

"Stop Being a Jerk"

By

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A self-absorbed yuppie tries to make things right... but an  
old teacher refuses to hear him out.

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EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

A line of people stretches outside a ticket window. ROY, a yuppie with meticulously messy hair, always in suit and tie, gestures to someone unseen...

ROY

Bob!

...and walks past all those people...

ROY

You're not Bob.

...and cuts in the front of the line.

INT. CAR - DAY

Roy texts and drives. A horn HONKS.

Roy glances in the mirror... then resumes texting.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Roy sits at a table for two with MELANIE, his pretty blonde date. Roy SLURPS the last of his drink through a straw... and SLURPS... then SLAMS the glass and looks around.

ROY

C'mon! Where's my refill?

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Roy's car zips through a parking lot, near a makeshift basketball court. Some KIDS play basketball...

KID 1

Hey!

Roy's car CRUSHES a skateboard sitting in the parking lot.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Roy and Melanie bounce as the car rolls over the skateboard.

MELANIE

You hear somethin'?

Roy cranks the steering wheel and shrugs.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Roy and Melanie get out of Roy's parked car.

MELANIE

You're really involved in church?

ROY

A concert every Sunday, an awesome  
write-off come tax time, and my  
very own get-out-of-hell-free  
card... what's not to love?

One of the kids hurls the basketball at Roy.

It BOUNCES off the side of Roy's head. He looks around,  
unfazed... then passes out, landing with a THUD.

DREAM SEQUENCE - WHITE SPACE

Roy stands, bathed in light, with white all around him.

ROY

Am I... dead?

A second version of Roy appears: older, WISER ROY, who wears  
a Jedi robe.

WISER ROY

You see any flames or pitchforks or  
ugly fellas with horns poking out  
their heads?

ROY

Why would any of those things be  
here?

Roy looks around nervously...

WISER ROY

'Cause you're a jerk!  
(beat)  
Stop being a jerk!

END SEQUENCE:

ROY'S POV - MELANIE

Roy looks up into Melanie's face, haloed by the sun.

MELANIE

Are you okay?

He lets out a frightened scream. She jumps back, confused.

END POV

Roy springs up and feels himself with both hands. Relief washes over him as he becomes aware of his surroundings.

MELANIE

Why'd you scream?

ROY

I thought you were the devil.

A matronly SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER grabs the kid who threw the ball. The other kids run away.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

Apologize to that man!

KID 1

Why? He ran over my skateboard.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

You did wrong... it has nothing to do with anyone else. You want to be a good person, right? Go apologize.

Roy walks toward them, interrupting the conversation...

ROY

I'm sorry about the skateboard.

He whips out his wallet and pulls out cash. The kid grabs the money and runs.

ROY

You think if I apologize to everyone I've been a jerk to, that'll make me a good person?

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

Can't hurt, can it?

Roy turns toward Melanie...

MELANIE

I think you need a doctor.

...and grabs her shoulders.

ROY

Melanie, I owe you an apology.

(beat)

Our relationship isn't going  
anywhere and I'm planning to dump  
you once I land someone hotter.

Melanie stares, dumbfounded... then SLAPS him.

She walks away, then turns and SLAPS him again.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Roy corners a waiter near a table... the waiter has a droll,  
disinterested look on his face.

ROY

I'm sorry I slurped my drink and  
yelled and stiffed you on the tip.

Roy hands over some cash... then looks at the money in the  
waiter's hand... he takes one of the bills back and leaves.

The waiter watches him walk away, expression unchanged. The  
GUY at the table behind him holds up an empty glass.

GUY

(timidly)

Can I get a refill?

The waiter stares at him blankly... and walks away.

The guy shakes his empty glass.

GUY

(timidly)

Anybody?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

It's a small office. A few desks, a RINGING phone...

Everyone is staring at Roy, who is standing in the middle of  
the room with their BOSS...

ROY  
...and I've been using excessive  
amounts of hand sanitizer, and I  
take naps in the conference room  
all the time, and I sold our wi-fi  
password to the guy who hangs out  
in the parking lot at night...

The boss stares at Roy, stone-faced...

ROY  
Anyway, I'm sorry. From now on,  
I'll be a better employee.

BOSS  
(calmly)  
You're fired. Get out.

Roy furrows his brow. The smile fades...

ROY  
Alrighty... I hope you'll still  
give me a glowing recommendation.

Roy walks away. The boss stands rigid, looks around.  
Everyone is slack-jawed... exchanging looks of disbelief.

BOSS  
(calmly)  
Somebody please change that  
password.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Roy stands in front of a slack-jawed mailman.

ROY  
I'm sorry.

EXT. CONVENT - DAY

Roy stands in front of a slack-jawed nun.

ROY  
I'm sorry.

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM - DAY

Roy stands in front of a class of slack-jawed kids.

ROY  
I'm sorry.

INT. JACKSON HOME - DAY

Incessant KNOCKING at the front door. MR. JACKSON, a gruff retiree, flings the door open.

On the other side is Roy, grinning like an idiot...

MR. JACKSON  
I remember you... go away.

Mr. Jackson SLAMS the door in Roy's face. Outside...

EXT. JACKSON HOME

...Roy steps back. He KNOCKS again...

MR. JACKSON (O.S.)  
Whatever you're selling, I ain't  
buyin'.

ROY  
I'm not...

Roy KNOCKS yet again. No response.

INT. JACKSON HOUSE - DAY

Mr. Jackson sits in a recliner, reading a newspaper, when a feedback SQUEAL outside disturbs him...

ROY (O.S.)  
(amplified)  
Mister Jackson, please hear me  
out...

Mr. Jackson WADS his newspaper into a roll.

EXT. JACKSON HOME - CONTINUOUS

Roy stands on the porch with a megaphone aimed at the door.

ROY  
(amplified)  
When I was in high school...

The front door opens. Roy lowers the megaphone.

Mr. Jackson rips out his hearing aid, dangles it by two fingers...

MR. JACKSON  
I can't hear you!

...and SWATS Roy on the head with the paper, then goes back inside and SLAMS the door.

Roy raises the megaphone. It SQUEALS...

ROY  
(amplified)  
Mister Jackson, c'mon!

INT. JACKSON HOUSE - SOME TIME LATER

Mr. Jackson walks past a kitchen window and sees Roy outside holding a pep rally banner with sparkly words: "I'm sorry"

MR. JACKSON  
Oh for Pete's sake...

He grabs a giant ladle from a basket on the counter...

EXT. JACKSON HOME - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Jackson comes outside, wielding the ladle. He whacks the paper banner until it's torn up, then whacks Roy's hands.

ROY  
Ow!

MR. JACKSON  
Go away.

Mr. Jackson walks back into the house and SLAMS the door.

ROY  
Well, that was rude!

EXT. JACKSON HOME - NIGHT

Roy holds an '80s boom box awkwardly, trying to figure out the buttons. Brenda Lee's "I'm Sorry" BLASTS...

Roy hoists the boom box over his head with both hands.

A POLICE OFFICER walks by.

POLICE OFFICER  
Hey, you can't...

Roy turns, surprised.

POLICE OFFICER  
You gotta shut that off.

Roy lowers the boom box and fumbles with the buttons.

The stop button CLICKS. The music stops as the tape EJECTS.

ROY  
Sorry.

INT. JACKSON HOME - MORNING

Mr. Jackson, in a bath robe, peeps out the window.

No Roy.

He eases the front door open and peeks outside.

Nothing.

He stoops for a newspaper. Roy jumps up from behind a bush.

ROY  
(breathless, rushed)  
I'm sorry for all the mean stuff I  
did to you in class.

Mr. Jackson stands slowly and stares him down.

MR. JACKSON  
You put thumb tacks in my chair,  
Ex-lax in my coffee, glue on the  
toilet seat... in the same day!  
(beat)  
Why are you still harassing me?

Mr. Jackson SLAMS the door, then flings it open again.

MR. JACKSON

You have no idea what it's like to have a toilet seat removed at the emergency room. It's not funny even though all the nurses laugh.

ROY

But... I said I'm sorry.

MR. JACKSON

Apology not accepted!

(beat)

Why don't you cut my grass, wash my car, take my trash to the curb... do something useful?

ROY

But...

MR. JACKSON

No? Then leave me alone!

Mr. Jackson SLAMS the door and goes to his recliner. He opens the paper and hears a LAWNMOWER outside. He tries to ignore it... FLIPPING pages furiously...

He goes to the window and sees ROY pushing the mower.

Roy wipes sweat off his forehead... then passes out.

The lawnmower keeps moving... hits a tree and tips over.

MR. JACKSON

Un-be-lievable.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Roy lays on a hospital bed with a bandaged head. Mr. Jackson stands beside the bed. A DOCTOR looks over Roy's chart.

DOCTOR

It's definitely a concussion. Probably caused some strange behavior, but you'll be fine.

A MALE NURSE walks by and does a double take at Mr. Jackson.

MALE NURSE

I know you! The toilet seat removal of ninety-three!

Mr. Jackson glares at Roy.

DOCTOR

It is you. We all figured you left the country after that.

(beat)

We show the security video every year at the Christmas party. I hear the toilet seat's still hanging somewhere in the basement...

The doctor walks away with the male nurse, chuckling.

MR. JACKSON

This is why I drive across town for emergency medical treatment!

Mr. Jackson takes a pitcher from a bedside table and pours a glass of water. Roy reaches for the glass.

Oblivious, Mr. Jackson takes a drink and sets the cup out of Roy's reach.

MR. JACKSON

Why were you mowing my grass?

Roy shrugs.

ROY

Why'd you call an ambulance when I blacked out?

MR. JACKSON

Had to... the neighbors all seen ya laying in my yard.

Roy touches the bandages around his head.

ROY

I gotta find the brat who hit me in the head. That kid ruined my life.

MR. JACKSON

Kinda like you ruined mine?

ROY

That's different... you were a mean old teacher.

Mr. Jackson gets in Roy's face.

MR. JACKSON

I could've had you kicked out of school, maybe even arrested. But I didn't, 'cause I knew it would've ruined your life.

Roy stares off as the implications sink in...

ROY

No wonder my sub-conscious Jedi-Roy told me I'm going to hell. I really am a jerk.

MR. JACKSON

I'm not arguing.

ROY

But I don't want to be.

MR. JACKSON

Then stop! It ain't rocket surgery.

(beat)

Head-injury-Roy wasn't a jerk.

ROY

Maybe I should come over once a week so you can hit me with that big metal spoon.

MR. JACKSON

If you're so worried about hell, you'd be better off goin' to church.

Roy nods. Mr. Jackson grips the bed rail and looks Roy over.

MR. JACKSON

And maybe after church, you can come over and watch football.

Roy struggles up on his elbows...

ROY

Wait... do you have a big screen?

MR. JACKSON

My granddaughter is about your age, she's always telling me to make some friends.

(beat)

Of course, I'll have to get the restraining order dropped...

Two female NURSES rush into the room.

NURSE 1

Ohmigoodness! It's the Christmas party video guy!

One of the nurses hands Roy a camera.

NURSE 2  
Will you take our picture? Please?

The nurses squeeze close and smile. Roy SNAPS a picture...

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

Mr. Jackson's scowling face is sandwiched between the grinning-like-idiots nurses.

BACK TO SCENE

...and Mr. Jackson blinks to regain vision from the flash.

NURSE 1  
You got keys to the basement,  
right? Let's get the toilet seat  
for him to autograph!

The nurses take the camera and run off while Mr. Jackson rubs his eyes.

ROY  
I'm sorry, Mr. Jackson. Really.  
About everything.

MR. JACKSON  
Apology accepted.

ROY  
Really?

MR. JACKSON  
(nodding each syllable)  
Ab-so-lutely.

Mr. Jackson offers his hand. Roy smiles as he shakes it.

ROY  
So... this granddaughter of  
yours... is she single?

Mr. Jackson jerks his hand away.

MR. JACKSON  
Absolutely not!

FADE OUT

