlie sits in chair pointing gun at ceiling, then slowly brings it towards his head. He is interrupted by a knock on door.)

Sid: Charlie, you ok in there? (Charlie puts gun in coat.)

Charlie: (sighs): C'mon in Sid. (Sid walks in and approaches Charlie, then sits down.) Sid, what's wrong with me? I mean what's happened? I'm not funny

anymore. My timing's off. I'm being heckled relentlessly. And the venues. Sid, if they get much smaller, I'll be performing at South Florida nursing home rec rooms...

Sid: Well some of those old coots can be brutal. You might get assaulted with a walker or a cane.

Charlie: Maybe it's the drinking, I dunno. But I only drink when I'm not funny. Well hell, I guess that's most of the time now. This is a definite decline from which there will be no reversal.

Sid: C'mon Charley, it's all just a momentary setback. All performers go through this funk. You know that. That's life Charlie. I've been with you through thick and thin. Hey it's a little thin now but it'll be thick again. I'm working on a movie deal...

Charlie: Movie deal? (disbelieving) Sid, we're sitting in a fucking broom closet and you're talking movie deals. When did I stop being funny Sid? Huh? Was it in the wild 80's, the roaring 90's? Was it when Julie left me? Was it when Angie left me? Was it when you found me in a ditch outside Albuquerque? Drunk and stoned out of my mind, nearly frozen to death?

Sid: No, you were pretty funny then actually. (Both laugh.) I don't remember Albuquerque. I must have been drunk then. I do remember Billings. You were caught in that ten foot snow drift. You weren't drunk or stoned, just lost. (Pats Charley on back.) C'mon get yourself together. You gotta go out there in another hour.

Charlie: I can't go out Sid. I just can't do this anymore. It's not just timing. Hey (points toward stage) they know my material better than I do.

It's boring. I don't have a creative bone left in my body.
Oh to be young and profane again.

Sid: You're a comic Charlie. What else you gonna do?
Start up a lawn care business?

Charlie: Well you never know. Hey can you get me a
sandwich and a drink?

Sid: The only drink you're gonna get is coffee my friend.
I'll go see what I can do about that sandwich.

Scene Two

(Same as before, a few minutes later. Knock on door.)

Charlie: Come in.

Josie: Hi, your manager asked me to bring you this. (sets a
sandwich and a glass of milk on table.)

Charlie: Damn that Sid. A glass of milk? (Shakes head)

Josie: Yeah he warned me about you.

Charlie: Did he now?

Josie: Yea he said you were a real ladies man, but I guess
he was joking. Ha ha.

Charlie: You're hilarious. Why don't you and Sid get up
on stage tonight. I'm sure you two will be a real hoot.

Josie: Actually he said you were very funny. And I'm
counting on that. The funnier you are, the more the
audience laughs. The more relaxed they become.

The more drinks they buy. The more tips I make. It's quite simple really. So funnyman, don't let me down.

Charlie: Well that's all I need. Another person counting on me for their livelihood. What's your name sweetie?

Josie: Josie.

Charlie: Well Josie, you'll learn in this life not to count on people. Cuz people will always let you down. And if they don't, well give 'em time. You see I could walk away right now, go to a bar down the street. Now that would be funny wouldn't it? Yea a tragic comedy.

Josie: C'mon dude, you're depressing me. You're supposed to make me laugh. Oh forget about me. Just make them laugh. (Points toward stage.)

Charlie: What makes you laugh hon? Is it slapstick? Watch this. (does a pratfall)

Josie: (laughs): Whoa are you ok?

Charlie: (holding ribs): Uh...I'm getting too old for this. Laughing at someone else's pain is always funny huh? So tell me Josie, what about you?

Josie: What about me?

Charlie: Married? Kids? Dogs? Cats? Emus? Starving actress? Alpacas?

Josie: Divorced. Two kids. No. No. No. Alpacas? None that I remember. But I do have a parakeet that knows a few four letter words.

Charlie: Mmm...nice. I'm sure it's hard supporting two kids on what you bring in, huh?

Josie: What are you trying to say? That I can't support my kids?

Charlie: No...no...no...I'm sure you're doing the best you can do but...

Josie: (Interrupts): Well the best I can do is good enough thank you. I don't need to ask anybody for anything. Maybe you should stick to being funny instead of pondering my financial situation. Like I said, if you're funny tonight, it will be a win-win situation for both of us. Well if you'll excuse me, I need to get back to work.
(Walks to the door.)

Charlie: Josie...please. Don't leave. Forgive me. I meant no harm. Just trying to have a conversation with a pretty and smart lady. Ok? Every now and then I just need to bond with someone.

Josie: Lucky me. (laughs)

Charlie: C'mon, lets have a drink and bond. Huh? What'd you say? Pleeze...pleeze...(gets on knees)

Josie (purrs): You're so adorable when you beg. How can I say no.

Charlie: You can't.

Josie: So ok lets go to the bar.

Charlie: Sure but not this one.

Josie: Not this one? Is there a problem with our liquor?

Charlie: No, no, of course not. Liquor is liquor.

Josie: Then what's the freakin' problem?

Charlie: It's my manager. He hates to see me drinking before a show. Hell he hates to see me drinking after a show. He tries to be my babysitter. He thinks I lose my edge if I'm drinking. Actually he thinks I go over the edge if I'm drinking. Is there another bar close by?

Josie: Well there's O'Malley's a block away.

Charlie: Cool, let's go there.

Josie: Ok, only for one drink, remember. Then back we come.

Charlie: Sure. Sure. We need to leave out the backdoor. Can't be seen by Sid.

Josie: Now you make me think we're doing something illegal.

Charlie: That's why it's all the more fun.

Josie: Ok. I'll tell the boss I'll be right back. Then we're off.

Scene Three

O'Malley's Bar

(Charlie and Josie sitting at bar. Josie lights up a cigarette.)

Charlie: You know smoking can kill ya.

Josie: Well so can drinking.

Charlie: Your liver or your lungs then. I really like you Josie.

Josie: And you're starting to grow on me even though I just met you.

Charlie: I feel like I've known you for all my life. I feel comfortable with you.

Josie: That's reassuring. Are we bonding yet?

Charlie: Well we're drinking buddies anyway. You know this is a nice quaint Irish bar. I feel at home here. You know I'm Irish. (Starts singing) Oh Danny Boy the beer, the beer is calling...

Josie: Nice. Better stick to comedy.

Charlie: That was comedy.

Josie: Uh oh. It's gonna be a rough night. (laughs)

Charlie: And since we're in a nice Irish bar, how about a shot of some nice Irish whiskey?

Josie: Sure, remember one drink.

Charlie: Ok mom. Bartender, a couple of drinks here please. Your best Irish whiskey. (Reaches in coat pocket looking for money. Feels gun instead. Stops, hesitates.)

Josie: What's wrong? Don't tell me you're out of money? No. No. Here is my wallet. Ok lets toast to lots of laughs

for me and lots of tips for you. (Glasses clink, they drink up.)

Charlie: That was good. Bartender, a couple of more drinks over here.

Josie: Whoa cowboy. We agreed to one drink remember. You have to go on soon.

Charlie: Oh c'mon. You're starting to sound like Sid.

Josie: I'm beginning to think Sid's a smart guy.

Charlie: I mean...look...we still have thirty minutes. Please. I promise I won't pick on you when I do my routine.

Josie: I can't believe this. (sighs) Ok one more drink and that's it funny man.

Charlie: Thanks doll. Hit us up again bartender. (Bartender pours drinks.) Bottoms up. (An old Irish song plays in the background.) I love that song. It's about unrequited love. (Starts singing.) Well I'm drunk today and rarely sober...

Josie: Have you ever had your heart broken Charlie? And if you have, do you just laugh it off?

Charlie: Girl, my heart's been broken so much, that one could only break the bigger pieces up into smaller pieces.

Josie: Yeah, I know what you mean. Well time's a wasting, let's get going Charlie. You've had your two drinks. Let's go.

Charlie: Let me wallow in my misery just a little while longer.

Josie: So this has been a miserable experience? Drinking with me?

Charlie: Of course not. Just joking.

Josie: Well it's not funny.

Charlie: Just one more drink please.

Josie: I'm not believing this shit. Charlie, you have to go on in fifteen minutes. I have to get back to work. Remember?

Charlie: One more drink's not gonna hurt anything.

Josie: You know what? I understand you now. You're an alcoholic. And you're using me. No wonder your manager watches you like a hawk. Well he's gonna be disappointed now.

Charlie: Fuck him and fuck you too. I really liked you but maybe you should go. I'll be there...just run along.

Josie: Well bye asshole. (Exits bar)

Charlie (Waves to bartender): Make it a double. (Reaches back into pocket, clutches gun.)

Scene Four

(“Belly Full Of Laughs.” Club owner confronts Sid about Charlie's disappearance.)

Owner: Where is your guy? He should have been on stage fifteen minutes ago.

Sid: He'll be here I promise. I'm sure he went out for a walk to clear his mind.

Owner: A walk? The crowd is getting restless. I'll give him another fifteen minutes. (calls out) Josie! Have you seen that son of a bitch comedian?

Josie: Haven't seen him. Maybe he's getting drunk or something.

Sid: What? (Storms out of club looking for Charlie.)

Owner: Something told me not to book this guy. Just another washed up alcoholic comic. They're a dime a dozen Josie. A dime a dozen. (Josie breaks down and starts crying. She makes an exit.) What's going on? C'mon. I need you here please. (shakes head) It's all shot to hell. This place is supposed to make people laugh. It's only bringing me misery.

Scene Five

(Same as before. A few minutes later.)

(Charlie enters "Belly Full Of Laughs". Crowd is small, Charlie is visibly drunk as he walks toward the stage.)

Owner (to Charlie): Well it's about fucking time. (Charlie pushes him back, reaches stage and pulls out gun from coat pocket.)

Charlie (to audience): You are being held hostage. You will listen to my unique brand of comedy and enjoy it.

You will laugh. You will applaud. (Crowd laughs not realizing the gravity of the situation.) Is that what a guy has to do to get a laugh around here? Carry a gun?

Heckler (offstage): Oh go to hell, you washed up has been. (Charlie fires gun in the direction of the heckler, everyone ducks underneath tables.)

Sid (re-enters club): Charlie, what the hell...(Rushes toward stage. Charlie then points gun to his own head. Sid tackles Charlie and gun goes off in the ensuing melee. Sid grabs the gun away from Charlie.)

Sid (brushes himself off): Hey everyone. All of this is just a little misunderstanding. Right Charlie?

Charlie (visibly shaken and stunned): Yep...that's right. Sid you're gonna set the record straight. You're gonna tell the world how funny I really was, aren't you?

Sid (whispers): Just shut up Charlie. Shut the hell up.

Owner (rushes toward Josie who lies on floor) You've killed her. You've killed my waitress.

The End