

Vic and Sade Discuss a Close Friendship

By [Paul Rhymer](#)

Announcer: Well sir, we *have* no scene as we enter the small house half-way up in the next block now, because within the largest upstairs bed-room where we are taking you it is pitch dark and almost twelve-o'clock midnight. But here's a *voice*. Listen.

SADE: [*Softly*] Vic?

VIC: [*With a bare edge of gruffness*] What?

SADE: Asleep?

VIC: Yeah.

SADE: *No*, you're not.

VIC: Yes, I am.

SADE: *Talk* to me a minute.

VIC: I'm very drowsy.

SADE: Vic, *I* don't wanta go to sleep mad.

VIC: Whatcha mad about?

SADE: *I'm* not mad. But *you* are.

VIC: Me? Mad? Laughable. My soul never *was* so much at peace. I never *was* so serene.

SADE: *Fred* don't mean to be aggravating.

VIC: Sade, you'll kindly not mention that name to me *again*.

I've *finished* with Fred Stembottom. I play no more *Five Hundred* with Fred Stembottom. I brush no more *elbows* with Fred Stembottom. Fred Stembottom an' I are *quits*.

SADE: *I* know you feel bad about tonight.

VIC: [*With spirit*] *Who* feels bad about tonight? *I* don't feel bad about tonight. I feel *good* about tonight. Tonight has taught me that a man can cherish a rattle-snake as a friend an'...

SADE: A little lower, Vic.

VIC: Huh?

SADE: You'll wake *Rush* up talkin' so loud.

VIC: Very well, I'll say now more. Let us sleep. I bid you good-night. [*With finality*] Good night.

SADE: [*After a brief pause*] It's just this way.

VIC: What's just who's way?

SADE: It's just Fred's way to get under a person's skin.

VIC: He didn't get under *my* skin. He might of *thought* he got

under my skin, but he *didn't* get under my skin.

SADE: *Jokin'* is all it really *is*. I realize that kind of jokin' bothers a person.

VIC: It didn't bother *me* by a long shot.

SADE: [*Timidly*] You got kinda red in the face.

VIC: [*Tough*] What?

SADE: You...kinda squirmed in your chair when he was talkin'.

VIC: [*Louder than necessary*] Who *wouldn't* squirm around in their chair listenin' to such ignorant bunk? Who *wouldn't*...

SADE: Please, Vic--Rush.

VIC: [*Referring to Fred*] The fat head.

SADE: [*Brief pause*] *It's* just Fred's way.

VIC: Just his way, hey? Some way, *I'll* say.

[*A poem*]

SADE: I know he's stubborn an' loud-talkin' but he's a wonderful husband to Ruthie an' *such* a good provider an' sends money to his folks an' just as soon give you the shirt off his back as...

VIC: I don't *want* the shirt off his back. I wouldn't *have* the shirt off his back. An' I'll tell ya *this*, Sade, I've been in that guy's house for the last time. The--last--time.

SADE: I bet if he had any idea you felt this way about it, he'd just *more'n* apologize. I bet he'd come over *a-kitin'* sayin' how sorry he...

VIC: If he comes over a-kitin' I'd send him right *back* again a-kitin'. Listen, were we or were we not guests at his home tonight?

SADE: 'Course we were guests over there in his home tonight an' that's why I say...

VIC: Let *me* say a minute ... long as we're gonna lay in bed till morning *talking*. We were *guests* over there tonight. We were invited over there to play a sociable game of cards. What did our courteous *host* do? He lit right in an' told his guest his business was just so much hooley. He spent twenty minutes laughin' about his guest's...

SADE: *No*, he didn't, Vic. He...

VIC: [*Exercised*] He *didn't*? He didn't? Fred Stembottom didn't sit there at that card-table with that big wide dumb half-wit grin on his face an' snort over how funny my job down at the Plant...

SADE: Vic, *please*. You're talkin' terrible loud. Rush's got to have his sleep.

VIC: O.K. I didn't ask to discuss this. *You're* the one that wanted to have a pleasant chat in the middle of the night.

SADE: Couldn't you just bring your voice down a little?

VIC: I'll bring my voice down to *nothin'*. I need sleep *myself*. I

bid you good-night. Good-night.

SADE: [*Ignoring this*] Fred didn't laugh at your job, Vic.

VIC: Oh, he *didn't*, huh? Where were *you*? In Canada? He sat there with that monkey-face grin an' went on for twenty minutes about the Kitchenware Industry. [*Mocks Fred*] 'How do they get men to go in Kitchenware, Vic? Do they pick 'em out of insane asylums or do they stunt the brains of new-born babies?'

SADE: He just meant that to be *funny*.

VIC: Did *you* think it was funny?

SADE: No, but...

VIC: I should think it'd burn you *up* to hear cheap cracks like that about your husband's work.

SADE: I didn't think it was very smart of Fred to go *on* like that, but just the same I realized he was only...

VIC: We make our *living* out of Kitchenware. The food we *eat* comes from Kitchenware. Our money in the *bank* comes from Kitchenware. I've spent going on twenty years of my *life* in Kitchenware. All the future I *got* is Kitchenware.

SADE: No, I don't think it was very smart of Fred to go like that but just the same I realized...

VIC: An' who the heck is Fred Stembottom? Nothin' but a rotten little thirty-two-dollar-a-week clerk that only hangs on to his job because his bosses are too kind-hearted to...

SADE: [*Reproach*] Oh, *Vic*.

VIC: Oh, I wouldn't tell that to *him*. I wouldn't tell it to *nobody*. But what if I *had* said things like that tonight? *He* did. To *me*.

SADE: [*Small voice*] Only foolin' though.

VIC: [*Scornfully*] "Only foolin'." "Only foolin'."

SADE: Well, he *was* only foolin'. I know Fred's a little stupid when it comes to lots of things but I know as sure as there's a man in the moon that he wouldn't set *out* to hurt...

VIC: What surprises *me*, Sade, is that you didn't get mad *yourself*. *That's* what surprises *me*.

SADE: I *did* get a little mad. I...

VIC: Certainly *acted* it. You an' Ruthie *both* sat there an' giggled while Fred was hittin' up the two-bit comedy. Laughed out *loud* when he called me "The Prince of Pots an' Pans" an' the "Sweetheart of the Fryin' Skittle."

SADE: I laughed because...

VIC: *Never* mind. *It's* O.K. *It* won't happen again. I've been in Fred Stembottom's house for the last time an' you can put that in your pipe an' smoke it. Now let's go to sleep. Must be going on one o'clock.

SADE: Vic, don't get mad, but...

VIC: *I'm* not mad.

SADE: Don't you...can't you kinda see where... Don't get mad now at what I say, will ya?

VIC: I'm not mad. *I'm* not mad. Can't I kinda see *what*?

SADE: Can't you see where you were a little bit to blame tonight?

VIC: How?

SADE: Fred didn't start his joshin' till - till after you give *him* a little joshin'.

VIC: Did I run down his job? Did I make fun of the way he makes a living? Did I poke him in the spot that it hurts the worst?

SADE: No, but... [*Halts*]

VIC: But what?

SADE: You kinda went after *his* goat early in the evening there.

VIC: When?

SADE: Well - remember when Ruthie served the ice cream?

VIC: I do.

SADE: Remember what was bein' said?

VIC: I complimented Ruthie on her ice cream, stated it was delicious, announced it was my favorite flavor, an' in every way behaved like a guest is *s'posed* to behave.

SADE: Do you remember - I may not get this exactly right - but do you remember sayin' you liked ice cream served in round chunks like baseballs?

VIC: I do.

SADE: An' then you recollect what *Fred* said?

VIC: Somethin' insulting, I imagine. What'd he say?

SADE: He said speakin' of baseball it wouldn't be long now before -- Izzy Bean, is it?

VIC: Dizzy Dean.

SADE: He said speakin' of baseball it wouldn't be long now before Dizzy Dean would be fannin' out National League batters like sick flies.

VIC: I recall the remark, yes.

SADE: An' then *you* said Dizzy Dean was just so much wet gunpowder an' oughta be plowin' corn down on the farm.

VIC: *Sure*. That's *right*. Dizzy Dean's a flash in the pan.

SADE: That got under Fred's skin.

VIC: What did?

SADE: The things you said about Dizzy Dean. He thinks Dizzy Dean is marvelous. Keeps a scrap-book about him an' everything. Listens to the radio. Thinks the sun rises an' *sets* on Dizzy Dean.

VIC: That's *another* example of Fred's stupidity.

SADE: But you were trompin' on his *toes* with the things you

said.

VIC: Good.

SADE: Trompin' on 'em good an' *hard*. I saw his neck get red as fire one time there when you said you'd rather have one pitcher from the bush league than all the Dizzy Deans in the world.

VIC: I was tellin' the *truth*. I would.

SADE: But it made Fred *mad*.

VIC: Excellent.

SADE: An' you went right *ahead* makin' him mad. You were talkin' about his *car*. Said you'd bet him three to one the transmission wouldn't hold up five hundred miles.

VIC: An' it *won't*. I was statin' *fact*. *Everybody* knows that make of automobile is so much junk.

SADE: But after all it's *his* car. He paid good *money* for it. He's as proud of it as Adam. Goes over it with a damp cloth every night of the universe.

VIC: If he was smarter he'd drive it into Sugar Crick.

SADE: But don't you *see*, Vic?

VIC: See what?

SADE: He didn't make you any madder than you made *him*. It was just one thing leading to another. Till finally he got on the subject of Kitchenware.

VIC: Well, he won't get on the subject of Kitchenware any *more*. Not with *me*. I'm *though* with the fat-head.

SADE: But won't you admit you were *partly* to blame for...

VIC: Kiddo, it's gettin' on for *morning*. Let's get some *sleep*.

SADE: All right.

VIC: Good night.

SADE: Good night.

[*Pause*] [*More Pause*]

SADE: Vic.

VIC: I'm asleep.

SADE: It's *Ruthie* that *I'm* thinking of.

VIC: What about her?

SADE: She's my best friend.

VIC: Well?

SADE: I wouldn't lose her for *anything*.

VIC: *You* don't hafta lose.

SADE: [*Pause*] When you an' Fred have these flare-ups, *naturally* the wife sticks to the husband. I noticed tonight. I was peeved when Fred was laughin' at your work an' Ruthie was peeved when you were makin' fun of Fred's baseball players an' his auto. We couldn't *help* it. We *tried* to, but was *bound* to show a little. Like I said, Ruthie is my best friend. My *very* best friend. I'm with other ladies a lot, *yes* - - Mis' Donahue an' Mis'

Harris an' Mis' Brighton an' Mis Applerot -- but it's not the same. Maybe it's because they're a little *older* than I am. Maybe it's because they're a little brighter in the head an' got more education. *I* don't know what it is. But I'm not the *same* with them as I am with Ruthie. With Ruthie I can laugh an' cry an' fight an' talk nonsense an' just get along marvelous. With other ladies I sorta feel like here I am a woman that aint a girl any longer an' got a fourteen year old boy. See?

VIC: Um.

SADE: Ruthie an' I get along a lot like *kids* get along. It's *hard* for married ladies with families to have close friends where you can just take your *hair* down. An' Ruthie's the only close friend I *got*. The only one I ever *will* have probably -- because I'm getting along to an age where women don't *make* close friends. *[Pause]* Awake?

VIC: Yeah - I'm listenin'.

SADE: You...see what I mean?

VIC: Uh-huh.

SADE: Don't you think...If you *tried* don't you think you an' Fred could hit it off better?

VIC: *I* guess so.

SADE: Mean it?

VIC: Sure. *Fred* aint beyond redemption. Not a bad egg at *all* if ya don't take him serious.

SADE: Would it...Would it be all right if...

[Low giggle because she's afraid to say it]

VIC: Would it be all right if what?

SADE: If I asked 'em over tomorrow night for more cards?

VIC: Fred an' Ruthie?

SADE: Yes.

VIC: Sure.

SADE: You're not just talkin'?

VIC: *No*, Go ahead--ask 'em over.

SADE: Thanks, Vic.

VIC: Hey, kiddo, don'tcha think we oughta settle down an' get some sleep?

SADE: Yes.

VIC: Good night.

SADE: Good night.

Announcer: Which concludes another brief interlude at the small house half-way up in the next block.