

# DINNER AT DARIO'S

A ONE ACT ROMANTIC COMEDY

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## Dinner at Dario's

### Characters

Frank, A surgeon

Mark, An operatic baritone

David, A needy ninny

Harold, doesn't hardly exist.

All are over 28, but not much. The time is the present in Frank's apartment in Greenwich CT.

(Scene)

(Frank's apartment in Greenwich CT. The set is empty for a few beats. Frank rushes in from UL door anxiously looking at his watch. He is followed by Mark, who is deadpan calm.)

MARK

I'm not upset Frank. I've told you that three times. I'm proud of you. Really! I just didn't think you'd have the guts to go through with this that's all.

FRANK

Why not? Why don't you think I have the guts?

MARK

I just don't remember your being this decisive, that's all.

FRANK

That's exactly it. See? That's exactly it.  
(goes into the kitchen)

MARK

WHAT?

FRANK

(sticking his head out the door)  
Your...your...ineffable criticism.

MARK

My what? I meant it as a compliment.

(The sound of a blender from the kitchen)

FRANK

I don't need your compliments.

MARK

WHAT?

FRANK

(blender stops running. Frank reappears holding a glass filled with a green liquid)  
Are you deaf? I said I don't need your compliments. Not any more. Have a sip.

MARK

What is it?

FRANK

It's non alcoholic. Just some parsley, aloe vera, Brewer's yeast and raw milk.

MARK

No thank you. I've given them up.

FRANK

Anyway, what are you complaining about? You're still a hot looking guy fresh from a makeover in Paris. Talented. And now...you're single.

MARK

Makeover indeed. On the make is more like it, and even that was a flop.

(pause)

Why do you think I'm...what you said?

FRANK

Why do I think you're single? Mark we broke up two months ago.

MARK

No. I mean the hot looking part.

FRANK

You don't need my approval. And I've heard you sing. Where do you think I've been for the last five years?

MARK

In the operating room. And you only came to hear me sing once.

FRANK

Did you ever come to watch me perform an appendectomy?

MARK

Yuck! Of course not.

FRANK

I rest my case.

MARK

An opera by Verdi, and an appendectomy by you are totally different.

FRANK

They both deal with blood and guts. Sure you don't want one of my health cocktails?

MARK

No thanks. I've given them up. By the way, what time are we eating?

FRANK

We have a reservation at Dario's for eight. It is now, 7:35. So I'll give you ten minutes to change. Where's your bag?

MARK

Oh. Still in the car. Get ready, for what?

FRANK

For dinner. You're not wearing those are you?

MARK

These are my best jeans. I even pressed them. I see you're still a label queen. What are those pants? Armani?

FRANK

Don't start.

MARK

I'll be nice. I have to say, it's sweet of you to invite me to dinner after....like it's some kind of celebration. And a gift too.

FRANK

How do you like him? He's a Bichon Frise. They don't shed. Well, not much.

MARK

Yeah, he's the cutest. Does he have papers?

FRANK

Uh huh, but you'd better get some more. I don't think he's housebroken.

MARK

You were never any good at humor Frank, being the love child of Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura. Anyway, the houseboy can take care of that.

FRANK

A houseboy. You have a houseboy!?

MARK

Yes. Every good home should have one. Why do you think God gave us dust?

FRANK

I have a feeling he does a lot more than dust.

MARK

You're not jealous are you? You?

FRANK

Of course not. You didn't have it so bad you know.  
A great apartment. I'm a terrific cook.

MARK

You sound like one of those personals online.  
Healthy, young, gay, white male wanted to sleep in.  
And if he sticks around long enough, he might get  
mentioned in the will.

FRANK

I've never seen an ad like that.

MARK

The point is, it wasn't enough Frank

FRANK

You're so amazing. All you ever think about is  
yourself.

MARK

Touche. All you ever think of is yourself.

FRANK

Great. The four of us can have dinner tonight,  
(looks at his watch)  
And we'd better hurry. They're not too lenient about  
holding your table.

MARK

Wait. I have to ask you something first.

FRANK

But they're very lenient about allowing people to  
talk to one another. Can it wait?

MARK

I'll be brief.

FRANK

And I shall respond briefly and succinctly. Haven't  
I always?

MARK

I wasn't talking about your sexual technics.

FRANK

We've been all through this before. Who could match  
your wild libido?

MARK

It wasn't your fault. You don't have a libido.

FRANK

Somehow, I don't remember considering it my mission in life to help you realize your fantasies.

MARK

Fantasies? You thought that touching my hair was sexual contact.

FRANK

Well, it is, in a way.

MARK

You were supposed to be my lover, not my hairdresser.

FRANK

What's the question?

MARK

Did you...I mean,,,well okay. Did you ever really love me?

FRANK

Yes.

MARK

Yes, yes. Is that it? Why did you?

FRANK

Oh Jesus.

MARK

Well?

FRANK

I don't know. Because you're, I don't know.

MARK

If that's true, why did we break up?

FRANK

Same answer.

MARK

Why don't we...

FRANK

Look. I wanted to see you tonight. I'm still not sure why. But it's only fair to tell you I have a few irons in the fire.

MARK

Yeah you told me. David. Why haven't I met him?

FRANK

David, um...and Harold.

MARK

Greedy boy. Where do you keep them? In the fridge soaking in yogurt?

FRANK

You'll meet David, and you'll like him. He's an opera buff.

MARK

What about, who did you say?

FRANK

Harold.

MARK

I'll bet he invented that vile looking drink you offered me.

FRANK

So? He likes raw milk.

MARK

So do panthers.

FRANK

He happens to be a wonderful man. And a real homemaker.

MARK

How useful. Now you can have a real home.

FRANK

We're not committed. There's David too.

MARK

As I said. Greedy, greedy.

FRANK

There's nothing wrong with being selective. I want to make the right choice.

MARK

Yes. This time. Right Frank? Come on, what is choice? You take a risk and hope for the best. Like buying brand X. It's the warranty that you can't believe. And why the hell do you want to celebrate our breaking up at a dinner in a fancy bistro?



FRANK

David's joining us.

(looks at his watch)

And he's late! Why dinner? It's called adult behavior. Now try not to upset David. He hasn't been out very long and he's sensitive about some things. He likes opera so that's something you could talk about.

MARK

Is opera the only subject I'm allowed?

FRANK

I can recall times when the subject matter you chose at parties caused an abrupt exodus of our guests.

MARK

And you had this absolute genius for making me feel guilty about everything I say. It was like wearing skis in a tiny john on a charter flight. You couldn't move in any direction without pain.

FRANK

Just don't upset David, that's all.  
(the doorbell rings)

(Frank opens the door to David who enters and stares at him blankly. Like many who are unsure of themselves, he is overdressed for this occasion in the latest trend for gay attire. He hands Frank a small bouquet of flowers.)

FRANK

(continuing)

Hi David, come in.

(Takes the flowers)

Why thank you David. How sweet.

MARK

Hi there, I know that you're David, and I'm Mark. Frank give this boy something to drink.

FRANK

I intend to, as soon as he enters the room. David, this is the Mark I told you about.

(He places the flowers on the coffee table.)

DAVID

Um, I'll have a coke. Diet.

MARK

I'll do the honors. Frank? The usual for us?  
(goes into the kitchen)

FRANK

I hope you like pasta David. Dario does a great puttanesca.

DAVID

Mmm. I'm half eyetalian....what's puttanesca?

MARK

(sticking his head out the doorway)  
It was invented by Neopolitan whores to save time when they cooked between customers.

FRANK

Well that's partly...I guess it's all true. But no one ever thinks about it...except Mark.

DAVID

Is he the opera singer?

FRANK

Yes, he sings with a small opera company in New York. You two should have a lot to talk about.

MARK

(enters with a tray of drinks)  
Coke for you David. Frank and I will have somethink a little more potent.  
(to Frank)  
I see you still keep a little vodka on hand.

DAVID

(to Frank)  
Does he really sing opera?

MARK

Yes I do. If you wish to address me David, please know that my hearing is perfect, and I understand the local dialect. There's no need for Frank to translate.

DAVID

(to Frank)  
Did I say something wrong?

MARK

Did you hear what I said sweetie?

FRANK

Take it easy Mark.

MARK

I'm only trying to communicate.

FRANK

(looks at his watch)

We've got ten minutes to get to Dario's.

MARK

It's practically next door. How about some music? I understand that David loves the opera. But I hope he's not one of those Puccini freaks. If I hear the strains of one fine day from Butterfly once more by anyone, including Frank who I adore, I shall vomit Japanese cherry blossoms.

DAVID

Well, I think that...

MARK

And Tosca, that shabby little shocker, dipped in tawdry dyes. What was it someone said? "an emotion torn to tatters." Or was that an opera by Mascagni? Anyway, we of the conoscenti know they were dramatically inept, don't we David?

DAVID

(to Frank)

What is he talking about?

MARK

Listen. He's doing it again.

FRANK

I'll put on a CD. What would you like David?

DAVID

Oh, anything. I don't care.

(looks at Mark)

But no...um...Puccini.

(Frank kneels by the record shelf looking.)

MARK

Oh not in those pants Frank. You spend a bundle for style and fancy labels, then you dig around in them like a mole.

(to David)

I don't know what's going to happen to him now that I'm no longer around.

FRANK

I don't know Mark. What is going to become of me?

(Mark is facing David out of Frank's vision. He begins to unbuckle his pants belt as he speaks, staring at David.)

MARK

Right now, you're going to play the Callas Medea. I'm feeling strangely vengeful tonight. But if you insist on crawling around down there you'd better remove those pants.

DAVID

W-why should he d-do thaaat?

FRANK

Oh calm down David. Mark doesn't mean what you think he means. Oh, here it is.

MARK

And what in hell does he think I mean?

DAVID

(Jumping up)

I don't know what you guys have in mind but...I...I gotta go now!

(He rushes out)

FRANK

YOU! YOU LOVE PUCCINI.

MARK

Well, everyone doesn't have to know that. Besides, why in hell would you want anyone that squeamish?

(David suddenly runs back in, angrily takes up the flowers and rushes back out again)

FRANK

It shouldn't concern you. And now, we've lost the reservation at Dario's.

MARK

Let's go to a Burgerking.

FRANK

In Greenwich???

MARK

Why not? Do you all have spastic colons in this town?

FRANK

Only after living in New York.

MARK

That's a traitorous remark

FRANK

Why did you do that to David?

MARK

What have I done? Sundays in Connecticut are depressing enough without being accused of seduction and rape. He's just one of those uptight queens.

FRANK

That was for me, wasn't it?

MARK

I've no idea what you're talking about.

FRANK

See? You don't even understand the concept.

MARK

Until I met you, I had no idea I was this master of innuendo

FRANK

You get very cute about it, but you'll have to admit there was no discernable heat between us other than a mutual love for a variety of pasta sauces. What real passion have we known? Okay, I know it was mainly me, and I know now that without expressed passion, your soul becomes a wizened, grumbling thing. Yes, you and I are guilty of having grouchy souls. And the result is, that I can't demonstrate anything physically, and you have become insatiably greedy. Souless satyr and nooky nymph. That's us.

MARK

It's interesting that you're speaking in the present tense. I thought it was over between us.

FRANK

It, it is.

MARK

Thanks for clarifying that. Now, when and what do we eat? Want me to cook?

FRANK

You can't cook. You can just about boil water as they say.

MARK

You've guessed it. We're having boiled water for dinner.

FRANK

I'll go see what I can find in the fridge.

(Frank exits to kitchen.)

(Mark paces around the room. There is a knock at the door. Mark opens it to Harold. Thin, blonde, in jogging attire holding a small paper bag.)

HAROLD

Oh, hullo. I'm Harold Mumford, and you must be Mark. I've been dying to meet you, although Frank doesn't think that I should. Oops, don't tell him I said that. Where is he?

MARK

He's in the kitchen.

HAROLD

I got him some tofu. I'll just go in and give it to him.

MARK

(Eye roll)  
Oh..my...GOD!

HAROLD

(Re-entering)  
He doesn't seem to be there.

MARK

Maybe he's in the little boy's room.

HAROLD

(Eyes sweep over Mark)  
I expected you to be much taller, with a booming voice like Maude. I watch all the reruns. And Frank said you were a bit, um, overwhelming.

MARK

Usually, I am, but I'm wearing my low heels tonight.

HAROLD

I've been jogging.

MARK

(Staring at his jogging outfit)  
Have you really?

HAROLD

I do it to improve my balance. I'm not very well coordinated.

MARK

A little gold jewelry might help.