

MENAGERIE

Ten-Minute Comedy Duet

by
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At Rise: Valentine's Day. Lights up on an urban or possibly suburban apartment's kitchen area. A little table has several bills on it. On the counter, a blender and other assorted cooking implements. TABITHA, mid-20s to mid-30s, is on her hands and knees urgently wiping up some kind of brownish liquid mess with a sponge. From outside, street noise. Sound of the door lock being worked. SHE finishes her cleaning and sits at the kitchen table just before SAM, same age, enters carrying a jewelry box.

SAM: Where's Jerry?

TABITHA: Happy Valentine's Day, Sam.

SAM: Happy Valentine's Day.

TABITHA: Is that for me?

SAM: Where's Jerry?

TABITHA: Do I look like Jerry's keeper?

SAM: He's always waiting at the top of the stairs when I come home.

TABITHA: He's allowed to take a day off. Isn't he allowed to take a day off?

SAM: Why would he take a day off? He loves meeting me at the top of the stairs. It's our thing.

TABITHA: Maybe he's got a new thing.

SAM: **(beat)** Do you know something I don't?

TABITHA: Know something how?

SAM: Know something about Jerry. **(beat)** There's something else, isn't there.

TABITHA: I didn't say that.

SAM: "Maybe he's got a new thing." What's that?

TABITHA: Nothing.

SAM: Why would you say "maybe he's got a new thing" unless he had a new thing?

TABITHA: I bought these chocolates—

SAM: Why is there milkshake all over the floor?

TABITHA: That's not milkshake.

(SAM gets on his hands and knees and sniffs the floor.)

SAM: It's coffee milkshake.

TABITHA: Accidents happen.

SAM: I'm getting a vibe.

TABITHA: You and your vibes.

SAM: That kid. That pimply teenager--the one who takes college classes but still lives with his parents in 32-A.

TABITHA: The one-bedroom?

SAM: One and a half baths.

TABITHA: What about him?

SAM: Last week--that pat on the head—

TABITHA: Him and Jerry?

SAM: That pat was not innocent. That pimply—

(SAM starts for the door. TABITHA leaps up after him.)

TABITHA: Wait, wait, wait—

SAM: I'm going over there—

TABITHA: You can't just go over there.

SAM: He's our prime suspect.

TABITHA: Because of a pat?

SAM: A line was crossed, and now it's time for a little heart to heart.

TABITHA: You're not fighting Tomas over Jerry.

SAM: You know his *name*? How do you know his name?

TABITHA: He lives two doors down.

SAM: Has he been here? Did he come to see Jerry here?

TABITHA: I talked to his mother. I hear this loud thud and then some rolling sounds--like a ball is rolling--and it turns out her groceries have ripped through the bag, and this orange rolls all the way down the stairs as I come out and watch it with her.

SAM: No doubt pilfered by the budding juvenile delinquent in 8-C.

TABITHA: Little monster was at the bottom of the stairwell waiting for it. It didn't even make it all the way down.

SAM: Nothing's safe since he got cut from tee ball.

TABITHA: Counseled out. No one gets cut.

SAM: Could he have--

TABITHA: I help her pick up the last of the groceries, and we both scream at the little criminal for a good five minutes, but when it's clear that Mr. Sticky Fingers isn't coming back out, she says, "My son Tomas, he tried to catch that pint-sized bandito three Wednesdays ago, and wouldn't you know, the terrorist in training stole the shoelaces right off his sneakers."

SAM: Are you saying Jerry is a replacement for his shoelaces? That's sick.

TABITHA: **(beat)** We're changing the subject.

SAM: I can't believe this is happening on Valentine's Day.

TABITHA: I bought chocolates.

SAM: Jerry is important to me.

TABITHA: What if he's gone?

SAM: Gone as in...?

TABITHA: Gone as in left. Maybe he's hearing the call of the road, or something came up, or he got a better offer.

SAM: A better offer?!

TABITHA: It's a possibility.

SAM: How could he get a better offer? What better offer is there than my love? **(beat)** That's right—I love him.

TABITHA: You don't love him.

SAM: Why can't I love Jerry?

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