

CALL ME STAN

A DARK COMEDY

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Call me Stan

Characters:

Marge – the mother
Harold – the father
Brittany – the daughter
S(a)tan – her boyfriend

Scene: The exterior of a wealthy house, anywhere in the world. A few pot plants are placed tastefully here and there and a bright lamp shines from the wall. It is night time, round 7 pm, but it is already dark. Harold and Marge are walking up the path, stage right, conversing as they go.

Harold: I suppose we had to meet him. Eventually.

Marge: I just don't like it, Harold, not one bit.

Harold: Well, I don't like it any more than you do, either. But at this stage -

Marge: Not one little bit.

Harold: At this stage, there -

Marge: It isn't right.

Harold: As, I was saying, at this stage, there isn't much we -

Marge: A young girl like that.

Harold: There isn't very much we can do -

Marge: With a man.

Harold: Except to -

Marge: Twice her age. At least. Oh, Harold, I just don't want to -

Harold: *(With Marge)* Meet him.

Marge: *(With Harold)* Meet him.

Harold: Well, here we are.

Marge: Yes.

Harold: Look, I'm sure he'll be absolutely fine.

Marge: Yes. We're probably worrying about nothing.

Harold: The house looks very tasteful.

Marge: Too tasteful. He's clearly too old for her.

Harold: I suppose... well – let's look on the bright side. He can afford this place. Most guys her age don't know what that want to do with their lives, live in a hole somewhere, never do laundry, live off takeaways. This guy probably lives off kale and avocado.

Marge: Kale! Avocado! Oh, Harold, really? You do you know what Kale and avocado mean, don't you?

Harold: No idea, but I'm sure you'll enlighten me.

Marge: Mid life crisis. I wouldn't be surprised if he had a sports car parked in the garage.

Harold: Poor guy. He must be miserable. Hey - I eat avocado!

Marge: True.

Harold: But I don't have a sports car.

Marge: I know.

Harold: So it's a bad thing that I don't have one, but at the same time it's a bad thing that he does? I don't get it.

Marge: You're not her gander.

Harold: What?

Marge: You're my gander.

Harold: Speak English, woman!

Marge: Don't you see, Harold? He's like her (*In a low voice*) sugar daddy!

Harold: Since when did avocado and sports cars equal sugar daddy?

Marge: Since always. And he must squeezed so many, young, firm avocados in his life, Harold. Probably one every day! Or at least every other day!

Harold: Marge. (*Firmly*)

Marge: Yes, Harold.

Harold: You're getting carried away.

Marge: Oh, I am. You're right. I know I am. But so is she! I'm sure she is!

Harold: After all, we haven't even met the man. Let's give him a little credit?

Marge: It's just that -

Harold: I'm sure our girl has a sensible head on her shoulders, Marge. Now calm down. *(Reaches the front door)* Well, he must be quite successful, anyway, to own a place like this in this area. There's definitely money here.

Marge: Great. Well, at least he can look after her then....let's think of it that way.

Harold: What's his name again?

Marge: Actually, you know she told me, but now it's gone completely out of my head. It was a funny name. Old fashioned. *(She starts fiddling in her bag looking for lipstick to apply and applies it over the next few lines)*

Harold: Er, George?

Marge: No.

Harold: Steven?

Marge: No.

Harold: Matthew?

Marge: No, stop guessing.

Harold: Mark, Luke, John?

Marge: Er, no. Definitely not. Nothing biblical. No, his was something else. Something more..er mundane. Like Cyril. Or Cecil. Milton! That's it. His name was definitely Milton. *(She puts the lipstick away, Harold rings the door and the sound of a doorbell is heard)*

Harold: Milton, hey? Funny name, though. This place looks like paradise in my book. How bad could he be? *(He rings again. The sound of a door bell is heard again. Lights down stage right and lights up full stage except stage right. The room is tastefully decorated. There is a large dining table in the middle of the room with chairs arranged upstage for each family member. The table has a red tablecloth on it, with goblets by each place and cutlery is already laid out.*

Stan enters swiftly crossing the stage. He is dressed like Satan. (He is Satan.) He has red skin, horns and is wearing a black suit with a long red or black cloak. He wears black shoes or boots. He walks confidently to the front door and opens it. Marge and Harold are on the other side)

Stan: Good evening. Do come in. *(They regard him, unable to process what they're seeing)* You must be Harold and Marge!

Marge: *(Marge nudges Harold in the ribs)* It's not Milton.

Stan: Call me Stan. *(Holds out his hands to shake Harold's hand)*

Harold and Marge: Hello, Stan. *(Robotically. They don't shake)*

Stan: I can't tell you how lovely it is to meet you. *(They remain rooted to the threshold)* Now, now, don't be shy. We've got a bottle of Château Diable 1939 that has your name written all over it. *(He holds out his hand again to shake Harold's hand. Harold has to step into the house to take his hand, rather hesitantly. They shake hands. Marge stands there looking slightly lost.)* Come in, come in. There *(He closes the door)*. Perfect. Now where is - ?

(Brittany, dressed in white, runs in. She lets out a squeal of delight and hugs her parents.)

Brittany: Mum! Dad! I'm so glad you're here. I'm so excited. Come inside, please! *(They step hesitantly inside the door and look around)* You can leave your coats by the door here. *(They remove their coats and look for a place to put them down. There is a pitchfork hanging off the coat rack)*

Marge: Um, over here?

Brittany: Yes, yes, anywhere round there.

Stan: Just move it. We don't stand on ceremony here.

(They hang their coats on the coat hooks awkwardly. If the director wishes, the pitchfork can fall off and they can both fumble to put it back.)

Brittany: Oh, mum, did you have a nice journey down?

Marge: We, er did.

Harold: Whole thing took about two hours. We were quite lucky – missed all the traffic on the way, bizarrely.

Brittany: Oh, that's Stan. He's lucky like that, you know. Ever since I started seeing him, well, everything has just been, well, I don't know how to say it, but, mum, he's just so wonderful.

Stan: As are you, my little sugarplum.... *(Pinches her cheek)* *(To everyone)* Now if you'll excuse me just for a moment, I need to go check on the roast. How do you like your meat, Harold?

Harold: Oh, I don't mind, really. Er, medium rare?

Stan: Honestly, I've always been a fan of flesh being quite, how you say... well done. Haha.

Harold: Ahaha *(Laughs uncomfortably)*

Stan: Now if you'll excuse me? *(Exits)*

Marge: Well. *(Overly brightly)* You two seem to like each other.

Brittany: Oh, we do! Mum, dad, I know I had boyfriends before but Stan, he's so different, you know.

Marge: Well, that's true, dear.

Harold: Well -

Brittany: Dad! Please. don't be like that.

Harold: Like what?

Brittany: You always get like that with my boyfriends. And I really like this one. So I'm asking you, please be nice.

Harold: I've said nothing!

Brittany: Just don't be like you usually are. With my boyfriends. I hate to say it, dad, but it kind of puts them off of coming to the house again.

Harold: How?

Brittany: Do you remember Michael?

Harold: Was he the one with the motorbike or the mummy's boy?

Brittany: Aargh! And there is it. That's exactly what I mean, dad. You find something you don't like about them and you hold onto it and then use it as a reason for me not to go out with them. And then you frighten them away. All because you're so judgemental! You don't even give them a chance.

Marge: Well, yes dear, in most cases I would tend to agree with you, but in this case, I think that -

Brittany: So he's a bit older than I am -

Harold: Brittany -

Brittany: That, that just means that he has so much more experience with the world than I do, you know? I'm really learning from him.

Marge: Yes, but darling, do you really want that kind of er- experience?

Brittany: *(Flushes)* Mummy! I didn't mean like that!! I meant, well, he can teach me so much. He's like my Guru.

Marge: Yes, dear, I do see, but darling -

Brittany: What?

Marge: It's just that he's so -

Brittany: So what?

Marge: How do I put this?

Brittany: I don't know, mum. You tell me. *(Her back is up, annoyed)*

Marge: Harold, help me here.

Harold: Honestly, I don't know where to begin with this. There's, well the fact that he's so much older than you, which to be honest was a concern, even before we met him, and then there's the clothes.

Brittany: Clothes?

Harold: He dresses like my father. *(Marge nods in agreement)*

Brittany: Well, I like the way he dresses. So smart. So much nicer than wandering round in a pair of shorts with his belly hanging out like most guys.

Harold: I'm right, Marge, aren't I?

Marge: Red. *(Whispers and looks round to check Stan hasn't heard)*

Brittany: What, sorry, mum?

Marge: Red. *(Slightly louder but still in a quavery voice)*

Brittany: Red?

Marge: Red.

Brittany: Are you saying my boyfriend is red?

Marge: Er...

Brittany: I can't believe this. In this day and age, you're discriminating against someone for the colour of their skin! Mum, it's the 21st century. Believe me, we've gotten past that.

Marge: Well, I'm sure that if he was just a little red, it would be absolutely fine. I mean, half the people in Essex *(Other place where people get a lot of fake tans)* are orange.

Harold: More than half.

Marge: And even though it was a bit weird when we first started seeing them, now that we're used to it, well, we've become accustomed to it.

Brittany: What are you saying? That you'll try to become accustomed to his "redness" over time? O.M.G.

Marge: He's just so very red, Brittany.

Brittany: So?

Marge: It can't be healthy, dear. And your father feels the same way.

Harold: I do? *(Quickly)* I do.

Brittany: Do you dad, do you really? You two need to stop living in the past. Honestly.

(Enter Stan, popping his head jovially round the door)

Harold: We'll talk about this later.

Stan: Dinner's ready! I hope you're starving!

Marge: Ooh, you gave me a little fright there!

Stan: I do apologize. It was not my intention to, er, how do you say, scare the hell out of you. Haha.

Marge: *(Titters nervously)* But now that you ask, actually I am hungry. *(Stands)*

Stan: I've always liked a woman who enjoys her food. As much as I enjoy the process of preparing it. *(Touches her shoulder lightly)* Shall we go in? After you!

Marge: Oh, thank – you.

Brittany: Stan is so talented! *(Trying to win her parent's approval)*

Harold: Oh?

Brittany: He's been working like a demon all day in that kitchen.

Stan: Slaving over a hot stove! I don't want to boast, but I think you'll find it's worth it.

Harold: I'll bet.

Stan: Please come through and sit down. *(They follow him. He pulls the chair out for Brittany and then Marge to sit down. Harold pulls his own chair out. They all sit at the with Stan at the head of the table and Brittany next to him. Stan pulls the chairs out for both women. There is a large roast on the table with a large fork/prong sticking out of it and a carving knife next to it. There is an opened bottle of red wine on the table.)* Wine?

Marge: Yes, please! *(Stan pours her a glass)*

Harold: Not at the moment, thanks. I'll stick to good old fashioned water.

Stan: My love?

Brittany: No, thank-you, my absolute darling. *(They link hands and stare into each other's eyes)*

Harold: Where's the Holy water when you need it, hey? *(Jokingly, to Marge)*

Marge: Sssh. *(Digs him in the ribs)* So, er, Stan, what do you do?

Harold: Yes, Stan, tell us what you do...

Brittany: Stan has a great job!

Stan: Oh, you flatter me, my darling. It's not nearly as exciting as you make it out to be. *(Takes out carving knife)* Pound of flesh, Harold? *(He dishes up for Harold first then for the women afterwards during the conversation)*

Harold: Thank -you, maybe not quite so much though. *(Takes a mouthful)* Unusual taste. What meat is that exactly?

Stan: It's goat.

Harold: *(Almost spits it out but mouth is full and wants to be polite)* mmghgGoatgggtt!

Stan: Brittany, ever the animal rights activist, aren't you darling, has informed me that since goats live mostly free range lives, they're the more ethical choice, isn't that right, love?

Harold: *(Chewing and trying to say something, takes glass of water and downs it)* mmmmhuhmmm – mwhhuhghmmmmmm- mmmmm!!

Brittany: You were asking Stan what he did, dad?

Harold: Mmhuhfg, *(Swallows loudly)* Oh. Yes.

Brittany: He sells insurance! *(To her parents)* See?

Marge: Oh, what kind?

Harold: Life? *(Weakly)*

Brittany: Yes! How did you guess?

Harold: Just a hunch.

Brittany: He's very high up in his company. Top floor in fact. Up in the sky.

Harold: Oh?

Stan: Well, the, er, insurance industry is trying to diversify nowadays. No more hidden underground, er clauses, you see. What you see is what you get.

Harold: Really?

Stan: Really. Wine with your goat?

Harold: No, thank you.

Brittany: Stan's so hot at his job. He gets loads of contracts signed.

Harold: I'll bet.

Stan: Well, you know it's ever so much easier than it used to be, you know.

Brittany: Stan, what have I told you about putting yourself down?

Stan: I just meant with the internet and Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, it has really simplified my job. You can find just about any damned person out there at the click of a button! Really beats being a door to door salesman.

Brittany: Daddy used to be a door to door salesman, didn't you, Daddy?

Harold: Oh, er, yes, but that was a long time ago, sweetheart. I'm sure Stan doesn't want to know-

Stan: Oh, pray tell. What did you sell?

Harold: Bibles.

Stan: Really? And how did that go for you?

Harold: Good....?

Stan: You're still at it?

Harold: Not any more, no.

Stan: What a shame. (*Deeply sympathetic*)