

DON'T INSULT CHEF

By Joseph Sorrentino

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A Ten Minute Comedy Skit

By Joseph Sorrentino

SYNOPSIS: Frank, an actor who's in town for a performance, walks into the Apollo Restaurant simply hoping for a meal. But he meets Harry, the bossy waiter and learns that insulting Chef's food may be hazardous to his health.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 males, 1 extra)

FRANK (m)	Significantly younger than Harry. A fit, well-dressed, well-spoken, although a touch pompous, actor. <i>(96 lines)</i>
HARRY (m)	Older than Frank. Heavysset, a blue collar type. A waiter. Wears a dirty apron over his somewhat worn and dirty clothing. <i>(109 lines)</i>
CHEF (m/f)	Age flexible. Dressed all in black, riding boots, a monocle and holding a riding crop. Communicates using her riding crop. <i>(Non-Speaking)</i>

SETTING

A restaurant with a few small tables. Toward the back is a table with a microwave, small refrigerator and pitcher of water on it, a trash can under it. On one side is a door that leads to the kitchen. A sword hangs on one wall.

SOUND EFFECTS

- Microwave beeps.

PROPS

- Two or three small tables
- Two chairs around each table
- White but stained tablecloths
- Small table at back of the stage
- Microwave
- Small refrigerator
- Pitcher of water
- Small trash can
- Sword
- Vase with some dead flowers on the tables
- Empty Perrier water bottle
- One small pot pie
- Wallet with Money
- Two place settings on each table: plate, utensils, water glass
- A handwritten sign, "Please Wait To Be Seated," is on a small stand, facing audience.
- Another sign, "Apollo Restaurant," taped to the wall. It actually had said "Apollo Diner" but "Diner" has been crossed out and "Restaurant" written below it. Or over it.

AT RISE: *As lights come up, FRANK enters. He starts walking to a table, then sees the "Please Wait To Be Seated Sign" and stops. He waits. Looks around. Walks to one side of stage and looks, walks back to sign. Twiddles his thumbs. Decides to sit down and as he's about to, HARRY enters.*

HARRY: *(Loudly.)* May I help you?

FRANK: *(Startled.)* Oh...you did give me a bit of a fright there.

HARRY: I'm so sorry.

FRANK: I was just about to sit down.

HARRY: So you were. But we ask that people please wait to be seated. As you can see. *(Points to sign.)*

FRANK: Well, yes, but since there are no customers and no *maitre d* to be found, I...

HARRY: Oh, sorry again. We're a very small operation. No matter dees here. Nope. I'm the one who seats people, waits on tables, helps chef, etcetera, etcetera. And I was tied up in the back. Busy, busy. So sorry. Please, accept my apology.

FRANK: Certainly, my good man, certainly. I just thought, with the tables empty, I could sit pretty much anywhere.

HARRY: Of course you did. But what kind of world would it be if we didn't follow rules, hmm? Or signs? People sitting wherever they want. Chaos. Absolute chaos. So, once again, I apologize for not being here when you needed me. *(Tapping his chest.)* *Mea culpa. Mea culpa.*

FRANK: That's all right. I understand. Things do get busy in a restaurant.

HARRY: They certainly do. They certainly do. So...come for a meal have we?

FRANK: I did. I'm in town with the tour. *(Pause as he waits for a response.)* I'm in "Streetcar" *(Pause, as he waits for a response.)* "Named Desire." *(Pause, as he waits for a response.)* I play Blanche. A very avant-garde production, I must say.

HARRY: Oh, you must.

FRANK: We just finished a performance and I'm famished, absolutely famished and not a restaurant to be found...until I stumbled upon yours, of course.

HARRY: Lucky for us then. Well, let's get you seated, shall we?

FRANK goes to a table

HARRY: No, no. Not that one. That one's reserved.

FRANK: Reserved? But there's no sign...

HARRY: You didn't pay attention to that sign (*Points to "Wait to Be Seated" sign.*) so why would I bother to put a "Reserved" sign on a table? No reason I can see. Why burden myself, I figure, when people like you are just going to ignore my signs? Know what I mean? (*HARRY pulls a chair out so that FRANK sits facing the audience.*) Now, here...sit here. Nice, comfy chair, good view of the entire diner...er...restaurant. Come, come. Sit.

FRANK hesitates, then sits.

FRANK: Thank you.

HARRY: You are very welcome, I'm sure. Glad to help. So, what'll it be?

FRANK: A menu?

HARRY: You wanna eat a menu?

FRANK: No, no. (*Chuckles.*) I'd like to see a menu.

HARRY: Of course you would. So sorry. Misunderstood there, didn't I? I'll go fetch one.

HARRY walks to the back counter, looks in refrigerator, writes on a sheet of paper.

HARRY: And here we are...the menu.

FRANK: This is your menu? A single sheet of paper?

HARRY: Keeps the costs down. Chef puts everything she can into the food and I'll tell ya, it's terrific. First class. (*Leans in and whispers.*) She studied at the sorbet.

FRANK: Sorbet? Oh, (*Chuckles.*) I'm sure you mean the Sorbonne.

HARRY: Really? It's not sorbet?

FRANK: Nope.

HARRY: I really like sorbet. Sometimes I get gelato instead but it's got more calories...I'm watching my weight, you know.

FRANK: I didn't. Now I am famished so if I could order...

HARRY: And those sorbet flavors! Look out! You got your banana, raspberry, blue pop, grape, lemon...

FRANK: Sir?

HARRY: ...cherry, peach, piña colada—that's for when I'm in a particularly devilish mood—pink lemonade, cotton candy...

FRANK: Sir!

HARRY: Hmm?

FRANK: I'd like to order? If I may?

HARRY: Oh, yes...of course. Now, what'll it be?

FRANK: (*Looks at the sheet.*) There's only one thing on the menu. I can barely read the handwriting...looks like "licking pol tie." What on earth..?

HARRY: (*Taking menu.*) That's chicken pot pie. And it's terrific. It really is.

FRANK: (*Turning sheet over.*) Nothing else? You have nothing else?

HARRY: Chef likes to focus on one menu item at a time. Very avant-garde.

FRANK: Then I suppose I'll have the chicken pot pie.

HARRY: (*Writing order on a pad.*) Awesome choice.

FRANK: My only choice.

HARRY: And to drink?

FRANK: A bottle of water.

HARRY: We have a nice cabernet that goes very well with the pot pie.

FRANK: Water's fine.

HARRY: House red?

FRANK: I don't drink alcohol when I have to perform the next day.

HARRY: A coke then?

FRANK: Don't think so.

HARRY: Sprite?

FRANK: Sir...

HARRY: A Dr. Pepper perhaps?

FRANK: No. Thank you but no. I...

HARRY: V8?

FRANK: Please. Just a bottle of water. Perrier if you have it.

HARRY: Perrier it is. Awesome choice. I'll put your order in but I must tell you, it may take a while. Chef makes each dish to order.

FRANK: Oh...but I'm famished. Have you no appetizers?

HARRY: Of course we do.

FRANK: There aren't any on the menu. Anyway, I'd like to order one, if I may. What appetizers do you have?

HARRY: Oh, we have a bunch.

FRANK: Wonderful. And they are?

HARRY: We have mushrooms stuffed with organic spinach and homemade cream cheese, a wonderful salad of locally sourced greens dressed with our homemade Balsamic vinaigrette, bruschetta topped with chopped heirloom tomatoes and organic basil, gently steamed asparagus with...

FRANK: Stop, my good man, stop. You have my mouth watering. Absolutely watering. They all sound so lovely...so difficult to choose...I think I'll have the stuffed mushrooms and bruschetta.

HARRY: Awesome choices. Just awesome.

FRANK: Thank you.

HARRY: But...

FRANK: But?

HARRY: But sadly, we're all out. We had an early dinner rush—we have an older clientele and they do love their blue plate specials. Cleaned us out. Completely.

FRANK: But I'm famished. Absolutely famished.

HARRY: I'll see if I can hurry chef along. (Whispering) She does get a bit testy when rushed, but I'll see what I can do.

FRANK: Thank you. And could you bring me my water please?

HARRY: Of course.

HARRY walks to the back table, looks around furtively, and pulls the trash can out from under it. He removes an empty bottle of Perrier. He then takes a pot pie out of the refrigerator and puts it in the microwave; turns it on. He pours water from the pitcher into the bottle and brings it to FRANK.

HARRY: Your water.

FRANK: Thank you my good man.

HARRY: You're very welcome.

FRANK: (*Drinks about half the glass.*) Obviously, I was thirsty as well.

HARRY: Obviously.

SFX: The microwave beeps.

HARRY: Ah! Chef's signal.

FRANK: Goodness, that was awfully fast. I thought you said chef prepared them to order.

HARRY: She does.

FRANK: Then how did she do it so fast?

HARRY: I told chef you were hungry.

FRANK: But it wasn't even a minute, How..?

HARRY: You said you were hungry...famished is how I think you put it. You wanna continue this discussion into the wee hours or should I get your pot pie?

FRANK: By all means, get the pot pie.

HARRY gets the pot pie, brings it to FRANK who desperately tries to eat it.

HARRY: Here we go. Bon appetit.

FRANK: Thank you. (*He's about to dig in.*)

HARRY: Careful. It may be hot.

FRANK: I will.

HARRY: You might want to blow on it...cool it off a little.

FRANK: Sage advice.

HARRY: That crust is nice and flaky, isn't it?

FRANK: It is. I can hardly wait to taste...

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