

01A024I

01A024I

50

Project Number: 00-SV-8101

THE DREAMERY: STAGE COMEDY AS CATALYST FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

submitted to the Faculty

of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Science

by



Catherine M. Darensbourg

Date: October 5, 2001

Approved:



Professor Susan Vick, Major Advisor

1. society
2. drama
3. diversity

Abstract

This project discusses the sensitive topic of diversity on the WPI camps. The basis of the discussion reflects upon a live performance of the *The Dreamery*, a stage comedy which was successfully used to promote non-threatening discussions about homosexuality, sexual harassment, and diverse religious beliefs. The project concludes with a revision of the play script.

Table of Contents

	Page
1. Executive Summary	1
2. Opening Statement	3
3. Character Close-up: Lorraine	7
4. Character Close-up: Peter	9
5. Character Close-up: Andrew	12
6. Character Close-up: Caroline	14
7. Character Close-up: Blanche	16
8. Character Close-up: Twins	18
9. Character Close-up: Ivan	20
10. Character Close-up: Florence	23
11. Character Close-up: Eugene	26
Script From Play	28

Executive Summary

It is my firm belief that one of the greatest tools and catalysts that can be used for any society's self-examination and eventual positive change is stage comedy. For the public to laugh over matters in a theatre that they were too afraid to speak of openly or at length prior to seeing the show can open many doors for later, more serious discussions.

To be sure, great, high tragedies leave their marks on many audiences. Their writers are often even considered to have taken the nobler paths when compared to authors whose stories successfully employ slapstick or farce. This, I feel, is a mistake similar to someone saying that a playing a particular piece of music on a cello is more valid than playing that same piece of music on a violin. Yes, both instruments look the same, but because of the different techniques, the master of the cello cannot say that the violinist took the easy way out.

Thus, the question which must be posed is this: how well does any individual performance manage to have the issues it raised discussed—and then maybe even acted on sometime in the future? When critics dismiss comedy as

somehow having less literary merit than serious tragedy, what is often shoved aside is the old adage "It is easier to lure flies with honey rather than vinegar." Jokes have staying power. Good jokes can act as a skewer for large balloons of unreasonable fear and humanize taboo subjects. They are often repeated and remembered for months, if not years. Great jokes make the audience feel that they are included in a performance, not being preached to in a dry lecture where entirely alien points of view are being shoved down their throat. A great joke can leave the audience so changed in opinion that it will never completely slide back to its original comfortable point of view, or maybe alter its way of seeing matters forever. The world is no longer the same.

Hence, in this project's featured play "The Dreamery" as well as the other works that I have written, what I am striving to do is the same thing every comedian wants to do in life—to tell a few really great jokes.

Opening Statement

DreamMakers' first priority was to entertain. If it failed to keep the audience from walking out, or from just forgetting about it as soon as the final curtain fell, then any message it had to convey would have been lost. In order to insure success for this play, I gave myself four rules to follow--rules which both contemporary and classical artists greater than myself had already successfully used in their own works. I like to think of these rules as the four wheels of a car--if one is flat the whole vehicle suffers.

First, the many characters had to be believable. Even though *DreamMakers* can be classified as a fantasy, the audience had to have faith that somewhere out there people like Lorraine, Peter, and their cohorts could actually exist. More than that, the audience had to *want* them to. If the audience did, then it meant that I had succeeded in giving them a peek into a world they felt was somehow more alive and exciting than their own. Instead of being quickly forgotten, words out of the heroes' mouths would be remembered and quoted, and the character's points of view debated--maybe even tried on for size.

Second, in *DreamMakers* I decided to first start with the action and *then* introduce the characters rather than introduce the characters and then follow with the action. I consider this a vital practice and made it basic to all my written works. It keeps there from being emotionally dead space during the beginning of the performance. Getting the audience's attention and good will is crucial, and I have heard many people complain about a play that "It was okay, but it really took things a while to get started." My intention was to have the audience as close to in the palms of the actors' hands by the end of the first line as I could manage.

Third, *DreamMakers* had in its opening scenes a healthy sprinkling of references to things the characters know that would not be made clear to the audience until the middle or end of the play. By then, most of these inside jokes would have been forgotten. This was intentional because I didn't want people to see my play just once; I wanted them to come back with friends. The friends would see it for the first time and hopefully enjoy it on one level, while their companions would be rewarded with new insights and plot inter-connections that they were by then primed and on the

look-out for.

Fourth, the action in *DreamMakers* was intended to be almost non-stop. There was little if any time put in for the audience to catch their breath and start looking at their watches. This was achieved by a process I call "Plot and Counter-plot". In short, no-one's life is made up of entirely upbeat moments and neither are the lives of my characters. The audience, however, demanded I electrify them from the moment the first actor appeared under the spotlight. I tackled this difficulty by having many characters rushing on and off stage, all of them chasing the same goal but still mostly remaining wrapped up in their little worlds. That way I could switch from one character's high point to another's--making it clear to the audience that all the boring day-to-day stuff needed for the action's build-up was being taken care of behind the scenes. I always try to have at least three plot lines going at once--one large, one medium, and one small. The large alternates with the medium, while the small one appears from time to time as filler--usually in the form of an elaborate running joke.

Because *DreamMakers* carried out all four rules, it

could do a **fifth** thing successfully. The vehicle of the play could effectively carry the passengers of my opinions. There were opinions to be sure--ones which many people weren't comfortable with. The sympathetic presentation of a gay character in Andrew, the portrayal of a sexually active and attractive older woman in Blanche, and the sexual harassment which finally costs Lorraine her job were interwoven with the fluffy romance of the girl-gets-boy story. The characters in DreamMakers had flaws and did have to deal with problems, but the audience members were willing to sit through and watch while they did it. Thus, I feel successful in not only having made the points I wanted, but assuring that the audience will think about them and remember what was acted out for years to come.

Character Close-up: Lorraine

Lorraine is a coward who learns to be brave. In the beginning of *DreamMakers*, she is running from any sort of confrontation in her life. She has been the victim of long-term sexual harassment on her job as a reporter, and has never dared report her boss, Ivan Drake. Now that his wife Florence has wrongfully assumed Lorraine was involved with her husband, Lorraine again chooses to run in the form of quitting a job she loves rather than setting the record straight. She cannot even bring herself to stand up to a tiny spider, and the opening scene of Act I depicts her trapped on a table top, unable to cope.

Lorraine's transformation comes slowly. When Peter arrives, she does accept his advice to stop being so passive and comes up with the idea of winning the lottery. Still, she cannot stand up to Eugene Partridge, a co-worker whom is making advances at her. In addition to that her first attempt to rid herself of Ivan's attentions and explain things to an angry Florence comes too late, and then only because it was those two who forced the confrontation. Plus, when the older, more sexually aggressive Blanche sets her sights on Peter, Lorraine

resorts to claiming that Peter is gay rather than simply admitting to everyone--including herself--that this is the man she wants to marry.

By Act II, when the restaurant is in full swing, a different Lorraine begins to emerge. She is confident that things will go well and sticks by here guns in spite of the negative feedback she gets from Peter. She even gets up the courage to admit to him the lie she told Blanche, but not enough to say outright that she cares for him. She also is still too childish to set the record straight with Blanche. This indirectly causes the chaos at the end of the play. By that time, fortunately, when Lorraine is put on the spot she does tell things as she sees them. Fortunately, everything works out well, and she and her new fiancé Peter are destined to live happily ever after--or at least for a while.

Character Close-up: Peter

Peter is a pessimist filled with self-doubt and worried about fitting in with normal society. In the first scene, he displays this by arguing against Lorraine's idea of joining with other psychics and winning the lottery even though he knows his current way of life will not last forever. He does admit he has a secret special talent, and that so does Lorraine, but underplays its effectiveness by claiming "It's only good for little things directly affecting us." Peter tries to justify all of his actions as if he was aware there exists a forth wall behind which is some invisible, critical audience watching him. He continues to behave as if he feels himself accountable to this audience throughout the majority of the play.

Peter's desire to distance himself from what the average person might consider strange and fit into normal society is illustrated by the many disparaging remarks he makes about the others. It is first apparent in his negative reaction to Andrew's homosexuality when Lorraine suggests Andrew could help her plan ("Leave Andrew out of this. Things are queer enough as it is."). He then jumps to denigrating joining with the other psychics they might

know ("Our own little Fortune Tellers Five Hundred.") His complaints become louder on the night of the lottery drawing ("This is unreal.") and more specific in target on the opening day of the restaurant in his kitchen conversation with Andrew and Caroline. He leaves them, and again complains to Lorraine by saying "Don't you think some of our co-workers tastes are a little strange for the restaurant business?"

The turning point for Peter's character starts behind the scenes, and is made explicit when the audience sees he has come with Lorraine to Blanche's apartment because he has reluctantly thrown his lot in with the other psychics. Even while Peter is pessimistic about the others' psychic powers being able to win the lottery, he uses *his own* psychic power to come up with the reason why. ("I just get the feeling none of our tickets are any good, and somewhere out there some idiot spent a buck betting his birthday.")

The next major conflict for Peter comes when Lorraine admits she told Blanche Peter was gay. This continues when he understands she invited Janet Kliess, a former co-worker, to opening night. Suddenly Peter is confronted by the fact that one of the people in his life whom has a side

he considers weird is in love with him. By the time Lorraine confronts Ivan later that night, Peter has made an almost complete turn-around. He is ready to commit to a marriage relationship with Lorraine even though it means also embracing the part of his life he has feared. He rationalizes by saying, "It's true. Love does make you stupid."

Character Close-up: Andrew

Andrew is a very likable, easy-going sort of person who always follows his heart—and his heart is very big. While Peter first condemns Andrew at the opening of the play for his sexual orientation, it is Andrew who casually faces up to a tiny spider neither Peter nor Lorraine can cope with. This sets him up as a sympathetic character for the audience, which wants to see how many more scrapes Andrew can get everyone out of without his even knowing he has done so.

Andrew's psychic talent (his 'urges' to do or say positive things) was given to him because homosexuals are often condemned for following their inner nature. Just being who they are on a day to day basis can inspire fear and misunderstanding, even when they are not flamboyant in their behavior. Gay men in particular are popularly portrayed as shallow, effeminate individuals who are obsessed with current clothing fashions and hairstyles as well as overly emotional often to the point of hysterics. Because gay and bi males are a minority, the public tends to accept that this distortion is the way all men with an alternative sexuality must behave. In a way, this stereotyping is not dissimilar to what happened to the

black community in the early days of film, where blacks were often shown to be shiftless cowards who were slow of wit.

First, Andrew's character—as intended—was distinctly not flamboyant in his sexual expression. Secondly, he was also not tortured with existential guilt and self-doubt over the fact he was gay. Third, he is allowed to feel and freely express sexual attraction to another character. Fourth, Andrew is mature. When he understands his feelings are not going to be reciprocated by Peter after the opening night kitchen conversation, he does not fly into a rage. Instead, he quietly follows his urge to take a walk and think things over. By this time, the audience actually feels his pain because when Andrew is true to himself, he is at his most winsome.

Character Close-up: Caroline

Caroline is a free spirit who is often seen as out of touch with reality. In truth she is not. Her problem with getting people like Peter to take her seriously lies in the fact that her paradigm is so radically different from his. Caroline was intended to pose a problem for the religious bigot. It is one thing to look down on someone whose spiritual beliefs about the nature of the universe are deemed strange. It is another entirely when the person-in-question's belief seems to *work*.

Work they do. When Caroline is first introduced at the meeting at Blanche's apartment, her off-center spiritual explanations and suggestions are good for several laughs. What *keeps* the audience laughing, however, is the fact Caroline is often later proved right even when the other characters on stage do not realize it until much later—if at all.

As a person, Caroline does not change throughout the play as someone like Peter or Lorraine does. Instead, it is the audience that changes in their view of her, and

perhaps their level of tolerance for those with unusual beliefs.

Character Close-up: Blanche

Blanche is a blatant challenge on several levels. An older woman who is also heavier than thinks of herself as sexually attractive? How dares she? And to take this ludicrous belief of hers to heart to the point where she is sexually aggressive in ways usually only culturally condoned in men? Outrageous!

The scandalous thing is, however, Blanche is not out to live her life by other people's rules. In fact, if Lorraine had acted more like Blanche when it came to saying who she would and wouldn't have in her bed, then the whole escapade of dodging the evil boss Ivan Drake would have had quite a different ending. And certainly, Blanche would never have let someone like Peter remain ignorant of her feelings for him as long as Lorraine did.

Does Blanche have morals? Yes, she does. She does not chase those whom wouldn't be interested in her even when she is interested in them. Thus when Lorraine tells Blanche that Peter is gay, she does not set out like some pitiful over-sexed female to try and 'convert' him. Instead, Blanche even goes so far as to push for the

relationship with Andrew she mistakenly believes him to be interested in. Then, when the truth finally does come out, while Blanche is mad with Lorraine for lying to her, she still respects the fact that though straight, Peter is not for her.

Blanche does not need men to complete her emotionally and make her feel like a whole person. She does, however, like their company with a vengeance. Like Andrew, she is looking for that special someone. Unlike Andrew, her feelings are not so delicate that a badly ended attempt at a lasting relationship will leave her crushed. For Blanche, there are always other fish in the sea—but unlike most other fishermen she is not consumed with fire-side stories of 'the one that got away'.

Character Close-up: The Twins

The Twins Simon and Theodore are the main running joke for the play. As characters, they can seem as delightfully shallow or mysteriously deep as the audience wants them to be. When Peter first meets them, they seem to have so little brains between them as to not even be able to speak, and then only to finish each other's sentences. In spite of Andrew's hints about their intelligence (after all, it must have took some IQ points to get into the creative trouble of body swapping) they do nothing to prove him right.

By the middle of the play, the Twins are loyally hooked up with Blanche, for mysterious sexual reasons of their own. Do they sleep with her? No, but they 'like her for her mind' and follow her everywhere much to Blanche's delight. The Twins have very little impact on the major decisions in the play, only flitting in and out to speak in sync—even to the point where other people are using them as walkie-talkies. Do they mind? Do the Twins ever get angry about anything—like not even being able to be told apart most of the time? Again, the answer is no.

A running joke, however, must come to fruition, and Simon and Theodore have their moments of glory in the climactic kitchen scene. They are there to help Peter wrestle Ivan to the ground, handcuff Ivan, and find his tickets to Bolivia. They even speak like normal people for the first time. They are also allowed to shine when Blanche uses their telepathic power to get to the bottom of things when the three of them interrogate Ivan. Simon and Theodore might be a running joke, but they were a needed one in the end, because having the psychics figure out what Ivan was planning in an ordinary and mundane way would have made the play end on an unsatisfying tone.

At the end of the play when the actors take their bows, Simon and Theodore are hinted at going on to yet greater things. They find their long lost brother Alvin— and if it can be said great minds think alike, what indeed might our world as we know it soon be in store for?

Character Close-up: Ivan

Ivan is blinded by both his ego and his lust. At the beginning of the play, he believes he can have what he wants (a relationship with Lorraine) without consequences (running away from Florence instead of being honest and facing her). Ivan feels no loyalty to anyone but himself. When he thinks he can get Lorraine to run away to Bolivia with him, he back-stabs Florence even though it is Florence's money he has stolen to finance his get-away. When Florence arrives on the scene, Ivan the Fickle promptly turns his back on Lorraine, hoping to escape trouble by denying his adulterous interest in her. When both Florence and Lorraine are gone, Ivan then flips loyalties again by bribing Eugene to spy on Lorraine. Ivan's opportunistic betrayals are not limited to just the two women, however, because when Eugene runs into trouble with the cops, Ivan simply fires him without telling him, and lets Eugene go to jail.

Ivan doesn't see anything wrong at all in what he is doing to the people around him. All he wants is to come out ahead of everyone else, or at least get what he wants—and what he wants is money and sex. He is a user who

married Florence for her money, then got bored and dropped his marriage vows to chase after the younger, more attractive Lorraine. Ivan also chased Lorraine because Lorraine was too afraid to defend herself by going to lawyer and complaining of sexual harassment. He was simultaneously encouraged in his predatory habits by the fact that Florence (out of her fears) resolutely refused to see that anything wrong was going on in their marriage until given a eleventh-hour wake-up call by Eugene. Ivan would never be attracted to a woman like Blanche. Even though Blanche is sexually aggressive, she is not as easily manipulated as the two women in his life. Ivan does not do well in face to face confrontations where there other person has an opportunity to be strong, and he knows it. That is why he does not simply ask Florence for a divorce, or confront Eugene instead of firing him when Ivan discovers that Eugene also wants Lorraine. Ivan's boldest move is at the end of the play when he risks everything to try and win Lorraine one last time and fails miserably.

Unlike the other characters in the play, Ivan does not grow at all. He starts out and ends up the same slimy person he has always been, wrapped up in himself and

extremely offended by the idea that he cannot have whatever he wishes for.

Character Close-up: Florence

Florence is a woman betrayed who decides to get angry, and then takes her anger one step further and decides to get even. Unfortunately, her flaw is that she is too afraid in the beginning to think of her problem in the complex terms that would lead to a real resolution to her dilemma. That is why when Florence is confronted with Eugene's telephone call in which Eugene informs her of her husband Ivan's infidelity, Florence tries to take the easy way out. Instead of being brave enough to consider that maybe her marriage with Ivan is beyond saving, she instead chooses to treat Lorraine as the sole cause of the problem. According to her logic, if Lorraine caused the problem by being around, then the problem would go away forever if Lorraine goes away. It is not sufficient for Florence to chase Lorraine away, however, because Florence subconsciously admits that Ivan might find another woman or follow after Lorraine. Therefore Lorraine must be punished in a permanent fashion, because this not only get rid of Lorraine, but serves to put Ivan on notice that the same will happen to any woman he chases--and maybe even *him* should he get Florence mad enough.

By the middle of the play, Florence is beginning to admit her marriage has failed, and that Ivan has double-crossed her not only sexually but financially as well. When she meets with Eugene after he is released from jail, Florence still is clinging to the belief that Lorraine is to blame for the current split between Florence and Ivan, but Ivan is now the target of Florence's anger as well. After Florence's first confrontation with Lorraine, Florence technically has what she wanted in the first place—to have driven Lorraine away from even her job—but now Florence sees that Ivan continues to chase after an extra-marital affair even when Ivan knows the consequences for doing so (being shot) and punishes others men who Ivan thinks might be competition (Eugene). Florence begins to plan and take action for revenge against Ivan, even to the point where she can see herself taking Ivan's life if he doesn't toe the line.

In the climactic kitchen scene of the play, Florence is no longer afraid of seeing the facts as they are. When Ivan says exactly what he thinks of her to the psychics, she doesn't try to make excuses for him. Florence even goes so far as to let Lorraine off the hook and gives Lorraine a sincere apology, instead of clinging to her

original angry denial that her husband and not Lorraine was the one doing the chasing. Florence's character ends the play by literally chasing away her demons in the form of her soon to be dead ex-husband.

Character Close-up: Eugene

Eugene is opportunistic scum who has a very high survival instinct. Unlike Ivan, his loyalty is not merely to himself. Unfortunately, it is for the highest bidder. The price paid doesn't have to be money, however. When Ivan leaves him high and dry and without a job in the middle of the play, Eugene is perfectly willing to follow after Florence for the promises of sex.

Everything Eugene does is to further his survival and own best interests. From the moment Eugene first appears and tells Lorraine of having called Florence to inform Florence about Ivan's intended adultery, to the closing scene when he follows Florence out of the restaurant to chase down Ivan, everything Eugene does or thinks about fits into that one simple equation.

Being a survivor does not make Eugene on his own into a very strong character. Eugene never strikes out on his own, and is quick to cut his losses without much regret. He always follows what he believes to be the winning team. When it looks like Ivan is out of the picture, he tries to corner Lorraine. When Ivan side is on the rise and Ivan

wants him to spy on Lorraine, Eugene doesn't speak up and refuse on the grounds that he is interested in Lorraine for himself. Like the spineless jellyfish he is, Eugene not much later submits to Florence's will when it looks like both Lorraine and Ivan are going down and Florence is going to come out the winner.

Eugene does grow as a character—but not in a positive and uplifting way. He just becomes more and more debased, without any qualms from his conscience about the road he is following down.

CAST

LORRAINE is a psychic who can see and gauge future events with a greater than ten percent probability. She is our heroine. Clever and strong willed, **LORRAINE** is constantly on the move to dodge her boss **IVAN** while winning the affections of—

PETER Our hero. (Sort of.) **PETER** often receives strong premonitions which, while accurate, are almost always disregarded. He is constantly dismayed to exist on more than speaking terms with almost any other character. He thinks most of them are wierd. Perhaps, he's right. One person in particular who bothers him is—

ANDREW. Relaxed and easy-going, **ANDREW**'s subtle talent makes him the luckest person in the world—except in relationships. His last breakup was messy, which is why the beginning of the script finds him temporarily **LORRAINE**'s roommate. He's still looking for that special man in his life. Of course, he's good friends with lots of women, many of whom, like **LORRAINE**, are interesting. One of them is—

CAROLINE, who can read into the future with her Tarot. **CAROLINE**'s predictions are always true, but often not in the way anyone expects. **CAROLINE** is the sort of person who can discuss plans to drop off the face of the Earth for a weekend vacation, and *mean* it. **CAROLINE** thinks tie-dyes are a fashion must, unlike—

BLANCHE, a psycomotrist who can touch objects and tell things about the people who recently came into contact with them. She is the incarnation of "So many men, so little time!" Often keeping her company is—

SIMON (a **TWIN**) who lives in telepathic rapport with his indential twin brother, **THEODORE**. Due to a long complicated explanation which we won't go into, **THEODORE** looks nothing like him. They act the same, dress the same, and almost always speak the same words at the same time. Now if only the could reverse the horrible accident which made them swap bodies.

THEODORE is the other **TWIN**. If you've met one **TWIN**, you've met both.
meanwhile

IVAN the evil and very married editor, is determined to have **LORRAINE** run off with him. He has one small problem, and this resides in the person of—

FLORENCE, **IVAN**'s wife. She knows he wants **LORRAINE**, she wants back all the paintings **IVAN** took from her, and she carries a gun. Helping her keep an eye on her wayward husband is—

EUGENE, a tacky dresser who is LORRAINE's co-worker and IVAN's underling. Until FLORENCE enters his life, EUGENE is convinced the most important thing in the world is to get LORRAINE to do breakfast with him—or at least dinner.

KITCHEN OF ANDREW AND LORRAINE'S APARTMENT.

(All scenes to be performed with a minimum of props and strategically placed wooden cubes or crates. Much is left to the audience's imagination)
Lorraine is calmly sitting in a chair on top of the kitchen table. She is dressed in a business suit and sipping a mug of cocoa. Under the table is a pair of her shoes. Behind the table and closer to the door are cubes representing a counter with cabinets underneath.
There is only one door into the kitchen.

LORRAINE:

In here! (Pauses as Peter enters) Morning Peter. I sort of suspected something rather desperate like this was going to happen so I left the door unlocked.

PETER:

(Peter, dressed for work, holds his briefcase with both hands as he stares up at Lorraine in cautious shock.) Your new roommate didn't answer, so I invited myself in. I'd a feeling something was up. (undertone) Didn't know it would be you, though.

LORRAINE:

Want some cocoa?

PETER:

No—had coffee earlier.

LORRAINE:

Drinking coffee is unnatural.

PETER:

So I've been told. (pause) Ummm Lorraine?

LORRAINE:

Hmmm?

PETER:

What . . . ? (PETER gestures)

LORRAINE:

Oh, being a reporter is no longer feasible. I've decided to quit.

PETER:

So you're sitting on the table?

LORRAINE:

No, Peter, that would be silly.

PETER:

Then why—

LORRAINE:

Am I resigning? (sighs) The editor's wife is crazy.

PETER:

Oh. (pause) That explains everything.

LORRAINE:

Peter, don't patronize me.

PETER:

Never.

LORRAINE:

It was obvious from the beginning. No sane woman would act that way.

PETER:

What's this got to do with sitting up there?

LORRAINE:

Absolutely nothing, of course, but she plans to attack me. I've delayed matters as long as possible, but five out of five futures show us in an awful confrontation if I continue employment there—and you know what? In three she has a gun!

PETER:

Maybe that's what my premonition was about, do you think? Three out of five . . . want to come down to Earth and discuss it?

LORRAINE:

No. And I'm never working another assignment again. No paycheck is worth a sixty percent chance of seeing the wrong side of a gun! (Lorraine pauses, looking down) Pass me my shoes.

PETER:

Where are they?

LORRAINE:

Under the table.

PETER:

(Peter bumps his head as he hastily emerges from under the table with shoes and retreats two steps) I saw a spider.

LORRAINE:

Well I'm not here for the view!

PETER:

So I see. (stares quietly at the floor)

LORRAINE:

My shoes? (reaches towards Peter) Thank you.

PETER:

(Peter casually leaps to sit on the counter across from LORRAINE after edging from the table. He takes care to draw his legs up after him.) So about your getting shot?

LORRAINE:

It hit me this morning.

PETER:

So late? You should have gotten a week's notice at least. You usually do.

LORRAINE:

Only with a minimum ten percent chance of something happening. There wasn't—not until this morning.

PETER:

Thank God it didn't wait until you reached work. Whatever brought this on?

LORRAINE:

Nothing I didn't tug your ear about before. Ivan's so desperate he'd rob a bank to get frisked.

PETER:

Wouldn't be the first to cop a feel. (shrugs at Lorraine's glare)

LORRAINE:

Florence confronted him last night, and you don't need to be psychic to guess he blamed everything on me.

PETER:

It's really all your fault, Lorraine. You never stand up for yourself! I warned you I had bad feelings about this situation from the start! If you'd filed harassment charges—

LORRAINE:

Against my boss? Excuse me of being fond of my paycheck!

PETER:

'Fond of' I understand—'fondled for' I don't. You're creeping around like women don't have rights.

LORRAINE:

The right to walk if we make waves! I'd have been run out!

PETER:

That's happening now. Take a gamble! What have you got to lose?

LORRAINE:

My life!

PETER:

At least talk with Drake's wife.

LORRAINE:

That's when Florence pulls a gun.

PETER:

Would kill negotiations.

LORRAINE:

(After a short but distinct silence) Why are you sitting there?

PETER:

To keep you company.

LORRAINE:

Thanks.

PETER:

It seemed gentlemanly.

LORRAINE:

You could have found a flyswatter.

PETER:

It's not a fly. Besides—any modern woman would handle this herself.

LORRAINE:

Freeze in hell.

PETER:

Here's cold enough, thank you. I've already gone numb. (pauses to glance around suspiciously) Where'd it go?

LORRAINE:

Over there. Against the wall.

PETER:

By the door?

LORRAINE:

Yes

PETER:

So we're trapped.

LORRAINE:

Like flies.

PETER:

Fine! Make jokes! You've quit work! You've gone to the bathroom! (sniffs) I've my future as a junior investor—and I know you're going to start about the Crash of '99 but I've lots of time to switch careers. I just don't know how I'm going to explain being held hostage by a terrorist spider. Oh yes! I had one of my premonitions this morning, but I never—

LORRAINE:

Peter, let's win the lottery.

PETER:

What?

LORRAINE:

You heard me—I'm taking a gamble for once.

PETER:

We'll only be wasting money!

LORRAINE:

Not if we won.

PETER:

Even if we did, what's the point? There'll only be enough time to collect one check before the economy dies.

LORRAINE:

So we invest.

PETER:

(enunciating slowly) No stock market.

LORRAINE:

There are more things to invest in than stocks.

PETER:

Maybe, but this whole conversation is moot since it's not like we haven't gone over this before. Yes, you see things with a large probability of happening, and I have premonitions. So what? It's good for things nearby directly affecting our lives, but—

LORRAINE:

Oh, one of us alone couldn't, but both of us together might swing it if we bought enough tickets. Don't forget, there's always Andrew's urges.

PETER:

Leave him out of it! Things are queer enough without—

ANDREW:

Morning! (Andrew walks in wearing a robe and bunny slippers. He is carrying a paper) Why are you two sitting like that? (doesn't wait for an answer as he rolls his paper and swats viciously at the doorframe) Did you just mop? I won't track up if I come in, will I?

PETER:

No! (gritting his teeth as he hops down casually) It's dry now!

ANDREW:

Good! (beaming) I had the sudden urge for some cocoa.

PETER:

Really?

ANDREW:

How else would I get my caffeine fix? Drinking coffee is unnatural.

LORRAINE:

Andrew will agree with me!

ANDREW:

About?

LORRAINE:

Winning the lottery and starting a restaurant with the money.

PETER:

A rest—!

ANDREW:

(cutting Peter off) Oh cool! Just the other day I had the urge to quit my job and try something else.

PETER:

(in a despairing moan) Not you too . . . !

ANDREW:

(pouring cocoa for himself) Well being a clerk isn't thrilling, and with the economic collapse of America and the rest of the civilized world coming job security is a must. (sips cocoa) Lorraine, your timing is perfect. I could absolutely kiss you!

PETER:

(undertone) There's a first.

LORRAINE:

Then it's settled.

PETER:

What about my opinion? I didn't agree to anything!

ANDREW:

Be reasonable! We know what's going to happen, we know we should do something, and now Lorraine's come up with a perfectly peachy plan saving us lot's of trouble. We should take advantage of it!

PETER:

But a restaurant?

LORRAINE:

My parents ran a restaurant—and Andrew's worked in one before. So have you!

PETER:

And I remember distinctly not liking the job!

LORRAINE:

That's because you weren't your own boss.

PETER:

So what's changed! Why not take the money and skip to somewhere safe?
Bolivia is good!

ANDREW:

(haughtily) I have absolutely no urge to visit, much less live there.

PETER:

Why?

ANDREW:

It gets overrun by pirates! Lorraine told me so.

LORRAINE:

(mournfully) And whoever covers that story has an eighty-three percent possibility of a Pulitzer.

PETER:

Why not somewhere else?

ANDREW:

In a global depression?

PETER:

My point exactly! Who'll have money for restaurants?

LORRAINE:

Rich people.

PETER:

Nobody rich is going to be left!

LORRAINE:

There will always be rich people, rich people will always be extravagant, and following this to its logical conclusion there will always be ways to leech off of them.

PETER:

You forget—rich people didn't get rich and certainly don't stay rich by wasting what they've got. It's true now—and you can bet it'll be true after the Tokyo stock market crashes in '99!

ANDREW:

That's why we're going to be the best of the best.

PETER:

Reporters running restaurants? Ridiculous!

ANDREW:

Not really. We know about giving people what they want! Look at all those longshot deals you've had good feelings about.

PETER:

So?

ANDREW:

What about my urges? All right, so I admit I should have ignored the ones about my last relationship, but still . . . Anyway you don't think Lorraine gets all her leads from the street! Operating a restaurant is just another way of catering to people's tastes.

LORRAINE:

And we wouldn't be by ourselves! We could get friends in on this.

PETER:

Like who?

ANDREW:

Like us!

PETER:

Our own little Fortune Tellers 500!

LORRAINE:

Peter!

PETER:

All right! All right! Maybe! Just maybe you have a point. I don't know. I have to think. I have to get to work! I'm beyond late right now as it is. I'll get back to you. (departs)

ANDREW:

So you quit?

LORRAINE:

Yes. (starts getting off table) I'll only have a hundred percent probability of a happy future is if I clean my desk out today.

ANDREW:

Right now?

LORRAINE:

Right now. Even if it was safe to stay, I couldn't tolerate anymore of Ivan the Octopus.

ANDREW:

Well I'm free. Want me to drive?

LORRAINE:

Andrew—(hopping off table to hug him) you're a saint!

ANDREW:

So are you, but why don't we have boyfriends?

LORRAINE:

Finally admitting Steven is a slime?

ANDREW:

Yes. I just wish when I walked in on him cheating that instead grabbing my things and stamping off, I'd thrown him out on his rear. I can't thank you enough for taking me in on such short notice, love.

LORRAINE:

Well, I didn't know what was up, but I did see a seventy percent possibility of you crying on my doorstep last week.

ANDREW:

Yet another messy breakup in my life. Do you suppose things will ever change?

LORRAINE:

It'll work out.

ANDREW:

I'm sure it will. (pause) Is Peter coming back?

LORRAINE:

Absolutely. This is the fourth time this week he's been late, his boss isn't in the best mood, and there's a hundred percent probability that he'll be fired.

LORRAINE'S OFFICE AND HALLWAY OUTSIDE
Scene opens with Andrew and Lorraine walking down hall heading for
Lorraine's office.
HALL

LORRAINE:

—let's get my stuff and get out. I don't want to run into Mr. Drake and
certainly not his wife! Then there's always Eugene Partridge—

ANDREW:

Who?

LORRAINE:

You'd prefer not to know. He's absolutely repulsive.

ANDREW:

Well, I'll take your word—

EUGENE:

Lorraine! Lorraine! I thought you'd never get in. (crowding close) Drake
has been checking your office every couple of minutes. (laughing as he
cuts between Lorraine and Andrew to throw a companionable arm around
Lorraine's shoulder that she shivers off) He just doesn't get the message.

LORRAINE:

(tries to walk away) Some people are just dense.

EUGENE:

I hate the way he hangs over you! But you're always so polite I took matters in hand.

LORRAINE:

(stopping dead) What?

EUGENE:

No married man should be acting the way he is. Somebody had to tell his wife!

LORRAINE:

Oh my Heavens . . . you?

EUGENE:

I thought you'd be happy! I thought you'd feel freer to express your real emotions. I thought we'd do dinner! Maybe even breakfast!

LORRAINE:

(gives a helpless whine deep in her throat)

EUGENE:

You really had something going on!

LORRAINE:

(whines again) Help . . . !

EUGENE:

Huh? (turns around and pays attention to Andrew for the first time)
Who?

ANDREW:

(smiling seductively and inhaling deeply, he catches and shakes the hand
Eugene is waving in his direction) Hi!

EUGENE:

Bye! (scurries off)

LORRAINE:

(sighs in relief)

ANDREW:

(wiping his fingers on his shirt in disgust) I have the sudden urge to wash
my hands.

LORRAINE:

Bathroom's down there.

ANDREW:

And your office?

LORRAINE:

Right here. I'll start getting my stuff together.

ANDREW:

Okay—I'll be back. (leaves)

OFFICE

LORRAINE:

(enters office, shuts door behind her and strides over to desk) Snivaling informant! He's the one who should be shot!

IVAN:

(pushing chair away and crawling from under Lorraine's desk) I agree!

LORRAINE:

Mr. Drake!

IVAN:

I've been looking all over for you!

LORRAINE:

Get away from me! Just stay away!

IVAN:

My wife is on to us and we have to get out of here! (begins to chase Lorraine around the desk) Must you always play hard to get? Come here!

LORRAINE:

No! You can't do this to me! I don't want to die! I quit!

IVAN:

Good—we haven't much time to get to the airport! (waves envelope)

LORRAINE:

Tickets!

IVAN:

To Bolivia! I have a family estate not even Florence knows about. Trust me—you'll love it!

LORRAINE:

NO!

IVAN:

This is no time to be ridiculous! My wife has a gun—

LORRAINE:

Get this through your head—I don't love you! I don't think you're attractive! And I don't want to do dinner!

IVAN:

Don't worry—I understand. (catching LORRAINE and pulling her to him) You're distraught!

LORRAINE:

You're disturbed!

FLORENCE:

(Slamming office door closed and leaning heavily against it as she trains a handgun on Lorraine) You're dead!

LORRAINE:

Mrs. Drake!

IVAN:

Florence!

FLORENCE:

Top-heavy hussy!

IVAN:

I told you I was taken! (Ivan shives away from Lorraine and stands straight)

LORRAINE:

You hypocrite!

FLORENCE:

You see! He loves me!

LORRAINE:

He's nothing but a fuzball maggot and I don't want him!

FLORENCE:

Liar! I heard it all from one of your co-workers! He thought my husband was chasing you—but I saw the truth! My Ivan even tried to defend you—said all you needed was a good talking to. Ha!

IVAN:

I'm sorry Lorraine. This could have all been avoided long ago—

LORRAINE:

Florence, he's a cheat!

FLORENCE:

You expect anybody to believe that? It's not like you're beautiful or anything!

LORRAINE:

I don't want him!

FLORENCE:

I suppose you saw a future in some south American hide-away. Well your only future is this gun!

LORRAINE:

You'll never get away with it!

IVAN:

(meekly) You know, she's right. Look, honey, why don't we all sit down and discu—

FLORENCE:

Shut up, Ivan! I'm going to make it look like she jumped. We're sixty stories. After she hits there won't be enough left for a coroner's lunchbox! (turns to Lorraine) Get against that window!

LORRAINE:

It won't work!

IVAN:

Actually

LORRAINE:

Shut up, Ivan!

IVAN:

(shrugs apologetically) I tried.

FLORENCE:

You see! He's mine!

IVAN:

(undertone) A pity.

FLORENCE:

(holding out hand to Ivan as she aims gun) I'm here!

IVAN:

(starting towards Florence with open arms) I'm yours!

ANDREW:

(from hall) I'm back—

Andrew opens door and knocks Florence askew so she shoots wildly. Ivan falls to the floor.

LORRAINE:

Andrew!

FLORENCE:

Ivan!

ANDREW:

(catching first sight of Florence) The weirdo wife!

LORRAINE:

(dodges past Florence and runs out the door pulling Andrew in tow)

HALL

FLORENCE:

Murderers! (chasing them) Murderers! You killed Ivan!

OFFICE

IVAN:

(After all is quiet, Ivan sits and brushes himself off) Women!

EUGENE:

(cautiously poking his head through door) Everything okay?

IVAN:

Fine

EUGENE:

Should I call 911? I heard shots-

IVAN:

My wife wanted to scare me and those were just blanks. Nothing happened. (pause) You wouldn't know who talked to Florence about Lorraine?

EUGENE:

No.

IVAN:

Well, they're fired!

EUGENE:

Who would do such a vicious thing?

IVAN:

I intend to find out!

EUGENE:

Well, guess I'll just be going on my way—

IVAN:

No! Wait!

EUGENE:

(cringing) What?

IVAN:

Florence is so touchy she might try something rash again. I don't think it'll ever come to that, but I'd like to avoid trouble.

EUGENE:

So?

IVAN:

You're an investigative reporter! Keep an eye on Lorraine! See where she goes. What she does. And report everything directly to me!

EUGENE:

Sir, I don't—

IVAN:

You'll get a raise.

EUGENE:

Since you've personally asked

IVAN:

Good man.

EUGENE:

Thank you, sir.

BLANCHE'S APARTMENT AND STREET OUTSIDE.

A short walkway leads to Blanche's door. Blocks representing garbage cans are below the kitchen window. Inside, set near the window, is a table. Facing the audience is a 'sofa' made of blocks that is facing a television which is being left to the audience's imagination.

STREET

LORRAINE:

Come on Peter—be a good sport!

PETER:

I have been—and no one can say I haven't—but I really can't see any of this working.

LORRAINE:

Keep thinking about those good feelings you were having yesterday!

PETER:

Ten shots of vodka always gives me good feelings. (undertone) I hate that darn spider!

LORRAINE:

Think of all the other people with us! Who else can beat odds like that?

PETER:

I just can't stop feeling none of our tickets are any good and somewhere out there some idiot spent a buck betting his birthday on nothing but a whim.

LORRAINE:

Look—just hang together a few more hours! I promise, after tonight everything will be fine.

PETER:

You sound so sure.

LORRAINE:

Peter, I'd never do anything to get you in trouble—you know that don't you?

PETER:

(Reluctantly nods)

LORRAINE:

And by the way, don't sell yourself short because you've everything to be confident about. In fact, you look wonderfully handsome tonight.

PETER:

Thanks—but you did give me this sweater.

LORRAINE:

Because I knew you'd wear it so well.

DOORWAY

Peter blushes and starts to knock on apartment door, but before his hand ever descends it is opened by Blanche, an impeccably dressed fashion-model type.

PETER:

Hi—my name's—

BLANCHE:

Peter! Lorraine! I was wondering if you two would ever decide to show! You're the absolutely last you know—everybody else is in. I know you're starved—there's snacks and dip on the table. Feel free! (Blanche flutters off, Lorraine in tow)

APARTMENT

PETER:

Do I know this woman?

BLANCHE:

Don't stand there—come in! By the way, my name's Blanche.

PETER:

Guess not!

ANDREW:

Hi, Peter!

PETER:

I know him.

ANDREW:

Come on over—let me introduce you.

CAROLINE:

It's only fair—after all, we already know so much about you! (Caroline waves a deck of cards at Peter) I used my Tarot to peek. You don't mind, do you?

PETER:

(walking across to them) This is unreal.

CAROLINE:

Did you know you have the most spectacular future? I mean, you are going places—like hop in a spaceship and let's do Atlantis!

PETER:

Funny, I always felt I'd end up lost in the Bermuda Triangle.

SOFA

CAROLINE:

So you know all about it! Oh I am so really envious!

PETER:

Right!

ANDREW:

This is Caroline—she and her Tarot helped pick our ticket numbers.

CAROLINE:

I never spent absolutely so much money in my life. Well, this life. There was that time three centuries ago in Imperial China—where this really neat food critic showed me how to read tea leaves

PETER:

Of course.

ANDREW:

And this is Theodore and Simon.

TWINS:

(simutaneously) Hello, Peter.

ANDREW:

They're telepathic! But then that particular talent is rather expected with their sort.

PETER:

It is?

ANDREW:

Of course it is—they're twins, Peter! Can't you tell?

PETER:

(Peter simply stares—for it is glaring that the twins are of different ethnic backgrounds)

ANDREW:

Oh! I'm sorry! They experimented with a cross between astral projection and spiritual transference a couple of years ago. We've had an absolutely fascinating time talking about it. Anyway, they swapped bodies and never quite managed to get back where they belonged. Quite simple, really.

PETER:

Who did they swap with?

ANDREW:

Each other.

PETER:

Andrew, that doesn't help.

CAROLINE:

Hey, want me to do another reading now that you're here?

TABLE

LORRAINE:

What happened to the magician you were dating?

BLANCHE:

Vanished a while ago a while ago, but I'll get someone else. Roger and I were hot and heavy but he just didn't have enough tricks to keep my interest. Besides, he was a tacky dresser.

LORRAINE:

Well, I don't know. I mean I didn't see anything—

BLANCHE:

Oh, all men are. That's one of the reasons they need us. They have absolutely no sense of fashion whatsoever. Pitiful really. That guy over there—Peter?—a perfect example. Very nice, but that ratty old sweater! (sniffs) Pitiful.

LORRAINE:

He wears it rather well.

BLANCHE:

Of course. With a body like that he'd be dashing in a fig leaf—but since that's not possible he'll just have to make do until some woman takes enough time and interest in him to select his clothes.

LORRAINE:

I want another drink now.

BLANCHE:

Help yourself. You know, he does seem such a dear—maybe I should buy him a little something tomorrow?

LORRAINE:

What channel does the lottery come on?

BLANCHE:

Seven—such a lucky omen! Speaking of channels, have you met any people who were? Having one would really be useful. I'm sure Caroline's new roommate isn't the quiet girl she seems, but she wasn't interested when we told her what we planning.

STREET

EUGENE:

(Carefully climbs on top of garbage can cubes next to imaginary window on side of stage)

TABLE

LORRAINE:

Besides Andrew and Peter, you're the only real psychic I know. Those three over there are all your and Andrew's doing—Peter didn't know anybody.

BLANCHE:

That's hard to believe—he seems such a popular fellow and our type do tend to cluster. Whatever is Peter's gift?

LORRAINE:

Premonitions. No visions—just gets strong feelings.

BLANCHE:

(smiling at Peter) I'm getting some right now.

STREET

EUGENE:

(Mimes peering into window, where he can see and be seen from the table, though Blanche and Lorraine do not notice him.)

TABLE

BLANCHE:

Is he seeing anyone?

LORRAINE:

Not exactly—

BLANCHE:

You mean that man's still fair game? (Blanche starts straitening her dress and fluffing her hair) His type is one in a million, but then I suppose some lucky woman's got to win the lottery.

LORRAINE:

No!

BLANCHE:

Why not?

LORRAINE:

He's gay!

BLANCHE:

Funny, doesn't seem the type.

EUGENE:

(ducks as Lorraine looks towards window)

LORRAINE:

Some people hide better.

BLANCHE:

(shrugging regretfully) If you insist.

LORRAINE:

I do. But don't tell anyone. Peter doesn't feel secure enough to come out yet.

BLANCHE:

Trying to get up the courage?

LORRAINE:

(drumming her fingers against her leg) You could say

BLANCHE:

Oh well! There's always that handsome policeman who gave me a ticket.

LORRAINE:

You don't drive.

BLANCHE:

Darling, have I ever needed a car to run red lights? Frankly the whole incident made me so glad I'm a psychomotrist.

LORRAINE:

Why?

BLANCHE:

Because I knew exactly where his handcuffs have been.

STREET

EUGENE:

(loses balance on garbage can)

There is the rattle of garbage cans. A cat starts screeching loudly from the area where Eugene steps. A light suddenly shines offstage as if a porchlight has been turned on. There is the sound of a door opening.

WOMAN:

(dashes out holding a golf club) Woogums! Where are you?

Seeing Eugene the woman immediately starts beating him with her club until they both run offstage.

TABLE

BLANCHE:

(Stares out of window at fleeing pair and shrugs) Weird neighbors.

SOFA

CAROLINE:

Wow.

TWINS:

What?

CAROLINE:

I was shuffling my deck and this card fell out.

TWINS:

Which?

CAROLINE:

The Fool!

ANDREW:

Wonder what it means?

TWINS:

Who's your reading for?

CAROLINE:

I wasn't doing anyone! Who could it be?

PETER:

No comment.

TABLE

BLANCHE:

(waving a photo album as she walks over to sofa) Okay everybody! Time to win the lottery! I arranged all our tickets so we would be able to find the right one the moment they call it!

TWINS:

Smart.

LORRAINE:

I'll get the television.

ALL:

(As Lorraine flips channels, sounds of 'Move over!' and 'Leave some room!' are heard as everyone crowds around album.)

LORRAINE:

Channel seven?

CAROLINE:

That's it! Turn it up!

TV:

—for the State Lottery! As all of you know, tonight's winner can expect to walk away with ten million dollars, payable over the next twenty years . . . (temporarily drowned out by jeers, razzes, and calls of 'Crash of '99!') . . . and now for the lucky numbers!

ALL:

(Dead silence of eager anticipation falls over the room)

TV:

Our first Number is—NINE!

ALL:

(raggedly) YES!

TV:

TWENTY FOUR!

ALL:

YES!

TV:

NINETEEN

ALL:

YES!

TV:

SIXTY EIGHT!

ALL:

YES!

TV:

EIGHT!

ALL:

(long silence)

PETER:

No.

LORRAINE:

What do you mean 'no'?

PETER:

I mean I don't see it!

BLANCHE:

Keep looking—I just misfiled it or something!

PETER:

Lorraine! (voice beginning to rise) I don't see . . . !

LORRAINE:

Calm down, Peter—

ANDREW:

—totally incredible!

CAROLINE:

I picked that number—at least I think I did. I picked so many

PETER:

It's not HERE Lorraine!

ANDREW:

This is absolutely unbelievable!

BLANCHE:

Keep looking!

ANDREW:

I've won! I've won! (beginning to hop up and down) I WON! I WON! I
WON!

BLANCHE:

(After a long silence and enunciating each word) What do you mean?

ANDREW:

(pulling out his wallet) I've got it! I bought the winning ticket!

LORRAINE:

You're joking!

BLANCHE:

(staring at ticket Andrew hands her) You're serious!

TWINS:

How?

ANDREW:

I bet my birthday!

PETER:

Why?

ANDREW:

Well yesterday—after Caroline picked the numbers, Lorraine peeked into the future, and you said you felt good about everything—I went down to the store to buy them all. We needed nine hundred ninety-nine tickets. Then, when I was leaving, I found four quarters someone had dropped on the sidewalk. Since the tickets only cost a dollar I got the sudden urge to go back in and make it an even thousand. So I bought one more chance and bet my birthday—September 24, 1968!

BLANCHE:

No—wait. That still doesn't make sense—the number on the ticket is way too long to be a date.

ANDREW:

Well . . . yes. (looking smug) I know that.

PETER:

So where'd the rest come from?

ANDREW:

My measurements.

POLICE STATION.

Florence is waiting impatiently for someone.
Eugene wanders into scene, sees Florence, suddenly ceases to slouch and
straightens his tie.

EUGENE:

Hello . . .

FLORENCE:

(In disgust) Don't even think about it. I'm rather busy waiting for someone who should be arriving any second.

EUGENE:

You're the old ba—I mean Florence?

FLORENCE:

Don't worry, Mr. Concerned Co-Worker, you look different too.

EUGENE:

Well, in any case, thanks for meeting me when I got out. I didn't know anyone else to call for help.

FLORENCE:

You mean 'call for help after Ivan wasn't going to risk his own skin to save yours.'

EUGENE:

Uhhh

FLORENCE:

I know everything.

EUGENE:

Everything?

FLORENCE:

Do I look like an idiot? Ivan is a middle-aged philandering excuse for a cucumber, but he's rich—and with *my* money.

EUGENE:

I don't get it.

FLORENCE:

Before Ivan and I were married, I had several paintings he absolutely loathed. Not six months ago our house was ransacked and they were among the things taken. Amazingly this happened exactly two months after Ivan stopped nagging about our selling everything and moving to some tropical plantation.

EUGENE:

So you suspect he has enough funds to leave like he wanted?

FLORENCE:

He has my three Picassos for loose change!

EUGENE:

(stepping closer to lay a 'consoling' arm around FLORENCE's shoulder) The slime!

FLORENCE:

Five minutes out of jail and still chasing pussies.

EUGENE:

Huh?

FLORENCE:

In words of one syllable—do I look dumb?

EUGENE:

Dropping his arm and straightening up) No.

FLORENCE:

Thank you.

EUGENE:

And another thing—I had no intention of crippling that old lady's cat and I certainly wasn't the one who did the beating up!

FLORENCE:

So why didn't you just tell the judge? I'm sure spying on someone because my husband said to should have saved you serving three months for assault and battery of a senior citizen.

EUGENE:

Pardon me for being loyal to my employer!

FLORENCE:

Former employer.

EUGENE:

WHAT?

FLORENCE:

By the way, you've been fired.

EUGENE:

He didn't!

FLORENCE:

(pulls envelope out of her purse) Your severance pay.

EUGENE:

So he did find out I finked about he and Lorraine.

FLORENCE:

No—he found out that you wanted into Lorraine's pants worse than he did. Ivan never did handle jealousy well.

EUGENE:

What?

FLORENCE:

That was how I realized he was interested in this Lorraine woman—he couldn't stand you hanging around her. Needless to say, Mr Concerned Co-Worker, I found your phonecall highly amusing when I finally realized who you were.

EUGENE:

So if you knew all this, why bother help me?

FLORENCE:

I only know things in general—not specifics you might be able to give. Like how much was this Lorraine actually milking my Ivan for?

EUGENE:

Nothing I know of.

FLORENCE:

Then just where did she get money to open her new restaurant?

EUGENE:

What do you mean?

FLORENCE:

Hey—a person's got to eat, and she plans doing just that. She doesn't trust Ivan so apparently she took money from my paintings to open this restaurant.

EUGENE:

Are you sure?

FLORENCE:

Everything is in her name—all the purchases, all the contracts, everything. In the last three months she's run up considerable bills, and almost all have been paid. Even if Ivan screws her over instead of just screwing, there's no way he could touch the business.

EUGENE:

But she won the lottery—I heard when some people from the office showed up at my trial.

FLORENCE:

Sorry—there was only *one* winning ticket, and it went to some Andy Pelzone who has an apartment halfway across town from her. Since winning the man simply slipped out of society.

EUGENE:

Maybe she got a smaller prize that was still worth a lot.

FLORENCE:

Nope. I dug and got a list of winners from the state commission. Her name doesn't appear anywhere.

EUGENE:

Maybe she snuggled up to Pelzone?

FLORENCE:

I doubt it. He's gay.

EUGENE:

You're sure? Who told you?

FLORENCE:

His ex, who's right now cutting his wrists. Pelzone walked in on his lover and someone else and took his bags to live with some high school friend. Clearly, certain people who mysteriously quit working for my husband on a certain day when I confronted them should obviously not have enough money to bankroll anything near the type of business they've just opened.

EUGENE:

From what I've heard, any west end location is considered very exclusive.

FLORENCE:

And you and I both know the only other place where she could get that kind of money.

EUGENE:

No wonder she seemed so upset I called you. She finally decided to accept Ivan's offer and I ruined everything!

FLORENCE:

Now the questions are, how much money did he give her, and is it all in the restaurant or in another account somewhere?

EUGENE:

Does it matter? Take him to court and get a divorce.

FLORENCE:

Until I prove Ivan stole my Piccassos, he'll pocket more money than I want to think about if I let him go.

EUGENE:

So you need me to run errands while Ivan's busy watching you. You don't know how much he got for your paintings, where he sold them, or what he's done with most of the money.

FLORENCE:

Exactly.

EUGENE:

But what are you going to do when you find out?

FLORENCE:

I brought this. (Florence opens her purse towards Eugene)

EUGENE:

A gun?

FLORENCE:

Unlicensed, but I know how to use it.

EUGENE:

Isn't that dangerous?

FLORENCE:

Why do you think I got it? Ivan coughs up my paintings or coughs up his lungs.

EUGENE:

Ivan said you used blanks!

FLORENCE:

He would—it's all he ever learned to shoot.

EUGENE:

I'll take your word.

FLORENCE:

Which should I kill—my lover, or my lover's lover?

EUGENE:

Neither! Where would you hide the body?

FLORENCE:

Does their place serve hamburger?

EUGENE:

Probably not.

FLORENCE:

And Ivan never was worth much more than ground chuck. Well, it wasn't that good of an idea anyway—too messy.

EUGENE:

But you still wouldn't know where he sold your stuff!

FLORENCE:

When a person dies, everything goes to their spouse unless their will states otherwise. I know for a fact his will hasn't been changed—yet. If he has any nice back accounts hidden away, I'm sure I'll find out from the lawyers at the funeral.

EUGENE:

Right before they drag you off to jail!

FLORENCE:

If his death is traced, I can claim I discovered him cheating to lessen my sentence. A few years behind bars, and I still get everything. And I don't plan to get caught. I bleach my hair, not my brains!

EUGENE:

I just got three months for falling on some old lady's stray cat! What makes you think the courts would let a cold blooded murderer free to walk the streets?

FLORENCE:

Ever since O. J., I've had faith in the American judicial system.

EUGENE:

Oh.

FLORENCE:

Now let's go. Lorraine's restaurant opens in another two weeks, we have lots of work, and I don't want to stay in this place a moment longer. It's absolutely frigid!

EUGENE:

I noticed.

FLORENCE:

Give me your jacket.

EUGENE:

Dream on.

FLORENCE:

(fingering her purse) Who's in charge?

EUGENE:

(surrenduring jacket) My pleasure.

RESTAURANT

The dining area consists of elegantly set tables with floor length table clothes, typical of an expensive upper-class restaurant. However, ferns and potted plants abound everywhere, giving the place a greenhouse appearance. The kitchen is filled with pots, pans, and other implied implements of destruction.

Lorraine is sitting at a table looking over a pile of papers. Swatting ferns aside as he goes, Peter makes his way towards her and begins laying out silverware.

LORRAINE:

Where have you been?

PETER:

Lost in the jungle.

LORRAINE:

You don't like it?

PETER:

Don't you feel some of our co-workers' tastes are a little . . . strange for the restaurant business?

LORRAINE:

Anything you want off your chest?

PETER:

Our name!

LORRAINE:

What's wrong? Lot's of people name their businesses after things they like. I'm sure we're not the first to use—

PETER:

A comic book.

LORRAINE:

It was only fair—he did have the winning ticket.

PETER:

But we put everything in your name!

LORRAINE:

For tax purposes. You know I don't get more say than the rest of you.

PETER:

But it's not even printed anymore.

LORRAINE:

We can talk about it later. If we don't finish these forms, we'll never get the shipments we need.

PETER:

I don't believe it. I'm stuck in a restaurant named after a defunct comic book. "Purple Sparrow". I hope none of my old co-workers ever see me. I'd be the laughing stock of our investment firm.

LORRAINE:

There are three in tonight's crowd.

PETER:

Who?

LORRAINE:

(flipping through a pile of papers) Robert Forrier, Jonathan Everett, a Janet Kli—

PETER:

Not Janet Kliess! (Peter sits next to Lorraine so he can check the papers himself) Of all the restaurants in the state, the most gorgeous woman in the company has to pick the one I'm waiting in!

LORRAINE:

Looks like it.

PETER:

We only sent out opening day invitations to a limited group! How could she have found out?

LORRAINE:

(innocently) Fate?

PETER:

(collapsing forward so his head smacks the table) Somebody hates me.

LORRAINE:

Think you can stop griping long enough to go down to the docks with me?

PETER:

Why?

LORRAINE:

We need oysters.

PETER:

I can jump off the pier while we're there.

BLANCHE:

(fluttering in with a Twin on each arm) We're back! It took forever to get the jackets fitted right, but—(with a tap on their shoulder, Blanche has the Twins so in unison.) What do you think?

PETER:

(moans pitifully without looking up)

LORRAINE:

Spiffy!

BLANCHE:

(to Teins) Go show Caroline and Andrew!

TWINS:

Okay. (Twins depart)

LORRAINE:

What's with Theodore and Simon?

BLANCHE:

Huh?

LORRAINE:

They follow you everywhere!

BLANCHE:

So?

LORRAINE:

Doesn't having two men breathing down your neck all the time make you claustrophobic?

BLANCHE:

Should it?

PETER:

(moans again)

BLANCHE:

What's wrong with Peter?

LORRAINE:

Nothing.

PETER:

I feel so unloved.

BLANCHE:

Perk up! (smiles slyly) Everyone else is happy! Look at Andrew—he's in a great mood!

PETER:

Andrew's always in a great mood.

BLANCHE:

So much the better! Don't let opportunity go to waste—I never do!

PETER:

What?

LORRAINE:

(quickly) Caroline needs you in the kitchen.

BLANCHE:

Better go see what she wants. (flutters off)

PETER:

What's Andrew got to do with me?

LORRAINE:

Nothing. (takes a quick swallow from the glass of water next to her) She thinks you're gay.

PETER:

(pauses, then enunciates) Why?

LORRAINE:

(bites her lip) Well

PETER:

There is a sensible explanation?

LORRAINE:

I told her you were.

PETER:

(stares)

LORRAINE:

(flustered) Don't look at me like that—it was for your own good! I like Blanche, but she could have "It's Raining Men" for her theme song! And she's the type of woman who knows where handcuffs have been!

PETER:

(continues to stare)

LORRAINE:

I was working in your best interests—not that I really care or anything. Besides, Blanche thinks you're a tacky dresser, and doesn't like your sweater.

PETER:

(blinks)

LORRAINE:

(folds her arms and turns away) Quit asking questions—I don't want to discuss this anymore! We have work.

PETER:

No problem. (with the dazed look of someone on the wrong planet)

KITCHEN

Andrew is standing in the kitchen stirring furiously at a large pot. Caroline is perched on a nearby cube, intently shuffling her tarot. The Twins are watching her with interest..

ANDREW:

Spaghetti sauce almost done. Okay, what now?

CAROLINE:

(pauses to deal a few cards) Garlic. Cosmic amounts of garlic.

ANDREW:

Are you sure?

CAROLINE:

That's what the cards claim.

ANDREW:

(getting frustrated) How much?

CAROLINE:

(lays out another card) Five cloves.

ANDREW:

(irritated) If you'd just said that in the first place—

CAROLINE:

Hey man, I'm doing the best that I can!

ANDREW:

Where's the list?

CAROLINE:

(looks around) I don't know. Blanche was supposed to—

BLANCHE:

Looking for me?

CAROLINE:

Oh great! You're here!

ANDREW:

About time.

CAROLINE:

You have the Guest List?

BLANCHE:

(waves it in front of her) Finished using the signatures to get the birthdays while Simon and Theodore were getting their jackets refitted.

CAROLINE:

Good! Now we'll know what to cook for the last twenty orders!

ANDREW:

At least something's going right!

BLANCHE:

What's his gripe?

CAROLINE:

He's been that way all day!

ANDREW:

Have not!

CAROLINE:

Have to!

ANDREW:

Have not!

CAROLINE:

Have to!

ANDREW:

(pause) Sorry.

BLANCHE:

Well?

ANDREW:

(shaking his head) It's silly.

CAROLINE:

Not when your emotions keep clouding my readings!

ANDREW:

I thought this would be more of a happily ever after. You know—we win the lottery, we buy the restaurant, and we live happily ever after. Well we have, and deep down I really don't feel very happy.

CAROLINE:

(sympathetically) I know reality sucks, but trust me! Tonight, things are really going to change.

ANDREW:

(shrugs and gives a small laugh) Maybe I'm lonely.

CAROLINE:

We'll always be here.

ANDREW:

Thanks, but you're not exactly my type. I haven't had a real relationship in three years.

TWINS:

Neither have we.

ANDREW:

I keep wondering if anyone's out there.

BLANCHE:

Definitely. (carefully) Maybe closer than you think.

ANDREW:

Who?

BLANCHE:

I can't say.

ANDREW:

(realizing Blanche is serious) Blanche, who?

BLANCHE:

I promised!

ANDREW:

(advances on Blanche with spoon from spaghetti sauce raised threateningly) If you don't tell me—

BLANCHE:

All right! All right! It's Peter!

ANDREW:

(stops in shock) Peter?

BLANCHE:

Peter!

ANDREW:

He's not gay!

BLANCHE:

Lorraine told me so herself!

ANDREW:

He doesn't act it

BLANCHE:

So he keeps a straight face! All I know is Lorraine told me he was too shy to come out of the closet..

ANDREW:

Peter? (A small smile starts to creep across Andrew's face) He is sort of cute . . . Peter? I'd always thought he hung around to see Lorraine . . .

CAROLINE:

Spaghetti sauce is boiling over!

ANDREW:

(is jerked part of the way back from Neptune as he whirls and begins to frantically beat his creation back into submission)

BLANCHE:

Remember—nobody heard it from me! Lorraine said Peter would die if he found I finked!

CAROLINE:

Didn't here a thing.

TWINS:

Likewise.

BLANCHE:

Andrew, tonight's opening night. Make the best of it. I am! After work I'm seeing someone, and I'm sure if you show some interest, you and Peter could have a date in nothing flat.

ANDREW:

You think? I don't know—

BLANCHE:

Oh come on! What have you got to lose? How difficult can it be? Look!
(With exaggerated gestures, Blanche sweeps Caroline off her stool and into a deep embrace.)

BLANCHE:

My dove, my parakeet, my petite chickadee! I have always loved you from afar! Now, my lark, my sweet sparrow, confess! Chirp your tender song of adoration into my ear, oh my little nightingale!

PETER:

Hi guys!

(Andrew, Blanche, Caroline, and Twins immediately freeze, and stare at Peter in complete silence.)

PETER:

Lorraine sent me to tell you to come downstairs for a quick meeting.

OTHERS:

(Silence)

PETER:

In a couple of minutes okay?

OTHERS:

(Silence)

PETER:

Andrew, the food smells sensational.

BLANCHE:

(triumphantly) So you see! We have ways of making you squawk!

PETER:

Right! (departs)

BLANCHE:

So the food smells sensational!

ANDREW:

God! Peter is so cute!

CAROLINE:

We better hurry, or we'll never finish. (jumps back onto her stool) Who's next on the list?

BLANCHE:

Thomas Grey. According to his signature he was born April 27, 1965. He'll be arriving at seven, accompanied by a woman we don't have any information on.

ANDREW:

I can't believe Peter's gay!

CAROLINE:

Let me see . . . (Caroline shuffles her deck and begins to deal)

BLANCHE:

What are you getting?

CAROLINE:

The Lovers.

ANDREW:

It means he likes me!

CAROLINE:

(Annoyed) It means oysters! Mr. Grey and his wife are celebrating their anniversary.

BLANCHE:

We're getting in a fresh shipment today. Lorraine saw a ninety percent chance we'd need them.

ANDREW:

He really really likes me!

CAROLINE:

Keep stirring.

DINING AREA

PETER:

(sitting at table with Lorraine) They've gone weird on us.

LORRAINE:

What are you talking about?

PETER:

It used to be separate wierds, and that was okay, but now they're ganging up.

LORRAINE:

It's opening night Peter. You've just got jitters.

PETER:

I keep getting bad feelings. Something hideous will happen any moment.

LORRAINE:

If anything was, I'd know too. All I see is a spectacular future with a successful restaurant ahead of us.

PETER:

I don't know.

LORRAINE:

(as others file into the room and approach their table) I do! Have faith—everything's going to turn out fine.

KITCHEN

After several moments of silence, Eugene creeps on stage, glances around, and heads for the phone

EUGENE:

(dials, then waits for a moment) Mr. Drake? Yes, this is Eugene, sir. (pause) Just where do you think? Of course. And neither one of us has to play ignorant because I know exact locations of a few paintings. (pause) If you want that not to reach certain ears—like your wife's—it would mean my old job. I thought you'd see it that way. (pause) Here in four hours would be very good. (pause) Absolutely, sir, and thank you. (hangs up then dials again) Florence? He fell for it.

RESTAURANT

Scene is opening night. Andrew is in the kitchen. Peter, Lorraine, Caroline, Blanche, and the Twins are working the tables serving customers.

DINING AREA

CAROLINE:

Welcome to the Purple Sparrow. May I take your order?

1ST MAN:

How fresh are your oysters?

CAROLINE:

They were delivered from the wharf about an hour or so ago.

1ST WOMAN:

(giggling) I love oysters.

1ST MAN:

And your wine selection?

DOOR

BLANCHE:

If you'll follow me to your table, gentlemen

2ND MAN:

I'm getting great feelings just being here.

BLANCHE:

(patting 2nd Man on the back with a sly smile) Me too.

DINING AREA

LORRAINE:

(catching Blanche as they are returning to the entrance) How are things going?

BLANCHE:

Wonderful. Two phone numbers and a maybe, and in less than two hours!
(heads for kitchen)

LORRAINE:

(as Twins come out of the kitchen with plates) Simon? Theodore?

TWINS:

Yes?

LORRAINE:

I don't mean to pry, but—

TWINS:

What?

LORRAINE:

The relationship between you and Blanche

TWINS:

Purely platonic.

LORRAINE:

(blinks in surprise) Really?

TWINS:

We're telepathic—we like her for her mind.

LORRAINE:

Oh. (pause) Could you do me a favor?

SIMON:

What?

FLORENCE:

Could you find Peter and give him a message for me?

TWINS:

Okay. (Theodore walks off and stands next to Peter.) Found him. What do you want to say?

LORRAINE:

(To Simon) Where is he?

TWINS:

Right here next to us.

LORRAINE:

Oh?

TWINS:

Trust us.

LORRAINE:

Okay.

TWINS:

What do you want to say?

Peter and Lorraine now use the Twins as walki-talkies, Lorraine's voice coming through Theodore and Peter's through Simon. To further this impression, the individual Twin now speaks simultaneously with Lorraine or Peter what they are supposed to be relaying.

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

Peter!

PETER AND SIMON:

What?

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

It's your turn to man the entrance!

PETER AND SIMON:

I know, I know . . . !

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

Well?

PETER AND SIMON:

Be there in a bit.

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

You said that the last time!

PETER AND SIMON:

Oh, sorry

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

Well?

PETER AND SIMON:

Do I have to?

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

Yes you have to!

PETER AND SIMON:

Not tonight, Lorraine.

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

What do you mean? Why not?

PETER AND SIMON:

I have a headache.

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

We all agreed to take turns!

PETER AND SIMON:

But I don't feel like it!

LORRAINE AND THEODORE:

Would you rather feel cold and hungry from being jobless and on the street?

PETER AND SIMON:

No!

LORRAINE:

Then come on! And hurry up, or you'll miss the next group!

PETER AND SIMON:

(trudging obediently towards Lorraine) What next group?

2ND WOMAN:

(waving) Peter, it is you! I was wondering where you'd disappeared to! So, like your new job?

LORRAINE:

Oh wow! You're Janet! Peter's told me everything about you

PETER:

I think I'll go to the kitchen and personally see to your food.

KITCHEN

ANDREW:

(pauses with the dessert he is garnishing) Hi, Peter.

PETER:

(leaping to the stool Caroline was sitting on earlier and hiding his face in his arms) AUGGGGGH!!!

ANDREW:

What's the matter?

PETER:

Women!

ANDREW:

Really?

PETER:

Sometimes they can be normal, but other moments I'm sure they've beamed straight from spaceships!

ANDREW:

Don't be so hard. They feel the same a lot of the time.

PETER:

They don't. They never do—and they gloat when we're not watching

ANDREW:

Why so down on women right now? One would get the idea you didn't like them.

PETER:

We share the planet.

ANDREW:

So that's the way it is.

PETER:

I just wish they'd get together and decide which half they want.

ANDREW:

(chuckles)

PETER:

I suppose I'll have to go back out there.

ANDREW:

Eventually, but you're not a slave, you know. No reason why you can't stay a while.

PETER:

You're so good to me.

ANDREW:

If that's the way you feel.

PETER:

Your life is so uncomplicated.

ANDREW:

I don't know about that, but I've never regretted being me for a moment.

PETER:

Privileged person.

ANDREW:

After work, I'm heading out to celebrate. Want to tag along?

PETER:

Sounds great.

BLANCHE:

(walks into kitchen) Oh! (pauses as she sees Peter and Andrew together, then continues what she was doing) That dessert ready?

ANDREW:

Right here.

BLANCHE:

(winks at Andrew then off again)

PETER:

There's another one.

ANDREW:

Blanche?

PETER:

Apparently she considered making a pass at me.

ANDREW:

Happens lots of times. When I tell them I'm not interested, I usually get the line about really handsome men being taken or gay. Can't say I complain about the classification.

PETER:

Sometimes I feel dense.

ANDREW:

About?

PETER:

Relationships. What people are actually thinking or feeling behind your back.

ANDREW:

Specifically?

PETER:

Lorraine. I really like her, but I was so clueless she was interested.

ANDREW:

Lorraine's quiet about some things. A lot are that way, but you wouldn't think it from the mask they wear in public.

PETER:

I thought she wanted to be friends. Now I'm positive Lorraine ensured Janet came here tonight so Janet would never date me. This morning she confessed convincing Blanche I was gay so Blanche wouldn't go for me.

ANDREW:

See what you mean about being dense.

PETER:

Lorraine never stands up for herself. She always wants the non-confrontational way out.

ANDREW:

We all do.

PETER:

I wish she'd be straight-forward for once.

ANDREW:

So you don't want to go on the floor again, do you?

PETER:

Not until Janet is gone.

ANDREW:

Think you could hold down the fort here for a while?

PETER:

Me—cook? I can't do that!

ANDREW:

Everything except a couple of easy dishes is already done. Since we knew what everybody was ordering, I went ahead and prepared it all. Make a few desserts, arrange a few dishes, and you're set.

PETER:

Sure then. (shrugs) Fine.

ANDREW:

The order predictions are right here. (points to a pile of papers by the phone) Whatever you do, don't get them confused. (starts taking off his apron and hat) Follow the schedule, and you'll be set.

PETER:

No problem—but where are you going? When will you be back?

BLANCHE:

(dashing into kitchen) I need another chicken dish!

ANDREW:

Tell Lorraine I had the urge for a walk. (picks up his coat and leaves)

PETER:

Sure. (off-handedly as he goes to help Blanche find her order)

BLANCHE:

(picking up tray) Thanks Peter! (Leaves as the Twins arrive)

TWINS:

We need ice-cream.

PETER:

In the refrigerator.

TWINS:

Someone locked it!

PETER:

(picking up a ring of keys) Be right there. (goes offstage with Twins)

EUGENE:

(walks into kitchen via the opposite exit and whispers) Mrs. Drake?
(louder) Florence?

FLORENCE:

(enters behind Eugene) Right here! Where is Lorraine?

EUGENE:

Weren't you going to wait to confront her when Ivan arrives?

FLORENCE:

Yes, but first I want to see what the little tramp is up to.

FLORENCE AND EUGENE:

(jump as phone rings)

FLORENCE:

Answer it before someone comes!

EUGENE:

Me?

FLORENCE:

If it's Ivan, he'll recognize my voice!

EUGENE:

(picks up phone, and in doing so knock over the pile of order slips next to it. They scatter everywhere.)

FLORENCE (begins to pick them up.)

EUGENE:

Restaurant hours? Oh, from nine in the morning to eleven at night.
(pause) Not what it says in the add? Well if you have the add why did you call? (hangs up)

TWINS:

(offstage) Thanks Peter.

FLORENCE:

(stuffing order forms back into a pile by the phone, then dashing offstage)
Quick idiot! Hide!

EUGENE:

(realizing he will be intercepted, ducks into an empty cabinet space beneath the counter and closes the door behind him)

TWINS:

(come into the kitchen, then leave to the dining area)

CAROLINE:

(dashes in, sees no one, goes over to phone, picks up a slip, takes a tray, and leaves)

DINING AREA

LORRAINE:

(escourting a couple) Here's your table. The waitress will be right here to take your order. (sees them seated, then leaves)

CAROLINE:

I will get through this night! (passing LORRAINE as she approaches the table) Here's your order.

4TH MAN:

But we didn't order yet!

CAROLINE:

I will get—what? Aren't you the Davis couple?

4TH MAN:

Yes.

CAROLINE:

And you're a Leo and she's a Aris, right?

3RD WOMAN:

Yes we are—

CAROLINE:

Then didn't you order sirloins? Well done? With two house salads, a side dish of rice pilaf for you and mixed vegetables for you?

4TH MAN:

(laughing) Well, yes, that sounds great, but we didn't order it yet! We barely sat down before you arrived.

CAROLINE:

(slowly) Barely sat down?

3RD WOMAN:

That's right.

5TH MAN:

(to one of the Twins) I didn't order lobster!

CAROLINE:

(standing straight and wringing her hands) There seems to be a minor difficulty—I'll try to get it straightened out.

6TH MAN:

(background) I'm sorry, but I didn't order this.

CAROLINE:

(attempting not to appear desparate) I'll be right back. (turns and flees, yelling as she goes) Lorraine!

KITCHEN

Lorraine, Caroline, Blanche, Peter, and the Twins are noisily arguing with each other.

PETER:

I told you this would never work. I told you I felt disaster coming! But did anybody listen to me?

BLANCHE:

Shut up Peter! It was your fault the slips got mixed up! I don't know why Andrew trusted you enough to leave you in charge of the kitchen!

LORRAINE:

Arguing won't do—

PETER:

(cutting her off) My fault! My fault! I'm not the one who—

LORRAINE:

(screaming to be heard) Arguing won't do any good! We have customers waiting for service! Now stop acting like stupid kids or we'll all be out on the street!

(There is a sullen silence, over which Blanche's sharp snuffle can be heard.)

LORRAINE:

(disgustedly) Get a kleenex and a backbone!

BLANCHE:

Easy for you to say!

LORRAINE:

Look, I don't like it either but we'll figure something out.

PETER:

Feeling certain?

LORRAINE:

Why don't you trust me? Where's Andrew? I can't believe he would up and leave without reason!

TWINS:

And this isn't?

LORRAINE:

Peter—you were the last to see him! Where'd he go?

PETER:

I don't know—he said he had the urge for a walk.

CAROLINE:

How unlike him.

PETER:

Andrew's Andrew! What he does is his own business so long as I'm not involved!

BLANCHE:

(pointing accusitively at PETER) Ah-ha! You two had a fight!

PETER:

What?

BLANCHE:

You argued, didn't you! Didn't you!

PETER:

I'm telling you, I didn't do anything wrong—now will you get off my case?

CAROLINE:

One more time Peter—can you remember anything about where he might have gone? If he said he'd be back?

PETER:

No—nothing! We were talking about celebrating after closing, then a little after that he just left.

CAROLINE:

I don't get it. If you had already decided to go out on a date—

PETER:

A date! Who said anything about—

LORRAINE:

(moaning) Oh Heavens!

PETER:

For the record I would like to state that I am not gay!

BLANCHE:

But I only told him you were becau—

LORRAINE:

You wench!

BLANCHE:

But that's what you told me!

LORRAINE:

But I told you not to tell anybody!

BLANCHE:

You lied!

LORRAINE:

Only because you're so hot to have anything with pants on!

BLANCHE:

At least I can get a date! This whole mess is all your fault!

LORRAINE:

The only reason you were interested in Peter is because he's mine! Well you can't have him!

PETER:

I don't belong to—

BLANCHE:

My aren't we possessive? It's a free country!

LORRAINE:

(screaming) I love him, he's mine, so keep your sticky hands off!

PETER:

(turning to Lorraine) You do?

LORRAINE:

(folding her arms and turning away) Shut up, Peter! We'll talk about it later!

PETER:

You love me?

BLANCHE:

(softening, but still miffed) Well, you could have said!

PETER:

Since when?

CAROLINE:

In case anybody's forgotten we have customers!

LORRAINE:

We'll never keep service under five minutes with the orders screwed. This is bad!

CAROLINE:

If we just think, I'm sure we can—

BLANCHE:

Here—give them to me. Maybe I can feel how they're supposed to go. (Blanche picks up the orders, concentrates for a moment, then frowns.) That's odd

TWINS:

What?

BLANCHE:

Someone besides one of us has been handling these. And whoever it is has no fashion sense whatsoever!

CAROLINE:

Impossible. No one was in the kitchen besides us. I was with Andrew when he did them.

BLANCHE:

No—I'm sure! I'm definitely getting the impression of tacky clothing!
Someone's messed with our slippers!

LORRAINE:

Sabotage? But who?

IVAN:

(walking into the kitchen) So I've finally found you!

LORRAINE:

Grab him!

(Peter and Twins immediately pile upon Ivan.)

TWINS:

Tie him up!

BLANCHE:

Here. (reaches in her dress and pulls out a set of handcuffs)

PETER:

(grabs them without looking, then realizing what they are, turns to stare
at Blanche)

BLANCHE:

(shrugs) Be prepared.

PETER:

If you say so.

BLANCHE:

Careful, okay? They're on loan.

CAROLINE:

Frisk him!

IVAN:

Hey, you! Watch it! Keep your pink pixie paws off of me!

PETER:

For once and for all I am not gay!

IVAN:

(to Twins) Give that back!

CAROLINE:

Two tickets!

BLANCHE:

(eagerly) Where to?

SIMON:

Bolivia.

THEODORE:

(sarcastically) Great!.

IVAN:

You'll never get anything out of me!

CAROLINE:

Trust me! Talking will make everything a lot easier.

IVAN:

I want my lawyer!

CAROLINE:

That's not an option!

IVAN:

Then go ahead! Whip me! Beat me! You'll learn nothing!

BLANCHE:

Is that a challenge?

IVAN:

Do your worst!

BLANCHE:

(snaps her fingers above her head)

TWINS:

(Each grab one of Ivan's ears with one hand, and puts the other to their foreheads)

LORRAINE:

Okay, Ivan! What are you doing here?

IVAN:

I'll say nothing unless you release me!

TWINS:

Eugene told me where you were. I came to convince you to run off to Bolivia with me.

IVAN:

What?

TWINS:

How did they know that?

IVAN:

Oh no—

IVAN AND TWINS:

—they can read my mind!

BLANCHE:

If he did this, and I kill him, where can we hide the body?

TWINS:

Hamburger.

PETER:

Were you the one who mixed up our orders?

IVAN:

(affronted) Who are you?

PETER:

Lorraine's fiance'.

LORRAINE:

(distracted from Ivan) You are?

PETER:

We'll talk about it later.

IVAN:

Lorraine doesn't have a fiance'!

TWINS:

She's going to marry me!

LORRAINE:

I'm not in love with you—I never even liked you!

IVAN:

As soon as we get to my family estate—

LORRAINE:

You have a wife!

IVAN:

I have an old monster!

TWINS:

—who looks like a basset hound!

EUGENE:

(coming where he has been hiding) Take that back!

ALL:

(turn to stare at Eugene)

CAROLINE:

I don't think I can take many more surprises.

FLORENCE:

(Opening the door and closing it behind her deliberately. Once again, she is holding a gun.) No, Eugene. Let him finish.

IVAN:

Darling!

TWINS:

Dirtbag!

FLORENCE:

Dead man!

EUGENE:

So Ivan, you've come to this!

FLORENCE:

He never came at all!

IVAN:

Florence, darling—!

FLORENCE:

Give it up, I know you've been fooling around behind my back!

FLORENCE:

Lorraine, I sincerely apologize. He'd stolen a small fortune from me. When all of a sudden you came up with the money for this restaurant, I thought he'd given it to you—but I just found a list of the people working here. Andrew Pelzone is your head cook, for one. When I saw that, I remembered some tax laws plus you saying his name at the office and everything made sense.

LORRAINE:

What are you going to do?

FLORENCE:

What I should have a long time ago—

Florence aims her gun, but once again is knocked aside by Andrew coming into the room. Ivan siezes the opportunity to flee, and Florence bolts after him, Eugene following her.

FLORENCE:

(faintly) You can't hide! I'll hunt you down . . . !

ALL:

(turn to stare at Andrew, who returns the attention with a congenial smile and sniffs the rose he is carrying.)

ANDREW:

Miss me?

DINING AREA

It is after closing time. All the tables are empty, except for the one Peter and Lorraine are sitting at.

PETER:

We survived opening night, it seems.

LORRAINE:

Guess I was right. (half laughs, then stops) Everything did work out after all.

PETER:

Yeah.

LORRAINE:

But—you were right too. And I still have to apologize to Andrew. I just hope he forgives me.

PETER:

It may take a while, but he will. (pause) When did you know you loved me?

LORRAINE:

When I first saw you—but I thought love was romances, flowers, long walks in the park. Being around you added something to my life—but I didn't know being away from you was going to take something away.

PETER:

When this whole restaurant business started. I had the feeling stuff was going to go wrong, but I just ignored it. The last time I ignored my feelings, I ended up in a car wreck. It's true—love does make you stupid.

CAROLINE:

(wandering onto stage) Do either of you have the feeling the cosmos shifted slightly to right, and that this will soon bring about a most totally unique situation? (when she receives blank stares) Guess it must be me.

PETER:

Sorry—but we'll let you know if we feel anything.

CAROLINE:

Cool. Hey—either of you want your fortunes read? I just picked up some really awesome tea leaves, so I can probably tell you more about the government agents coming into your life.

PETER:

Uhhh

LORRAINE:

(breaking in for Peter) No thank you—I can see everything we need.

CAROLINE:

All right. (shrugs, and wanders into the kitchen)

KITCHEN

Andrew, Blanche, and the Twins are sitting around the kitchen counter talking.

CAROLINE:

Hi guys.

BLANCHE:

Hi, Caroline.

ANDREW:

Hello.

CAROLINE:

What're you guys gossiping about?

TWINS:

Life.

CAROLINE:

Oh. (nodding deeply) I'm sorry things didn't work out like you'd hoped, Andrew.

ANDREW:

Peter probably wouldn't have been my type. Anyway I have the urge to leave things just as they are.

BLANCHE:

Excuse me—I just heard my date drive up. (Blanche departs)

CAROLINE:

Andrew?

ANDREW:

Yes?

CAROLINE:

Where were you while everything was going on here? What were you doing?

BLANCHE:

(returning) It's not him.

CAROLINE:

Who was it?

BLANCHE:

I don't know—but he sure is cute! And he must be rich—he's driving this black lamborgh—

ANDREW:

Well! Time for me to be going! (hops off counter and gives everyone a satisfied smile)

BLANCHE:

You mean he's—

ANDREW:

Mine! (tosses Caroline his rose as he walks out) Happily ever after, girls.

(Between each character's curtain call, the following character information is projected onto a screen or the back wall of the stage.)

Three months later ANDREW marries North America's most eligible bachelor.

Five months later after successfully re-swapping bodies, SIMON AND THEODORE find their long lost brother ALVIN.

Seven months later BLANCHE marries a prominent Italian fashion designer. They name their first daughter Chastity.

Eight months later IVAN DRAKE becomes dictator for life of Bolivia.

One year later PETER AND LORRAINE were last seen on their honeymoon cruise somewhere near the Bermuda Triangle. Government authorities deny all knowledge of their whereabouts.

Fourteen months later FLORENCE and EUGENE lead trained mercenaries to overthrow the Bolivian government. Hamburger becomes a national food.

Two years later, CAROLINE falls through a spontaneous black hole in her closet and winds up in an entirely different universe.

But that's another story . . .