

Mac's Basement

By

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Cast of Characters

Mark: Man in his late 20s, with chronic foot-in-mouth

Stacy: Woman in her late 20s, who perceives her best trait as being punctual

Brigid: Waitress who won't put up with crap from Mark

Scene

Basement of Mac's Tavern

Time

Present day, during softball season

MAC'S BASEMENT

A small restaurant table for two has a lit candle on it. Two wobbly chairs should kerthunk back and forth on a wooden floor when patrons are aboard.

Offstage can be heard the sounds of feet descending wooden stairs. Then STACY and MARK come walking to the table carrying their drinks and a basket of onion rings.

STACY

We ordered at the bar, but the waitress said they'll bring our food down here.

BOTH sit at the table with a confused look on MARK's face. BOTH look up as some heavy bass music bleeds through the ceiling above.

MARK

I didn't know Mac's Tavern even had a basement dining room. Want an onion ring?

STACY

Not very romantic, is it?

MARK

The Greeks thought an onion was an aphrodisiac.

STACY

I meant the basement isn't romantic.

MARK

It sure would've been nicer on the patio under the stars.

STACY turns away from MARK and looks back up the stairs. MARK quickly pulls out and opens a ring box.

STACY

Especially with the full moon tonight.

MARK

(longingly)

Yeah. That would've been nicer.

MARK closes and hides the ring box, and STACY turns back.

STACY

Que sera sera.

MARK

Huh?

STACY

Whatever will be will be. Mother used to sing that song to me. Half-heartedly.

MARK

She did something half-heartedly? Unbelievable!

STACY

Mother doesn't ever just roll with the punches. Everybody plots their own destinies.

MARK

I'm glad you're learning how to smell the roses and wander down life's twisted bramble path.

STACY

What bramble path? You're not planning that cross-country trip with Larry again, are you?

MARK

No. I just meant that not everything can be planned out to perfection. For example, would you have thought we'd be celebrating the two-year anniversary of our first date here in a basement?

STACY

No. Did we meet at Mac's? Is that why we're here?

MARK

Don't you remember the first time? Before the softball game that we lost to the Apex Lions in extra innings. I played shortstop and went 2 for 4 in that game.

STACY

Always the sentimentalist.

BRIGID enters.

BRIGID

Is there anythi-- Whoa. You can't have an open flame down here? Not since that gas leak last month.

BRIGID blows out the candle.

You two ready for refills yet?

STACY

I think we're good. Is it going to be a long wait for our meals?

BRIGID

Should be fast, but I'll check.

BRIGID exits.

MARK

Are you in a hurry to get somewhere?

STACY

No, but it's...a little spooky down here. Don't you feel the creepiness?

MARK

It's certainly darker now that the candle is out.

STACY

That must be what gave me the clammy palms.

MARK

Don't worry, Stace. I'll protect you from anything jumping out of the shadows. Goblins or rats.

STACY

You're making things worse.

MARK

Right. You've warned me about inappropriate conversation topics for a date. (holds up drink) But for some inexplicable reason, rum always makes me think of rats.

STACY

And I thought that the gas leak might be able to fix your gibberish.

MARK

Wrong again.

BRIGID enters with their meals.

BRIGID

Here you go. We'll have you two in and out of here in no time at all.

BRIGID serves a chef's salad to STACY and Buffalo wings to MARK.

MARK

This isn't what I ordered.

BRIGID

Sure is. Extra hot Buffalo wings.

MARK

I ordered fish and chips.

BRIGID

I'm sure you asked for wings.

MARK

Fish and chips. Take this back.

BRIGID

Would you like me to bring something else?

MARK

My fish and chips!

BRIGID

I'll add that to your order.

MARK

You'll take the wings off the order.

BRIGID

I can't take them off after I've brought them out of the kitchen.

MARK

Is this your first day on the job?

BRIGID

Do you still want the fish?

MARK

No. I'll be eating the wings.

BRIGID

Good. Let me know if there's anything else I can get for you.

STACY

Water, please. And extra napkins for Mark.

BRIGID

Coming right up.

BRIGID exits.

MARK

This evening is not going the way I expected.

MARK starts eating his wings and is visibly affected by the spiciness.

STACY

Luckily you've always been able to roll with the punches. I think that's why I've stuck with you this long. I get derailed too easily.

MARK

These wings are damn hot!

STACY

Are they making you cry?

MARK

(trying to cover for the spicy pain)
It's not the wings. It's just that...that you're so beautiful in the glow of...the emergency exit sign.

STACY

There's no holding you back.

MARK

(taking another bite and then
stammering)
You've got me fired up.

STACY

That's the hot wings and rum.

MARK

Rum always makes me horny.

STACY

You can be such an ass.

BRIGID returns with a glass of water and places it near STACY's food.

MARK

What about *my* water?

BRIGID

You didn't ask.

MARK

(yelling)
What do you have against me? Why'd you seat us down here? There were empty tables on the patio.

BRIGID

Get over yourself. It's not always about you.

MARK

Get your manager. Now.

BRIGID storms off. MARK picks up another sticky wing.

MARK

Can you believe that waitress? Although I must admit I *would* order these wings again.

STACY

Let's not get into a review of chicken bones. The evening is already off to a bad start.

MARK

You're right. You've probably been wondering why Mac's tonight instead of going out for a fancy anniversary dinner.

MARK wipes his sticky hands on his shirt and then kneels down on one knee.

MARK (cont'd)

No time like the present.

BRIGID re-enters.

BRIGID

My manager could hear you yelling and said--what the hell are you doing?

MARK

(to BRIGID)

Give us a moment alone.

MARK pulls out a ring box.

MARK (cont'd)

(to STACY)

Stacy Zabarski--

BRIGID

Get up. This is no place to be proposing.

MARK

It's none of your business.

STACY

Mark, she's right.

MARK stands.

MARK

But it's our anniversary.

STACY

Right day. Wrong place.

MARK

It's where we met.

STACY

But it would make a crummy story.

MARK

So? Isn't it the thought that counts?

BRIGID

It's the story you give the bride that counts for your proposal.

MARK

She can embellish the story later.

MARK returns to one knee.

BRIGID

(in desperation)
Mark, I'm having your baby!

MARK

Get out of here!

STACY

Mother would HATE this story.

BRIGID

She certainly would.

MARK

Are you being paid to ruin my evening?

BRIGID

No. It's just a bonus.

MARK stands.

MARK

Wait. You know Stacy's mother?

BRIGID

Um. No?

MARK

But you just said--

STACY

Nobody's mother wants to hear that my boyfriend proposed in a bar's basement.

MARK

(to STACY)

Did you know that I was going to propose tonight?

STACY

I thought you might.

MARK

What gave it away? The dingy basement or the rude waitress?

STACY

Those are both my fault. Brigid, can you leave us alone?

BRIGID

I did what you asked for, Stace, but I couldn't stop Admiral Oblivious.

BRIGID exits.

MARK

What did you ask her for?

STACY

Brigid is my cousin. I texted her on the way over to make sure we had a crummy dinner here. That way you wouldn't propose *in* the bar and you'd wait.

MARK

That's psycho manipulative.

STACY

I wanted to write our story.

MARK

So you texted your cousin to set this whole thing up?

STACY

She's pretty clever at improv, especially for someone who doesn't work here.

MARK

She may have built this evening into the worst engagement story ever.

STACY

In the end, that fault would've been all on you. You could've put the plans off at any point but kept going.

(MORE)

STACY (cont'd)

And who orders onion rings when they're about to propose?

MARK

I was thinking that I could just put the engagement ring in the tray and let you find it among the onion rings. Then I wouldn't have to kneel down.

STACY

You're astonishing!

MARK

Yeah, well I didn't know about the "proposal story" deal then. Do I get credit for not putting the ring in the onions?

STACY

Why do I always excuse you?

MARK

Because I never say things like "I forgive you for using your cousin to manipulate me."

(beat)

STACY

Will you marry me, Mark?

MARK

Sure. Can we serve Mac's wings at the wedding?

Lights out.

END SCENE