

TALK TO ME:
A THERAPEUTIC COMEDY

AUDIO SERIES

Written by

Abhi Kumar

ACT I

EPISODE 1: HAPPY BIRTHDAY

SOUND OF WORK PHONE RINGING. It's answered by a recorded message using the voice of a RECORDED MAN, deep, relaxing and reassuring with UPLIFTING MUSIC in the background.

RECORDED MAN

Hello and welcome to Call-A-Friend. Your friend will be with you in just a moment. We wanted to thank you for taking the leap and reaching out to us. We know how hectic things can get in our day-to-day lives and sometimes, just talking to someone can lighten your day. That's why we started Call-A-Friend. This isn't therapy, it's friendship. This is your first call and we hope it will be the first of many.

SOUND OF A BEEP and CATHY answers the phone. She sounds warm and bright but not so much that it sounds fake. There's a sincerity in her voice as if she's actually talking to a friend.

CATHY

Hello!

No answer.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Hello? Anyone there?

TYSON's voice is heard but through a VOICE MODIFIER (V.M) FILTER, making it significantly deeper and distorted.

TYSON

(V.M FILTER)
Err yeah, hello?

CATHY

Hi!

TYSON

(V.M FILTER)
Hello.

CATHY

My name's Cathy. What's yours?

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Do I...do I have to give my name?

CATHY
It kinda works better that way.

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
How about my initials instead? It's
D.V.

CATHY
D.V?

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Yeah.

CATHY
And how old are you D.V?

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Uh, Twenty three. Why? How old are
you?

CATHY
Actually, today is my birthday. I'm
thirty five.

Beat.

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
That's pretty old.

CATHY
(chuckles)
Yeah well, not from where I'm
sitting. You'll see.
So...D.V, I'm going to take a wild
guess here and say that your
initials stand for Darth Vader?

Beat.

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Maybe.

CATHY

In the spirit of being open and honest, I have to ask, what's the deal?

TYSON

(V.M FILTER)
Deal?

CATHY

You know, with the voice and the name and everything? I just want to know if this is a prank. Because if it is I'd rather we just acknowledge it and then just move on you know?

No answer.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Hmmm, okay, so I'm getting that you're not much of a talker. Which is fine. Coz actually, I'm not that much of a talker either believe it or not. It's always uncomfortable. Small talk and everything, what's the point right? So I have this method to get to know people a little better.

It's a game - well, not a game - more like Q and A. I'll ask a simple multiple-choice question and you just respond with one word. How's that? Hah, see that was a simple question right there. The catch is you have to respond in order to continue. Otherwise you may as well hangup right now. Deal?

TYSON

(V.M FILTER)
Umm...

CATHY

(sing-song voice)
You have to respond to
continuuueee.

TYSON

(V.M FILTER)
Heh. Aite.

CATHY
Awesome. Question number one. Sci-fi or fantasy?

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Sci-fi.

CATHY
Nice. Me too. I kinda figured with the Darth Vader thing but just wanted to be sure. Smurfs or Garfield?

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Garfield.

CATHY
Hmmm, go dancing or go to a diner?

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Uuh-

CATHY
Be honest now.

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Diner.

CATHY
Books or graphic novels?

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Graphic novels.

CATHY
Yeah. I. Love. Graphic novels.

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
For real?

CATHY
For real. It's like, panels of art that tell these incredible stories.

TYSON
(V.M FILTER)
Crazy stories.

CATHY

Yesssss. Crazy, fantastical stories! You ever read any of the old ones? Like, uh, oh - Amazing Spider-man number 32? The one where he fights Doctor Octopus?

TYSON

(V.M FILTER)

Oh hell yeah, that's one of my favorites!

CATHY

No way!

TYSON

(V.M FILTER)

Yah man, that's where Spidey manages to get the serum to save Aunt May's life but he's gotta fight Doc Ock first but the thing is Spidey's been sick so he's not 100%.

In his excitement, Tyson's Voice Modifier becomes dislodged revealing his normal voice - he's a young African American teen.

TYSON (CONT'D)

But then he realizes, *he's* the only one who can save Aunt May, he's the only way she's going to live and he goes nuts! But Doc Ock brings the whole building down around Spidey's head.

CATHY

Oh man, that panel where Spidey is under all that rubble and realizes he's failed, he can't get out to save his own Aunt...

TYSON

Yeah, all that power and there he was - powerless.

(beat)

And then. He digs within himself and he wills himself, just *wills himself*, to lift up the debris, the whole thing.

CATHY

God and I remember he said this one thing, that just caught me. What was it, uh-

TYSON

"Anyone can win a fight when the odds are easy! It's when the going's tough-"

CATHY

"-when there seems to be no chance-"

TYSON (CONT'D)

"-when there seems to be no chance-"

TYSON (CONT'D)

"-that's when it counts!"

CATHY

Woah! You memorized it!

TYSON

It was a good line. It was...it was like the first time I think that I felt something by just reading it. Very cool moment. It, uh, it really helped me at the time.

CATHY

Yeah? How come?

TYSON

My mom was in the hospital. She's fine now but at the time, reading that, it really made me think...if I'm just strong, it'll be ok.

CATHY

Smart man.
(beat)
Hey Darth?

TYSON

Yeah?

CATHY

You know your voice thing stopped working a while back right?

TYSON

Heh. Yeah.

CATHY

Does that mean we're friends now?

TYSON

I...I guess?

CATHY

You want to try introducing ourselves one more time ok? My name's Cathy. Thirty five years old.

TYSON

I'm Tyson. I'm gonna be fifteen next month. Is...is that cool?

CATHY

Well look, we're a non-profit so it's pretty chill here since we're not charging money or anything BUT I do need you to get an adult to just email me saying it's ok. No fake email accounts now. You got someone who can do that?

TYSON

Yeah sure.

CATHY

Great. It was really nice to meet you Tyson.

TYSON

Nice to meet you Cathy.

CATHY

This could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

TYSON

(pause)
I-I don't get it. Is that like a line from something?

CATHY

You know what, on second thought maybe thirty five is pretty old.

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

SOUND OF HOUSE PHONE RINGING.

CATHY

Hello?

CATHY'S MOM
Happy birthday sweetheart!

CATHY
Thanks mom.

CATHY'S MOM
Did you get the flowers?

CATHY
I did. They're beautiful.

CATHY'S MOM
So what's the plan today? You
meeting Veronica?

CATHY
Vee? To be honest, I don't think
she even remembers.

CATHY'S MOM
Oooh right. She's going through her
own stuff. Well that sucks! What
are you going to do?

CATHY
Oh, I'm gonna big-time cliché it. I
was going to get some take out -
like really good take out, not fast-
food or anything, open a bottle of
wine and watch something. No, you
know what, I'm going to be
original, I'll listen to a podcast
or audiobook instead. Boom.

CATHY'S MOM
Oh Cathy.

CATHY
Mom, it's fine. I'm not some sad
single woman in her mid-thirties
spending her birthday alone ok? Oh
wait...

CATHY'S MOM
You joke around but I know. A
mother always knows. How about I
come down there and we go out?

CATHY
Mom, no. There's no way I'm going
to ask you to come all the way down
here and-

CATHY'S MOM

You make it sound like I'm on the moon. It's only a two hour drive!

CATHY

No mom. Thanks anyway. It's fine. Really. I honestly am not up to going out or anything anyway.

CATHY'S MOM

Yes, because you're such a party animal usually.

CATHY

Hello!? I'm meant to be the funny one?

(sighs)

No, I'm just, not up for it mom. It's a strange birthday is all.

CATHY'S MOM

Ah, I get it.

CATHY

Get what?

CATHY'S MOM

You know he wouldn't have wanted you to be sad.

CATHY

Yeah. Look, I better go mom. I've got to let that bottle of wine breathe or something.

CATHY'S MOM

Sure hon. Now, you're sure you don't want me to come over?

CATHY

One hundred percent. I'm now a thirty five year old woman. I can take care of myself.

CATHY'S MOM

(sighs)

You have a great day ok? And if you need anything, just call.

CATHY

Love you mom.

CATHY'S MOM

Love you sweetheart.