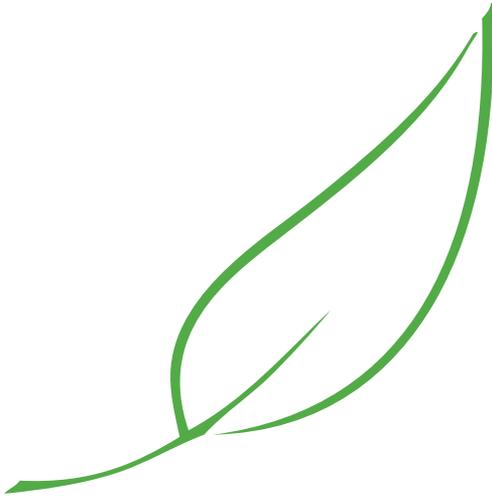


# A Circus In The House

By Ray Sheers



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# A CIRCUS IN THE HOUSE

By Ray Sheers

*This is the third play in Ray Sheer's trilogy.*

**SYNOPSIS:** Desmond Boa has secretly borrowed \$50,000 from a heartless and shifty banker in order to start a circus. Sadly, the circus is failing, and the loan is coming due. So Desmond and his eccentric business partner, Mr. Pupinski, decide to charm the wealthy Mrs. Dittersdorf into investing; however, they soon learn that their banker is also courting Mrs. Dittersdorf for her fortune. Desperate times call for desperate measures and it's not long before the banker ends up dead, or so they think, and Mrs. Dittersdorf's fortune goes up in smoke. Come one, come all for this Marx Brothers-style comedy with unforgettable characters, non-stop laughs and a phenomenal finale!

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(11 male, 10 female, 5 either; flexible)*

- JACK THE MECHANIC (m) ..... A mechanic who drinks a bit too much. *(8 lines)*
- BERT GICOMETTI (m) ..... The GICOMETTI brothers think they're big-time criminals, but they are really inept small-time crooks. *(29 lines)*
- EDUARDO GICOMETTI (m) ..... The GICOMETTI brothers think they're big-time criminals, but they are really inept small-time crooks. *(35 lines)*
- SAM (m/f) ..... A bratty child who wants to be kidnapped. *(27 lines)*
- GODIVA DOOLITTLE (f) ..... The BOA's maid. *(85 lines)*

- PUPINSKI (m)..... Friend of the BOAS. He and DESMOND are putting together a circus. He's a tease and a flirt, but he means no harm. He could be played as a Groucho or Chico Marx-type character, or a mixture of the two. *(125 lines)*
- HARPO (m/f)..... A lovable, fun-loving clown. Like his namesake, Harpo Marx, he doesn't speak. He should be dressed like a clown in ragged, mismatched clothes. He wears a curly wig and top hat. Sometimes he wears wire-rimmed sunglasses. What he lacks in speech, he makes up for in gestures and facial expression. He is totally outrageous and uninhibited. The more the actor patterns himself (or herself!) after the original Harpo, the more effective the role will be. *(No lines)*
- LUIGI BONJOURNO (m)..... An artist. *(21 lines)*
- LUCY BOA (f) ..... A kindhearted, good-natured, middle-aged woman. She is married to DESMOND. She accepts just about anybody at face value, but she's not as dumb as she sometimes appears. She might speak with a slight Transylvanian accent. She's extremely demonstrative when she speaks. *(104 lines)*

- ARETHA CLEMM (f)..... A friend of LUCY's visiting from South Carolina. She speaks with a strong Southern accent. (If accent isn't feasible, change her state of origin.) (45 lines)
- FILTHY WILMA (f)..... A witch dressed in ragged clothes. She should be nasty and intimidating. (47 lines)
- AUNTIE LUBA (f)..... LUCY's visiting aunt from Transylvania; she's crabby, critical, and complaining; a thick Transylvania accent is very effective. (49 lines)
- IGOR POPOVICH (m) ..... One of the POPOVICH brothers. The brothers are rather poor jugglers from Europe. They, too, speak with foreign accents and they have limited English. (No real juggling ability is required.) (14 lines)
- VASCHA POPOVICH (m)..... One of the POPOVICH brothers. (21 lines)
- DESMOND BOA (m)..... LUCY's husband. He's a bit eccentric like his wife, but he has a good heart. (146 lines)
- PERCY QUAGMIRE (m)..... A banker with no sense of humor. (72 lines)
- GRIM REAPER (m/f)..... (Optional) Non-speaking, walk-on part. (No lines)
- MRS. DITTERSDORF (f) ..... Wealthy, not too bright heiress; in a Marx Brothers' film, she'd be played by Margaret Dumont. (62 lines)
- BELLADONNA (f) ..... FILTHY WILMA's sister. If anything, she's even more despicable and threatening than WILMA. (38 lines)

- HORSE (m)..... Two characters in horse costume, ostensibly played by IGOR and VASCHA. However, the HORSE may be played by any two actors inside the costume. The HORSE needn't be realistic looking. *(No lines)*
- RAT (m/f) ..... At one point, the rat is SAM; however, during the transformation scene (and possibly the dance scene), it needs to be played by another actor to make the spell look authentic. Like the HORSE, it needn't look realistic. *(No lines)*
- ROSIE BOA (f)..... The BOAS' daughter. She's a successful lawyer who's running for mayor. She's a liberated woman who takes life a bit too seriously, especially considering her family. *(28 lines)*
- LYDIA SERPENTINE (f) ..... A tattooed woman who is very attractive. *(8 lines)*
- MERKLE BLESSAGE (m)..... SAM's father, the mayor of Leadville. He's running against ROSIE. *(7 lines)*
- HILLARY BLESSAGE (f) ..... SAM's mother. *(5 lines)*
- POLICEMAN (m/f) ..... A bumbling law officer. *(9 lines)*

*Musicians are easily written into the script and can be used in a number of places. School groups, especially, have students who are perfectly willing to play instruments onstage but who do not want speaking parts. The musicians could be explained as members of the circus troupe.*

### SOUND EFFECTS

1. Telephone ringing
2. Doorbell (“Totentanz” theme is especially effective for its sense of foreboding. The four note theme is easily recorded with a keyboard.)
3. Elephant sounds
4. Horse sounds
5. Thunder (for casting the spell)
6. Eerie music for drinking of potion
7. Glass breaking

### SUGGESTED MUSIC

To capture the wild and zany spirit of the play, I made much use of Klezmer music and early jazz. The unusual marriage of these two styles of music complemented each other and captured the feeling I wanted to create on stage. Track 1 of *The Klezmerim* was especially effective for the “never” dance that occurs throughout the play. When HARPO steals the potion from FILTHY WILMA, I used track 6 of *Klezmer Soul* for a mysterious effect. For HARPO’s “death scene,” track 10 from *The Klezematics: Jews with Horns* is very moving, especially in conjunction with effective lighting. The three times the potion is drunk, I used track 9 (13 seconds only) of that same CD. I also played circus music, especially when HARPO comes in on the HORSE and for his “tightrope act,” and for scene changes. When PUPINSKI briefly dances with DITTERSDORF, I played a tango from *Soul of the Tango*. To give DESMOND time to get ready for his gentleman caller, I had HARPO dance with the rat. We used the raucous “Black Dog” by Led Zeppelin. It was a great hit with all audiences. Whenever, possible, I used live musicians, particularly for scene changes and for the circus scene; also, for the brief “Swing Low” sequence when HARPO is presumably dead. They are not necessary, however. The following CD’s are widely available at most large music stores and even some libraries:

*The Klezmerim* (Arhoolie CD 309)  
*Klezmer Soul* (World Class 11303 2)  
*The Klezematics: Jews with Horns* (Xenophile 4032)  
*Circus Spectacular* (Vox 7541)  
*Hot Jazz at the Blue Note* (CDP 7243 8 35811 2)  
*Yo Yo Ma: Soul of the Tango* (SK 63122)  
*Led Zeppelin* (Atlantic 82638 2)

### PROPS

- Telephone booth or cellular phone (For BERT and EDUARDO)

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- Park bench
- Comic book
- Headphones
- “Lost cat” poster
- Playing cards (The larger the better)
- Many plastic fish and plastic bucket with water
- Paper and pen
- Telephone (For living room)
- Canvas, easel, painting supplies
- Painting (For LUCY)
- Fake money
- Small book for Igor
- Scissors
- Mail
- Briefcase with papers
- Surgeon’s gown, doctor’s bag, stethoscope, small flashlight, etc.
- Large inflatable hammer
- Feathers
- Bicycle horn
- Rat costume
- Horse costume
- Handkerchief
- Pen
- Kazoo
- Silverware
- Many pairs of glasses (Without lenses)
- Eye exam poster
- Horse poster
- Large plastic scissors
- Paper airplane
- Bizarre gift for LUCY
- Mop
- Fake moustache and glasses (Groucho-like)
- Key
- Boa
- Glass slipper
- Rubber chicken
- “Vote for Rosie Boa” poster
- Nightshirt and cap
- Hats
- Tea set
- Wigs (2)

- Brightly colored tutu
- Plastic sword
- Plastic meat cleaver
- Newspaper
- Feather duster
- Glass sugar bowl
- Lemonade in pitcher with glasses
- Alarm clock
- Water pistol
- Purses
- Guns and caps (For QUAGMIRE and police)
- Large plastic pumpkin
- Checkbook
- Ghost costume
- Tails and furry ears (For LYDIA and QUAGMIRE)
- Suitcase
- Painting of LUCY
- Sugar
- Car repair bill
- Desdemona's clothes
- Remote control car (*Optional*)
- Second rubber chicken (*Optional*)
- Whipped cream pie (*Cheap whipped dessert in pie tin works well*)

## SPECIAL EFFECTS

A small strand of white blinking Christmas attached to a battery loosely encased in iridescent plastic was used to make the mushrooms glow and appear mysterious.

A laser pointer (widely available and relatively cheap) produced a supernatural effect when HARPO transfers the potion to the sugar bowl. Using a glass sugar bowl with many angles and ridges creates a wonderful effect when the laser is directed on it. Instead of sugar, use salt; it's much less messy and far easier to clean up than sugar. It's also less of a temptation to eat!

The only two unusual costumes needed are a horse costume large enough for two actors and a rat costume. It's particularly effective if HARPO is able to ride the HORSE onstage, so if the actors playing IGOR and VASCHA aren't strong enough to support his weight, other actors could be used for the HORSE. It's not absolutely essential that anyone ride the HORSE, but audiences love it. If it's not feasible for HARPO to ride it, he could simply lead the HORSE onstage.

Beheading the rubber chicken is easily accomplished. When HARPO pulls out the chicken, the head is already separated from the body. He holds it at the separation as he throws it on the table for DESMOND to hit with the large plastic cleaver. After DESMOND hits it, HARPO pulls up the body and dangles it. Then he puts the head on his finger to torment QUAGMIRE.

The glass slipper is a plastic shoe or sandal that HARPO tosses into the air so that it lands behind the sofa. It should be timed to correspond with the sound of breaking glass.

When HARPO walks in as the tightrope walker, a balance beam that's been placed at the front of the stage is very effective for him to use; however, it's not necessary. Most PE departments have them. It helps if HARPO extends the walk by walking on furniture, walking on the sofa PUPINSKI and DITTERSDORF are sitting on, etc. Lighting and circus music enhance the effect.

When BELLADONNA and FILTHY WILMA transform SAM into a rat, strobe lights and the sound of thunder heighten the scene. SAM should spin and drop behind the sofa where another actor has been hidden in a rat costume. SAM simply remains hidden behind the sofa until the end of the scene. The dance with HARPO can be performed by anyone in the rat costume.

The pumpkin that HARPO places over QUAGMIRE's head in the shooting scene was a large (about three feet) plastic Halloween decoration (actually a

ghost on a pumpkin that I found in the basement.) We removed the light fixture and made the hole large enough for the actor's head. We cut slits into the pumpkin's eyes so he could see. The effect is ludicrous. Something else could, of course, be used. Those familiar with the final battle scene in *Duck Soup* will see where the idea came from.

For the ghost scene with AUNT LUBA, blacklights were used. To create tattoos on LYDIA, we used fabric paint on panty hose which she wore on her arms instead of her legs. We painted others on her face and legs. We rigged a rubber chicken to ride across the stage on a remote control car. While this certainly isn't a necessary component, it gets huge laughs.

Whenever "never" is said, music erupts and wild dancing begins. Outsiders (like DITTERSDORF and QUAGMIRE) are, of course, not affected by it and must appear shocked by the frenzied display. The only exception is at the end of the play when the entire cast joins the dance. The "never" dance should always be spontaneous and joyful and end as abruptly as it begins. It shouldn't last more than 20-25 seconds.

Because HARPO is so active and he needs to have a hat, to keep the hat from falling off we sewed the hat to his curly wig and placed another hat over it so that whenever one hat was removed, he always had another. This solved the problem and was in keeping with his character. Cheap plastic top hats worked best. We also used a blond wig instead of HARPO's red one. Since all the Marx Brothers' films are in black and white, his hair always looks blond rather than red. HARPO's clothes need to be loose with a lot of pockets and a loop to attach his horn. Sixties style wire-rimmed pink-tinted glasses, while not in keeping with an authentic HARPO, gave him an interesting look for variety.

While I tried to include as many HARPO antics in the script as possible, there is much that he does that onstage can't be written into a script. A careful study of Harpo Marx will give the director and the actor a wealth of other ideas that could be incorporated into the play, if desired. The same is true of Groucho's mannerisms and body movements for DESMOND and PUPINSKI. The possibilities are endless.

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**AUTHOR'S NOTES**

This play is a sequel to *For the Love of Lucy* (originally titled: *Lucy's Cigar in the Sky with Diamonds*). However, each play stands on its own, and there is no need to be familiar with the first to appreciate the second. (The actors who performed in *For the Love of Lucy* wanted to play their parts in a sequel, which is how *A Circus in the House* came about.) If one is planning on producing both plays, it is advisable to do *For the Love of Lucy* first. Incidentally, *For the Love of Lucy* is a spin-off of another play, *Black Hearts and Bearded Ladies*, forming a kind of trilogy. Some of the characters from *Black Hearts and Bearded Ladies* (specifically the Bearded Ladies) are retained in *For the Love of Lucy*, but that's the only link between those two plays.

Since much of the humor, situations, and characters in this play are meant to convey the spirit of a Marx Brothers' comedy, it is strongly advised that those involved in the production are familiar with the films of the Marx Brothers. Many young people, especially, know nothing of their work. While HARPO is the only character in the play true to his name, DESMOND and PUPINSKI have elements of both Chico and Groucho. Also, DITTERSDORF is a stock Margaret Dumont-type character found in most of their films. How strictly one wants to adhere to the Marx Brothers' characters, of course, is entirely up to the director.

**ACT ONE, SCENE 1**

**AT RISE:** *Scene may be played in front of curtain. Park scene. Stage left is telephone booth. Center stage is a park bench. EDUARDO and BERT enter, go up to telephone booth. They look around to see if anyone is present. There is a man (JACK) sleeping on park bench with paper on his face. BERT goes over to check.*

**BERT:** *(Returning to booth.)* Just some drunk sleeping it off.

**EDUARDO:** *(Pulls out folded poster, puts coin in slot, and starts to dial number on poster.)* Yeah, this is, uh. . . *(SAM enters wearing headphones. He approaches the phone booth and begins dancing to his music. EDUARDO quickly hangs up and hides poster. EDUARDO and BERT look at each other.)* Uh, we got an important phone call to make here. *(SAM, distracted by the music, doesn't react. EDUARDO removes headphones. Shouting.)* We got an important phone call to make!

**BERT:** Yeah, a big business deal.

**EDUARDO:** We need some privacy.

**BERT:** Yeah, scram, kid!

**SAM:** I need to use the phone. I'll wait.

**EDUARDO:** Well, wait over there. *(Points to bench. SAM puts music back on, goes to bench, shoves JACK off, takes out a comic, and begins to read. EDUARDO checks his pockets for change. He can't find any.)* Bert, give me a quarter.

**BERT:** I don't have any money.

**EDUARDO:** Hey, kid. You got change for a dollar? *(SAM doesn't hear him. EDUARDO pulls off the headphones.)* You got change for a dollar? *(SAM gets up, checks, and gives him change. Meanwhile, JACK has returned to the bench. SAM shoves him off again and sits. He doesn't replace the headphones. Instead, he glances at comic while listening to the phone conversation. EDUARDO dials again.)* Yeah, you the people with the missing Siamese cat that answers to the name of Dumbo? All right, we got the cat. That's right, we got him. *(BERT points to poster.)* I mean, we got her. Yeah, that's right. Now, you say on the poster that there's a reward of a hundred dollars. So listen, this is what we're gonna do. We're gonna return Dumbo in one piece for two hundred bucks. That's right, two

hundred. Now, if you want her in two pieces, (*Laughing.*) it won't cost ya nothin'. (*SAM is obviously listening.*) Yeah, you want Dumbo back, or don't ya? 'Course I got her with me. What do ya mean, you want to talk to her? It's a cat, for Pete's sake. Cats don't talk on the phone. Hang on. (*To BERT.*) She wants proof we got the stupid cat.

**BERT:** I told you it wouldn't work. Hang up.

**EDUARDO:** Hang up? Are you crazy? This is easy money. (*Thinking.*) Meow.

**BERT:** What?

**EDUARDO:** Meow. All you gotta do is meow into the phone and the stupid woman'll think we got her cat and she'll pay the ransom. So meow.

**BERT:** I can't meow.

**EDUARDO:** What do you mean, you can't meow? Anyone can meow.

**BERT:** Then you meow.

**EDUARDO:** Well, I can't, stupid.

**BERT:** Why not? You just said anyone can do it.

**EDUARDO:** I can do it. But she'd recognize my voice.

**BERT:** You're too embarrassed.

**EDUARDO:** I am not embarrassed. She'd know it's me. That's why you gotta do it. You ain't talked to her. She'd know if I meowed.

**BERT:** Oh, all right. But let me practice first.

**EDUARDO:** Practice?

**BERT:** Yeah, practice.

**EDUARDO:** Well, hurry up, hurry up. (*Into phone.*) Hang on, we, uh, gotta catch him, her, I mean. (*BERT starts to meow.*) She's fine. No, we didn't hurt her. She's just, uh. . .

**BERT:** In the cat box. (*BERT meows and SAM starts to meow back.*)

**EDUARDO:** She's in the cat box. Hang on. (*To BERT.*) Hurry up!

*BERT keeps practicing. Every time BERT meows, SAM meows. BERT looks around for a cat.*

**BERT:** (*Proudly.*) Did you hear that? Hey, I must be pretty good, huh?

**EDUARDO:** (*Pulling him.*) Get over here. (*Holds receiver out and BERT meows into phone.*) All right, did you hear that? That was your cat. What do you mean it didn't sound like Dumbo? 'Course it's Dumbo. (*Motions to BERT to meow again. BERT does.*) Did you hear that? That's your Dumbo. Now look, we mean business here. Stop wasting our time. We're professionals. You want the stupid cat back or don't ya? If ya want him back. . .her back. . .hey, I didn't look that close, okay?

**JACK:** (*Getting up and staggering toward them.*) Hey, what's all the racket? Can't a man get some sleep around here? (*BERT shoves him away.*)

**EDUARDO:** If you want Dumbo back, this is what you do. There's a mailbox in front of Lucy Boa's Bed n' Breakfast. You put two hundred dollars. . .

**BERT:** In unmarked bills.

**EDUARDO:** Hold on. (*To BERT.*) What are you talkin' about?

**BERT:** Unmarked bills.

**EDUARDO:** What's unmarked bills?

**BERT:** I don't know, but they always want the ransom in unmarked bills. I guess with no writing or drawing on 'em.

**EDUARDO:** All right, all right. (*Into phone.*) Listen, we want unmarked bills with no writing on 'em. Clean. Understand? You put the money in a coffee can and then you put the can under the mailbox in front of Lucy Boa's Bed n' Breakfast.

**SAM:** And no cops!

**JACK:** Cops! Where? (*He staggers off stage. The back of his shirt says "Jack's Garage". EDUARDO and BERT both look at SAM. EDUARDO motions for BERT to move over to the kid.*)

**SAM:** No cops, or else.

**EDUARDO:** (*Into phone.*) No cops, or else. Or else? You know! What do you think or else? All right, you heard me. You got till six o'clock. We get the money and you get Dumbo back in one piece. Don't be late. (*Hangs up.*)

**BERT:** You think it'll work?

**EDUARDO:** Course it'll work. It always works, doesn't it? Worked like a charm, just like always. Get him over here. (*BERT grabs SAM and pulls him over. SAM bites BERT's hand.*)

**BERT:** Ow! The brat bit me!

**EDUARDO:** So, you were eavesdropping on my phone conversation, huh?

**SAM:** Eavesdropping.

**BERT:** I'm bleeding! (*Whimpering and taking a handkerchief to wrap his hand in.*)

**EDUARDO:** There's a law against eavesdropping, you know.

**SAM:** There's no law against eavesdropping. But there is a law against kidnapping and extortion.

**EDUARDO:** Hey, watch your mouth!

**BERT:** (*Still whimpering.*) What are we going to do with him? He heard everything.

**EDUARDO:** (*Scratching his head.*) Let me think.

**SAM:** I know how you guys could make some real money.

**EDUARDO:** What are you talking about?

**SAM:** This cat-napping business doesn't pay much, from the sound of it. What? A measly two hundred bucks?

**BERT:** What are you talking about? We don't actually take the animals. We just say we do and collect the ransom.

**EDUARDO:** Shut up! Are you crazy? He can identify us.

**SAM:** I know how you could make some real money. Big money.

**EDUARDO:** Yeah, how?

**SAM:** Real kidnapping. A real kid. Me!

**BERT:** What are you, nuts?

**EDUARDO:** Shut up. What are you talking about, kid?

**SAM:** My dad's got a lot of money. Why don't you kidnap me? You can ask for a lot of money for my ransom. Say, fifty thousand dollars.

**BERT:** What?

**EDUARDO:** Your dad's got that kind of money? (*SAM smiles and nods.*) What's in it for you? Why do you want to be kidnapped?

**SAM:** Let's just say it's . . . personal.

**EDUARDO:** All right, kid, let's go. We got some talking to do. (*Puts his arm on SAM's shoulder.*)

**BERT:** Wait! Where are we taking him?

**EDUARDO:** Back to Boa's Bed 'n' Breakfast. There're plenty of places to hide him there. No one'll ever find him. (*Leads SAM off stage.*)

**BERT:** (*Following.*) I got a bad feeling about this, a real bad feeling.

BLACKOUT.

## ACT ONE, SCENE 2

*The rest of the play takes place in the sitting room of Lucy Boa's Bed 'n' Breakfast. GODIVA is mindlessly dusting. HARPO and PUPINSKI are at small table playing cards. HARPO has a bucket with plastic fish and water in it. He has a sign hanging on his back that reads "FISH FOR SALE." They play the card game "Go Fish" during the following dialogue.*

*There is an easel on stage with a painting on it. The audience cannot see the front of the painting. Artist's supplies are on a table near the easel. MR. BONJOURNO, with a paintbrush in hand, is pacing back and forth across the stage, obviously agitated. Telephone rings and GODIVA answers it.*

**PUPINSKI:** *(HARPO holds up card.)* No. Go Fish. *(HARPO reaches in bucket and slaps fish on table, getting PUPINSKI's face wet in the process. PUPINSKI takes out handkerchief and wipe his face.)*

**GODIVA:** *(Into phone.)* Lucy Boa's Bed 'n' Breakfast. Uh huh.

**PUPINSKI:** Go Fish. *(HARPO reaches in bucket and slaps fish on table.)*

**GODIVA:** Sure, we got rooms available. *(Writing on paper.)* Sure, no problem.

**PUPINSKI:** No. Go fish. *(HARPO brings out another fish.)*

**GODIVA:** Right. We'll see you then, Miss Serpentine. Bye.

**BONJOURNO:** *(Upset.)* Where is Mrs. Boa? She was supposed to sit for me. How does she expect me to finish her portrait if she's not here? She tells me I must have painting finished for her anniversary, but the woman, she doesn't sit still long enough for me to paint her.

**PUPINSKI:** Go fish! *(HARPO slaps another fish onto table.)*

**GODIVA:** She has been gone a long time. She went out with Miss Clemm.

**BONJOURNO:** Ah, that Miss Clemm, she is one beautiful woman. Her, I would paint for nothing. *(GODIVA goes over to canvas to take a peek, but BONJOURNO stops her.)*

**PUPINSKI:** Go fish. *(HARPO pulls out another fish and slaps it on the table.)*

**GODIVA:** What about me? You could paint me sometime.

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**BONJOURNO:** Yah, maybe. You know, Godiva, in Europe, I am known for my stunning nudes.

**GODIVA:** *(Shocked.)* Your what?!

**BONJOURNO:** I win many, many prizes for them. Yah, maybe I could paint you. I could make you famous, Godiva.

**GODIVA:** Mr. Bonjourno! Shame on you! *(Thinking.)*

**PUPINSKI:** No. Go fish. *(HARPO reaches into bucket and struggles as if the fish is pulling him into the bucket.)*

**GODIVA:** You could make me famous, Mr. Bonjourno? *(HARPO finally pulls out the large fish, still struggling with it because his finger is caught in its mouth. He finally gets it off his finger, gathers all the fish, and he and PUPINSKI exit as LUCY and ARETHA enter. GODIVA gets a mop and cleans up the water.)*

**LUCY:** *(Carrying a painting.)* Well, Mr. Pupinski and Harpo were certainly in a hurry. *(ARETHA and LUCY, exhausted, both collapse on the sofa.)*

**ARETHA:** What a morning!

**BONJOURNO:** Mrs. Boa! We had appointment! I have been already here an hour.

**LUCY:** Oh, Mr. Bonjourno! I'm sorry. I completely forgot you were going to work on my portrait today.

**ARETHA:** Portrait?

**LUCY:** That's right! It's a surprise for Desmond for our anniversary!

**BONJOURNO:** How do you expect me to finish painting if you are not here?

**LUCY:** Well, I'm here now. I'll be with you in just a moment. Look at the lovely painting I just bought. *(To ARETHA.)* Oh, I just love auctions, don't you? I think they're so exciting. All that bidding! I'm so glad I was able to get this painting. I just adore it, don't you, Aretha?

**BONJOURNO:** *(Holding up painting.)* What is this? It is garbage!

**LUCY:** *(Grabbing painting.)* Well, I like it. Don't you, Aretha?

**ARETHA:** *(Looking at it.)* Well, it's all right, I guess. But it sure cost you a pretty penny.

**BONJOURNO:** It's garbage! You paid money for this trash? *(Returns to his easel, preparing to paint.)*

**LUCY:** It was just a bit more than I wanted to pay, but we're not going to tell Desmond, are we, Godiva? This will be one of our little secrets.

**ARETHA:** Like the little accident you had with the car?

**LUCY:** Exactly. Our lips are sealed.

**GODIVA:** Another accident, Mrs. Boa?

**LUCY:** Just a teensy-weensy one.

**ARETHA:** You know, that policeman was pretty upset.

**LUCY:** Well, I didn't know he was a policeman when I bumped into his automobile. You'd think a policeman would be more careful.

**ARETHA:** You would, wouldn't you? I hope they don't take your license away, Lucy. He was really mad.

**LUCY:** Oh, they wouldn't do that, I'm certain. After all, I do pay taxes. It's a good thing the accident occurred close to Jack's Garage.

**GODIVA:** When did Jack say the car would be ready? I've got to shop for tonight's dinner.

**LUCY:** He wasn't too clear on that. He was slurring his words a bit.

**ARETHA:** He was drunk as a skunk.

**GODIVA:** It figures.

**LUCY:** Oh, Aretha! Really! Shame on you, Godiva.

**ARETHA:** Well, he was!

**BONJOURNO:** Mrs. Boa, please! We have no more time to dilly-dally if you want this portrait done in time.

**LUCY:** All right, Mr. Bonjourno. I'm coming. *(She goes over and sits on stool.)*

**BONJOURNO:** Now, don't move a muscle.

**LUCY:** You know, I wouldn't have collided with that policeman's car if I hadn't been watching that obnoxious little man with the silly hat. He was following us in his automobile.

**ARETHA:** Do you really he was following us?

**LUCY:** I'm certain he was.

**GODIVA:** You know, Mrs. Boa, I've noticed a little man with a silly hat following me lately, too. Sometimes he's standing across the street looking up at the house, too.

**LUCY:** No! Oh, this is just so exciting!

**BONJOURNO:** Again, you are moving! You must stop moving!

**GODIVA:** Maybe he's a spy.

**ARETHA:** A spy? What would a spy want with you?

**LUCY:** I don't know. But we'd better keep our eyes and ears open. Godiva, go check the window and see if he's there. (*GODIVA does.*)

Mr. Bonjourno, have you noticed anyone lingering about outside?

**BONJOURNO:** I do not notice men who wear silly hats. Can we get on with the painting?

**GODIVA:** No, nobody's there.

**ARETHA:** I didn't know you liked auctions so much, Lucy.

**LUCY:** Oh, they're so exciting! It's like opening an old trunk in somebody's attic. Who knows what treasures you'll find? And then bidding against all those other people is just so (*Jumping up.*) exhilarating!

**BONJOURNO:** (*Throwing paint brush down.*) I give up! All you do is wiggle and talk, talk and wiggle. You are a wiggle worm! How am I supposed to paint you? You never sit still!

*On "never", all but BONJOURNO begin a frenzied dance. Exasperated, he gathers up his painting supplies. The word "never" always triggers this automatic response in the household. Strangers are not affected by the word and are always baffled whenever this occurs.*

**LUCY:** Oh, Mr. Bonjourno, I thought you were going to be careful. You must not use that word in this house.

**BONJOURNO:** What word? What are you talking about?

**LUCY:** Now, Mr. Bonjourno. . .

**BONJOURNO:** I come back later. Maybe then you will sit still and shut the mouth up! (*He rushes out.*)

**LUCY:** I think I made him mad.

*Doorbell rings to the tune of "Totentanz". GODIVA goes to answer it.*

**ARETHA:** What's wrong with your doorbell?

**LUCY:** I like it. It's a catchy tune.

*FILTHY WILMA enters. GODIVA is obviously afraid of her and cowers behind LUCY.*

**LUCY:** (*Jumping up.*) Oh, Miss Wilma, good morning! How are you?

**WILMA:** *(Correcting her.)* Filthy Wilma! I been better. So have you, looks like.

**LUCY:** Aretha, I want to introduce you to Filthy Wilma. This is my good friend, Aretha Clemm, Filthy Wilma. She's visiting from Charleston, South Carolina. And, of course, you remember Godiva Doolittle. *(To ARETHA.)* Filthy Wilma and I do a little business together from time to time.

**ARETHA:** Really?

**LUCY:** That's right! You know my Transylvanian mushrooms? Well, Filthy Wilma has been buying my mushrooms and using them in a special. . .

**WILMA:** *(Interrupting her.)* Soup. I use 'em in my soup.

**LUCY:** Her special soup. She says they have some special medicinal powers. Isn't that fascinating?

**ARETHA:** What kind of special powers?

**WILMA:** Wouldn't you like to know, Missy? *(To LUCY.)* Missy asks too many questions. You got them mushrooms ready? I'm in a hurry.

**LUCY:** I'll pick them right now! They're in the cellar. I'll just go get them. I'll be right back. Come, Godiva. *(They exit.)*

**ARETHA:** Are you from around here, Miss, uh. . .

**WILMA:** Wilma. Filthy Wilma. No, I'm just passing through.

**ARETHA:** Passing through to where?

**WILMA:** Someplace else.

**ARETHA:** What is it you do here, Filthy?

**WILMA:** Why you want to know, Missy?

**ARETHA:** Just curious is all.

**WILMA:** I sell things.

**ARETHA:** What kind of things do you sell?

**WILMA:** Things people wants to buy.

**ARETHA:** I see. Like mushrooms.

**WILMA:** Yeah, like mushrooms.

**LUCY:** *(Entering with GODIVA still cowering behind her.)* Here they are! *(WILMA gives LUCY some money and takes the bag.)* You have yourself a nice day! *(WILMA grunts and gives ARETHA a threatening look.)*

**WILMA:** *(To LUCY.)* Might need more mushrooms. Business is booming. *(She exits.)*

**GODIVA:** She gives me the heebie jeebies.

**LUCY:** She is a bit. . .unusual. But we mustn't judge people by appearances, Godiva.

**ARETHA:** Where'd you meet her?

**LUCY:** She came to the door a few months ago and asked if I had any Transylvanian mushrooms for sale. She said she heard I grew them in true Transylvanian soil. She's been coming by every week ever since. Did you hear her? Business is booming. I had no idea there was such a demand for my mushrooms.

**GODIVA:** She looks like a witch.

**LUCY:** I know! She's so mysterious! Isn't it just so exciting?

**ARETHA:** What did she mean, business is booming? What kind of business?

**LUCY:** Well, how would I know? The soup business, I suppose.

**ARETHA:** The soup business?

**LUCY:** Do you suppose she works for the Campbell Soup Company?

**ARETHA:** I hardly think the Campbell Soup Company would hire someone who looks like Filthy Wilma to buy mushrooms for their soups. Does Desmond know about your selling mushrooms to this. . . this Filthy Wilma?

**LUCY:** No, it's one of my little secrets.

**GODIVA:** You sure got a lot of little secrets.

**LUCY:** (*LUCY takes her forward conspiratorially. ARETHA is listening intently and none of them notices that BERT and EDUARDO are sneaking SAM across the rear of the stage.*) Now, Godiva. There's something you must understand about men. We women need to keep our little secrets; it's what keeps us mysterious to them. Our little beauty secrets, our little money secrets. . .

**GODIVA:** Our little automobile accident secrets. . .

**LUCY:** Right. That reminds me. Godiva, why don't you make one of your scrumptious banana cream pies that Desmond loves so much, just in case he finds out about my little accident secret. (*To ARETHA.*) Banana cream pie always puts him in a good mood.

**ARETHA:** What about your daughter? Does she know you're selling mushrooms to this Filthy Wilma?

**LUCY:** Rosie? What's Rosie got to do with it?

**ARETHA:** Well, she is running for mayor of Leadville, isn't she?

**LUCY:** What's that got to do with anything?

**ARETHA:** Well, the wrong kind of publicity could sway the election.

**GODIVA:** The election's only a week away.

**LUCY:** It is, isn't it? Poor Rosie is so busy with that silly election that she doesn't have time for anything! We hardly ever see her anymore. I can't imagine why she wants to be mayor of Leadville.

**ARETHA:** Well, you want her to win the election, don't you?

**LUCY:** I don't give a bee's behind if she wins or not. Politics is all a lot of nonsense as far as I'm concerned. Besides, what's Rosie got to do with my selling mushrooms?

**ARETHA:** It's not just the mushrooms. It's this Filthy Wilma that you're selling 'em to. Do you know anything about her?

**LUCY:** No. I told you she just appeared at the door one day asking about my Transylvanian mushrooms.

**GODIVA:** You know, Rosie got pretty upset when the paper kept printing the story about you and me seeing the UFO. And then there was the werewolf. . .

**ARETHA:** (*Jumping up.*) You saw a werewolf?

**LUCY:** (*Rising.*) Well, not exactly. It was an extremely, very big, oh-my-gosh so large. . .dog.

**GODIVA:** I don't want to be around when Rosie finds out you're selling mushrooms to a witch.

**LUCY:** Now, Godiva, let's not jump to conclusions. We don't know Filthy Wilma is a witch.

**GODIVA:** Well, she sure looks like one.

**ARETHA:** Is that all she calls herself? Doesn't she have another name?

**LUCY:** I wouldn't know about that. I think it would be rude to ask.

**GODIVA:** Well, I just hope Rosie doesn't find out about her.

**LUCY:** Well then, Godiva, we just won't mention it to Rosie. It'll just be another of our little secrets.

*LUBA, LUCY's aunt enters, followed by IGOR and VASCHA.*

**LUBA:** Lucy, you got ghosts in this house, you know.

**LUCY:** Ghosts? (*Hopeful.*) Oh, do you really think so? Hello, Igor, Vascha. (*They respond.*)

**GODIVA:** *(To LUBA.)* Did you say ghosts?

**LUBA:** Restless spirits. The walking dead! I heard them roaming the halls again last night. Kept me awake all night! *(IGOR and VASCHA sneak up behind her and pretend to be ghosts.)*

**LUCY:** Oh, I don't think that was the ghosts. I think you probably heard Desmond. He hardly slept a wink last night. The poor dear is worried about something. He hasn't been sleeping well at all.

**LUBA:** I know ghosts when I hear them! You got ghosts. *(VASCHA sneaks up behind LUBA and yells "boo".)* Oh, get away from me, you big lunkhead.

**VASCHA:** *(To IGOR.)* What is a lunkhead?

**IGOR:** I don't know.

**VASCHA:** Well, look in the book. *(IGOR takes a book out of his pocket and starts paging through it.)*

**LUBA:** Who's Desmond?

**LUCY:** Now, Auntie Luba, you know perfectly well who Desmond is. Desmond's my husband. You sat next to him at dinner last night.

**LUBA:** Tall, gawky fellow? Not too bright? Thought his name was Dylan. He slurps his soup.

**LUCY:** He most certainly does not! Why, Desmond has wonderful manners.

**LUBA:** That's why you put him next to me at the table. Because he slurps his soup.

**LUCY:** Desmond does not slurp.

**LUBA:** Desmond! What kind of name is Desmond? You marry a man with no looks and no money, and I'm supposed to remember his name? What can you possibly see in such a man?

**LUCY:** Love! Love is what I see in him. Now you be nice to him, Auntie Luba!

**IGOR:** Here it is. Lunkhead. A very stupid person. *(VASCHA sneaks up behind LUBA as if to strangle her. IGOR holds him back. She doesn't notice.)*

**LUBA:** Plenty of men in Transylvania who would cut off their right arm to marry you.

**LUCY:** Now, what would I want with a one-armed Transylvanian for a husband? That would be no fun!

*GODIVA giggles. LUBA gives her a nasty, disapproving look.*

**LUBA:** No, you have to marry an American who slurps his soup, this Dillard fella with no looks and no money.

**LUCY:** His name is Desmond, Auntie Luba.

**LUBA:** So you say. Better do something about the ghosts. Isn't healthy to live with ghosts. I won't stay in a house with ghosts, I tell you.

**VASCHA:** *(Shouting at LUBA.)* I am not lunkhead! You are lunkhead!

**LUBA:** Get away from me. Go take a bath. *(VASCHA again needs to be restrained by IGOR.)*

**LUCY:** Now, Vascha, Auntie Luba didn't mean anything by it. She's just. . .impulsive.

**LUBA:** I know a lunkhead when I see one, and he's a lunkhead. Why do you keep these derelicts in your house?

**VASCHA:** Derelicts. Igor, look in the book. *(IGOR does.)*

**GODIVA:** Derelicts? They're not derelicts!

**LUCY:** Auntie Luba, really! You know Igor and Vascha are jugglers in Desmond's circus.

**LUBA:** Jugglers! Humph!

**IGOR:** Derelict: a homeless person without a job who is rejected by society.

**VASCHA:** We have home!

**IGOR:** We live here! And we have job in circus!

**LUCY:** Of course you do! You pay her no mind!

**VASCHA:** We are jugglers!

**LUBA:** You're losers! Rejects!

**GODIVA:** They are not! *(Hugging IGOR.)*

**VASCHA:** You are loser! You have ugly face too! *(IGOR pulls him away.)* What is a reject?

**IGOR:** I don't know.

**VASCHA:** Well, look in the book. Rejects. *(IGOR is looking in the book as they exit.)*

**LUCY:** Oh, dear. You've hurt their feelings, Auntie Luba. You really must try to be kinder to Igor and Vascha. They're such sensitive boys.

**LUBA:** They're losers! What kind of person would live in a house with jugglers and ghosts (*HARPO sneaks up and honks his horn.*) and clowns!? (*To HARPO.*) Get away from me! (*He exits.*) Your mother should be alive to see this, rest her soul.

**ARETHA:** (*Trying to change subject.*) Anyone need anything from the store? I have to pick up a few things.

**LUBA:** I need to go to War-Mart.

**LUCY:** It's Wal-Mart, Aunt Luba. Why don't we all do some shopping and then have a little lunch?

**ARETHA:** That would be nice. Of course, we'll have to walk. I'll get my purse. (*Exits.*)

**LUBA:** Walk? Where's the car?

**LUCY:** It's uh. . .

**GODIVA:** Getting a tune-up.

**LUBA:** Well, how far is Wal-Mart?

**LUCY:** Oh, not too far.

**GODIVA:** Ten miles, at least.

**LUBA:** What?

**LUCY:** Oh, Godiva, how you exaggerate! It's not more than a mile, but if you'd like to stay here, Auntie Luba, we could bring you what you need.

**LUBA:** I won't stay here alone with ghosts and derelicts and clowns. If I'm going to walk, I need my corn medicine. My corns are killing me. (*She exits to the rooms.*)

**GODIVA:** I know she's your aunt, Mrs. Boa, but I don't like her and she scares me.

**LUCY:** She's old and cranky, Godiva, and a bit too critical. She can't help it. Between you and me, she scares me sometimes, too, but she is my only auntie. She's been seeing ghosts all her life. Don't worry too much about it, dear. Oh, what I wouldn't do to see a real ghost! Come on, let's get our things. (*They exit.*)

*CURTAIN.*

*END OF ACT ONE*

**ACT TWO, SCENE 1**

*BERT and EDUARDO are on their way out. SAM is trailing behind.*

**SAM:** Can't I come with?

**EDUARDO:** No! You can't be seen.

**SAM:** I could wear a disguise. *(Puts on silly glasses and fake mustache.)*

**BERT:** No!

**EDUARDO:** Look, kid, we have to deliver the ransom note, *(Holds up envelope.)* and then we got to wait for Cat Lady to deliver her two hundred bucks. And we got a few other things to do, so you just sit tight.

**SAM:** Don't forget, no fingerprints! Keep the gloves on.

**BERT:** Don't worry, don't worry.

**EDUARDO:** Yeah, we're pros.

**SAM:** Hey, I got an idea. *(He goes to desk and returns with pair of scissors. He snips some hair from his head and gives it to EDUARDO.)* That way they'll know you really got me. *(EDUARDO puts it in envelope.)*

**EDUARDO:** You got a real criminal mind, kid. Now, you stay here.

**BERT:** And stay out of trouble. *(BERT and EDUARDO exit.)*

**SAM:** Couple of bozos. *(He puts on glasses and moustache.)* I just know they'll screw it up. *(He follows them out.)*

*DESMOND enters from rooms. He wears a nightshirt and a cap. He's also wearing large furry slippers. DESMOND goes over to desk, which is piled with bills. He picks up the mail, shakes his head.*

**DESMOND:** More bills! That's all I ever get. *(Enter PUPINSKI from street.)* Mornin', Pupinski.

**PUPINSKI:** Good morning, Desmond. *(Tugging at nightshirt.)* Say, isn't it a bit late to be in your jammies?

**DESMOND:** Had breakfast?

**PUPINSKI:** Thanks, I've eaten. I can't stay. I just stopped by to drop off the anniversary gift you wanted me to pick up for Lucy.

**DESMOND:** Thanks, Pupinski. (*Opens box and holds up gift, which is something ludicrous, like a large ceramic pig's head.*) I think she'll really like it. It sure cost enough.

**PUPINSKI:** By the way, Mrs. Dittersdorf will be by this afternoon. I'll see what I can do about getting her to invest more money in the circus.

**DESMOND:** You'd better hit her hard and fast because that Quagmire is due here any time now.

**PUPINSKI:** Quagmire, the banker?

**DESMOND:** That's the one. I'm going to try to talk him into an extension on the loan. I haven't made a payment in months. And the whole fifty thousand dollars is due at the end of this month.

**PUPINSKI:** That's pretty bad.

**DESMOND:** It's worse than bad. Did you know I put up this house as collateral?

**PUPINSKI:** Collateral?

**DESMOND:** As a guarantee that I'll pay back the loan. If I don't pay it back by the end of the month, Lucy's Bed 'n' Breakfast. . .

**PUPINSKI:** Will be no more?

**DESMOND:** That's right.

**PUPINSKI:** That's terrible. Does Lucy know?

**DESMOND:** No, and she can't find out about it either. She'd kill me if she found out. You know her Transylvanian temper! So we have to do something to get that money.

**PUPINSKI:** Well, if I could only get Mrs. Dittersdorf to marry me, our troubles would be over. Can you believe her husband left her the entire Dittersdorf fortune when he died?!

**DESMOND:** I wish he'd died and left me the fortune. It would have simplified everything.

**PUPINSKI:** Well, I'd better clear out before Quagmire gets here. Bankers give me gooseflesh. Why's he meeting you here instead of at the bank?

**DESMOND:** I told him I was too ill to meet him there. If he believes I'm sick, maybe I can convince him to give me an extension on the loan.

**PUPINSKI:** Ah, that explains the jammies. Well, good luck. I've got an appointment with a magician this morning. He saws women in half. I'll see you later. (*Exits.*)

**GODIVA:** (*Entering.*) Good morning, Mr. Boa.

**DESMOND:** Good morning, Godiva.

**GODIVA:** Did I hear Mr. Pupinski's voice?

**DESMOND:** No, it was an echo.

**GODIVA:** An echo?

**DESMOND:** We've really got to do something about the echoes in this house.

**GODIVA:** I'll try to vacuum more often. By the way, Lydia Serpentine called and reserved a room.

**DESMOND:** Lydia Serpentine? The Lydia Serpentine?

**GODIVA:** I guess so. Do you know her?

**DESMOND:** Doesn't everybody? Lydia Serpentine is a world-famous tattooed lady. Pupinski has been trying to get her to work for the circus. Oh, this is exciting!

**GODIVA:** Exciting.

**DESMOND:** There's that echo again. (*Doorbell rings.*) More excitement. (*Doorbell rings again.*) What's wrong with the doorbell? Why does it sound that way?

**GODIVA:** I don't know. Maybe there was an electrical storm or something. It's a catchy tune though.

**DESMOND:** Catchy. (*He stretches out on the sofa.*)

**GODIVA:** (*Looking around.*) Another echo.

*GODIVA answers door. MR. QUAGMIRE enters with briefcase. He sets it down and hands GODIVA his coat, treating her like a servant. In defiance, she drops it on the floor. He doesn't notice.*

**QUAGMIRE:** I'm Percy Quagmire. I have an appointment with Mr. Boa.

**GODIVA:** Oh, Mr. Boa, there's a Mr. . . .Squidmire here to see you.

**QUAGMIRE:** Quagmire!

**GODIVA:** That's what I said.

**DESMOND:** (*Still on sofa, raising himself a bit, weakly.*) Ah, Mr. Quagmire? How do you do, Mr. Quagmire?

**QUAGMIRE:** I'm fine, Mr. Boa.

**DESMOND:** I wish I were fine. Or even fair, or fair to middling.

**QUAGMIRE:** Now, let's get down to business.

**DESMOND:** Business! Is that all you think of? What about the finer things in life? The things that money can't buy? There are things money can't buy, you know.

**QUAGMIRE:** Yes, but I have no interest in those things. (*Doorbell rings.*) What's wrong with your doorbell?

*GODIVA answers the door and HARPO rushes in, wearing surgeon's gown and carrying a doctor's bag. HARPO bumps up against QUAGMIRE, honking his horn. Banker jumps. GODIVA exits to rooms.*

**QUAGMIRE:** What is the meaning of this? (*HARPO bumps and honks again.*) (*To DESMOND.*) Who is this?

**DESMOND:** (*Standing.*) He's a banker. No, you're a banker. He's a doctor, Dr. Slimehaven. Oh, I'm sorry. Where are my manners? (*Introducing them.*) Dr. Slimehaven, Mr. Quagmire. (*HARPO stands on coffee table, bows, and steals QUAGMIRE's handkerchief.*) Dr. Slimhaven's going to examine me while we talk, if you don't mind. He's a very busy man. Due back in surgery in half an hour, you know.

**QUAGMIRE:** A doctor? He's going to examine you? What are you talking about? (*HARPO motions DESMOND to open his mouth and DESMOND says "ah" several times. HARPO puts flashlight in DESMOND's mouth, then moves it around DESMOND's body, tickling him. DESMOND giggles.*) What's going on here?

**DESMOND:** A medical examination. I thought I introduced the two of you. Dr. Slimehaven, Mr. Quagmire. (*HARPO bows. HARPO has DESMOND lie on sofa.*) When he's done with me, he could take a look at you. But I warn you, he charges an arm and a leg. (*HARPO grabs QUAGMIRE's arm and leg, knocking him to the floor.*)

**QUAGMIRE:** (*To HARPO.*) Get away from me! Of all the nonsense! Now, about your loan. Where's my briefcase? (*He looks around for it, sees it, but HARPO races him for it. HARPO gets it. He holds it up and QUAGMIRE grabs it and starts throwing papers all over the floor.*) Now, look what you've done. (*HARPO "helps" him pick up papers, but every time banker puts some in, HARPO takes some out. Finally, QUAGMIRE grabs all the papers and pulls away from HARPO. QUAGMIRE tries to organize his papers on the desk. HARPO takes out a stethoscope and puts it to DESMOND's head.*

*DESMOND moves it to his chest. HARPO shakes his head sadly.)*

**DESMOND:** Is it that bad? *(HARPO nods. He takes out QUAGMIRE's handkerchief and wipes imaginary tears away.)*

**QUAGMIRE:** *(Sits at desk, puts on glasses and looks at contract.)* You signed a contract, Mr. Boa, let me remind you. Now, what's happened to that contract? *(HARPO runs over to QUAGMIRE and puts stethoscope to his head.)* What is going on here? *(Noticing handkerchief in HARPO's pocket, he checks his pocket and sees his is gone.)* Give me that handkerchief! *(HARPO stuffs handkerchief in QUAGMIRE's pocket but takes it back as he lifts his hand out of the pocket. He puts stethoscope to QUAGMIRE's chest.)* Leave me alone. *(HARPO puts stethoscope to his own chest, listening and smiling.)*

**DESMOND:** A loan! That's what you were talking about just now. An extension on my loan. *(HARPO applauds.)*

**QUAGMIRE:** I was not. *(HARPO takes QUAGMIRE's pen from desk.)* I didn't say anything about an extension on your loan. Where's my pen? *(Looks around for it. HARPO has it. HARPO goes to DESMOND and removes DESMOND's shoe and sock, while QUAGMIRE continues to look for pen.)* In fact, according to our records, you are six months behind in your payments. *(HARPO takes a feather duster and tickles DESMOND's foot. DESMOND laughs and wriggles uncontrollably. QUAGMIRE stands, outraged, arms crossed.)* Mr. Boa, are you listening to me? Are you hearing what I'm saying? Six months delinquent on your loan. *(HARPO tackles the banker, knocks him to the floor, removes his shoe, and tickles his foot.)* Leave me alone! *(Pushes HARPO away.)* Get off me, you fool! What is wrong with you people? *(HARPO switches DESMOND's sock and shoes with the banker's.)*

**DESMOND:** I'll thank you not to manhandle my doctor, Mr. Quagmire. It's a good thing we didn't bring the nurse. Heaven only knows what would happen, you. . .you banker, you. You're lucky we don't sue you for malpractice. *(To HARPO.)* Tell me the bad news, Doc. I can take it. *(HARPO removes his hat and plays "Taps" on the kazoo. DESMOND sobs. HARPO comforts him.)*

**QUAGMIRE:** This is preposterous. *(He begins to put on DESMOND's slipper.)*

**DESMOND:** Oh, so my condition is preposterous, is it? With only months to live. . . (*HARPO honks and shakes his head.*) With only weeks to live. . . (*HARPO stops him and shakes his head.*) With only days to live. . . (*HARPO stops him again.*) At this rate, I won't make it to lunch, and I really had a taste for that tuna salad. (*HARPO pantomimes eating.*) Oh, so you'll eat it for me, eh? (*HARPO nods.*)

**QUAGMIRE:** This isn't my shoe! (*Pulls off slipper.*) Give me that. (*Grabs shoe from DESMOND and throws DESMOND his.*)

**DESMOND:** This is a fine state of affairs. I open my house to you and what happens? You steal my clothes! That's what comes of inviting bankers into your house. (*To HARPO.*) Let this be a lesson to you. Check your wallet. (*HARPO holds up banker's wallet.*)

**QUAGMIRE:** (*Checking his pocket.*) That's my wallet! Give me that! Now, see here, Mr. Boa. You are six months past due on your loan. (*To DESMOND.*) If you don't come up with the cash by the end of the month, we shall have no choice but to foreclose.

**DESMOND:** You wouldn't foreclose on a man who's on his deathbed, would you?

**QUAGMIRE:** Deathbed, my foot! (*HARPO starts to go for QUAGMIRE's foot again. To HARPO.*) Oh, no, you don't! Stop it! Mr. Boa, the bank expects this loan to be repaid in full by the end of the month.

**DESMOND:** We're talking the Grim Reaper here (*Lights dim and GRIM REAPER walks across stage.*) and all you can think about is money, you heartless scoundrel! Have you two met? Mr. Slimehaven, Mr. Reaper. Mr. Reaper, Mr. Slimehaven. That can't be right. (*HARPO puts stethoscope to REAPER's back as he walks out.*)

**QUAGMIRE:** (*Removes his glasses and sets them on desk.*) You signed a contract for a loan, Mr. Boa, and you put up your house as collateral.

**DESMOND:** Are you sure we didn't put up the horse as collateral? (*To HARPO.*) I was certain it was the horse. (*HARPO nods.*) Let me see that contract. (*He grabs it from banker. HARPO takes QUAGMIRE's glasses and gives them to DESMOND.*)

**QUAGMIRE:** Horse? What horse? What are you talking about? (*HARPO holds up large picture of horse.*) What is this? Where are my glasses? (*HARPO dumps numerous pairs of glasses from desk drawer onto coffee table. They all begin trying on glasses.*)

**DESMOND:** Doctor, show Mr. Quagmire the horse. (*HARPO rushes off stage. DESMOND holds up eye exam poster.*) Now, try reading this, Mr. Quagmire.

**QUAGMIRE:** What is the meaning of this?

*IGOR and VASCHA enter in horse suit, HARPO riding.*

**QUAGMIRE:** If you don't pay off the loan, your horse becomes the property of the bank. (*Realizing his error.*) I mean, your house becomes the property of the bank.

**DESMOND:** Horseflies! You can't do that! (*HARPO throws feathers.*) Oh, are we out of horseflies? (*HARPO nods and throws more feathers at QUAGMIRE.*) Mr. Quagmire, what would Leadville be without Lucy Boa's Bed 'n' Breakfast? Besides, the check is practically in the mail.

**QUAGMIRE:** Humph! (*He sits on sofa.*)

**DESMOND:** (*Sitting next to QUAGMIRE.*) Humph! (*HARPO pulls up DESMOND's nightshirt and hits his knee with a large inflated hammer. Every time HARPO hits DESMOND's leg, DESMOND throws out his arm, hitting QUAGMIRE.*) Do you know who is meeting with my associate Mr. Pupinski this afternoon? None other than Mrs. Ditters von Dittersdorf.

**QUAGMIRE:** Mrs. Dittersdorf? (*HARPO hits QUAGMIRE's leg with hammer.*) Stop that! Get away from me.

**DESMOND:** As we speak, Mrs. Dittersdorf is probably writing us a check for another fifty thousand dollars. That should take care of this little unpleasantness with the bank.

**QUAGMIRE:** Fifty thousand dollars! I'll see it when I believe it. I mean, I'll believe it when I see it. Furthermore, as Mildred's, I mean, Mrs. Dittersdorf's banker, I would strongly advise her against giving you a cent of her money for this worthless venture of yours.

**DESMOND:** Oh, you would, would you? Speaking of worthless ventures, the doctor will see you now. (*HARPO holds up large pair of scissors; QUAGMIRE shoves him away.*) Worthless venture, indeed! Where would we be today if some brave souls hadn't been willing to take risks? Think of Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone! (*Phone rings; HARPO answers it.*) Think of Cinderella, inventor of the glass slipper. (*HARPO lifts glass slipper.*) Where

would we be today without glass slippers? (*HARPO tosses slipper behind sofa; sound of glass breaking.*) Think of the Wright brothers! (*HARPO throws paper airplane, then honks horn insistently.*) And the Marx Brothers!

**QUAGMIRE:** Who? (*HARPO pulls out large knife and sneaks up behind him, as if about to kill him. DESMOND takes knife and hides it behind his back.*)

**DESMOND:** The world is a crazy place, Mr. Quagmire, and don't you ever forget it.

**QUAGMIRE:** The world is not crazy, Mr. Boa!

**DESMOND:** It's not? Well then, how do you explain this? (*Raising the knife.*) And this?

*HARPO holds up a rubber chicken and throws it onto the table. DESMOND cuts off its head with the knife and HARPO holds up the chicken.*

**QUAGMIRE:** No, you are crazy. (*HARPO puts the chicken's head on his finger and annoys QUAGMIRE with it.*) Both of you! The rest of the world is perfectly sane. (*Looking around.*) What is that smell? (*He looks behind sofa.*) Oh my heavens! (*Holds handkerchief up to face. A rubber chicken on a remote control car crosses stage. HARPO follows it, fascinated. HARPO then goes to coat rack and puts on QUAGMIRE's coat.*)

**DESMOND:** You know what they say. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't teach him any manners.

**QUAGMIRE:** I am getting out of here. Mr. Boa, if you don't pay off your loan by the end of the month, Lucy Boa's Bed 'n' Breakfast will belong to the bank. There will be no extension on your loan. As for Mrs. Dittersdorf, I think you'll find that a blind alley.

**DESMOND:** (*Uplifting the knife and approaching him.*) A blind alley? Mrs. Dittersdorf an alley? Wait till she hears about this! And you can rest assured she will hear about it. Alley, indeed! You equate that lovely mountain of flesh with trash cans and rats? Filth and maggots? For shame!

**QUAGMIRE:** Good day, Mr. Boa! *(He goes to coat rack to get coat, but sees it's gone. HARPO starts honking his horn.)* Give me that coat! *(HARPO starts to take one arm out of the sleeve and they get all tangled up in the coat. HARPO kicks QUAGMIRE in the pants as he's twisting and turning, trying to get his coat on.)* We'll see who gets the last laugh around here!

**DESMOND:** I love a good laugh. In fact, I feel a laugh coming on right now. *(He and HARPO laugh uncontrollably. Disgusted, QUAGMIRE starts to leave; HARPO kicks QUAGMIRE again. Frustrated and furious, QUAGMIRE stomps out, but not before HARPO pins a "Vote for ROSIE Boa" poster on him.)* Good day and good riddance! *(To HARPO.)* Well, I don't think that helped matters much. But we gave it our best shot. *(HARPO nods and kicks DESMOND.)* Come on, let's take a walk, Harpo. I need to think. Maybe Pupinski will have better luck with Mrs. Dittersdorf. *(HARPO honks his horn at DESMOND as they're about to leave.)* Of course! What am I thinking of? I can't go out in public dressed like this. *(He takes off his cap and puts on his hat. HARPO nods, smiles, and they exit.)*

CURTAIN.

## ACT TWO, SCENE 2

*The stage is empty as MRS. DITTERSDORF and PUPINSKI enter from street. HARPO enters from rooms. DITTERSDORF doesn't notice him. PUPINSKI leads her to the sofa. A teapot, cups, and a sugar bowl are on the coffee table.*

**PUPINSKI:** Have a sweet, my seat. I mean, have a seat, my sweet. *(HARPO sits on sofa and she sits on him without realizing he's there. Horn honks.)*

**DITTERSDORF:** Good heavens!

**PUPINSKI:** Now look what you've done. You've gone and sat on my clown. Please be more careful. I don't sit on your clowns, do I? Certainly not! Tea?

**DITTERSDORF:** Please. *(He pours her some.)*

**PUPINSKI:** Sugar?

- DITTERSDORF:** Two, please. (*He puts two teaspoons into her cup.*)  
Now Mr. Pupinski, I have already lent you forty thousand dollars for this circus of yours, but still there is no circus.
- PUPINSKI:** Sugar?
- DITTERSDORF:** Two, please. (*He puts two more teaspoons into her tea.*) And now you say you need more money.
- PUPINSKI:** Well, Mrs. Dittersdorf, forty thousand dollars is a mere drop in the bucket! Sugar?
- DITTERSDORF:** Two, please! (*He puts in two more.*) I hardly consider forty thousand dollars a drop in the bucket.
- PUPINSKI:** Well, why don't you marry me and we won't have to have to worry about money. At least, I won't!
- MRS. DITTERSDORF:** Marry you?
- PUPINSKI:** Yes, marry me and your troubles will be over.
- MRS. DITTERSDORF:** Troubles? Why, what troubles?
- PUPINSKI:** Where to put all your money. It's silly to keep all that money in buckets, you know.
- DITTERSDORF:** Buckets? What are you talking about? (*HARPO walks by with a bucket on his head.*)
- PUPINSKI:** Oh, Mrs. Dittersdorf! Or may I call you Mildred? You're such an exquisite little creature. (*HARPO makes face behind her.*) May I see your hand. . . Mildred? (*She shows him her hand.*)
- PUPINSKI:** (*Examining it.*) Do you see that line?
- DITTERSDORF:** Yes.
- PUPINSKI:** Well, a good washing with the right kind of soap would probably get rid of it. (*She pulls it away.*)
- MRS. DITTERSDORF:** Why, Mr. Pupinski, this has gone far enough.
- PUPINSKI:** Oh, it has, has it? I suppose you're going to cast me aside like you've done all the others, like some old horseshoe.
- MRS. DITTERSDORF:** What are you talking about? (*HARPO takes her shoe and holds it up.*) Give me that!
- PUPINSKI:** Mrs. Dittersdorf, let me be frank. The bucket is empty and only you can fill it. (*HARPO holds out the bucket. She takes a sip of tea and starts coughing.*) Are you all right? (*He slaps her on the back.*) You're not going to kick the bucket on me, are you? (*HARPO kicks bucket.*) Not before our honeymoon, I hope. Not before we change your will.



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