

THE SINGING TELEGRAM

(It's 7:30 on the same Friday night in the same alternate suburban reality. Lights up on THE LIVING ROOM of a modest home. A MAN in full singing telegram regalia arrives and knocks on the door. Maybe he has flowers or balloons.)

LOUISE: *(From off.)* Oh, my gosh! Gary! You're early! *(LOUISE OVERBY enters, scrambling to get herself together. More knocking.)* Hold on! It's only 7:30, Sweetie! I thought you said be ready a little after eight?!? *(Louise grabs her bag and a coat. More knocking.)* I'm comin', I'm comin', God! *(She opens the door. The person at the door, a man dressed in full singing telegram regalia, is not who she expected.)* Oh—um... Hello.

SINGING TELEGRAM MAN (STM): Hello! Singing telegram for Miss Louise Overby! *(Little beat.)*

LOUISE: I'm sorry—what?

STM: Singing telegram for Miss Louise Overby!

LOUISE: *(Amused.)* Wh—? Singing telegram?

STM: Yup. For Miss Louise Overby, are you Louise Overby?

LOUISE: Yeah.

STM: Okay, good. Singing telegram for Miss Louise Overby!

LOUISE: *(Amused.)* Are you [serious]—? Seriously?

STM: Yeah.

LOUISE: I didn't know they had those anymore, // singing telegrams.

STM: Oh—they do!

LOUISE: Really?!?

STM: Yup.

LOUISE: Okay, um...well, can I see some credentials?

STM: Oh—yeah—sorry—here. *(The Singing Telegram Man presents some sort of ID.)*

LOUISE: The SuperCenter? >

STM: Yeah—

LOUISE: You work out of the SuperCenter?

STM: Yeah, it's a new service they're providing. They have a kiosk.

LOUISE: Oh. Okay. Well...um (*This is weird.*)...who's it from?

STM: Huh?

LOUISE: My singing telegram: Who's it from?

STM: Oh. Um—sorry—this is my first day—um...(*He checks.*)...Gary.

LOUISE: (*Super happy and excited.*) Gary?!?!?

STM: (*Confused.*) Yeah...

LOUISE: *Really?!?*

STM: Yeah...

LOUISE: Well—...(*Overjoyed.*)...what's he—? What is he *doing?*, What is he *up to?!?*

STM: Um, I // don't know.

LOUISE: This is so neat!

STM: Yeah, um, can I ask you somethin' real quick? Who is...Gary?

LOUISE: Oh! He's my guy!

STM: He's [your guy]?!?!—

LOUISE: I think we're gonna get married!

STM: O//h...

LOUISE: And honestly—that's something that I just thought wasn't gonna happen for me, and now (*JOY!*) aaaaah!

STM: Well, congratulations, // um—

LOUISE: Thanks! I'm lucky. He's pretty great. I mean—get this: Tonight—he's taking me dancing! Isn't that neat?!? For a guy to take a girl dancing on a Friday night, in this day and age?!?

STM: Y//eah—

LOUISE: Yeah. He's always doing stuff like that, always surprising me, and God, this takes the *cake*!! I mean, a singing telegram? So *retro*!!!

STM: Yeah!

LOUISE: And so *fun*! So, how do we do this?, I guess just come on in, and— >

STM: (*Singing Telegram Man doesn't want to come in and sing what he has to sing.*)
Oh—um—

LOUISE: Where's good?

STM: You know what? I don't want to intrude, so—

LOUISE: You're not intruding!

STM: No, I don't think—

LOUISE: You're not! Now get in here and sing me my singing telegram, Singing Telegram Man!

STM: Well—

LOUISE: **Get in here!** >

STM: Okay. (*Singing Telegram Man reluctantly enters.*)

LOUISE: God! This is so *fun*! I mean, what is he *up* to?

STM: Um...I'm not sure.

LOUISE: (*She gasps—huge revelation.*) Oh! Oh-my-God! Wait! Oh-my-God! I think I might know what he's up to! Oh-my-God! I've been thinking that he might do something like this!, Oh-my-God: Is he *proposing* to me?!? >

STM: Um...

LOUISE: Is that what's happening right now?!? >

STM: Well—

LOUISE: Aaaaah! Oh, my God! He's proposing, isn't he! >

STM: Well—

LOUISE: Oh-my-God!!! Oh-my-God-oh-my-God-oh-my-God! Aaaaaaah!!!, Oh-my-God! *(Beat. Singing Telegram Man is kind of frozen. Louise is overjoyed and full of anticipation.)* Well, don't just stand there! Go ahead! Sing! Sing! Oh-my-God! This is so crazy!

STM: Yeah. *(Beat. Singing Telegram Man does nothing.)*

LOUISE: What's wrong?

STM: Nothin'.

LOUISE: Are you okay?

STM: Yeah.

LOUISE: Well—then, let's go. Sing. Come on! Sing me my singing telegram, Singing Telegram Man! *(Beat.)*

STM: I can't.

LOUISE: What?

STM: I can't do this.

LOUISE: You can't do what?

STM: *(He comes up with an excellent lie to get him out of this.)* Sing!

LOUISE: What?

STM: I can't sing.

LOUISE: You can't sing? >

STM: Nope!

LOUISE: Of course you can sing, you're a singing telegram man!

STM: No. I can't.

LOUISE: Well—how in the world did you get to be a singing telegram man if you can't sing? >

STM: Um—

LOUISE: How did you get this *job* if you can't sing?!?

STM: Um, well—

LOUISE: I mean, didn't you have to audition?

STM: No—

LOUISE: No?!?

STM: No, 'cause, see, I guess there's just a real shortage // of us—

LOUISE: There's a *shortage*?!?

STM: Yeah, there's a shortage of singing telegram men // right now—

LOUISE: There's a *shortage* of Singing Telegram Men right // now?!?

STM: Yeah, and I guess they just liked me and thought I was pretty charming // and that—

LOUISE: Really.

STM: —yeah—and that I had a lot of charisma, and, so, I think they had the confidence that I could pull it off.

LOUISE: Really.

STM: Yeah, // but—

LOUISE: Well then, pull it off.

STM: Huh?

LOUISE: Pull it off.

STM: But I can't sing.

LOUISE: Tough! It's your job. So do your job.

STM: But I—

LOUISE: Do your job, Singing Telegram Man.

STM: (*Fear.*) But—

LOUISE: *(She's fierce—and loses it a little.)* **Do it! I'm excited about this! This could be *big* for me!**

STM: All right, Miss Overby.

LOUISE: Thank you!

STM: Um...Singing telegram for Miss Louise Overby from Gary. *(He gives her the flowers and preps.)*

LOUISE: *(All starry.)* Gary. He is somethin' else, isn't he?

STM: Yup. He is. *(Little beat.)* Well, here goes. *(He sings the chorus of "Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad" by Meatloaf. And he sings it very well.)* "I want you (I want you), I need you (I need you). *(Little beat.)* But there ain't no way I'm ever gonna love you; now don't be sad (don't be sad)... 'cause two out of three ain't bad. *(Little beat.)* Now don't be sad... 'cause two out of three...ain't bad." *(Long, long beat. The awfulness of what just happened washes over Louise. She is devastated and struggles to hold it together.)*

LOUISE: I thought you said you couldn't sing.

STM: Yeah, well—

LOUISE: You sing very well.

STM: Yeah. I can sing fine. I just didn't want to sing that to you. *(Beat.)*

LOUISE: Wow. This is—... *(The surreal awfulness of it all continues to descend upon her. Long beat.)*

STM: Um...I have another appointment that I have to get to...*(He starts to leave. He stops.)* Here's—...um...they ask us to ask you to rate my performance. Here's info on how to do that. *(He leaves a business card or an information card somewhere and starts to go.)*

LOUISE: *(Stopping Singing Telegram Man.)* What's—?!? Why did he do this?!? Why would anyone do this? What kind of a person...does this—like *this*?

STM: The kind of person I don't think you want to be with. *(Little beat.)* I'm so sorry. *(Little beat.)* Goodbye, Miss Overby. *(The Singing Telegram Man starts to go, but stops and turns to Louise...and then exits. The lights fade on a sad and perplexed Louise—and the Singing Telegram Man just outside her door. Existential space vacuum sound/Music/Transition.)*

THE END *(And we move on to...)*