

I DON'T WANT YOUR PITY...I WANT YOUR BROCCOLI

By Bradley Walton

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-773-3

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I DON'T WANT YOUR PITY...I WANT YOUR BROCCOLI

A 10-Minute Comedy Duet

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: John is having a bad week. Steve is not. Steve has broccoli. John does not. John wants Steve's broccoli. Is there a limit to how far one person will go to help another? Steve and John are about to find out.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 either; gender flexible)

STEVE/STEPH (m/f).....Feeling good about him/herself, and also, has broccoli. *(65 lines)*

JOHN/JEAN (m/f)Feeling down in the dumps. *(65 lines)*

AUTHOR NOTES

This piece started with the title, and I wrote the rest of the script to go with it. I have no idea where the title came from...it just popped into my head, seemingly out of nowhere. The resulting scenario seemed like a good opportunity to poke fun at self-entitlement and social conventions of politeness, particularly the use of "How's it going?" as a form of greeting rather than as an actual question, which is something that has always bothered me.

AT RISE: *On a bare stage, STEVE and JOHN enter from opposite sides and cross towards one another. JOHN is slouching and disheveled in appearance, with messy hair and armpit stains. HE seems kind of down. STEVE is dressed neatly and is carrying a bowl of broccoli which HE is eating with a fork. The properties can be mimed if performed for forensics competition.*

STEVE: John, hey.

JOHN: Hi, Steve.

STEVE: How's it going?

JOHN: Pretty good.

STEVE: Really?

JOHN: Yeah.

STEVE: I mean, I don't want to pry, but...

JOHN: But what?

STEVE: Are you sure everything is okay?

JOHN: Do you really want a straight answer? Because usually when somebody asks how it's going, it's just a meaningless pleasantry, not a real question. Sort of an extended hello. You're supposed to say everything is good regardless of whether things are good or not. So are you asking me for real?

STEVE: Well, I'm not trying to be nosy, but just looking at you...

JOHN: Just looking at me what?

STEVE: I don't get the impression that everything is okay.

JOHN: If everything wasn't okay, would you really want me to tell you?

STEVE: I would, yes. I don't want to sound corny, but I care about the people I know. If you're hurting, I'd like to help if I can.

JOHN: That's really nice of you. Thanks.

STEVE: Sure. So...everything's not okay?

JOHN: What gave it away?

STEVE: Well...your posture's terrible, your eyes are bloodshot and sunken, your hair looks like it hasn't been washed in a week, you've got some pretty incredible armpit stains, and you smell kind of bad.

JOHN: Thanks for pointing all that out. I really appreciate it.

STEVE: Sure. No problem.

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JOHN: Before I share my litany of woes with you...I have to ask...what are you eating?

STEVE: Broccoli.

JOHN: That's what I thought.

STEVE: Why?

JOHN: It's just...you're walking around eating broccoli out of a bowl with a fork?

STEVE: Yeah. If I carry it on a plate, it tends to fall off. And if I use a fork, then I don't have to worry about my hands being dirty.

JOHN: But you're standing in the middle of downtown.

STEVE: Because I stopped to talk to you.

JOHN: But before that...you were walking down the sidewalk eating broccoli. Why?

STEVE: It's broccoli.

JOHN: You seem very secure in that assertion.

STEVE: Why wouldn't I be?

JOHN: Right. Okay, so...you want to hear about my problems?

STEVE: Of course I do.

JOHN: You sure?

STEVE: I'm here for you.

JOHN: Okay, well...I think my cat is constipated.

STEVE: That's terrible. Is there anything else?

JOHN: I ordered pants online and they sent me the wrong color.

STEVE: That's awful.

JOHN: My credit card got demagnetized somehow and I had to wait forever to pay for my coffee this morning.

STEVE: Ouch. That's a bummer.

JOHN: My TV remote died last night and we were all out of AA batteries. I had to get up every time I wanted to change the channel. Two days ago, I went to the store to buy skim milk, but I picked up 1% by mistake.

STEVE: Let it all out. It's okay. There's no shame here.

JOHN: I was going to send in some cereal box tops to get a free baseball cap, and I thought I needed five box tops, but when I went to fill out the order form, I found out it was actually six, and now I have to eat a whole other box of cereal.

STEVE: I'm so, so sorry.

JOHN: To top it all off...my car's due for inspection this month.

STEVE: You have the weight of the world on your shoulders. I really feel for you.

JOHN: And just when I think I'm at my lowest...that my shattered ego can't possibly be crushed into tinier fragments... I get told that I have bad posture, my eyes are bloodshot and sunken, my hair is greasy, I have pit stains, and I stink.

STEVE: I thought you said you appreciated me telling you all that.

JOHN: I was being sarcastic.

STEVE: You need to work on your sarcasm. It doesn't come across very clearly.

JOHN: One more thing to add to the list.

STEVE: Is there anything I can do?

JOHN: No.

STEVE: Are you sure?

JOHN: The universe has seen fit to dump all this stuff on my shoulders, so it's up to me to deal with it.

STEVE: You're a strong person, John. I have a lot of respect for you.

JOHN: Thanks.

STEVE: Nobody should ever have to go through what you're going through right now. I'm really sorry.

JOHN: Steve, I appreciate the sentiment and all, and I don't want to come off sounding like a jerk, but pity doesn't do me any good. I'm not some injured puppy that's been hit by a car. I have my problems, sure, but I also have my dignity, and I don't want your pity.

STEVE: Sorry, John. I didn't mean to offend you.

JOHN: It's okay. I know you meant well.

STEVE: If there's anything I can do...

JOHN: Well, there is one thing...

STEVE: What?

JOHN: But I don't want to impose.

STEVE: Name it, John. Anything I can do for you, I will. As one human being to another, it would be my honor to assist you, not out of pity, but out of a sense of shared humanity, in any way that I can.

JOHN: Give me your broccoli.

STEVE: No.

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JOHN: What?

STEVE: I'm not giving you my broccoli.

JOHN: But you just said—

STEVE: I'm not giving you my freaking broccoli. Go get your own.

JOHN: But—

STEVE: What part of “I'm not giving you my broccoli” do you not understand?

JOHN: I understand it just fine. It's the part before where you said—

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