

THREE WISHES

By Joseph Sorrentino

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THREE WISHES

A Ten Minute Comedic Duet

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SYNOPSIS: Things aren't looking good as Harry shuffles through trash, searching for anything that will help support his family. That is, until he stumbles upon an old bottle. While rubbing the label, so he can read it, he is stunned when a genie appears. In true genie fashion, Harry is granted three wishes. Will Harry's wishes be selfless or self-serving? The answer might surprise you in *Three Wishes*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 male)

HARRY (m)..... Ideally middle-age but can be any age; blue collar; down and out. *(73 lines)*

FRANK (m)..... Younger than Harry; nattily dressed, urbane. *(72 lines)*

COSTUMES

HARRY – Old worn clothing.

FRANK – Suit and tie.

PROPS

- ☐ Cloth or Plastic Bag
- ☐ Soda Cans
- ☐ Two Soda Bottles
- ☐ One Small, Corked Bottle
- ☐ Checkbook
- ☐ Folded Piece of Paper

AT RISE: *HARRY enters carrying a cloth bag over his shoulder. An empty can, two soda (or other) bottles and a small, corked bottle are on the stage.*

HARRY: Another can...maybe it's not much by itself but with all the others I have in my bag, it's gotta be close to another pound...another ten cents. And Little Timmy will be ten cents closer to getting those crutches he needs so he can walk on his own. *(Continues walking, picks up the two soda bottles.)* No value in these bottles but the least I can do is pick up all the litter I find on my rounds, make these streets just a little nicer for folks. *(Looks up, sighs.)* Well, it's getting late. I should head home. Boy am I hungry. I was hopin' to find a few more cans to cash in...maybe come coins...buy a little somethin' for dinner but...*(Sees the third bottle and picks it up.)*...more trash. Hmmm...this is an interesting bottle...never seen one like it. It looks really old *(Uncorks it and sniffs.)* Hmm...Awfully dirty. I wonder what the label says? *(Rubs the bottle.)*

There's a thunderclap and FRANK enters.

FRANK: You called?

HARRY: Excuse me?

FRANK: You called me.

HARRY: No I didn't. I'm so poor, I can't even afford a cheap cell phone.

FRANK: Did you uncork and rub that bottle?

HARRY: Well...yeah...but only to clean the label so I could read it.

FRANK: Can you read it now?

HARRY: *(Reading.)* "The All-Powerful Genie's Bottle...Anyone Who Uncorks and Rubs This Bottle Thereby Releasing Me Is Entitled To Three Wishes." *(Pause.)* So, yeah, I can read it. And I gotta tell ya...they really crammed lotta information onto a tiny label.

FRANK: And you do understand the written word.

HARRY: Of course I do, I...wait a minute. *(Stares at bottle.)* Wow. Three wishes. You kiddin' me?

FRANK: Nope.

HARRY: This is incre—...wait a minute. If you're really a genie, how come you're not dressed in a genie's outfit? You know, turban, big feather, baggy pants.

FRANK: Oh, that is so old school, *tres passé*. We're in the 21st century now. We have to stay current, you know.

HARRY: So I really get three wishes?

FRANK: Absolutely. And I'm not going anywhere until you get all of them.

HARRY: This is...amazin'.

FRANK: Just doing my job.

HARRY: This is so...amazin'.

FRANK: So you said. Now, let's get started, shall we?

HARRY: Yeah, yeah. Three wishes...I really gotta think here...Let's see...gotta make 'em count. OK, got it...first one...that everyone gets plenty of food...there's no more hunger. Can you do that?

FRANK: Well I must say, that's a little unexpected...it'll take some extra effort but... (*Closes eyes for a moment.*) there. Done.

HARRY: Just like that?

FRANK: Just like that.

HARRY: Hold on...how do I know you really did it?

FRANK: Were you feeling hungry?

HARRY: I sure was.

FRANK: Do you feel hungry now?

HARRY: Ya know, I don't.

FRANK: Ta-da!

HARRY: Amazin'. You're really somethin'.

FRANK: Thank you. Now, wish number two.

HARRY: (*Pause, thinking.*) OK, okay...gotta be careful...three wishes ain't all that many...gotta make 'em count. (*Pause.*) OK...no more wars. I wish for world peace.

FRANK: Another big one, but... (*Closes his eyes.*) done.

HARRY: Really?

FRANK: Really. I mean, I'm the All-Powerful Genie, aren't I?

HARRY: That's just incredible.

FRANK: What's incredible is your wishes.

HARRY: Whaddya mean?

FRANK: Well, most people, they ask for a million dollars, some huge, brand-new McMansion, big TV, a beautiful wife...

HARRY: They do?

FRANK: ...it's always something trite like that. But you...you didn't think about yourself. You thought about others. What a wonderful, refreshing gesture. A breath of fresh air. You've restored my faith in humanity. Now, for your third...

HARRY: Wait, do you mean you could deliver me, say, a million dollars, a new home, that kinda thing? I mean, if I was like them other people.

FRANK: Oh yeah. Piece of cake. Do it all the time. Much easier than what you asked for. Your wishes were a little more challenging, had to get a ton of things lined up but we did it, didn't we? And so much more rewarding than a piddley million dollars

HARRY: Well I don't know about that...

FRANK: No more hunger or war. When you said those were your wishes, I was shocked...stunned...goodness, what a day. I feel so good. So, now for your third...

HARRY: Listen, I didn't realize you could...you know...ask for a million bucks or one of them real big TVs...that kinda stuff. You didn't tell me nothin'...there were no instructions on the bottle.

FRANK: So what's your point?

HARRY: Well, I hate to ask but, any chance I can take those first two wishes back?

FRANK: Take them back?

HARRY: It's really not fair. You didn't tell me the rules, there was nothin' on the bottle. I'm just sayin' I could sure use a few extra bucks. I'm collectin' cans here just to get by. I got ten kids and we live in a hovel, practically.

FRANK: But you asked that there be no more hunger, no more war. You want people to go back to being hungry and fighting?

HARRY: Hey, it's not like I'm makin' 'em do it. They been doin' it forever. Why make 'em change now?

FRANK: Well, now I'm really shocked but...but...no, I'm sorry. You can't take back your wishes. Once they're granted, they can't be...ungranted. I suggest you use your third wish to get a little something for yourself.

HARRY: But I'm down to one lousy wish. You shoulda told me. There shoulda been some sorta information on this bottle. I mean—

FRANK: Look, you still have one more wish. Get whatever you want.
Go absolutely crazy.

HARRY: I just don't think it's fair. I only got one stinkin' wish to get a little somethin' for myself.

FRANK: I'm sorry you feel that way but I don't make the rules. You've still got one more wish and, besides, look at all the good you've done with your first two wishes: no more hunger, no more war. That's a pretty impressive couple of wishes.

HARRY: Yeah, yeah sure. But what do we got now? Lotta peaceful, overfed people walkin' around...but, me, all's I got is a lousy bag of cans and one measly wish.

FRANK: Could we please move this along? I don't have all day.

HARRY: OK, okay, one more wish. I still don't think it's fair but...better make it a good one. Let's see...I...no, no. Not that. How about...no, that's no good...wait. I got it. An infinite number of wishes.

FRANK: A what?

HARRY: I want an infinite number of wishes.

FRANK: Yeah, sure. Just what every kid says they'd ask for if—

HARRY: I'm not a kid.

FRANK: I realize that. But no one's ever—

HARRY: Well, I just did.

FRANK: But you can't.

HARRY: Why not?

FRANK: Because that's not the way it works.

HARRY: Whaddya mean? You said I had one more wish and I could get anythin' I want. That's what I want...an infinite number of wishes.

FRANK: But...

HARRY: Look, do I get one more wish or not?

FRANK: Yes, but...

HARRY: No 'buts' here, pal. That's what I want.

FRANK: But it's not the way it's done.

HARRY: Do I have to call a lawyer? I got a brother-in-law, real ambulance chaser that guy.

FRANK: Now let's not do anything rash.

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