

FRUIT SKINS

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Amanda Burris

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SYNOPSIS: Harold's had a long day at work, and he's in the mood for confrontation when the overpriced fruit at a local fruit stand pushes him right over the edge! He demands a price reduction from Norman, another shopper gets involved, and an unexpected interruption turns the whole situation on its head. A lighthearted comedy of errors that will keep you guessing until the very end!

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(3-4 MEN, 1 WOMAN)

HAROLD (m) Cranky banker buying fruit.
NORMAN (m) Confused 30-40 year-old
worker in a green apron.
GRANDMA SHARP (f) Eighty year-old indecisive
woman.
ROBBER (m) Can double with Fruit Stand
Owner.
FRUIT STAND OWNER (m) Can double with Robber.

SETTING

A small fruit stand, either in a corner store or a fruit cart vendor in New York City. There is a cash register and various kinds of fruits and vegetables.

TIME

Mid-to-late evening; sun is setting as Harold heads home after overtime at work.

AT RISE:

HAROLD is on the side of the stage on his cell phone, talking to his wife. GRANDMA SHARP is looking at various fruits as she shops. NORMAN is listening to his iPod as he leans against the front of the counter or table where the cash register is.

HAROLD: Hi, honey. You would not believe the day I had... *(Beat.)* no....just that my boss is an asshole...yes...ugh, no! Yes...no, it was just a horrible day....yes...fine. I'll be home soon...okay, I got it! *(Hangs up the phone angrily. He continuously picks up pieces of fruit that are less than adequate. Stalks over to NORMAN, who is listening to his iPod, and holds the apple up in front of his face.)* Excuse me.

NORMAN says nothing, agitating HAROLD.

HAROLD: Sir? *(NORMAN is still silent, bobbing his head to the music. HAROLD taps him on the shoulder.)* Hey!

NORMAN takes his headphones out and notices HAROLD.

NORMAN: What?

HAROLD: Do you see what I am seeing here?

NORMAN leans in closer to inspect the apple.

NORMAN: Well, sir...that's an apple.

HAROLD: Yes, I know, but what do you notice about the apple?

NORMAN: Well...it's red...?

HAROLD: And...

NORMAN: ...And it's slightly round...

HAROLD: You're missing the point here...what else do you see?

NORMAN: Well...sir, it's an apple. I don't know what you're getting at here.

HAROLD: Yes...I'm aware that it's an apple. But do you see something wrong with it?

NORMAN: No...not really.

HAROLD: Are you blind?

NORMAN: I don't know what my eyesight has to do with any of this...?

HAROLD: It's rotten! There's a rotten spot on it. (*Points to a spot on the apple.*) Right there, brown and gushy and...rotten!

NORMAN: It's one little spot, man.

HAROLD: Why would I pay full price for a piece of fruit that is rotting?

NORMAN: I don't know...why would you?

HAROLD: *I wouldn't!* That's the thing! *I wouldn't* buy a piece of fruit that was rotting!

NORMAN: Then why don't you just go get a different piece of fruit if that one's that bad?

HAROLD: But that's just it! They're ALL like that! Not just one...not two...or even three! But every apple over there! Hell, every piece of fruit in this damn fruit stand has something wrong with it!

GRANDMA SHARP marches over, clutching her purse and her basket full of fruit.

GRANDMA SHARP: Excuse me, I couldn't help but overhearing your conversation, and I know this really is none of my business, but I don't think this young man deserves to be talked to the way you are talking to him.

HAROLD: Well, excuse ME, but this really is none of your business.

GRANDMA SHARP: Well, excuse ME, but that's really no way to talk to your elder now, is it?

HAROLD: First off, you're the one who put your nose in business that wasn't your own, and secondly, I don't believe there's anything wrong with me saying that this is an outrageously priced fruit stand for the kind of fruit that they sell here.

GRANDMA SHARP: Don't shop here, then.

HAROLD: Don't be ridiculous. This fruit stand is right across the street from my apartment. I should be able to stop here after a long day's work and pick up some fresh produce for my wife without having to worry about finding rotted spots on every piece of fruit I buy.

NORMAN: Dude, it's not my fault you're some kind of failure at picking out fruit.

HAROLD: Oh, now I'm a failure, am I? Maybe I wouldn't be such a failure if this damn fruit stand carried fresh fruit.

GRANDMA SHARP: Now, just you wait a minute, grouchy. My family has shopped at this fruit stand for decades now, and I have never once gotten a piece of fruit that wasn't fit to eat!

HAROLD: Look, I'm just saying that this fruit is way too overpriced for its quality.

GRANDMA SHARP: You're paying for its convenience and its freshness! Right now, all I can hear from you is whining. Why, I remember when I was a girl, we had to actually go outside the city and pick our own fruit. They didn't have fancy fruit stands you could just walk to until this one came along!

HAROLD: Well, Grandma, they were also still building the pyramids back in your day.

GRANDMA SHARP: How DARE you!

NORMAN: Dude, not cool...that's no way to talk to your elder...

GRANDMA SHARP: How dare you, how dare you, how dare you! Why, this fruit stand has been here ever since I was a teenager, and I'VE never had a problem!

HAROLD: With all due respect, some of this fruit looks like it's been here since the stand first opened.

NORMAN: It's not that bad...it's just an apple with a few spots.

HAROLD: Listen to me. I work at a bank. I know all about trying to sell your product or your company to customers, but if my bank had a shitty product that we were offering and said, "Well...the inside of the building is really nice," do you think we'd have any customers?

NORMAN: No, but I don't see how your bank has anything to do with fruit...

HAROLD: It doesn't! I'm just comparing the two.

NORMAN: Okay, if you say so. I'm just telling you that I don't think that a bank and a fruit stand are at all similar in any way.

HAROLD: They're not!

NORMAN: Then why are you comparing them to each other?!

GRANDMA SHARP now turns to NORMAN.

GRANDMA SHARP: You really aren't the brightest crayon in the box, now, are you, son?

NORMAN: Great! And now she's throwing in something about crayons! What do you want from me? I'm just a man!

GRANDMA SHARP: It's really not that confusing, dear. This man is just explaining to you that even though it might be wonderful fruit, you are trying to sell a business...it's all about the presentation to customers.

NORMAN: Stop talking to me like that.

GRANDMA SHARP: Like what?

NORMAN: I'm not a child! I know how to sell a product! I work at a successful business!

GRANDMA SHARP: I agree! I didn't say you didn't.

NORMAN: Then why are you talking to me like I'm some idiot who doesn't speak English?

GRANDMA SHARP: Well, dear...you did have somewhat of a kooky look on your face. How was I to know you understood what we were saying?

HAROLD: We're not his teachers! I don't care about any of this right now. All I'm concerned about right now is getting my fruit, getting back to my house, and relaxing for the rest of the night! So wipe that dumb look off your face and give me a discount on my fruit!

NORMAN: I can't give you a discount for your fruit!

HAROLD: And why the hell not?

NORMAN: I don't know how to work that cash register.

HAROLD: Honestly, you must not know what you're doing if this is the kind of business you work for. What kind of person can't work a cash register?

NORMAN: Oh, I can work a cash register...I just don't know how to work that particular one.

HAROLD: You're not going to give me even a little discount? You're just going to charge me a ridiculous amount of money for rotten fruit?

NORMAN: Hey! I don't make the prices!

GRANDMA SHARP turns to HAROLD to stand up for what NORMAN is now saying.

GRANDMA SHARP: He doesn't make the prices!

HAROLD: Then he should talk to his supervisor! Nobody wants to overpay for a crappy product.

GRANDMA SHARP turns to NORMAN.

GRANDMA SHARP: You really should, dear.

NORMAN: Look, it's not that big of a deal! Times are tough, and everybody is trying to make a buck.

GRANDMA SHARP turns to HAROLD.

GRANDMA SHARP: You should be a bit more understanding. Everybody is struggling in this economy...

HAROLD: Hey! Whose side are you on, anyways?

GRANDMA SHARP: I'm not on either of your sides! I was just trying to buy my gosh-darn fruit and watched as you went up and attacked this poor man!

HAROLD: So you ARE on his side!

NORMAN: The ladies like me, what can I say...

GRANDMA SHARP: I am not on your side or his side!

NORMAN: HA! I'm her favorite!

HAROLD: Listen here, Granny, you need to mind your own business...this has nothing to do with you!

NORMAN: Stop! She is a nice lady!

HAROLD: Shut up!

Suddenly, as the argument is getting louder and louder, a man in a ski mask runs in from offstage and holds a gun up to the three characters. They all freeze and put their hands up in the air, dropping their fruit.

ROBBER: Put your hands in the air!

GRANDMA SHARP: Oh, good heavens!

ROBBER points the gun at NORMAN

ROBBER: Shut up! You, go get me the money.

NORMAN: Dude, why me?

ROBBER: Get the money!

NORMAN: Look, man...

ROBBER: Are you stupid or something? Do you feel like getting shot today? Because I will! Don't think I won't! You don't know me...

HAROLD: Go get him the money....

NORMAN: But...

The ROBBER turns the gun sideways to a 'kill shot.'

NORMAN: Oh my God, it's a kill shot!

ROBBER: Go. Get me. The money.

HAROLD: (*Mutters.*) What the hell is a kill shot?

ROBBER: I said go get me the damn money!

NORMAN: Okay, okay!

GRANDMA SHARP: Young man, I don't believe you're holding that gun correctly! You're going to hurt yourself. Do you want to hurt yourself? (*GRANDMA SHARP holds her arm up and points her finger in the shape of a gun.*) My papa was the best shot in the entire town before we moved to the city! Now, THIS is how you hold a gun, nice and steady...

ROBBER: I don't need no damn gun-shooting lesson from some old lady...

GRANDMA SHARP: Well, apparently you do, because you obviously don't know the proper way to hold a gun. You'll shoot your eye out if you don't shoot your gun properly. My papa always told me that shooting a gun is a privilege, not a right. Though I suppose it is a right, seeing that we have the second amendment and all...

ROBBER pulls back the hammer of the gun as he continues to point it at NORMAN.

ROBBER: Now do you understand what I'm saying? Go get me the money, or I'm going to blow your brains out!

NORMAN nods and looks around like he doesn't quite know where the cash register is.

NORMAN: Uhh...yeah, okay...just going to the cash register.
Yep...good ol' cash register...wherever it is...

HAROLD: (*Mutters.*) What the hell is wrong with this guy...

GRANDMA SHARP: It's over there, dear!

NORMAN wanders around to the other side of the counter and points to the cash register, still confused.

NORMAN: Right here? Got it, I've got this...

NORMAN goes behind the counter. The ROBBER holds his bag up and NORMAN begins putting the money into it. Finally, when the register is completely empty, the ROBBER runs away. The three characters sigh in relief.

GRANDMA SHARP: Good Lord, I think I just wet myself a little. That was the scariest thing that's ever happened to me in my life. Well...not including the time that I had to take my husband to the hospital for chest pains, let me tell you...

HAROLD: Can you just please be quiet? Please. We just got robbed at gunpoint, and you're jabbering away like it didn't even happen!

GRANDMA SHARP: In case you didn't notice, I was jabbering about something that was just as scary if not more scary, and I have had it up to here with your attitude!

HAROLD: Well, I've had it up to here with you two, this fruit stand...hell, I've had it up to here with this entire day! Goodbye! (*HAROLD stomps offstage. Both NORMAN and GRANDMA SHARP watch him in bewilderment.*)

NORMAN: I think he was a little upset.

GRANDMA SHARP: He had no right, but maybe he'll be better tomorrow...

NORMAN: Or he won't.

GRANDMA SHARP: I'm going to pass on a little advice to you...shit happens. You just have to wipe, pull up your pants, and get over it. (*NORMAN nods and then starts to pick up the fruit that the three dropped when attacked by the ROBBER. GRANDMA SHARP slowly bends down to help.*) Here, let me help you. Actually, these don't look too bad... If you ring them up, I'll take them.

NORMAN: What?

GRANDMA SHARP: I'll take these! They don't look too bad...just a few minor glitches, but other than that, they're still apples. Ring them up, please!

NORMAN: Oh...I can't.

GRANDMA SHARP: What do you mean you can't?

NORMAN: I don't work here...?

GRANDMA SHARP: You don't? As in...you don't work here? Ever?

NORMAN: Nope...is that what you thought this entire time?

GRANDMA SHARP: Well, of course! The way that man was yelling at you, I guess it's safe to assume that he thought the same thing. You're wearing a green apron!

NORMAN: I have to...it's part of my uniform.

GRANDMA SHARP: Part of your uniform for your job....for your job that is not at this fruit stand?

NORMAN: Right.

GRANDMA SHARP: I just don't understand! Then why are you wearing a green apron, dear?

NORMAN: I work at the coffee shop the next block over.

Entering from stage left comes the real fruit stand worker who is wearing a white button-down shirt and a white apron.

STAND OWNER: Sorry 'bout that, folks! Didn't mean to take so long! What a relief...I was half expecting to come back and find the place robbed and ransacked! Can I ring those up for you?

BLACKOUT.

THE END