

JUST A JOKE

Written by

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INT. ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAYTIME

ALLEN, (36), a man wearing a navy colored business outfit stands next to the window. He is holding a glass of whisky and looking at the view outside of the window.

INT. RECEPTION DESK OF ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAYTIME

FRITZ, (36), a man wearing a white T-shirt and casual jeans, walking rashly into the scene and stop at the reception desk.

FRITZ

Allen is in his office, right?

NANCY, (20s), a woman wearing business outfit stands behind the reception desk.

NANCY

Yes. Do you have an appointment, sir?

Fritz says nothing but goes directly to Allen's office.

NANCY

Sir! You can't...

Nancy goes after Fritz to stop him.

INT. ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAYTIME

Fritz opens the door crudely.

FRITZ

What do you mean you will not go to the funeral?

Nancy comes into the office after Fritz.

NANCY

Sorry, sir. I tried to stop him, but...

Instead of turning back to them, Allen keeps looking at the view outside of the window.

ALLEN

It's okay, Nancy. You can go back to your work.

Nancy closes the door and leaves.

Fritz stares at Allen's back.

FRITZ
You're supposed to say something,
Allen.

Finally Allen turns back and sits in his chair.

Allen looks at Fritz.

ALLEN
What am I suppose to say? By the
way, it's a really blunt way to say
hello to a friend you haven't met
for years.

Fritz frowns. He sits in the chair in front of Allen's desk.

FRITZ
When did you become such a cold
person? It's Jake, Allen. Not some
stranger. Jake died!

There is still no expression on Allen's face.

ALLEN
So? I have a meeting tomorrow, I
can't go.

Allen opens a file on his desk. He picks up a pen and starts working.

Fritz stares at Allen and takes out a business card. Fritz puts it in front of Allen.

FRITZ
Come here tonight. We need to talk.

Fritz stands up and leaves.

Allen puts down the pen and picks up the card.

ON THE CARD

HEART

OWNER FRITZ

BACK TO SCENE

Allen looks at the card for a while and then stares at the door that Fritz just closed.

EXT. FRITZ'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Allen stands outside of the restaurant.

INT. FRITZ'S RESTAURANT

Fritz greets guests. A woman stands next to Fritz. Fritz turns back, looks at her and introduces her to the guests.

EXT. FRITZ'S RESTAURANT

Allen takes a deep breath, then walks into the restaurant.

INT. FRITZ'S RESTAURANT

The small bell on the door rings when Allen walks into the restaurant.

Fritz notices the sound and turns around to see the door.

FRITZ
(mouthing the words)
Wait me for a second!

Allen nods. Allen finds a seat next to the window, sits down. Allen doesn't take off his jacket.

Fritz greets the guests.

FRITZ
Enjoy your meal.

Fritz nods to the guests. Fritz walks to Allen's seat. Fritz pulls out the seat right in front of Allen's.

FRITZ
Wanna order something?

ALLEN
No, I'm fine. Nice place.

Allen points at somewhere of the restaurant.

Fritz smiles.

FRITZ
Thanks.

ALLEN
So, what do you want to talk about?
I still have work to do later.

Fritz sighs.

FRITZ

Okay, listen to me, Allen. About the funeral, you don't even need to be there until the end, just a few hours to say goodbye to him.

ALLEN

I told you I have a meeting that day. I'm not gonna waste my time on an idiot who died because he can't swim. You really don't need to waste both of our time.

Allen stands up and tends to go. Fritz grabs Allen's wrist.

FRITZ

(getting angry)

Really? Really Allen? Everything that is not business is unnecessary to you now? You...

Allen shakes off Fritz's hand.

ALLEN

You what! We haven't been in contact for years. Now don't you dare to say you know anything about me.

Fritz is speechless. Allen stares at Fritz.

FRITZ

I...

KATHY, (30), the woman with blond hair who just stood next to Fritz wearing simple one piece walks over. She holds two cups of water and puts each of those in front of Allen and Fritz.

KATHY

What are you gentlemen talking about here? I'm Kathy, nice to meet you. Why are you standing up, sit down.

Kathy holds her hand out to shake.

ALLEN

Not necessary. I'll be leaving soon.

Allen turns to go.

Kathy grabs Allen's hand then gives him a smile again.

KATHY

Good boy, don't make me say that again, OK? I don't allow fighting in my restaurant.

Allen sits down slowly.

KATHY

Good for you. Now...

Kathy turns around and looks at Fritz.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Baby, why don't you go out with your friend for a drink? You two haven't seen each other for a long time, right? Don't worry about here, I have it all in control.

Fritz nods at Kathy.

ALLEN

Wait, I didn't say I was going...

Kathy turns back to Allen again, smiles significantly.

KATHY

What did you just say?

ALLEN

I...

FRITZ

Let's go.

Fritz stands up. Kathy still smiles at Allen.

EXT. ON THE ROAD SIDE - NIGHT

Allen and Fritz walk on the side of the road in silence.

Allen puts his hands in his pockets, looks down, kicks his shoes on the ground as he walks.

Fritz watches Allen and laughs.

FRITZ

You feel that awkward now.

ALLEN

What?

Fritz smiles and points at Allen's shoes.

FRITZ

You usually kick your feet like this when you feel awkward.

Allen stops kicking his shoes, looks forward, and coughs awkwardly.

ALLEN

Now what, trying to bring those old stories out and impress me?

FRITZ

Usually when you kicked your shoes like that, Jake always made fun of you, saying: "come on Allen! How insecure can you be? Be like a man!" Then he would smack upside your head lightly. Of course you would hit him back and argue with him that it was not you were being insecure but he was being annoying, which wasn't persuasive.

ALLEN

Ok, you are just... keep talking. You...

FRITZ

(over Allen)

Sometimes I agreed with Jake about how insecure you were. No offense, but I always thought you were too sensitive. You thought too much.

ALLEN

You...

FRITZ

(over Allen)

And I'm the one who never grew up. Remember I picked a fight with the guy who lived next to my dorm, you and Jake came and backed me up?

ALLEN

Yeah, and you almost die, stupid.

FRITZ

Haha, right, and Jake made me buy his lunch for a month to thank him.

ALLEN

You should be glad I didn't ask you for anything.

FRITZ

Yeah, you are the most mature one. You know what, I was actually surprised you fought for me that day.

ALLEN

Forget it, I was crazy that day anyway.

FRITZ

Haha don't say that! Sometimes being crazy is just something you need! Don't always make a businessman's face. By the way, didn't you use to want to be a painter?

Fritz stops and stands in front of Allen, looks at him.

Allen stops. There's a few seconds silence.

ALLEN

I'm not gonna go to the bar with you. I need to go back to work.

Allen turns back and walks away from Fritz.

FRITZ

What?! Wait! Oh, hey, I see the bar! Allen!

Fritz points at the bar and then runs to Allen, grabs his hand.

ALLEN

I'm not gonna...

Fritz pulls Allen to the bar.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE BAR - NIGHT

Three drunk muscle guys walk out.

Fritz crashes into one of the drunk guy.

FRITZ

Sorry.

ALLEN

I said I'm not gonna...

One of the drunk guy stops Fritz from going.

DRUNK GUY 1

There must be a better way to say
sorry, right, buddy?

Fritz turns around, lets Allen go, and looks at Drunk Guy 1
with a cold expression.

Drunk Guy 1 steps forward.

DRUNK GUY 1

What, you want to fight, boy?

Fritz also steps forward without saying anything and still
looks at Drunk Guy 1 with a cold expression.

Drunk Guy 1 grabs Fritz's collar.

DRUNK GUY 1

What?

Allen takes a hundred dollar out and hold it in front of
Drunk Guy 1.

ALLEN

Enough?

FRITZ

What?! Allen!

Fritz looks at Allen but Allen doesn't look back and still
stares at Drunk Guy 1.

Drunk Guy 1 takes over the money and puts it into his pocket.

Drunk Guy 1 smiles to Allen and then looks at Fritz.

DRUNK GUY 1

Seems like your friend know how to
be an adult.

Drunk Guy 1 push Fritz back a little bit.

DRUNK GUY 1

Bye, asshole. Oh, and you...

Drunk Guy 1 points at Allen.

DRUNK GUY 1

Rich asshole! Hahaha!

Drunk Guy 1 leaves.

Fritz grabs Drunk Guy 1's arm when Drunk Guy 1 is walking pass him.

FRITZ

Never talk to my friend like this,
you son of bitch!

Fritz punches on Drunk Guy 1's face.

Allen looks shocked. The other two drunk guys take a step towards Fritz.

Drunk guy 1 rubs where Fritz just punched on him, stares at Fritz madly.

Allen stands next to Fritz.

ALLEN

Are you crazy?!

FRITZ

When I count to three... Let's run.

ALLEN

What?!

FRITZ

1...

Drunk guy 1 gives his buddies a look.

Drunk guy 2 and 3 starts to walks to the positions that could encircle Allen and Fritz.

FRITZ

3! Run!

ALLEN

What?! You idiot! Where the hell is
2!

Fritz and Allen runs to opposite direction where the three drunk guys at.

DRUNK GUY 1

Catch them up!

The three guys are yelling at and chasing after them.

EXT. NEXT TO A WALL - NIGHT

Fritz sees a wall that they can hide. Fritz grabs Allen's arm and drags Allen to stay next to him.

The three guys keeps running forward without noticing where Fritz and Allen hide at.

Fritz cranes his neck and looks around the direction those three drunk guys run to.

Fritz has a deep breath, and turns around to look at Allen.

Allen looks back to Fritz.

Two of them laugh out loud at the same time.

FRITZ

Wanna a bottle of beer?

ALLEN

Why not.

EXT. IN FRONT OF 7-11 - NIGHT

Fritz walks out of 7-11 and holds two bottles of beers.

Allen is sitting on the bench in front of 7-11.

Fritz sits next to Allen. Fritz opens a beer and pass it to Allen, then opens one for himself.

ALLEN

Thanks.

Allen takes a sip.

Fritz also takes a sip.

There is a few seconds silence.

FRITZ

Tell me the real reason you don't want to go to Jake's funeral.

ALLEN

I have already told you I...

FRITZ

Don't treat me as a fool, Allen.

Allen shakes his beer in silence.

FRITZ

Allen...

ALLEN

You achieved your dream.

FRITZ

Huh?

Fritz puts down the beer, looks at Allen.

ALLEN

You told us you wanted to run your own restaurant after you graduated from college. Oh, you remember what Jake had said about his dream?

FRITZ

Yeah...

ALLEN AND FRITZ

(together)

A fisherman. Hahaha...

ALLEN

I was so like... what the hell were you talking about, you couldn't even swim.

FRITZ

Yeah, I know, but isn't it funny when he told us those crazy ideas.

ALLEN

Yeah... so when I found out he died because of drowning when he was fishing on the boat. I didn't know what to say... you know... I just...

FRITZ

Is this the reason you don't want to go to the funeral, because you are so mad at Jake?

ALLEN

Not... only because of that... I... you know, I was too into my work these years for no reason. What I'm doing now is not what I want to do. I told you two that I wanted to be a painter, but I didn't do it. I hadn't even tried so hard for that.

(MORE)

ALLEN (CONT'D)

After we graduated from college, I had shown some of my paintings to a few galleries, and all I had gotten were "gentle" rejections.

Allen takes another sip of the beer.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

I freaked out. I didn't know what to do and I was still staying at my parents place. It was... just so hard for me to let them keep supporting my dream when I wasn't even sure about myself at the point. I lost to the reality. After that, I worked so hard to forget the truth that I was just a chicken in the real world. If I go to funeral, what am I supposed to say to him? I don't think I have the right to say anything to a man who is chasing his dream so hard...

Allen looks down and stops talking.

There is a few seconds silence between them.

Fritz drinks all of his beer and stands up suddenly.

Fritz drags Allen up.

FRITZ

Come with me.

INT. FRITZ'S RESTAURANT

Kathy is working on cleaning up the restaurant.

EXT. FRITZ'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Fritz and Allen stand in front of Fritz's restaurant.

Fritz is looking at Kathy. Allen is confused and looks at Fritz.

ALLEN

Why are we...

FRITZ

Technically, I'm not the one who owns this restaurant.

ALLEN

What?

FRITZ

Kathy bought it for me.

(beat)

After graduation, I was working at several restaurants at the same time to save money in order to open my own. I met Kathy at one of the restaurants. Fortunately, it didn't take a long time for me to open my own. However, I still failed on my first restaurant because of some financial problem. I had to sell it. I was so depressed and just wanted to run away from the real world. I closed myself into my room just like a kid. Then Kathy found me. You know the first thing she did to me when she met me? She punched me in the face.

ALLEN

I'm not surprised.

FRITZ

Yeah, Kathy is much braver than me. She told me to sell my restaurant to her and she then hired me to be the ?owner?.

(beat)

I'm just as coward as you are, Allen. We both knew we wouldn't win if we actually fought with those guys, so we run, but there's nothing wrong with being a coward. It's true that you ran away from your dream, but you succeeded in being a good son that doesn't make your parents worry about how you are gonna survive, and you know what, it's never late to chase your dream even now.

Allen is speechless. He stares at Fritz for a long time.

FRITZ

What? I know I'm handsome especially after this speech, but don't fall in love with me Ok? I have a cute wife.

Allen laughs and hit on Fritz's head lightly.

ALLEN
Screw you!
(beat)
Thanks Fritz.

FRITZ
So, tomorrow's funeral?

ALLEN
Yeah, I will go.

INT. JAKE'S FUNERAL - THE NEXT DAY MORNING

Jake's picture is put in the center of the wall. There is a coffin put in front of the picture.

Surprisingly, there are not much people here yet.

Allen and Fritz walk into the door.

Instead of flower, Allen puts a condensed swim ring in front of Jake's picture.

ALLEN
Learn how to...

JAKE
Surprise!

Jake jumps out from the coffin. Allen and Fritz are shocked.

Jake turns around then see the swim ring.

JAKE
Wow, a swim ring. I will put it in my boat! Fritz, what do you bring to me?

Jake looks at Allen and Fritz.

JAKE
Hey hey, are you guys here?

Jake shakes his hand in front of Allen and Fritz.

Fritz turns to Allen.

FRITZ
Am I dreaming?

Allen pinches on Fritz's face.

FRITZ

Ow!

ALLEN

Maybe not...

Jake laughs out loud.

JAKE

Wait, seriously you guys don't know
what date is it today?

Allen and Fritz looks at Jake primly and shakes their head.

JAKE

Oh my god, I'm a genius.

(beat)

It's April 1st! Yeah! Happy April
Fools? Day you two fools
hahahahaha!

Allen and Fritz are still speechless.

JAKE

I love your reactions but...

ALLEN

You... idiot!

Allen gives Jake a light smack upside the head and Fritz also
gives Jake a light smack after Allen.

JAKE

Ow! Sorry, sorry! I apologize!
Stop, stop!

Jake runs away from Allen and Fritz.

JAKE

It's not only a joke! No no no,
it's a joke but see! We're together
again because of my joke! Isn't it
amazing?

Allen looks at Fritz and Fritz looks back to Allen. Allen
gives Fritz a eye signal. Fritz comes in front of Jake and
Allen follows Fritz and stands on another side of where Jake
stands.

JAKE

What? A hug? Want to give me hug?
Come here come here!

Fritz and Allen step forward and give Jake a fake hug action and then hit him again.

JAKE

Again!? Ow!

Jake runs away again. Allen and Fritz are chasing after Jake trying to stop him from running away. Instead of getting mad at Jake, Allen and Fritz laugh out loud.

FADE TO BLACK.