

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

(A Short Comedy)

by

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THE CHARACTERS

LORRIE CRUMP, in her 20s

JACK PINCHLEY, a young man in his 20s

MELVIN CROW, a young man in his 20s

THE SCENE

Lorrie's living room, kitchen

THE TIME

Recently

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

**(At rise we're in a living room. The front door is in the rear and a door to the right. A refrigerator is seen left. Sofa center stage faces the audience, flanked by a couple of chairs. A small table is near the front door. For the moment it is empty. Then a doorbell rings. LORRIE enters right and goes to the door. She opens it to find JACK standing there. He's holding a box)**

LORRIE

(Not quite yawning) Hello Jack.

JACK

Boy! That's a warm greeting!

LORRIE

What are you doing here?

JACK

For one thing, I wanted to give you this. (He hands her the box. She takes the box, puts it on the table by the door). Aren't you even going to open it?

LORRIE

It's candy.

JACK

How'd you know that?

LORRIE

It always is. And if you say 'sweets for the sweet' one more time, I'll scream.

JACK

I'd almost think you weren't happy to see me, Lorrie.

LORRIE

What do you want?

JACK

(Enters) You know that Mexican restaurant you've been asking to go to?

LORRIE

You mean the one that closed four months ago?

JACK

It *did*? Well, there must be somewhere else you'd like to go. (He now opens the box of candy, eats a piece, offers some to LORRIE, and sprawls on the sofa)

LORRIE

You know I don't eat candy.

JACK

Darn! I keep forgetting that. Well, where would you like to go for dinner? My treat.

LORRIE

I have a date tonight.

JACK

You *what*? How could you do that?

LORRIE

I broke up with you last week. Remember?

JACK

But you're always doing that. And frankly, it's getting kind of annoying.

LORRIE

(She sighs) I know. I'm sorry. It's just that—

JACK

Now look, who's this date with, anyway?

LORRIE

You wouldn't know him.

JACK

Oh no? I know a lot of people, Lorrie. You don't know everyone I know. Now what's his name?

LORRIE

Melvin Crow, do you know him?

JACK

As a matter of fact, I think I do. He's that really ugly bald jerk with crossed eyes and a nose like a Virginia ham, right?

LORRIE

I didn't think you knew him. Anyway, he knows Trudy Workman.

JACK

Then why didn't she go out with him?

LORRIE

She probably thought her husband wouldn't like it. See, Trudy and I were sitting at The Grotto having a glass of wine and Melvin came over to talk to us, and he—well, he just sort of told me he'd take me out tonight.

JACK

He *told* you?

LORRIE

(Now looking uneasy) Sort of—

JACK

Why didn't you just tell him no?

LORRIE

(More nervous) He's not an easy person to say no to.

JACK

Oh-ho. So he's that type, is he? All right, I'll take care of him. Just leave this to me.

LORRIE

(Skeptically) What are you going to do?

JACK

(A bit of swagger) What I'm going to do is tell this Melvin a few facts. I'm simply going to tell him that you are my girl, so he can just turn around and take himself home—or else. That's what I'm going to do!

LORRIE

I don't think you should do that.

JACK

You just watch me! The trouble with you Lorrie is you don't have enough faith in me. Well, this is my chance to show you how wrong you are.

LORRIE

But you don't understand—

JACK

I don't, huh? You wait and see how I handle this bird! (He chuckles) Crow, bird! I like that! (She is about to protest) No! I don't want to hear another word from you, Lorrie Crump! Look, you don't even have to see him. Now you just go into the other room and let me take care of him! I'll have him out of here with his tail between his legs before you can say, um—

LORRIE

(She is very skeptical) Well, I tried to warn you.

JACK

(Now a bit uneasy) I mean how can he be so tough to say no to? What is he in a wheelchair or something? Oh, okay, I get it. Well, don't worry, Lorrie. I promise I'll let him down so easy he'll hardly know it. (She exits shaking her head).

**(And then there's a knock at the door)**

JACK

I'll bet that's him now. Okay, Melvin, prepare to meet Jack. And remember, you asked for it. (He opens the door and simply stares up, flabbergasted. MELVIN then enters, brushing past him. MELVIN is huge. He stares menacingly at JACK)

MELVIN

Where's Lorrie?

JACK

(Nervously affable) Hello. Hi. Um, hello. You must be Melvin. (A faint hope that maybe he isn't)—Aren't you?

MELVIN

Who're you?

JACK

Who, *me*? I'm nobody at all. Well, actually, I'm Jack. I'm Lorrie's, er—brother. Yeah.

MELVIN

She never said she had a brother.

JACK

She didn't know it.

