

HOPEFULS !

"Pilot"

**Written by
Ronald V. Micci**

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Write Vault Reg. No. A85338CF

RVMicci@yahoo.com

STANDARD OPENING

FADE IN:

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD

CLEAN. HIP. MODERN. YOUNG ACTORS HANGING OUT AT TABLES, SHOOTING THE BREEZE, SMILING, SIPPING LATTES.

NARRATOR

There once was a place where actors could come, get comfortable, share a laugh, a belch, a bond. (A BEAT OR TWO) No, not this place.

FREEZE AS ACTORS SLOWLY TURN THEIR HEADS TO US WITH A SHOCKED, DISTURBED LOOK ON THEIR FACES.

CUT TO:

EXT. DILAPIDATED PINK STUCCO HOUSE OFF HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD WITH MODEST FRONT PORCH. AN OLD SIGN HANGS DOLEFULLY NEAR THE FRONT DOOR THAT READS: "ROOMS FOR RENT - ACTORS FORBIDDEN," WITH MAYBE A YELLOW CONDEMNED STICKER OR TWO.

NARRATOR

This place. Sooner or later, hungry Hollywood wannabes wend their way to this door. You probably know them by another name:

TITLE SLAM: HOPEFULS!

RUN CREDITS

CUT TO:

COLD OPENING:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - BURKE RESIDENCE

JOEY CICERO, 20S, IN JOGGING SWEATS, IS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY. HE SETS DOWN HIS BACKPACK. KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.

THE DOOR OPENS. AN OLD-TIMER IN HIS 70S, JAMES BURKE, PEERS OUT.

JOEY

Hey, I'm an actor, I'm down on my
luck, I'm looking for a place to
crash.

JAMES

Can't you read the sign?

JOEY

I'm sign-averse. Thanks, I knew
you'd understand.

HE BARGES PAST JAMES. THREE MORE ACTORS APPEAR AT THE DOOR: MARJORIE PETERS, 20S, PRETTY IN A CHUBBY SORT OF WAY; VICTOR COHEN, A JEW WITH A TOUPEE, AND SUZETTE DANIELLE, A TOUGH, DARK-HAIRED GAL, BUILT LIKE A BRICK SHITHOUSE.

MARJORIE

We're actors. We're broke. They
were all full up at the inn.

JAMES POINTS TO SIGN. SUZETTE TEARS IT DOWN.

SUZETTE

Thanks a bunch.

THEY BARGE PAST HIM.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - BURKE RESIDENCE

CLARISSA BURKE, THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE, 70S, WATCHES AS THE NEWCOMERS CONGREGATE IN THE LIVING ROOM, WHICH CONSISTS OF A PIANO, AN OLD PHONOGRAPH, A COUCH.

JAMES

I just did a really stupid thing.

CLARISSA

I'll get my stupid book and add another checkmark. Who are these people?

JAMES

Our new tenants.

CLARISSA

They're actors, aren't they. You rented to actors.

JAMES

Well --

CLARISSA

James?

JAMES

They trampled on my sympathies.

CLARISSA

No excuse.

JAMES

Made a mockery of my generosity.

CLARISSA

You know the rules.

(MORE)

CLARISSA (cont'd)

I'm gonna sic a plague of locusts on your underwear drawer. You remember what happened with our last tenants.

JAMES

They stole all the silverware. But they did leave a nice pair of chopsticks and a thank you note.

CLARISSA

This calls for harsh measures.

JAMES

You're not going to throw them out?

CLARISSA

No. I'm going to throw you out!

SHE POINTS. (END COLD OPENING)

CUT TO:

ACT ONESCENE AFADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BURKE RESIDENCE

JAMES ADDRESSES THE NEWCOMERS.

JAMES

You probably wonder why we opened
our home to you here.

JOEY

Actually, we forced our way in. But
go on, we're listening.

JAMES

Because we're generous of heart and
spirit.

JOEY

Meaning, you have evil plans for us
in your laboratory.

JAMES

No, no, my dear friends. It's not
like that at all.

JOEY

Said Hannibal Lector through the
cage bars.

JAMES

Oh my dear friends, we're here to
help you.

JOEY

Isn't that what Dr. Frankenstein told the villagers? You know what happened next.

JAMES

I'm simply a benevolent old man, and this is my benevolent -- (OFF A HOSTILE LOOK) not-so-old wife.

JOEY

And we're benevolent wanderers who will be on our benevolent way.

JAMES

Wait. We are, how do you say it, mucho simpatico.

MARJORIE

Wasn't Hannibal Lector fluent in Spanish?

JAMES

We share your suffering plight. You see, we were once in showbiz. Indeed, there was a time when the wife and I were all the rage on the British dance hall stage.

VICTOR

When was that, during the late Pleistocene era?

JAMES

Early Paleozoic.

HE SNAPS HIS FINGERS. CLARISSA HANDS HIM A FRAMED BLACK AND WHITE BBC STILL PHOTO OF THE TWO OF THEM IN THEIR PRIME.

JAMES

James and Clarissa Burke, known professionally as the Dancing Burkes.

HE HANDS PHOTO AROUND.

JAMES

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, eat your heart out.

JOEY

"Eat your heart" -- I knew it.

JAMES

If we learned one thing from our professional experiences, it's this -- it pays to be realistic. That's why you're here.

JOEY

We're here because we broke the door down.

SUZETTE

And since when are actors realists?

JAMES

Well, broke actors.

JAMES

My friends, you made your way to this particular door, which means reality has got you by the short hairs. I mean, does this look like the Polo Lounge? Come this way.

THEY MOVE INTO THE LIVING ROOM. JOEY PATS JAMES ON THE SHOULDER.

JOEY

Remember, friends don't ask friends for body parts -- friend.

JAMES

This is the living room. Provided you pay your rent, this is one of the few to no perks afforded you. Now, means test -- pockets please.

THEY TURN OUT THEIR POCKETS IN TURN, EACH WITH A SHRUG -- NOTHING.

JAMES

House rule number one: you must pay your rent. House rule number two: it is imperative that you pay rent. House rule number three --

VICTOR

Yeah, yeah -- we have to pay the rent.

JAMES

No pets.

PAUSE.

SUZETTE

We have about as much chance of paying the rent as Donald Trump does of hosting a Muslim dinner party.

MARJORIE

Come on, if we hurry we can catch the last bus to Wichita. Dinner theater is thriving there.

JOEY

No, that's "diner" theater. You get to sing and they throw plates at you.

JAMES

Let's not be too hasty. Now, why don't you introduce yourselves.

JOEY

(TO SUZETTE) You first, while I slip away and alert the authorities.

SUZETTE

Suzette Danielle, the bitch from hell. Five foot two, eyes of hellfire blue. And my feet aren't long fellows.

VICTOR EYES HER BREASTS. SHE SLAPS HIS HAND.

SUZETTE

Pig!

VICTOR

Victor Cohen. (BOWS) It has been said that casting directors' doors learned everything they know about slamming from me. I'm a real nice guy if you don't get to know me.

HE TURNS TO MARJORIE.

MARJORIE

Marjorie Peters. The ingenue who came in from the cold. Midwest girl, yanked on a lot of cow tits to pay my way through acting school. It was an **udder** mess.

A BEAT OR TWO.

JOEY

Joey da bad boy Cicero. Don't mess with me.

HE FLEXES HIS MUSCLES.

JOEY

I'm from Brooklyn, baby. I'm bad.

JAMES

So, do any of you thespians have a job? (HEADS SHAKE) Rich uncle? Expertise at second story break-in? (A BEAT) I thought actors were supposed to be resourceful.

THE LAND LINE RINGS. HE ANSWERS IT.

JAMES

Burke residence, last refuge for
aspiring thespians, King James
speaking, how may I be of little or
no assistance to you? (LISTENS)
Marjorie? Just a minute. (TO
MARJORIE) For you.

SHE THROWS A QUIZZICAL LOOK, RELUCTANTLY TAKES THE PHONE.

MARJORIE

(INTO PHONE) This is Marjorie. Yes,
I'm the really cute six wide strapless
with the crappy instep. I'm sorry
my credit card bounced, Franklin, it
was nothing personal. How did you
find me? What, right now?

SHE MOVES TO WINDOW, LOOKS OUT.

MARJORIE

I can have the shoes anyway, your
compliments? I can't take gifts
from you. No, not even if I let you
sniff my feet. On the other hand, a
little cash wouldn't hurt. I also
take Visa, American Express and
expired Doritos . . . Tonight? I
don't know, I don't have anything to
wear.

(MORE)

MARJORIE (cont'd)

You'll leave a couple of hundred under a rock? You wouldn't. (SHE PEEKS OUT THE WINDOW) Yeah, that rock should do. Look Franklin, you're a nice guy, but I don't really think you're my type. Your old man is a well-connected producer? You're my type. Pick me up here at eight o'clock. But please, no more stalking or I'm gonna disguise myself as the little old lady from Pasadena.

END CALL.

MARJORIE

Great, I can't go out with that pimple face.

JAMES

Somebody check under the rock.

SUZETTE

On it.

SHE EXITS.

MARJORIE

I've got to date an ugly shoe clerk, for what?

JAMES

His money. Look, it's just one date.

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)

Victor, you pretend to be Marjorie's agent. She needs up-front money to jump-start her career.

MARJORIE

What career? My last acting gig I played a tree in The Petrified Forest. I can't stoop this low. Even actors have their dignity.

JAMES

For ten grand, up front, cash.

MARJORIE

Alright, I'm a slut. No, let someone else be the sacrificial lamb. Let her do it. She's got the big bazoombas.

SUZETTE

But you've got the insole he wants to know better, baby. If the shoe fits. . .

CLARISSA

You can't make this girl do this. It's dishonest.

JAMES

Dishonest was you discarding my blowup Petula Clark sex doll. I'll never forgive you.

CLARISSA

Guilty, but I got tired of hearing
whooshing sounds in the night.

A BEAT OR TWO.

JAMES

Look, I like this idea, I like it a
lot.

CLARISSA

You like stinkweed and Lady Gaga.

JAMES

Come on, she's an actor, she can
pull it off.

MARJORIE

You mean he can pull it off. That's
what worries me.

SUZETTE RETURNS WITH THE MONEY.

SUZETTE

Three-fifty in unmarked bills. Let's
hit it, sweetie, the boutiques are
beckoning.

MARJORIE

I don't --

SUZETTE

Come on, come on. Men are transitory,
fashion is forever.

SHE LEADS MARJORIE OUT.

JAMES

(WIDE CHESHIRE GRIN) Well I'll be --

CLARISSA

A rotten stinker.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. DINING ROOM

(James, Clarissa, Suzette, Joey)

GATHERED AROUND THE DINING ROOM TABLE LUNCHING ON TUNA SALAD SANDWICHES.

JOEY

Wow, this is disgusting. What is it?

CLARISSA

My favorite wow-this-is-disgusting recipe. Chicken of the -- whoopee! Starvation is also an option.

JOEY

What am I crazy, this is great!

ENTER VICTOR AND MARJORIE.

VICTOR

Remember, tell yourself "I am Meryl Streep." Affirmations are very important. You need to build up your ego.

MARJORIE

My ego is fine. But it won't be if I stoop to dating that pimply geek.

VICTOR

Say it -- I am Meryl Streep. Go on.

MARJORIE

(VAPIDLY) I am Meryl Streep.

VICTOR

With conviction.

MARJORIE

I am Meryl Streep. I am Meryl Streep.
But I'm not Meryl Streep.

VICTOR

Not even Meryl Streep is Meryl Streep.
But does she look in the mirror and
say "I am Betty Grable"? That's why
she's Meryl Streep.

SUZETTE

Words to the wise from Charlton
Heston.

MARJORIE

Look, I like being me. I like it so
much, I'm going to say it three times.
I'm gonna give me a hug.

SHE DOES SO.

CLARISSA

And now, the you you like being is
welcome to join us for lunch.

MARJORIE AND VICTOR SIT AT TABLE. VICTOR TRIES TO SIT NEXT
TO SUZETTE.

SUZETTE

(TO VICTOR) This seat is for non-creeps only, and stop staring at my Willy Wonkas. Willy may wonka, but he ain't gonna getta.

JAMES

Okay, now when Marjorie's date arrives tonight, Victor, you introduce yourself as her agent. You turn to your protege: "Marjorie, don't forget that big audition you've got on Monday. Oh, I forgot, you can't afford to take time off from work. If only you had the money to afford to take the day off." Franklin chirps in: "I'll give you the money." We make the grab.

MARJORIE

I have a better plan. It's called running for my life.

JAMES

(TO SUZETTE) How did the shopping go?

MARJORIE

She made me buy a trollop outfit. I refuse to stoop to the level of trollop.

SUZETTE

Late trollop. Kim Kardashian beat us to the early trollop rack.

MARJORIE

I don't want to be an early trollop, a late trollop, or any trollop. Why can't someone else be the sacrificial lamb?

SUZETTE

The guy was nice to you. Gave you a fistful of money and free shoes. Never look a gift shoehorn in the mouth.

MARJORIE

Great.

JAMES

Marjorie, think of all the insoles you'll bring joy to.

MARJORIE

Most of them are sitting around this table. They're called heels. (SWIPES SANDWICH) Excuse me, I think I'll go finish unpacking my decency in my room.

SHE EXITS.

CLARISSA

You can't force her to date some jerk. James, you're better than this.

JAMES

No I'm not. I'm a greedy old man with bad breath. Come on, one and done.

CLARISSA

That's what you said on our wedding night. How did I know you were a sex maniac with Jack the Ripper-like tendencies.

JAMES

Oh my dearest Clarissa. . .

JOEY

The reassuring voice of Dr. Frankenstein, after he's left half a stolen corpse on the cutting room floor.

JAMES

Besides, this will buy us time to dream up another insidious plan.

JOEY

Yeah, like selling my limbs to pay the water bill, or celebrity grave-

(MORE)

JOEY (cont'd)

robbing. It's always wise to keep
your options open.

JAMES

Oh ye of little faith.

JOEY

Look, if it will make you feel any
better, I can go along as a chaperone
or something. You know, do the
brotherly thing.

JAMES

I don't think that will be necessary.
Do you, dear?

CLARISSA

Finish your lunch, Hannibal darling.
I'll deal with you later.

CUT TO:

ACT TWOSCENE CINT. LIVING ROOM - 8 PM

JAMES TINKERING ON THE PIANO. THE OTHERS WAITING AROUND NERVOUSLY, ALL EXCEPT FOR MARJORIE. SOUND OF DOORBELL BUZZER.

CLARISSA

Where's Marjorie?

SUZETTE

She locked herself in her room.

CLARISSA

The doors don't have locks.

SUZETTE

These ingenues, what won't they think up next.

CLARISSA

See if you can get her. (TO JAMES)
If this guy turns out to be hideous,
he gets the bum's rush, scheme or no
scheme.

JAMES

But darling.

DOOR BUZZER AGAIN. CLARISSA ANSWERS DOOR. TO HER ASTONISHMENT, A HOT HUNK OF A MAN -- CROSS BETWEEN TOM CRUISE, BRAD PITT AND ROB LOWE -- SPORTS JACKET, BODY SHIRT OPEN AT THE NECK -- IS STANDING THERE. HIS NAME IS BRUCE JAMES.

BRUCE

Hello. You would be the lady of the
house.

CLARISSA

(JAW DROPPING) I'll be Marilyn Monroe if you want me to be. (ASIDE) Can we run off to Marrakesh?

BRUCE

Franklin couldn't make it, so he sent me instead. I'm supposed to ask for Marjorie.

CLARISSA

Marjorie? Oh yes, Marjorie. Forgive me, I was just admiring your -- everything. Oh Marjorie, dearest... you have a visitor. She's a little shy. (ASIDE) Look, if this doesn't work out, Marrakesh is still on the table.

AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, SUZETTE PUSHES MARJORIE INTO VIEW. MARJORIE IS WEARING A TIGHT OUTFIT WITH A SCOOP NECKLINE.

MARJORIE'S VOICE

I will not --

SHE SPIES BRUCE.

BRUCE

(CUPPING HANDS SO THAT MARJORIE IS SURE TO HEAR) As I mentioned, Franklin couldn't make it, and he sent me in his place, but if there's a problem, I guess I'll just leave.

MARJORIE LITERALLY FLIES DOWN THE STAIRS.

MARJORIE

Wait. Did you say Franklin couldn't make it?

BRYCE

I did. Think of me as the un-Franklin.

MARJORIE

Un-Franklin, I'm the very-much Marjorie. You just saved me from a life of zits.

BRUCE

Oh come on, he's not that bad. Alright, he's that bad. I guess I owe you an explanation.

MARJORIE

No explanation necessary.

BRUCE

Franklin had a little problem. I think it's called disgusting acne. He sent me, his cousin. He didn't want you to be disappointed.

MARJORIE

I'm heartbroken. . . You don't mind if I just stand here and gawk?

(MORE)

MARJORIE (cont'd)

I know it's cheap and vulgar, but
it's Hollywood and I'm horny. (TO
CLARISSA) Am I hallucinating?

PAUSE.

BRUCE

You look beautiful.

MARJORIE

This? Oh, it's just a little
something I threw together.

SUZETTE ASIDE TO VICTOR.

SUZETTE

A trolloping we go.

BRUCE

Dinner date alright?

MARJORIE

You don't mind if I just gawk for a
while? I mean, vulgar is so *au*
courant.

BRUCE

Anyway, I called ahead to Spago. I
figured Burger King would be booked
solid. Of course, I'd hate to steal
you away from all these wonderful
people.

MARJORIE

(TAKING HIS HAND) No you wouldn't.

CLARISSA

Dear, aren't you going to introduce
Bruce to your extended family?

MARJORIE

My extended family was wiped out in
the blizzard of 1856. Shouldn't we
be going?

CLARISSA

Now now, she knows how much we adore
her.

MARJORIE

Don't be fooled. She's in league
with Hannibal Lector and the others.

BRYCE

Yes, I'd love to meet the rest of
your "family."

MARJORIE

You were warned. (SHE TAKES HIS
HAND AND LEADS HIM TO THE LIVING
ROOM. RE: CLARISSA) That's Morticia.
Oh, I'm sorry, I meant Clarissa.
And that's her husband, Victor
Frankenstein.

JAMES

James.

MARJORIE

He likes to keep busy in his cutting room. Stay on his good side.

CLARISSA

We were professional dancers on the British stage -- James and Clarissa Burke.

BRUCE

A pleasure.

VICTOR STEPS FORWARD AND EXTENDS A HANDSHAKE.

VICTOR

Hi, I'm Marjorie's agent -- Victor Cohen.

BRUCE

Oh, you have an agent. I'm impressed. What agency do you work for?

VICTOR

The Goddammit We're Good Talent Agency.

BRUCE

I know every agency in town, all two of them. That's a new one on me.

VICTOR

That's 'cause we're that good.

BRUCE

Would I be familiar with any of your clients?

VICTOR

Probably not, since we don't have any -- except Marjorie.

BRUCE

In other words (TO MARJORIE) -- no offense -- you're a charlatan.

VICTOR

Right.

BRUCE

I'm with William Morris, slated for the lead role on "CSI: Caracas."

SUZETTE

Wouldn't I love to carry his castanets.

JOEY

Joey.

BRUCE AND JOEY SHAKE HANDS.

BRUCE

Strong hands.

MARJORIE

In addition to being a gym rat, Joey's very versatile. He speaks three different dialects -- duh, duhhhh, and dahhhhh. Shouldn't we be running along?

SUZETTE

Haven't you forgotten someone?

MARJORIE

No, it was quite intentional.

SUZETTE

Hello, hunk.

MARJORIE

Be careful, she tried to push me
into trollopdom.

BRUCE

Trollopdom?

MARJORIE

She wanted me to wear some hooker
outfit. I like to think I have higher
standards, but I know better.

SUZETTE

(TO BRUCE) Suzette Danielle.

THEY SHAKE HANDS.

SUZETTE

If you get bored with Shirley Temple
there, I'm your high-voltage option.

BRUCE

You seem familiar. Have I seen you
in something?

SUZETTE

I had the lead on Broadway in Boobs-
Too-Large-to-Box-With-God. Beat out
Kim Kardashian.

MARJORIE

Well, we'll be on our way.

CLARISSA

I was so hoping you'd stay for rum
punch.

BRUCE

I think we should be running along.

(SOTTO VOCE) Get me out of here.

MARJORIE

(TAKING BRUCE'S ARM, THEN SOTTO VOCE)

I warned you.

THEY START TO EXIT.

CLARISSA

We could spend such a nice quiet
evening together just gawking.

MARJORIE

Come on.

MARJORIE AND BRUCE EXIT.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - BURKE RESIDENCE

AS THE COUPLE EMERGE.

MARJORIE

I know what you're thinking -- why
would I waste my time in a dump like
this.

BRUCE

No, I was thinking why would I waste my time in a dump like this, but you were close.

MARJORIE

I'm sorry you got roped into this. We can call it off if you want.

BRUCE

Don't be silly. Well, you can be silly. We can both be silly.

MARJORIE

It's just that I'm not sure I'm exactly what you expected.

BRUCE

Actually, you're way more than I expected. After all, this is Franklin we're talking about, pimply shoe salesman to the stars. How did you get roped into this?

MARJORIE

I felt sorry for him. (OFF A LOOK)
And he fed me that phony line about his old man's connections. Actually, those blood-suckers in there pushed me into it.

BRUCE

Come on, let's go have some fun.

CUT TO:

SCENE D

EXT. SPAGO'S - BEVERLY HILLS

TO ESTABLISH.

INT. SPAGO'S

MARJORIE AND BRUCE ENTER. MAITRE D' APPROACHES.

BRUCE

Hello, Roberto.

MAITRE D'

Mr. James. The usual?

BRUCE

Yes, please.

MARJORIE

My usual is the drive-up window at
KFC.

HE GUIDES THEM TO A TABLE. THEY ARE SEATED.

MARJORIE

You sure you wouldn't settle for a
Big Mac? (PAUSE) I can't believe
we're dining at Spago.

BRUCE EYES HER.

BRUCE

This is okay, right?

MARJORIE

You kidding, this is life-altering.
Eight hours ago I stepped off a bus
from Wichita.

(MORE)

MARJORIE (cont'd)

Wait till I tell my kids about this.
I know they'll be amazed, because I
don't have any kids.

BRUCE

I wanted only the best for Franklin's
girl. (BEAT) I have a little
confession to make. I'm not really
Franklin's cousin. I caught a glimpse
of you in the shoe store.

MARJORIE

You were peeping my Tom?

BRUCE

I was ogling your insoles.

MARJORIE

Which means you bribed Franklin to
take his place. So Franklin bribed
me, you bribed him. Which means, in
effect, you bribed me. (OFF A GUILTY
LOOK) I've never felt so happily
bribed in my life.

YOUNG WAITER BRINGS MENUS.

BRUCE

Can I bribe you with a cocktail?

MARJORIE

Si senior. See that, I even speak
French.

BRUCE

Tequila? (SHE SHRUGS - WHATEVER)

You have a choice of Devil in Disguise
or Indecent Exposure?

MARJORIE

Let's get raw. (ASIDE) Did I say
that?

BRUCE MOTIONS TO WAITER.

BRUCE

Two Indecent Exposures.

WAITER EXITS. MARJORIE SURVEYS THE OTHER TABLES.

MARJORIE

Don't you hate people in restaurants
who stare? The only thing I stared
at as a kid was cow nipples. They're
big and they squirt a lot. Oh look,
isn't that Robert Redford over there
picking his nose? Uh-oh, Eddie Murphy
just came in with his favorite
transvestite.

THEY EXAMINE MENU.

BRUCE

Moving right along, what shall we
order for our main course?

MARJORIE

From where I sit, it's already been
delivered.

BRUCE

I'm dessert. Might I recommend the veal filet mignon tartare?

MARJORIE

You might, but your plot to subvert my bad taste will never work.

BRUCE

The sauteed Maine Skate lobster is also very good. Wolfgang has outdone himself with that.

MARJORIE

Thanks to my sophisticated knowledge of Latin and Greek, I have no idea who Wolfgang is.

BRUCE

Puck.

MARJORIE

The hockey player. Of course.
(PAUSE) About this menu, I ask myself, because I have no other self to ask, what would Meryl Streep order?

BRUCE

Meryl Streep?

MARJORIE

(CHANTING) I am Meryl Streep, I am Meryl Streep. Affirmations, baby.

BRUCE

If you're Meryl Streep, who's that sitting in the corner?

MARJORIE

(A GLANCE) I can't believe she's not home polishing her trophies. Okay, I'm not Meryl Streep, I'm not Meryl Streep. The curse is lifted. So how is it that someone apparently knee-deep in the business like yourself came to be a shoe peeper?

BRUCE

It's a long and tortured tale filled with sound and fury, signifying -- swollen arches.

MARJORIE

I suppose I should take pity on you, but I don't see it here on the menu. I'll try the lobster. I think I'd feel safe in the arms of a crustacean.

WAITER RETURNS WITH DRINKS.

WAITER

Ready to order, sir?

BRUCE

We'll have the lobster.

WAITER

We are out of the lobster tonight,
with chef's apologies. The lobsters
are on strike.

BRUCE

How can lobsters be on strike?

WAITER

There was a contract in their clause.
I'm training to be a stand-up
comedian.

MARJORIE

How'd you like to see the contract
in my claws?

GESTURES WITH FISTS.

BRUCE

I suppose we'll have to settle for
the veal tartare. Okay?

MARJORIE

Shoot the moon, baby.

WAITER BENDS OVER AND MOCK MOONS THEM.

MARJORIE

And -- he did.

BRUCE GESTURES -- 'TWO.' MARJORIE GIVES WAITER PEACE
GESTURE.

MARJORIE

Peace, baby.

WAITER NODS, EXITS.

MARJORIE

I suppose that's his global warming
joke.

BRUCE

Both hemispheres.

MARJORIE

I can't believe we're out on the
town on a night like this, just the
two of us, and so romantic. While
lesser mortals sit at home toiling
over sweaty Seinfeld reruns, chewing
their toenails.

BRUCE GLANCES DOWN.

MARJORIE

Don't go there. . . I've never dined
out with a foot fetishist before --
come to think of it, I've never dined
in with one either. I think I'm
getting a little nervous. Why don't
we go have some real fun?

BRUCE

Hell yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORE FRONT ON HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

MARJORIE AND BRUCE ARE MUNCHING HAMBURGERS, DRINKING BROWN-
BAG BEER, FLIPPING PENNIES INTO AN OLD HAT.

BRUCE

Double or nothing.

THEY EACH FLIP A PENNY -- SHE SUCCEEDS, HE MISSES.

MARJORIE

That's **two** orders of fries.

BRUCE

Says you. Just wait.

SHE TAKES A SWIG OF BEER. A DRUNK PASSES BY, DOES AN ELABORATE CHAPLINESQUE FLIP OF A COIN INTO THE HAT. BOWS.

BRUCE TAPS HIM ON THE SHOULDER, GIVES HIM A TWENTY DOLLAR BILL. DRUNK BOWS, EXITS.

BRUCE

(RE: DRUNK, ROLLING HIS EYES)

Professional.

HE FLIPS COIN.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BURKE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

JOEY AND SUZETTE PEER THROUGH THE WINDOW.

JOEY

Here they come.

EXT. SAME

BRUCE AND MARJORIE STAGGER UP THE WALK, SLIGHTLY DRUNK.

MARJORIE

It's **your** fault.

BRUCE

No, it's **your** fault.

MARJORIE

I never drink beer with strangers.

Not even to-die-for handsome ones.

SHE STUMBLES, FALLS. HE QUICKLY CATCHES HER.

MARJORIE

I think I'm stewed. You stewed me.

I feel like bouillabaisse your arms.

(GESTURES) They're probably watching

from inside. Perverts.

SHE GETS TO HER FEET.

MARJORIE

Uh-oh, moment of truth time. Your

tongue attempts a high-wire act on

my adenoids. I warn you, I have

vengeful tonsils.

THEY KISS.

MARJORIE

Not that vengeful.

THEY KISS AGAIN.

MARJORIE

No, I won't marry you. That'll only

mean more trouble with the lobsters

union. (PAUSE) Hey, that was fun.

I mean, the whole evening.

BRUCE

Will I see you again?

SHE EXAGGERATEDLY TILTS HER HEAD, SMILES, SHRUGS.

MARJORIE

That's a cockeyed yes.

BRUCE

Good. I guess I'll say goodnight
then. You steady on your feet?

SHE NODS, STILL A BIT WOOZY. HE STARTS TO LEAVE.

MARJORIE

Bruce?

SHE MOVES TO HIM, THEY KISS. A LONG, PASSIONATE ONE.

MARJORIE

I may be cockeyed, but I'm not a
fool.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

JOEY AND SUZETTE SLAP HIGH FIVES.

JOEY/SUZETTE

Yes!

MARJORIE ENTERS.

MARJORIE

Chalk up one for the farm team.

SUZETTE

How hot was he? Come on. On a scale
of one to ten.

MARJORIE

Mooooooooo!

SHE STAGGERS OFF TO BED. SUZETTE AND JOEY EXCHANGE LOOKS.

JOEY

Don't look at me. Mooooo!

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW