

SONNY THE SOUP SIPPER

In the beginning was the Boss. He created the Sovereign Soup Company. The Boss had the ultimate administration in His company, the chief assistant being His vice president. Now no one knows exactly when, or even why, but one day the vice president rebelled. He took part of the workers into his own administration and then rebuilt this particular soup factory complete with his own inferior decorating designs. Being in control now, he also wanted to change his title. So he changed it. No longer is he called vice president. He is now called the president of vice.

In case you hadn't noticed, you are in this soup factory. Just like everyone else, you are covered with grease and soup. You can never get clean. Look around you. Have you met your fellow workers? There's Tommy, the tub tipper. He tips the tall tubs. From him the soup is forwarded to the various facets of the factory's facilities. After the commodity has been consumed, the empty cans are catered to Kelly the can crusher, who, of course, crushes cans, enabling them to be recycled.

But the person everyone depends on most is Sonny -- Sonny the soup sipper. Sonny sips soup sort of systematically, seeking satisfactory soup. Of course, if it's not, Sony sets the soup aside.

Now these are just a few of your fellow workers. All of you who work here were born here in this greasy factory. You live here, and you will die here, unless -----
(interrupted by Tommy's first line)

Tommy: Hey, lets get some more tubs over here. (muttering)
I don't know what they'd do without me around here
... Seems that nobody is worth their pay anymore.
Wages keep going up and work keeps going down.

(Meanwhile Kelly has been crushing cans and Sonny sipping soup)

Tommy: You know, Kelly, it's really lucky that we, two good friends, get to work in the same department of this huge soup factory.

Kelly: Yeah. Fate. It's gotta be.

Tommy: You know, I really don't know what they'd do without me around here. From me, all the soup goes to every other part of the factory. It all starts right here.

Kelly: And me, what would they do without me? All these cans would be piled so high that nobody could even walk around in this factory.

Tommy: Those turkeys out there think that the whole factory revolves around them.

Kelly: Well I've got news for them. It don't.

Everybody: It revolves around me.

Tommy: It's about time you brought some tubs over here.

Kelly: Just stack them there; I'll crush them in a minute.

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Sonny: Hey Mickey, come over here just a minute, would you? This belt sounds squeaky.

Mickey: OK, Sonny. They don't call me Mickey the mechanic for nothing.

Sonny: Here, listen, can't you hear that squeak? It's driving me crazy.

Mickey: Hear it? I bet they can hear it on the outside of the factory walls.

Sonny: Yeah, if there is anything outside these dirty, greasy walls. Look at them. Four dull, high, cold, damp walls. No doors, no windows, no nothing except for this endless conveyor belt and a lot of clanking noise and nothing, just nothing.

Mickey: Just remember, Sonny, you only get out of something what you put in it.

Sonny: Get out of something! I'll tell you what, Mickey, I want to get out of this place. I'm sick of being dirty.

Mickey: Four walls do not a prison make.

Sonny: Are you happy with this life here, Mickey? I want to go somewhere where it's clean and warm with color and beauty and fresh air....

Mickey: What are you going to do? Fly up through the ceiling? You know there are no doors or windows.

Sonny: There is one window. (looking up)

Mickey: How do we know it's a window? Sure, light comes from there, and lights up the whole factory, but is it a window, or just a giant light bulb? I mean, how do we know? (looking off) Yeah, yeah, I'm coming. Just hold your horses. There's always something to fix. Mickey the mechanic, Micky the mechanic, that's all I ever hear.

Sonny: Mickey?

Mickey: (turns and stops) Yeah?

Sonny: I'm going up there someday. (keeps looking up)

Mickey: (with a wave of his hand) Yeah sure.

(Mickey exits. Newspaper Boy enters)

Boy: (walks across stage) Hey ya, hey ya, read all about it - Boss makes same offer again. Get your Sovereign Sentinel right here. Hey ya, hey ya, read all about it....

Sonny: Hey boy. Where'd you get those papers?

Boy: They fell through the window.

Sonny: How much is a paper?

Boy: Just three labels off your #10 can.

Sonny: OK, here...

Boy: Hey ya, hey ya, read all about it....

(Boy exits. Black Robe enters and listens)

Sonny: (reading and thinking aloud) "Dear Children," He always calls us that. It kind of makes me feel warm inside. "This message is to remind you that no one needs to work in the soup factory. I will gladly give you a more abundant life and actually take you out of the futile work of the soup factory. All you need to do is acknowledge who you are and tell me you are ready." (thoughtfully) "Who you are and tell

me you are ready." He says that every time... It seems so simple, too simple.

Black: Don't tell me you're gonna believe that old line!

Sonny: I've heard it over and over. I wonder if it's true?

Black: Come on, you're smarter than that.

Sonny: I suppose if I just use my own logic I'd see that it's just too simple to be true. Course, it might be true...

Black: It's not true, I tell ya, it's not!

Sonny: Aw, it's probably not true. Besides, it sounds more real what the president of vice says.

Black: Now you're thinking. Just stick with us and someday we'll break through these walls and outside you'll see there's warmth, and beauty, and fresh air...

Sonny: He says if we stick with him that someday we will break through these walls and see our dreams come true. That's what I want. I want to be freed from the dull routine of this crummy soup factory.

(Black Robe nods and walks off, pleased with himself. White Robe enters)

White: Doesn't the light feel good? Wouldn't you like to take the Boss's offer and get out of the darkness of this place?

Sonny: Now I feel really confused. To get out of the factory the Boss says one thing and the president of vice says another. Neither of them have come through yet.

White: That's because you haven't said you're ready.

Sonny: The Boss says to just say I'm ready, but I'm not ready to say I'm ready. Yet there doesn't seem to be a way to break through these walls, either. I'd like to believe the Boss. They say He's a good man. I just wish I knew that He really did care for me. If I could just see some evidence.

White: Evidence? (White robe protects Sonny from accidents Black Robe would like to cause her)

Sonny: Was that the whistle already? I can't believe it's time to quit already. This has actually been an easy day. I'm not even tired. And I didn't even cut my hand on the cans like I usually do...

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Kelly: Have ya noticed anything different about Sonny lately?

Tommy: Yeah, she's acting pretty weird.

Kelly: All she talks about all the time is that light up there. If you ask me, she's getting really fanatical.

Tommy: I guess we've all wondered about it from time to time, but I don't have time to sit around and try to figure out what that light thing is really all about.

Kelly: Well I'll let ya in on a plan if ya can keep it a secret.

Tommy: Oh ya got a plan? You know a good buddy can keep a secret.

Kelly: Well, I've been figurin', and I know it's a long ways up to that light, and I've heard the stories about it just as much as you have, and it sounds just as crazy to me as it does to you. So . . . here's what I've been plannin' on doin'. I've been sneakin' a few of the cans from the crusher and instead of recycling them, I've been welding them together and makin' sections of scaffold and hiding them over there in that back corner of the factory where nobody ever goes....

Tommy: What are ya going to do with them?

Kelly: Just wait a minute and I'll tell ya. I've been figurin' that in just a little while I'll have enough scaffold built to reach clear up to that light in the ceiling . . . I figure I'm gonna settle it once and for all what's really up there. I'm sure I'll prove all those people wrong who think there is something up there...Maybe I'll help out Sonny. And if there is something up there I'll be the first to

grab hold of it... Who knows? Maybe I'll find a way out of this place?

Tommy: Ya gonna let a buddy help out?

Kelly: You bet. I figure it ought to be done in a couple of weeks.

(Tommy and Kelly freeze momentarily - time lapse)

Kelly: There. That looks pretty good to me. I just hope that one joint holds.

Tommy: Yeah, it looks kind of weak to me, maybe we'd better wait.

Kelly: Aw, it's OK. I didn't have time to get any more cans and besides, people will start comin' to work pretty soon, so we best get a move on...you wanna go up with me?

Tommy: No, I'll stay down here and steady it.

Kelly: OK, but it's going to be exciting. (starts to climb) You wouldn't believe how the factory looks from here.

Tommy: (looking around) It looks the same from here.

Kelly: Not from there, from here.

Tommy: That's what I said. Hey, you'd better be careful...that thing is swayin' some.

Kelly: Yeah, thanks. I still can't get over the view.

Tommy: Kelly! Stop climbing! That joint is starting to crack and bend, and you'd better come back down...Oh no!

(Kelly falls)

Tommy: Kelly, are you alright? Say something to me...come on, buddy, say something.

Kelly: Fresh air.

Tommy: What's that Kel?

Kelly: It was easier to breath up there.

Tommy: Take it easy buddy, you had a real tumble on your head.

Kelly: I'm OK, Tommy, really, the air was actually fresher up there.

Tommy: (sarcastically) I'm sure it was. You really hit your head. What you saw was probably stars when you hit. It's a wonder that you're talking at all.

Kelly: No Tommy. I know what I saw and felt, it was brighter than anything I've ever seen before...I just can't explain it...and it was warm up there too.

Tommy: Yeah, you're probably getting a temperature or something...I better get you home...That was some fall....

----- 4 -----

(White Robe is praying. Black Robe is messing up labels on cans)

Black: What in the soup factory are you doin'.

White: I'm talking to the Boss. What in the soup factory does it look like I'm doing?

Black: I have no idea...looks like you're warmin' your hands or something...What are you talking to him about.

White: Sonny.

Black: Yeah, what about Sonny?

White: He was telling me how much He loves Sonny, like He loves all the workers.

Black: Yeah, so the president of vice likes her too. She's a hard worker.

(Black Robe goes back to messing up labels)

White: What are you doing with those labels?

Black: I'm just having a little fun doin' some switchin' here and there. I've put the Split Pea label on the

Tomato can and the Tomato label on the Potato can...it's a riot to watch the Anderson family sit down to open a can of Split Pea soup for supper and find Tomato...It really busts me up.

White: But Sonny gets blamed for all that, doesn't she?

Black: Yeah, but she can handle it...remember, she's a hard worker. (laughingly) Hey, did you hear anything from the Boss? Ha, ha.

White: Yes, He said Sonny may be talking to Him soon.

Black: Now how's she gonna do that? No one's made it through that window.

White: She's been looking at it a lot lately, and if she just says she's ready...

Black: She's not gonna, besides, she's ours, just like everyone else in this pit.

White: What do you mean she's yours?

Black: Simple. She hasn't taken the Boss's offer, and she's either on the Boss's side or the president of vice's. So figure it out for yourself, White Tornado.

White: (goes back to praying) White Tornado? And what are you up to with that rag?

Black: Is that all you have to do is stand around and watch me all day? I'm just trying to wipe off some of this grease and oil off this belt.

White: But won't that make it squeak?

Black: You've gotta be the smartest person in the whole soup factory. I just love the sound that this belt makes when it's out of oil...ha, ha, by the way, did you hear anything from the Boss? Ha, ha.

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Sonny: Hey Mickey, come over here, this belt is squeakin' again.

Mickey: I can hardly believe it, Sonny, every morning this crazy thing is squeakin', you'd think that someone

was wipin' the oil off of it or something. And not just one, but they're squeakin' all over the place.

Sonny: Wow, Mickey, you must be ubiquitous.

Mickey: Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me.

Sonny: I'm not calling you names, Mickey. That means you seem to be everywhere at once.

Mickey: Well, I'd like to be everywhere at once, especially today, 'cause today is the Super Soup Bowl, And I hate to miss it. I love to watch the way they turn the Super Big Soup Bowl over and then watch the people try and climb to the top. They're steppin' all over each other; they'd do anything to get to the top.

Sonny: Yeah, Mickey, it's quite a game, I guess.

Mickey: Yeah. Do you remember a few years back when Kelly the can crusher was determined to get to the top of the soup bowl and she got Tommy and a bunch of guys to throw her high enough and she crashed into the soup bowl with her head...she just about broke her back on that one...I wonder if anyone will ever make it to the top.

Sonny: If you ask me, Mickey, it's kind of a dumb game. You know as well as I do that in the history of the soup factory no one has ever made it to the top in that game. Kelly came the closest to making it of anyone, except for Crazy Crouton with his Sensational Spoon Shot. He was gonna get into that giant spoon and be catapulted to the top of the super soup bowl. Only instead of going forward, he went straight up...and straight down.

Mickey: But, Sonny, it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game. That's my PHILOSOPHY.

Sonny: But there are some things you'd like to win at...er...like this soup factory. It's just like one big game of getting to the top, except there is no top, no place to go.

Mickey: That's the way the cookie crumbles...or to put it more better, that's the way the ball bounces.

Sonny: I'll tell you what, Mickey, I'm not going to do something about it. I'm not going to let the cookie crumble.

Mickey: What? Been thinking about going through the window again?

Sonny: Yeah, sort of, Mickey. We've got a real good plan, Kelly and I. She let me in on a plan of hers to leave this place.

Mickey: Yeah? What is it?

Sonny: Kelly has been making a two-man hot air balloon and has been keeping it in the back corner of the factory...we can hook it up to the heating system and float out of here.

Mickey: That's fine for you, but be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.

----- 6 -----

(Kelly is pacing back and forth, waiting for Sonny)

Kelly: It's about time you got here...seems like I've been here for a week.

Sonny: I'm sorry I was late...I was making last minute preparations for leaving.

Kelly: Well that's OK. We can talk on the way up...get in, 'cause we don't have much time before people will start coming to work.

(Both get into balloon, cut rope, and begin to float upwards)

Sonny: This is really neat, floating around in this thing.

Kelly: Yeah, it's workin' pretty good all right. Hey, doesn't the factory look funny from up here? It seems smaller from up here than it does from down there.

Sonny: Just look at how the conveyor belt goes. Hey, it goes in a circle. Starts there, and just winds around over to there, and then back again. It never goes anyplace and doesn't accomplish anything.

Kelly: Hey, look. The soup's even recycled.

Sonny: And the labels.

Kelly: And the cans.

Sonny: And here I thought we were doing something worthwhile.

Kelly: Wow, look over there at Tommy's tubs. They look so small from up here. Ya know, Sonny, she told me once that the whole soup factory revolves around her. If it wasn't for her, the whole soup factory would stop. But when you look at her efforts from up here, they almost seem insignificant.

Sonny: We're getting pretty high up.

Kelly: Yeah, we should be to the roof pretty soon. It sure looks like a sturdy roof to me.

Sonny: It wasn't always that way though, Kelly.

Kelly: Oh, what do you mean?

Sonny: Haven't you heard the tradition the old people tell?

Kelly: No, I never have.

Sonny: Well, nobody hardly talks about it anymore, but do you want to hear it?

Kelly: Sure, we have a little time before we get to the top.

Sonny: Here's how it was told to me. A long, long time ago they say the Boss came disguised as a workman. He knew that the roof was about to fall in on everyone. So He came to make sure nobody got hurt. He kept working everyday...nobody seemed to notice Him, and those that did just thought that He was another workman. But He kept looking up at the light and watching the ceiling. Day after day, as He worked, He would help people. No matter what they needed, He seemed to be able to help them. Sort of like Mickey the mechanic, except He could do a lot more than Mickey the mechanic.

He knew that someday soon the roof was going to fall down, but no one else was even concerned with the

roof and so nobody ever looked up. Then one day, everybody heard a lot of creaking and groaning in the roof. They stopped and looked up, and saw that the roof was about to fall in on them. Since the Boss had already been looking up, He was already prepared. At the right moment He revealed His true identity; reaching up with both hands, and with superhuman strength, He caught the roof and, somehow, nobody knows how He did it, He pushed the roof back up into it's place. Now when the roof fell, He caught the huge beam that goes all that way across the ceiling, and cut His hands on the nails. They say that's how we'll know Him when he comes back...by those scars in His hands. After He did all that, He said to everyone in the soup factory, "I've secured it for a time below, now I'm going to go up and secure it forever from above." And then, Kelly, He went up through that window over there in the ceiling. I've wondered if that's where He wants to take those who say they're ready and acknowledge who they are?

Kelly: You say He went up through that window?

Sonny: That's what the tradition says.

Kelly: Well a few weeks ago, ya know what I saw?

Sonny: What?

Kelly: I've been planning for a long time on getting out of here. I've been workin' like crazy to get out of here. Anyway, I had built a bunch of scaffold from cans I'd been smuggling and I built it high enough that it would just about reach that there window. I started to climb up on this thing and got up pretty high when all of a sudden one of the joints gave way and I came crashin' down. It's a wonder I didn't kill myself. Anyway when I was up there I could breath real easy 'cause the air seemed fresher, and when I just got a peak at the window I saw some of the most terrific colors you could ever imagine. Tommy saw the whole thing, but when I was telling her about it afterwards, she thought I had just taken a bad fall on my head. Like I was crazy or something. But I tell you, Sonny, it's true, I saw it.

Sonny: Kelly, so you suppose that's where the Boss wa.....(awe struck)

Kelly: Look, Sonny, I can see it again, Look.

Sonny: Yeah, the color. You're right, Kelly. I can see it too. And I can breath easier up here, the air is fresher...and look...

Kelly: Oh no, Sonny, we're going to hit that nail.

Sonny: What can we do?

Kelly: Hang on. Oh no, it tore a hole in the balloon.

Sonny: We're going down...

Kelly: We're losing air...

Sonny: We're going faster...

Kelly: Just hang on, Sonny.

(crash)

Kelly: Are You OK Sonny?

Sonny: Yeah, I think so. That was some fall, though.

Kelly: It's a wonder we didn't kill ourselves. I'm sorry, Sonny, every time I get a plan something happens, it all ends up crashing to the ground.

Sonny: That's OK, I might as well give up on trying to get out of this place too. But we did see the color, didn't we?

Kelly: Yeah, sure makes this place look drab.

Sonny: If there was only a way...

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Black: Where ya goin', White Tornado?

White: I'm going to be with Sonny.

Black: You got something from the Boss to tell her or have you just been warmin' your hands again?

White: I do have something to tell her.

Black: What's that Whitey?

White: The Boss knows for sure that Sonny's about to say she's ready.

Black: What do you mean, for sure? I've been watching Sonny, and there doesn't seem to be much change.

White: You seem to forget that the Boss has an inside track on what a person is thinking, and Sonny has been doing a lot of that lately about getting out of this place by accepting the Boss's offer.

Black: (worried) Are you sure about that?

White: Of course I'm sure. One thing the Boss never does is tell a lie.

Black: That's a lie.

White: No, That's a lie.

Black: Why you wimpy little bag of bones. What are you gonna do if I stop you from talkin' to Sonny?

White: I'm not worried about you. When I'm on a mission for the Boss, I'm completely covered with Eternal Life Assurance.

Black: Oh yeah? We'll see about that. (swings at White robe and hits invisible wall) How'd you do that?

White: I told you I was completely covered.

Black: (feels wall) OK, Whitey, so you got a few tricks. But Sonny is still ours, and I'm gonna talk to her, too. She's listened to me in the past and she'll listen to me again. You have no guarantees that she'll listen to you. I'll tell here about you, you dirty, rotten, good for nothing....

(White Robe zaps Black Robe. Black Robe violently moves mouth, but is unable to say anything)

White: You were saying? Speak up. Well, if you have nothing to say, I must be leaving. Sonny needs me.

(Black robe starts to follow, and White Robe zaps Black Robe so Black Robe can't follow. White Robe walks back and sips up Black Robe's mouth, straightens his coat, and goes)

----- 8 -----

(Scene opens with Sonny sitting on a stool thinking)

Kelly: Sonny, Tommy and I just put together this new business plan and we're going to let you in on it. It can make you a lot of money. We just invented a machine that will make jewelry out of cans. We have bracelets and necklaces and all kinds of neat things. You should have seen the last ring I made.....Sonny, are you listening to me?

Sonny: Oh, yeah, Kelly, Listen, I've been thinking a lot lately about taking the Boss's offer. Seems like that's the only way I'm ever going to get out of this place.

Kelly: You didn't hear a word I said. I have a plan that can make you a lot of MONEY,

Sonny: Listen, Kelly, I don't care about money anymore. It can't get me anything that I really want.

Kelly: But you can really make it big with this.

Sonny: I don't care anymore.

Kelly: OK let's look at this thing logically. If there is anybody who has wanted to get out of this place it's me. I've tried climbing my way to the top and that messed p. Then you and I both tried the balloon trip and you know what happened to us then, I even tried using a jackhammer to get through the walls. I don't think I ever told you about that one. I tried all these things and none of them worked. I've given up on trying to get out of this place. I'm just gonna make it big while I'm here. Are you with me or not?

Sonny: No, Kelly, what I want, this soup factory can't give. I wanna get out of this place. And it's not just that. I've been looking at the light a lot more lately. The more I look, the more I feel that the Boss is right. In my mind I've been thinking a about those words and going over them and every time I do, I get this strange feeling of fear and excitement. The other times we've tried to get out of this place I've been excited, but never like this. The more I look at the light the more I actually want to say "I'm ready".

Kelly: You just gotta quit looking at that light so much. You gotta look at the things around you, and not just go by some fairy tale that people said a long time ago...

Sonny: I've decided that this is what I should do. I'm gonna take His offer.

Kelly: Don't do it now. Oh, think about it a little while longer...

Sonny: I've thought about it long enough.

Kelly: Sonny!!

Sonny: I am ready!!!!

Kelly: Hey, not so loud, people's lookin' at ya.

Sonny: I AM SONNY THE SOUP SIPPER!!!!

Kelly: Sonny, stop action so crazy!

Sonny: I BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE THE REAL BOSS!!!

Kelly: Sonny!

Sonny: I BELIEVE YOUR NEWSPAPER!!!

Kelly: Would ya cut it out, Sonny!

Sonny: I CANNOT GET OUT ALONE!!!

Kelly: For crying out loud, Sonny!

Sonny: TAKE ME OUT....I AM READY!!!!

Kelly: Hey, what's happening?!

Sonny: I see Him!

Kelly: See who?

Sonny: The Boss. I see Him looking at me!

Kelly: I don't see nothing.

Sonny: He's coming for me!

(White Robe puts a white robe on Sonny)

Kelly: Hey, what's happening to your clothes?

Sonny: He says that as long as He's near, I can never be dirty again.

Kelly: Be reasonable, Sonny. Be reasonable. You don't wear that snow white suit here in this dirty place.

Sonny: As long as I stay with the Boss, I can never be dirty again.

Kelly: Yeah, but what if you slip on some slippery soup or something?

Sonny: He says that if I fall, He'll help me up and clean my suit again.

Kelly: How come he don't talk to me?

Sonny: He will if you ask Him to.

Kelly: I don't know, Sonny. There's a lot of people watchin'. I'd look pretty silly talkin' to nothin'.

Sonny: It's not nothin', Kelly. He's the Boss, and He's right here with me.

Kelly: Yeah sure.

Sonny: If you say you're ready you'll be able to see Him too.

Kelly: What good is that? You're still here in the factory.

Sonny: I'm here to help my friends through the window. When my work is done, He will take me home.

Kelly: I don't know, Sonny. It sounds too good to be true.

Sonny: No, Kelly. It's too good to be false. Come on, you can be clean too, and you can breathe this fresh air.

Kelly: I dunno, Sonny. I better get some work done.

Sonny: Kelly, don't put it off. It's too good...(voice fades)

Kelly: Let me think about it. (goes off and begins crushing cans) Look at her over there, her in her white suit, and singing all the time. Boy, I'd hate to have to keep that suit clean. 'Course it's been a long time and she's still not dirty. It's strange too, because she's sure helped a lot of people out of some pretty messy places. I wish I could help people. Maybe I could say I'm ready, and admit that I'm dirty. That's all Sonny did. Nah. That's dumb. Too easy. There's got to be some trick to it. I could at least try. Nah, that won't work. I could go ask Sonny. Nah, She'll tell me the same think she's told me over and over a million times. Say I'm ready and acknowledge I'm dirty. Sounds like a broken record. Say I'm ready and acknowledge I'm dirty. Say I'm ready and acknowledge I'm dirty. Boy, she sure looks happy over there, singin' happy songs and helpin' people...if I only could believe...believe....

Narrator: Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am gentle, and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest unto your soul, for My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
