

# ***Roast Beef Means Everything's Gravy***

*by*

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Cast of Characters

JERZY:

40

GEORGE:

67

Place

Front Yard Motel

Time

Early afternoon

Setting: Motel. Day.

At Rise: Jerzy sets down pool net beside shed and gets approached by his father who smokes a cigarette and drinks a beer.

**GEORGE:** Did you do the pool?

**JERZY:** Yeah, it's done.

**GEORGE:** But what's taking so long for you to get back to the front desk?

**JERZY:** Don't you want it done right?

**GEORGE:** There's people waiting. When there's people waiting, you don't make them wait.

**JERZY:** So why are you out smoking a cigarette?

**GEORGE:** Cause I'm on my break.

**JERZY:** I can't be two places at one time.

**GEORGE:** You work too slow, that's the problem. When I was your age I could vacuum the pool in no time flat.

**JERZY:** Is that why the pool always looked like shit growing up?

**GEORGE:** What did you just say to me?

**JERZY:** Forget it, you don't understand.

**GEORGE:** I understand just well, you are spoiled rotten.

**JERZY:** Yeah, I'm so spoiled.

**GEORGE:** One great big spoil.

**JERZY:** It's like you have a saying for things that don't apply to our situation.

**GEORGE:** Situation? What situation? Problem with the pool?

**JERZY:** There's no problem with the pool, George.

**GEORGE:** Customers are waiting, that's the situation.

**JERZY:** They're waiting cause you're too stubborn to put your customers first.

**JERZY:** (*cont'd*) We see things two different ways.

**GEORGE:** You're speaking philosophy again and I don't have time for that shit.

**JERZY:** You never have time. (pointing) Are those the people waiting?

**GEORGE:** Looks like it.

**JERZY:** Looks like they're leaving. (beat) Excuse me? Are you looking to book a room?

*Jerzy frowns and looks at his father.*

The woman just gave me the finger. How long were they waiting?

**GEORGE:** Fifteen, maybe twenty minutes a half hour or so.

**JERZY:** Why didn't you invite them in?

**GEORGE:** I'm on my break, you deaf?

**JERZY:** We're losing business left and right.

**GEORGE:** Your mother's cooking roast beef tonight.

**JERZY:** ...Why tonight?

**GEORGE:** Cause I asked her to...

**JERZY:** ...I have bowling tonight.

**GEORGE:** Suit yourself.

**JERZY:** But you know I have bowling tonight.

**GEORGE:** Cherry still coming by though.

**JERZY:** You invited Cherry without me?

**GEORGE:** Frankly son, I don't give a damn.

**JERZY:** I can't miss bowling, tonight.

**GEORGE:** I said, I don't give a damn.

**JERZY:** We have our yearly tournament coming up, so...

**GEORGE:** Maybe I wasn't clear enough...I...DON'T...CARE!

**JERZY:** Why are you so hard on me all the time?

**GEORGE:** Boy, you ain't seen hard.

**JERZY:** I'm a forty year old man!

**GEORGE:** Life is what you make it and this is what you made it.

**JERZY:** Look at who you are, miserable, unsatisfied, moping around just waiting for it all to end. That's not who I want to be. You take no pride in anything, in nothing that you do...you've had this shitty ass motel since I was born and look at it...hasn't been painted since, wood beams are coming apart from termites, you're just waiting for the whole damn thing to collapse, aren't you? And what will we have then? I'm supposed to be taking this thing over from you and you are handing it to me in the worst possible condition.

Room 209 has been out of commission for three years. Three years, Dad! It's become a junk room for tools, old air conditioners, moldy carpets and God knows what else. It smells like shit in there cause there's a raccoon family you've allowed to take up residency there.

We're losing customers! You don't let me run anything except physical labor, you give me no chance to build this business back up to working condition the way I know I can. Why you keep holding my life back!

**GEORGE:** The business works just fine.

**JERZY:** You can't be serious. We have ceilings coming down on the third floor. We need to make investments into remodeling and rewiring and---

**GEORGE:** I'm not giving you the place.

**JERZY:** What?

**GEORGE:** I've sold this hunk of shit!

**JERZY:** ...What the hell are you talking about?

**GEORGE:** I'm gettin' out of it for good.

**JERZY:** How can you sell it?

**GEORGE:** Myers is taking it over.

**JERZY:** Myers?! When?!

**GEORGE:** This November.

**JERZY:** ...November.

**GEORGE:** Sweet November...

**JERZY:** How much did you get for it?

**GEORGE:** One-forty.

**JERZY:** One-forty?!

**GEORGE:** That's good considering all the work that needs to be done and all. Place is an absolute disaster.

**JERZY:** You ran it into the ground.

**GEORGE:** It got us through and now I can retire.

**JERZY:** What am I supposed to do?

**GEORGE:** Well, you are forty and I did think about you and well, I'm gonna part with forty thousand and give it to you...least I can do, already told your mother.

**JERZY:** Mom knows about everything?

**GEORGE:** Yep.

**JERZY:** What did she say about it?

**GEORGE:** She complained at first but then she saw the light and admitted it's time for us to move on.

**JERZY:** And where are you both moving on to?

**GEORGE:** No, no, no, *not* your mother, just me.

**JERZY:** What?!

**GEORGE:** Bought me a patch of land down in Florida...gonna build me one of those tiny homes, you know the ones we've seen on tv? (beat) Gonna live out my days fishing, bathing and drinking.

**JERZY:** And what's mom gonna do?

**GEORGE:** Oh, she's moving in with Kelly.

**JERZY:** Aunt Kelly?

**GEORGE:** That's right.

**JERZY:** Crazy Aunt Kelly?

**GEORGE:** Yep.

**JERZY:** How can you do this? You are the most selfish bastard I've ever met in my life.

**GEORGE:** Look Jerzy, your Momma and me fell out of love a long time ago...we've been living together out of convenience, not out of happiness...I finally sold this place here cause I found someone dumb enough and rich enough to buy it from me and now I have a way out and I'm taking it...don't worry, I'm giving your mother half my savings cause it's only right, so you can't call me a scumbag, can ya?

**JERZY:** Is she happy?

**GEORGE:** Happy? That word got left out of the design when they built your mother.

**JERZY:** I thought you guys were fine.

**GEORGE:** That's cause you're stupid.

**JERZY:** But she's making roast beef tonight and roast beef means everything's gravy.

**GEORGE:** Yeah, well, we was planning on telling Cherry first who was then gonna tell you but whatever, now you know.



**JERZY:** I have bad news...well, it's good news, great news actually but now things are sort of...Cherry's pregnant...we only found out yesterday and we weren't gonna say anything until this weekend.

**GEORGE:** No shit.

**JERZY:** What the hell am I gonna do now?

**GEORGE:** You gonna have to figure it out the way I figured it out before your ass was born.

**JERZY:** You made me believe that I was taking over the motel and I had plans. I've been loyal to you and this business my whole damn life. You can't just take it out from under me like this, it ain't right, this whole thing with you and mom and tiny houses, what the hell is going on with you?! You're destroying the entire family! We are not selling this business!

**GEORGE:** Contract is already signed dummy!

**JERZY:** I am going to Myers and I'm gonna tell him that it's a no go. We can't sell this business or this property. It's all we have left! We can turn it all around!

**GEORGE:** There ain't no way this crappy ass motel gonna be turned around. Myers wants to build a residential building. He's gonna knock it right down and build it back up and probably make a fortune doing it.

**JERZY:** We can't sell.

**GEORGE:** I did sell and there ain't a damn thing you gonna do about it, boy.

**JERZY:** I'm stopping that contract, you hear me?

**GEORGE:** Don't make me give you a whipping. I still got one or two left in me!

**JERZY:** You never had any belief! You never built the business up with ideals or values, it was all for profit. You never gave a damn about anything more than the quick buck. No longterm vision, no drive or focus, only survival tactics.

I've always seen it different. I've always wanted to take over the helm and make a real business out of it. Treat customers like their family, instead of rat poison, make people feel invited and special, make them have a positive experience, instead of looking at them like dollar signs for beer and barbecues.

**JERZY:** (*cont'd*) This property is begging to be fixed up and renovated, it's dying for a life...you've always pinched the pennies and never reinvested your earnings back into the company. It always went back into your gambling habits, drinking and women on the side...don't think I don't know about the fooling around you've done, when I got old enough I knew all too well what you were up to...embarrassing...and now this, this is my future, my birthright and I will kill you first before I let you sell it because I have dreams and my own family to support and I won't let you take that away from me...I won't!

**GEORGE:** I took care of your sorry, ungrateful, pathetic, skinny ass your entire life...every drop of food ingested and digested, every piece of clothing you wear, every thought you've ever had was because of my two hands. I gave you your life and took care of you and your mother and couldn't stand either of you.

Don't talk to me about survival skills. If it weren't for my survival skills we'd all be dead a long time ago. You don't have what it takes! You hear me? You have no backbone, no hustle, no know how, no nothing!

**JERZY:** Stop talkin' you old drunken bastard.

**GEORGE:** Nothing! To think you are my son. Where did you come from? You ain't mine, can't be mine, ain't no way no how you come from my soil. Ask your momma, she's so perfect, you think everything she done is so righteous, yeah, as righteous as a heart attack on a sunshine morning when I found her with her skirt up to her thighs getting' plowed by Willy Bond in our kitchen...ask her!!! You stupid shit, ask her...but I stayed, I stayed and I still don't know why...you think you know everything, you think a coat of paint is the answer...HA! I sure wish life was as simple as a coat of paint...

**JERZY:** You're not my father?

**GEORGE:** Do I look like your father?

**JERZY:** Was there ever a DNA test?

**GEORGE:** Of course not!

**JERZY:** Who the hell is Willy Bond?

**GEORGE:** A jailbreak. How do you like that one?

**JERZY:** What?

**GEORGE:** Son of a bitch escaped from jail and somehow miraculously found our habitat as his hideout. Your mother stuck his ass in room 209 for months...feeding him, clothing him and fucking him.

**JERZY:** ...And where is he now?

**GEORGE:** Your standing on him.

**JERZY:** What?

**GEORGE:** After I blew his head off with my sawed off shotgun Matilda, I buried him out here in the open cause it's the most obvious place. We're standing right abouts where I buried his ass.

**JERZY:** I don't think I'm goin' bowling.

**GEORGE:** Roast beef means everything's gravy.

*Jerzy goes into the shed and pulls out a shovel. He begins digging up the land.*

**GEORGE:** What the hell are you doing now?

**JERZY:** I'm diggin' up my father.

*George goes into the shed and pulls out another shovel. He charges Jerzy with it. Jerzy spins around and the two men lock shovels like a pair of swords. They separate and slowly circle one another. They collide shovels again and instantly back off one another. They continue circling around one another slowly. They strike shovels again but this time George gets overpowered by Jerzy. Jerzy raises his shovel as if to strike and George falls backwards on the ground with his hands up to protect himself.*

*Jerzy goes back to digging up the ground. George rests looking on from the ground.*

**GEORGE:** You'll never find him like that. It's been so many years...so many years...just bones now...I've put it out of my mind...don't know the exact spot to dig...maybe your mother knows, maybe she knows where...

*Jerzy stops and considers asking his mother.*

**JERZY:** ...I'm the best player on the team.

**GEORGE:** What's that?

**JERZY:** Bowling. I'm the best one on the team...I have talent, real talent but my whole team must be the worst bunch of bowlers this side of the country and I'm constantly picking up their slack but I'm single-handedly never going to win a tournament for us...never won a tournament, never will with those guys.

*Jerzy takes a beer out of the cooler and sits on the grass opposite George.*

Can't win in life without a team effort.

**GEORGE:** Best player my dirty asshole.

**JERZY:** We are going to make this thing here, this motel, this life, a team effort George...you're going to cancel that contract with Myer. You're going to give me your life savings to rebuild this business. You're going to keep your mouth shut and remain as you are in this place until the day you die. I'm going to provide a good life for my family and if you think about cheating me or ever leaving, I'm gonna bury you beside your old friend Willy here.

**GEORGE:** Eat a dick.

**JERZY:** That's the way it's going to be George, a team effort. Tonight it's roast beef...

**GEORGE:** And everything's gravy.

**END OF PLAY**