

Othello Undercover

A Comedy in Two Acts
by
D. Richard Tucker

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Larry Moore. A school teacher and amateur actor.

Rita Moore. His wife, an information systems professional, slightly younger than Larry.

Cody Burke. A friend of the family, aspiring actor, slightly younger than Larry.

Chelsea. An actress.

Mitchell Lyons. A modern private investigator. He does not wear a suit and fedora.

THE TIME

The present. Mid-June.

THE PLACE

The Moore family living room / dining room combination.

Act One. Scene one. The Moore home. Monday morning.

Scene two. The Moore home. That afternoon.

Scene three. The Moore home. Wednesday morning,
one week later.

Scene four. The Moore home. Late Thursday
morning.

Scene five. The Moore home. Late Friday morning.

Act Two. Scene one. The Moore home. Monday morning.

Scene two. The Moore home. That afternoon.

Scene three. The Moore home. Tuesday morning.

Scene four. The Moore home. That evening.

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ACT ONEScene One

Larry and Rita live in a two bedroom condo at the end of Venice Avenue. There is a television set facing away from the audience. A sofa, facing away from the front door has a coffee table in front of it and an easy chair nearby. To one side is a dining table, and next to it, the kitchen door. The main entrance is located opposite the hallway entrance, which leads to the offstage bedrooms. Near the Main entrance is a closet door. The home is sparsely, but tastefully decorated. LARRY enters, wearing his pajamas and eating cereal out of the box, singing “Summertime, Summertime” by the Jamies.

LARRY

(singing)

Summertime, summertime, sum- sum- summertime.

Summertime, summertime, sum- sum- summertime.

Summertime, summertime, sum- sum- summertime.

Summerti-i-ime! Summertime, summertime, sum- sum-

RITA

(offstage)
Would you cut it out?

LARRY

Sorry, Darling – just happy.

RITA

(offstage)
I feel like you're rubbing it in.

LARRY

Don't take it personally. All school teachers do this. June is here and school is out. Send the little bastards home to their parents – Larry Moore is on vacation.

RITA enters, getting ready to leave for work.

RITA

Sometimes I think this is the only reason you became a teacher.

LARRY

That's not far from the truth.

RITA

Here's a list of things I need you to do this week. Make sure you ask for heavy starch at the cleaners - to them, heavy starch is the same as medium starch to normal people. When you get the propane tank filled, make sure they only put in 4.6 gallons because you don't want it completely full, but watch that they don't charge you for more. You need to water the plants every day, but you have to do it before 2:00 because the sunlight hits them at 3:35 and any water that hasn't soaked in will boil them alive.

LARRY

Right.

RITA

So what are your plans?

LARRY

With this list, it looks like I'm enslaved for life.

RITA

Quit whining. What are you going to do with your spare time?

LARRY

Not much. Relax a bit, read a few books, wash and wax the car, a little gardening,
(muffled)
audition for a play,

LARRY (cont'd)

(a little louder)
put together the new barbecue grill, go to a few ball games—

RITA

Hold on there, Summertime, what did you say?

LARRY

Go to a few ball games?

RITA

Before that.

LARRY

Barbecue grill?

RITA

Before that.

LARRY shrugs as if he can't remember.

RITA (cont'd)

(low key, but serious)
Larry, don't you even think about doing another play!

LARRY

But Honey, I haven't done one since last summer.

RITA

Larry.... Every year it's the same thing. You get wrapped up in a play and it's a miserable summer.

LARRY

No I don't.

RITA

Remember last year? "That director has the artistic vision of a house plant."

LARRY

I didn't say that.

RITA

"Those actors spend more time mugging at the audience than they do learning their lines."

LARRY

That's not true —

RITA

“The costumer doesn’t know the difference between Redcoats of the American Revolution and the Green Berets of Viet Nam.”

LARRY

Oh come on – you saw it. The poor guy was wearing a plumed hat and camouflage battle fatigues. We were just grateful she didn’t make him wear Cub Scout shorts and knee socks.

RITA

It’s like this every year. You go into your anal retentive theatre-mode and make everybody miserable. Everyone involved is tasteless or incompetent – or both. You hate the production company, you hate the cast and crew, you hate going to rehearsals – it’s no fun for anyone.

LARRY

But Honey, it’s what I love to do.

RITA

You’re sick.

LARRY

And how can you call me anal retentive? How many women would network all the light switches in the house to the computer?

RITA

Our power bill had jumped up 8%. I had to know which lights were being left on.

LARRY

How about the time you followed me to work every day for a week?

RITA

(humiliated)

I was just checking for a variance of your route – your car had a drop in fuel efficiency of more than two miles per gallon.

LARRY

And you tell me I’m anal retentive..... I’m surprised you’ve never hired a private detective to or have you?

RITA

(playfully)

No. But I have considered a hitman. Kiss me good-bye.

They kiss passionately as CODY enters.

CODY
Hey, you two, get a room.

LARRY
Don't nag us, we live here.

RITA
(to CODY)
Just once I'd like to see you knock.

CODY
Rita, you look stunning today. Is that a new outfit?

RITA
Is it really hot out today, Cody?

CODY
It's a frozen wasteland, my dear, when compared to your smile.

RITA
Larry, why don't you ever talk to me this nicely?

LARRY
Because [A.] Cody is a natural kiss-up and [B.] I'm married to you and know what you're really like.

RITA
Teach him some manners will you?

CODY
Your wish is my command.

RITA
And Larry- please – no play.

RITA exits.

CODY
You told her about the play?

LARRY
Not exactly, I didn't tell her I'd already auditioned.

CODY
Can I be here when you tell her? She's really cute when she's angry.

LARRY
I'm not telling her.

CODY

You're going to do Shakespeare at Centennial Park and your wife isn't going to notice?

LARRY

All the rehearsals are during the day – she'll be at work. She won't find out 'til opening night.

CODY

You're asking for trouble.

LARRY

I'll take the chance.

CODY

I thought married people share everything.

LARRY

Welcome to reality. After a few years, all the lovey-dovey stuff goes and then you just try to get by without being yelled at. If you want to do anything fun, it has to be under the table.

CODY

Really?

LARRY

Oh yeah, the passion dries up and then you're nothing more than a roommate who does chores.

CODY

I would have thought life with Rita would be better than that.

LARRY

She's okay, but she's really into her job. She's just not very attentive, anymore

CODY

I don't suppose that's because she's figured out what a jackass you are.

LARRY

No, she knew that before we were married. So have you heard yet?

CODY

Indeed I did, gentle sir.

LARRY

And?

CODY

You are looking at the next Cassio.

LARRY

That's great. That's a good part.

CODY

It's okay.

LARRY

Aren't you happy about it?

CODY

I should be playing Iago..... you know, the villain..... the ambitious, lieutenant who conspires to destroy Othello. That's more suited to my talents.

LARRY

Kind of full of yourself aren't you?

CODY

Well, I am a born actor.

LARRY

I thought you were a born telemarketer.

CODY

Telephone sales is just how I receive my income until I get my big break. I am, from the top of my head to the soles of my feet – an actor.

LARRY

I'm sure you give quite a performance with a headset on. "Hi, this is Cody Burke from ElectroMedia and I'd like to send you a copy of 'Vanity Fair' as a gift for -"

CODY

Hey! Just yesterday I sold a subscription to a lady by doing my impression of Kevin Spacey doing his impression of Al Pacino.

LARRY

What does that sound like?

CODY

(Pacino-esque)

"I say this is how we must act. I do those things which seem correct to me today. I trust myself. And if security concerns me, I do that which I think today will make me secure."

LARRY

That doesn't sound like Al Pacino.

CODY

It's Kevin Spacey doing Al Pacino.

LARRY

Sounds more like Kevin Costner doing Al Jolson.

CODY

You just don't appreciate real talent.

LARRY

You'd have to show me some first.

CODY

"How foul and loathsome is thine image."

LARRY

If you're so talented, why didn't you get the part you wanted?

CODY

(turns on television)

Same old story. I'm just too pretty. I always play the young lover, never the villain.

LARRY

That's the reason?

CODY

It's a curse. Being attractive can be a real hindrance to the career.

LARRY

I'm sure.

CODY

Have you heard yet?

LARRY

No.

CODY

Not good.

LARRY

I know.

The phone rings – LARRY quickly answers.

LARRY (cont'd)

Hello..... Yes, this is Larry Moore. No, I don't want any magazines, thank you.

(hanging up)

Probably one of your co-workers. A born model. Or born artist.

CODY

Daytime TV is rotten. When are you going to talk Rita into getting cable?

LARRY

That's a battle I lost a long time ago.

CODY

She's still on that –

LARRY

“TV is a waste of time.”

CODY

There's nothing on. It's either Sesame Street or Mr. Rogers.

LARRY

(staring at phone)

I vote for Mr. Rogers.

CODY

That show always creeped me out. I mean, what's a guy named “Mr. McFeely” doing on a kids' show, anyhow?

LARRY

That is spooky.

The phone rings, LARRY quickly answers

LARRY (cont'd)

Hello? ... This is Larry. ...Oh, yes. Thanks. Thank you. Yes. I see..

(taking notes.)

Yesyes.....right.....Um, yeah. Well, I guess I'd better not. Right. Thanks anyway. Goodbye.

CODY

And that was.....?

LARRY

Leonard.

CODY

And...?

LARRY

He wanted me to play a sailor.

CODY

(opening text)

You're playing the sailor?

LARRY

No, I turned it down – it was just a sailor. Leonard's divided the role into two. I would have been Sailor Number One.

CODY

At least it's not Sailor Number Two.

LARRY

Whoopee.

CODY

Act one, scene three. Here it is.

LARRY

(taking script and reading)
 "What Ho! What Ho! What Ho!"

CODY

That's it?

LARRY

Yeah, and those lines are delivered offstage.

CODY

(takes script from LARRY)
 Look, there's more. "The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes –"

LARRY

No, that goes to sailor number two.

CODY

Oh. And you passed that up? "What Ho! What Ho! What Ho!"

LARRY

I'm not going to spend all summer yelling from offstage.

CODY

But it's a part.....

LARRY

I should have been given a bigger role. I thought I nailed it at auditions...

CODY goes into recitation mode, while
 LARRY, not listening ponders the situation.

CODY

(giving his best John Barrymore impression)
 Ah, to suffer the poisoned barbs of rejection,
 To tremble as those horrific sounds cross your ears
 And know that in the master's insightful but limited vision
 Your talent did not shine in perfect clarity.

LARRY

I bet that big guy, Dwayne, got the part.

CODY

To see a stranger take the role
 That was ordained for you alone.

LARRY

Why couldn't Leonard see that my reading was much better? I mean, I had THE attitude.
 I had that edge....

CODY

Who is this rogue who dares to call himself "Director?"
 To stand in judgment of your gifts
 And suspend them in lower balance
 Than those of less worthy mortals?

LARRY

What was he thinking?

CODY

Alas, it is the gesture of ignorance.
 A futile attempt to realize the beauty that stirs within your soul.

LARRY

I would have made a great Othello.

CODY

Or maybe it's just because you're a white boy.

LARRY

Don't you think I'd have been a good Othello?

CODY

Actually I had you pegged for something more demanding, like "Larry Moore starring in
 The Sidney Poitier Story." Or maybe the lead in "Bruce Lee, the Musical."

LARRY

Cut it out.

CODY

I mean, why not? The cast of “Les Miz” wasn’t French.....the guy who played the Elephant Man wasn’t really an elephant.

LARRY

Stop it.

CODY

And of course, there’s always “Cats.”

LARRY

Would you please-

CODY

Why should the fact that you’re almost an Albino keep you from playing the Black Moor of Venice?

LARRY

Alright, already!

CODY

Relax, Larry, most actors think they’re better suited for the role than the director. Though, most actors don’t take it to your extreme...

LARRY

I just thought I’d be great for –

CODY

Hey! Have you ever considered playing Joan of Arc?

LARRY

Stop it!

CODY

Let me check around and see if there’s something else going on that might be suitable for you.

LARRY

Like what?

CODY

Maybe there’s a playwright’s festival or that group over at West Blaylock Park –

LARRY

Not them. Last year they had an eighteen year old kid playing King Lear.

CODY

Then they should welcome you with open arms.

LARRY

Maybe I need a new headshot.

CODY

Of course, that's it! Why didn't I think of that? Leonard probably looked at your photo and said, "Gee, that's too bad – he would have made a great Othello – but not with this headshot. People just might realize we've got a Caucasian Moor."

LARRY

Seriously, I probably need a new one. Who does yours?

CODY

Emerald Photography. Over on 2nd Avenue.

LARRY

Would you bring me one? I want to see it.

CODY

If it makes you feel better. I've gotta run. Give me a call later and I'll tell you what I've found.

LARRY

Okay, but nothing too ridiculous. Alright?

CODY

Ridiculous? Like a white Othello?

CODY exits.

LARRY

(yelling after him)

What Ho! What Ho! What Ho!

LARRY settles back in front of the TV and changes channels and sighs.

LARRY (cont'd)

It's gonna be a long summer.

Blackout.

ACT I

Scene Two

LARRY is still in his pajamas watching television, apparently he hasn't moved all day, though now there are a number of empty soda cans and a pizza box residing on the coffee table next to the old cereal box from scene one. .

LARRY

I don't get it. I can do that..... How did this guy get on TV in the first place? I'm much better than he is.

(changing channels)

Oh, and not this loser.

(yelling at the TV)

The only reason you're in this commercial is because you own the company..... I bet you wouldn't be able to yell "What Ho" from offstage.

(changing channels, then singing)

"Can you tell me how to get – how to get to Sesame Street?" Well, I'll have to concede to Grover. He is a pretty good actor.

CODY enters

CODY

Alas dear friend, I bring glad tidings.

LARRY

Oh, hey.

CODY

What are you watching?

LARRY

Bert and Ernie. What's up?

CODY

I have landed you the role of a lifetime.

LARRY

Really?

CODY

How would you like to be in "The Sound of Music?"

LARRY

Captain von Trapp?

CODY
Not exactly....

LARRY
What?

CODY
Franz...his butler.

LARRY
Franz?

CODY
It's not a bad role. The guy who was cast was just picked up by Immigration - expired green card. It opens in three weeks at the Dogwood Musical Playhouse.

LARRY
A non-singing butler in a musical? A Nazi-sympathizing non-singing butler?

CODY
It's better than "What Ho. What Ho. What Ho."

LARRY
(slumps back into chair, depressed)
Not by much.

CODY
So do you want to part?

LARRY
(weakly)
Yes.

CODY
You start rehearsals tomorrow. Do you still need a copy of my headshot?

LARRY
(takes photo from CODY)
Yeah, thanks. See, this is much better than mine.

CODY
Yeah, but that's because of the face, not the photo.

LARRY throws head shot on desk.

CODY
Better not leave this lying around – the wife will get suspicious.

LARRY

(places photo in file drawer of desk)

You're right. I'll stick it in with my headshots. She won't find it there.

CODY

So come on Franz, get with your butler duties and get me something to drink.

LARRY

Watch it, Prettyboy!

The phone rings, LARRY answers while
CODY exits into kitchen.

LARRY

Yes. Speaking..... Oh, hi. Umm, sure. Yes.....That would be great. No, not at all..... I'm more than happy to..... Right. I'll see you tomorrow morning.

LARRY hangs up – somewhat in shock.

CODY

(returning with drink)

What's up?

LARRY

Well, gentle sir, you can kiss your Franz goodbye!

CODY

What happened?

LARRY

I'm returning to Centennial Park in "Othello, the Moor of Venice."

CODY

What happened?

LARRY

Vince dropped out.

CODY

Vince? Iago?

LARRY

Yeah, he got a screen test in LA and he flies out tonight.

CODY

What Ho.....So they've got to adjust the casting?

LARRY
You got it.

CODY
So they're giving you a bigger role?

LARRY
You got it.

CODY
I wonder who's going to play Iago now.

LARRY
I got it.

CODY
If they bump everybody up, then maybe I'll have – what did you say?

LARRY
I got it. I got the part.

CODY
You're playing Iago?

LARRY
I am playing Iago.

CODY
Really?

LARRY
In faith, gentle squire, I pull not your leg.

CODY
So are you going to do it?

LARRY
Sure, why shouldn't I?

CODY
Aren't you biting off a bit more than you can chew?

LARRY
Hey, how often do you get a chance like this? It'll be a challenge, but how could I ever turn down Iago?

CODY

But you've never had such a big role before. You don't have the experience like some people might.

LARRY

So what? It sure beats "The Sound of Music."

CODY

I just thought that –

LARRY

Are you jealous, Cody?

CODY

No.

LARRY

Are you thinking that you should have been given Iago and I should have been promoted to Sailor #2?

CODY

No, you deserve more than just a sailor-

LARRY

But not Iago. Not the villain - the ambitious, lieutenant who conspires to destroy Othello.

CODY

Hey, I was just concerned that you might be in over your head.

LARRY

Yeah, well maybe I am, but I am loving it. Finally, a decent part.
(singing childishly)

I get to play Iago. I get to play Iago. Not a stupid sailor. Or a German butler.

CODY

So why do you think Leonard gave the part to you?

LARRY

Because he spotted my talent and didn't want it to go unrewarded.

CODY

Right.

LARRY

Obviously, I'm the best man for the job. What other reason could there be?

CODY

Well, it's definitely not because you've been sleeping with the director.

Don't think I wouldn't. LARRY

What? CODY

(jokingly)
A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. LARRY

That's too much for me. CODY

Well, what is too much when it comes to sleeping with cast members? LARRY

Only with the women. CODY

Yeah, all the women. LARRY

Not all of them. CODY

And who did you miss? LARRY

Marlene CODY

She's married. LARRY

Colleen CODY

She's thirty years your senior. LARRY

And Chelsea. CODY

Why not Chelsea? LARRY

Too stuck up. CODY

LARRY

Well, you've had your share.

CODY

But never Leonard. I draw the line at that.

LARRY

Where would you draw the line for a major role on Broadway in the next Neil Simon comedy?

CODY

Neil Simon?

LARRY

Check.

CODY

On Broadway?

LARRY

Check.

CODY

(pause)

I'd sleep with Neil Simon himself.

LARRY

You are a sick puppy.

CODY

A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. Well, dearest Iago, you'd better hit the books. You've gotta learn your lines.

LARRY

Oooo. Rita will get suspicious if she sees me studying.

CODY

You should have thought about that a long time ago, Barrymore. Now you've got a truckload of Shakespeare to learn. Unless you want to go back to being Sailor Number One. You've got his lines down pat.

LARRY

I can study during the day, but I need someone to run lines with me. Rita always did that.

CODY

She's been a pretty supportive wife.

LARRY

Not this time. Maybe I could get up and call you in the middle of the night when she's asleep. And we can run lines over the phone.

CODY

I bet she looks cute when she's sleeping.

LARRY

Yeah, it's that peaceful expression of someone who dreams in binary code.

CODY

What does she do again?

LARRY

She's a systems analyst.

CODY

And what does a systems analyst do?

LARRY

She, um...she analyzes systems.

CODY

That would have been my guess, too.

LARRY

Then you would have been right.

CODY

You mean you don't even know what your wife does for a living?

LARRY

At least she doesn't sell magazines.

CODY

Now that's mature.

LARRY

Nanny nanny boo boo.

CODY gives LARRY a raspberry.

LARRY

So, will you help me with these lines?

CODY

Marry, sir, I shall comply.

LARRY

Thanks. And ...umm...okay, this is kind of embarrassing, but ...umm.. what does “Marry” mean..

CODY

You don’t know?

LARRY

No, I mean I’ve heard it, but what does it mean?

CODY

Do you know how many times Iago says “Marry?”

LARRY

Yes, that’s why I want to know what it means.

CODY

You’re a school teacher. You’re a drama enthusiast. And you don’t know what “Marry” means.

LARRY

You don’t know, either, do you?

CODY

As a matter of fact I do.

LARRY

Really?

CODY

Yeah, I looked it up this morning. It’s an oath – like swearing.

LARRY

It’s a curse word?

CODY

No, you putz. It’s a like an oath. Like when you swear BY something. It’s a religious reference - short for “I swear by the Virgin Mary.” And over the years it just became “Marry.”

LARRY

With two Rs.

CODY

Right.

LARRY

So it has nothing to do with marriage?

CODY

Well, they both involve swearing.....

LARRY

This vocabulary is really confusing.

CODY

You want to do Shakespeare, you're gonna have to use it. Shakespeare equals fancy lingo.

LARRY

Well then, I swear to you my gratitude.

CODY

Marry, rogue, I would not swear in jest.

LARRY

Marry, knave, I swear faithfully.

CODY

Marry, you ass, you know not what you swear.

LARRY

Marry, sir, I-

RITA enters

RITA

Who's Mary?

LARRY

Oh, hi Honey.

CODY

Hi, Rita.

RITA

(noticing LARRY is still wearing pajamas)

Don't tell me you've been here all day. Please, tell me you've gone somewhere and done something.

CODY

I went to work.

LARRY

Yeah, Cody went to work.

CODY

And Larry watched TV.

LARRY

Yeah, and I – hey!

RITA

You guys are pathetic. I brought home Chinese for dinner. Who's Mary?

LARRY

Mary who?

RITA

I don't know; that's why I asked you.

CODY

What's her last name?

RITA

(begins cleaning up after Larry and move towards kitchen)

If I knew, I wouldn't ask. I came in and you're talking about Mary. But if you don't want to talk about it, then that's quite all right with me.

CODY

Okay.

LARRY

No, we... umm....

(wanting to divert suspicion)

were just talking about Mary.

RITA

Mary who?

LARRY

I...um... I can't remember her last name. Do you remember her last name, Cody?

CODY

No, Larry, I can't really remember her last name.

RITA goes into the kitchen, gets silverware and begins to set table. Throughout the next passage she moves back and forth from the kitchen preparing the meal.

LARRY

She's an actress...um....Yes, she's an actress. In a play that Cody did last year.

CODY
Remember when I did “Much Ado About Nothing?”

RITA
Yes.

LARRY
She was in that play.

CODY
Right she was ...umm... the uh.... she played ...a...she was one of thea...

RITA
Women?

CODY
Right.

RITA
I’m thinking that “Much Ado About Nothing” is going on here in my living room.

LARRY
Ah, that’s funny.

CODY
What a witty lass!

RITA
Are you staying for dinner Cody?

CODY
No, I’ve got to run. Got to study.

RITA
Study?

LARRY
Cody’s in a play.

RITA glares at LARRY.

LARRY (cont’d)
I said “Cody,” not “Larry.”

RITA
Which show is this?

CODY
Othello. In Centennial Park.

RITA
Oh, that'll be fun. Which role are you playing? Iago?

CODY
No, some other guy got that part.

RITA
That's too bad.

LARRY
Cody is playing Cassio. The young lover. The pretty one.

RITA
That's a good role.

CODY
Yes, but it's not Iago. I would have been a great Iago.

RITA
I bet you would. I've never seen a good Iago before. It seems that Iago is always played by some loser who mugs at the audience through the whole play.

CODY
Yes, that's the case this time, too.

RITA
Really, that's too bad.

LARRY
I'm sure this Iago will be fine.

CODY
He's just way too inexperienced.

LARRY
I bet he'll be great.

RITA
Do you know him, Larry?

LARRY
No! No, I don't. I couldn't know him.

CODY

Well, trust me, he's going to be a big let down.

LARRY

I think he'll be great.

CODY

And how would you know?

LARRY

I just have a feeling.

CODY

Well, think what you will, but he's in way over his head. I've got to go. I'll see you two later.

RITA

Bye, Cody.

LARRY

I'll talk to you later.

CODY

Right.

CODY exits. LARRY and RITA sit down to eat.

RITA

Well, it'll be good to see Cody on stage again.

LARRY

Yeah.

RITA

Too bad he didn't get the part of Iago. He would have been great.

LARRY

Yeah.

RITA

That's the breaks, I guess. Sometimes the best man for the part doesn't get it.

LARRY

Right So Honey..... just what does a systems analyst do?

Blackout.

ACT I

Scene Three

Lights up on CODY watching TV. He is obviously annoyed with LARRY, who is offstage running lines.

LARRY

(offstage)

“And what was he?
 Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
 A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;
 That never set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle knows
 More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoretic,
 Wherein the toged consuls can propose
 As masterly as he:
 (enters still dressing)
 mere prattle, without practise,
 Is all his soldiership.”
 That's you – Florentine.

CODY

Yeah, whatever. When's Chelsea going to be here?

LARRY

Any minute now.

CODY

You're lucky she agreed to do this – she rarely has the time of day for anyone else.

LARRY

She's probably just enamored with my talent.

CODY

Would you give it a rest?

LARRY

I would have thought you'd have outgrown your jealousy by now.

CODY

Oh, I have. Six rehearsals and you've shown me I have no reason to be jealous.

LARRY

“We cannot all be masters, nor all masters cannot be truly follow'd.”

CODY

You have no idea what you're talking about, do you?

LARRY

First, you're jealous of me because I got the part of Iago. And now you're jealous of me because Chelsea is coming over to run lines with me and she wouldn't even give you the time of day.

CODY

Why should I care about Chelsea?

LARRY

Because she doesn't care for you....but she obviously likes me.

CODY

So? We all know that your wife is much nicer than Chelsea anyhow.

LARRY

You think so?

CODY

You're a lucky man to be married to her.

LARRY

I guess. Sometimes I think she just puts up with me.

CODY

I would think you'd be a lot to put up with.

LARRY

No, not that. It's justlike we got into a routine. The passionate flames aren't burning anymore. Just kind of the steady warmth of a space heater.

CODY

So what did you do to ruin it?

LARRY

Me? You think I'm the problem?

CODY

Look, Rita is smart, attractive, got a good sense of humor. That's the kind of woman that every guy wants. You, on the other hand.....

LARRY

So are you jealous because she's married to me, too?

CODY

Oh, give me a break.

LARRY

Cody, you've got to part ways with that big green monster.

CODY

What?

LARRY

The big green monster. Envy.

CODY

No, Larry, that's the green-eyed monster. Act three, scene three. The green monster is the left field wall at Fenway Park.

LARRY

Don't be so picky.

CODY

You're right, I apologize. William Shakespeare – Carl Yastrzemski, what's the difference?

LARRY

Shakespeare couldn't hit an inside fastball.

CODY

Has Rita figured out what you've got going on?

LARRY

She doesn't suspect a thing. Plus, I'm really good at diverting attention. I have this big kiss-up strategy which keeps her off her guard.

CODY

How's that?

LARRY

First, I start by making dinner and having it ready for her when she comes home.

CODY

Okay.

LARRY

Speaking of which, do you know how to use a meat thermometer? I wanted to roast a turkey. Rita really likes turkey.

CODY

Sorry, man, can't help there.

LARRY

Anyhow, I started making dinner for her and then every once in a while – here’s the key – not in any predictable pattern, I bring home flowers for her.

CODY

I’m underwhelmed.

LARRY

Hey, it works. And then, to top that off, I buy her an expensive gift – for no reason at all.

CODY

Except to hide your guilt. What did you get her? Jewelry?

LARRY

A gold plated pen.

CODY

A writing instrument?

LARRY goes to desk and pulls out pen.

LARRY

That’s the kind of thing that Rita likes. She likes practical gifts.

CODY

You are a lucky man.

LARRY

(giving pen to CODY)

I had it engraved.

CODY

“To my Hottie hyphen Sweetie.” What the hell were you thinking?

LARRY

(takes pen back and returns it to desk.)

It’s a joke. You know, a play on words. Rita really likes hot and sour soup, so I call her my Hottie-Sweetie. She likes that kind of stuff.

CODY

With your lack of taste, you’re lucky she hasn’t left you already.

SOUND: Doorbell.

LARRY

There’s Chelsea.

CODY answers door – CHELSEA enters.

CHELSEA
Hello, Cody. Hi Larry.

CODY
Hi.

LARRY
Hi.

CHELSEA
So where do you want to start?

LARRY
Act three, scene three.

CHELSEA
Oh, the hanky scene. Okay, let's see....um...where do I know you from Larry? Have we worked together before?

LARRY
No, not us.

CODY
You might remember Larry from "Midsummernight's Dream" two years ago, over at West Blaylock.

LARRY
I played Bottom, the weaver.

CHELSEA
Oh, that must be it. Yes, Bottom. You were funny.

LARRY
I was?

CHELSEA
Yes, I can't remember laughing so hard in all my life.

LARRY
Hear that, Cody?
(to CHELSEA)
So you really liked my acting, huh?

CHELSEA
Oh, it was mainly your costume. It looked so stupid. You cracked me up.

CODY
I'm going to get something to eat. I'll be back in an hour.

LARRY

Sure.

CODY exits.

CHELSEA

Okay, this is where Emilia offers the handkerchief to Iago.

LARRY

What's that all about?

CHELSEA

The handkerchief belongs to Desdemona, but actually Othello gave it to her. It is a piece of great sentiment to him – haven't you read this, Larry?

LARRY

Uh...yeah. I just wanted to refresh my memory.

CHELSEA

Okay so, Iago, that's you, wants to get the hankie and then tell Othello that he got it from Cassio, and that Cassio must have gotten it from Desdemona, making Othello think that Desdemona has been, like, you know, cheating on him with Cassio.

LARRY

Right, I knew that.

CHELSEA

Go ahead.

LARRY

"How now! what do you here alone?"

CHELSEA

"Do not you chide; I have a thing for you."

LARRY

"A thing – "

CHELSEA

No, just a moment. Let me do that again."Do not you chide; I have a thing for you." No. Just a minute. "Do not YOU chide; I have a thing for you." No, that's not right. "Do not you CHIDE; I have a thing for you." No. "DO not you chide; I have a thing for you." Yes, that's it. "DO not you chide; I have a thing for you." Okay, your line.

LARRY

Umm... "A thing for me? it is a common thing—"

CHELSEA
 “Ha!”

LARRY
 “To have a –“

CHELSEA
 Just a minute. “Ha!” mmmm “HA!” No..... “hA!”..... “Ha!” “Ha!”
“Ha!” Okay, your line.

LARRY
 “To have a foolish wife.”

CHELSEA
 “Oh, is that all? What will you –“ No, wait. “What WILL you –“ No. “Oh, is
 that all? What will YOU –“

LARRY
 Umm, Chelsea, I was just thinking. Maybe we should just .. um ... you know...just run
 the lines. Not to get the meaning perfect, but just to... um... get them in the right order.

CHELSEA
 Really?

LARRY
 Yeah, that way after we have them down pat, we can go back and make sure we get the
 right emphasis on each line. Or word. Or syllable.

CHELSEA
 Okay.

LARRY
 I’ll start. “ How now! What do you here alone?”

CHELSEA
 (in total monotone)
 “Do-not-you-chide- have-a-thing-for-you.”

LARRY
 “A thing for me? it is a common thing—“

CHELSEA
 (wanders around room looking at furnishings)
 “Ha.”

LARRY
 “To have a foolish wife.”

CHELSEA

“O-is-that-all-what-will-you-give-me-now-for-the-same-handkerchief.”

LARRY

“What handkerchief?”

CHELSEA

“What handkerchief” Oh isn’t that funny? We both say “What handkerchief?” Okay.
(regaining her composure)

“What handkerchief? Why-that-the-Moor-first-gave-to-Desdemona-that-which-so-often-you-did-bid-me-steal.”

LARRY

“Hast stol'n it from her?”

CHELSEA

“No, 'faith; she-let-it-drop-by-negligence-and-to-the-advantage-I-being-here-took't-up-look-here-it-is.”

LARRY

“A good wench; give it me.”

CHELSEA

Oh....that was good, Larry - you do that really well. It's sounds really evil.

LARRY

Oh, thanks.

CHELSEA

Oh yeah, my line. “What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest to have me filch it?”

LARRY

What does “filch it” mean?

CHELSEA

I don't know – sounds dirty.....maybe it means to steal.

LARRY

That would make sense. Okay. “Why, what's that to you?”

CHELSEA

“If it be not for some purpose of import, Give't me again: poor lady, she'll run mad when she shall lack it.” That was good. Do you want to do it some more?

LARRY

(checking watch)

I need to get that turkey in the oven. Do you know how to use a meat thermometer?

CHELSEA

Sure. I've used them before. Which way to the kitchen?

LARRY

In here, thanks. I'm trying to roast a turkey.

CHELSEA

A turkey? In this weather?

LARRY

It's my wife's favorite.

CHELSEA and LARRY exit through kitchen door. Soon after RITA enters through front door, talking on cell phone.

RITA

Yes, I know what "crash" means. Marty, I'll be there in twenty minutes..... I'm at home.....Yes, I keep the back up disks here..... No, if the office ever goes up in flames, we'll always have a back up that's safe...

RITA exits through hallway without being heard by CHELSEA and LARRY.

CHELSEA

(offstage)

Okay, this one has a temperature gage on it. Some just have this little button that pops out.

LARRY

(offstage)

So where do you put it. I tried to put it under the tongue, but I don't think this bird has one.

CHELSEA

(offstage)

Don't be silly. They've cut off the head - of course it doesn't have a tongue.

LARRY

(offstage)

Watch how you hold that.

RITA returns with back-up disks in hand.

CHELSEA

(offstage)

"Do not chide, I have a thing for you."

RITA stops and listens.

LARRY

(offstage)

“A thing for me? it is a common thing to have a foolish wife.”

CHELSEA

(offstage)

“O, is that all? What will you give me now?”

LARRY

(offstage)

So do I just stick it in?

CHELSEA

(offstage)

Right. “You have been so earnest to filch me.” No, harder. Yes, that’s it.

LARRY

(offstage, triumphantly)

What Ho! Marry, you are a handy one. What do you think?

CHELSEA

(offstage)

That’s great. You’re just so wicked. I mean, I always thought your Bottom was great, but this is fantastic.

RITA fuming, exits and slams the door.

LARRY

(offstage)

What was that?

LARRY and CHELSEA enter.

CHELSEA

It sounded like the door.

LARRY

Cody? There’s nobody here.

CHELSEA

Must have been the wind or something.

LARRY

Must be. Thanks for the help with the meat thermometer.

CHELSEA

No problem. I may be an actress, but I'm not like that far removed from everyday life.

LARRY

So should we run these lines again?

CHELSEA

Sure. Go ahead. You start.

LARRY

"How now! what do you here alone?"

CHELSEA

"Do not you chide; I have a thing for you."

LARRY

"A thing –"

CHELSEA

No wait. That's wrong. "Do not you CHIDE; I have a thing for you." No. Just a minute.
"DO not you chide; I have a thing for you." No.

Lights fade to black as CHELSEA
continues.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

"Do not YOU chide; I have a thing for YOU." Okay, your line.

ACT IScene Four

SOUND: Doorbell. RITA enters from the hallway and opens the door. LYONS is standing in the doorway. He is dressed casually, a polo shirt and slacks. He is a modern investigator and does NOT wear a suit and fedora. He is all business – no sense of humor.

Rita Moore? LYONS

Yes. RITA

Mitchell Lyons, Missing Link Investigations. LYONS

Oh, please, come in. RITA

LYONS enters.

I'm sorry – I'm a little late. LYONS

That's all right. RITA

So I understand you've had trouble with a stalker. Somebody giving you a little unwanted attention? Following you around? Calling you in the middle of the night? Now, what kind of person is the stalker? Jilted lover? Ex-husband? Creepy neighbor? LYONS

No, I'm not concerned about a stalker, the reason I called is because of my husband – RITA

Oh, okay, now that makes sense. The husband. . So, this husband of yours – he's having trouble with a stalker. Did he fire somebody who now wants revenge? An old classmate getting back for being bullied in high school? Illegitimate son of a jilted lover? LYONS

No. I didn't call about a stalker. RITA

LYONS

Ohhhh, I understand. You don't want to say anything because this stalker might have bugged your home ...

(looking around room for bugs)

...and you're concerned that he might exact some penalty for revealing his identity to the authorities. Kidnap your children. Terrorize your pets. Scare an elderly relative.

RITA

No, Mr. Lyons there is no stalker.

LYONS

Really?

RITA

Honest.

LYONS

Well, that's strange. I mean that's my specialty – stalkers. You ask anybody at the agency, they'll say "Mitchell Lyons? He knows all about stalkers." Yes, ma'am, I know it all: surveillance - restraining orders. I'm just a regular stalker-stopper.

RITA

Well, I don't have a stalker.

LYONS

Oh.... That's too bad, because I'm really good with stalkers.

RITA

Look, Mr. Lyons, perhaps you're not the right man for the job.

LYONS

Oh, no, I'm the man for the job. That's me. Mitchell Lyons - the man for the job. You ask anyone down at the agency, they'll say "Mitchell Lyons - he's the man for the job." That's my middle name even. Mitchell "The Man for the Job" Lyons. In fact, it says that right here on my business card. Let me give you one.

LYONS hands RITA his card which she reads.

LYONS (cont'd)

See there. Mitchell Lyons - the man for the job.

RITA

It doesn't say that.

LYONS

It doesn't?

(takes card, examines it and returns it to pocket)

Well, it should. Because that's me. Mitchell Lyons - the man for the job. It's mostly due to my keen sense of observation. I notice things that most people never see. For instance, I can see that you've spilled coffee on your blouse.

RITA

(examining blouse to find stain)

Actually, that's pretty obvious.

LYONS

But how many people would realize that it was a Colombian blend with artificial sweetener and nondairy creamer.

RITA

I drink my coffee black.

LYONS

Oh. Well it is Colombian, though?

RITA

Don't know - don't care. Okay, let's assume that you are the man for the job -

LYONS

Oh, you don't have to assume. It's a fact. Mitchell Lyons, he's the man for the job.

RITA

Mr. Lyons, my husband is cheating on me.

LYONS

Oh. I'm sorry. That's a terrible thing, you know, marital infidelity. I'm sorry to hear that. I'm sure it probably had something to do with the pressure on your marriage from having a stalker.

RITA

There is no stalker!

LYONS

Oh.... right. No stalker. Yes, that's terrible, and of course, your husband has broken his wedding vows, traipsing around behind your back with the secretarial pool and an occasional night club chanteuse. Just dreadful..... So....um..... let's get to the point, shall we? No need to beat around the bush - what can I do for you?

RITA

Mr. Lyons, like I said before, my husband is cheating on me.

LYONS

Yes...I heard that.

RITA

Can you help me?

LYONS

And, um.... What would you like me to do?

RITA

Could you investigate?

LYONS

You want me to check up on your husband?

RITA

Right. Find out who she is. How long it's been going on. Find out WHAT has been going on.

LYONS

Okay.....um... I guess I can do that.

RITA

Great.

LYONS

Sure.

RITA

Good.

(long pause)

Do you want to ask some questions?

LYONS

Oh, yes, well I suppose I should.

(opening notebook)

Okay, so ...um....

(looking for pen – can't find one)

Excuse me. I hate to inconvenience you, but may I borrow a pen? I seem to have misplaced mine.

RITA

Sure.

(goes to desk and gets gold pen, returns and hands it to LYONS)

Here.

LYONS

Thank you. So, exactly when did you suspect that your husband was ..um... you know...

RITA
About a week ago.

LYONS
And what made you suspect this?

RITA
I would wake up in the middle of the night and hear him in the living room talking on the phone.

LYONS
Mmmm.....That's typical.

RITA
Then yesterday I came home from work in the middle of the day, and I overheard him talking to a woman in the kitchen.

LYONS
In here?

LYONS opens kitchen door and looks in.

RITA
Yes.

LYONS
(peering into kitchen)
Yes. It's possible for two people to hold a conversation in there.

RITA
Yes.

LYONS
Did you hear what they were saying?

RITA
Well, he told her that he had a foolish wife –

LYONS
That would be you.

RITA
Yes, and –

LYONS
You don't seem to be foolish.

RITA

Thank you. She was talking about how naughty he was. That he was wicked and she wanted him to give it to her. Oh, and that she liked his bottom.

LYONS

And does your husband have a particularly nice derriere?

RITA

Umm.....It's okay.

LYONS

I see. So who was this woman?

RITA

I don't know. I think he called her Mary.

LYONS

Mary who?

RITA

I have no idea.

LYONS

What did she look like?

RITA

I didn't see her.

LYONS

You didn't see her?

RITA

No.

LYONS

Let's see, you were out here. Exactly where?

RITA

(goes and stands in the place where she overheard the conversation.)

Here.

LYONS

(pointing at the kitchen)

And they were in there?

RITA

Right.

LYONS
And you didn't see them?

RITA
No.

LYONS
And they didn't see you?

RITA
I don't think so.

LYONS
You didn't rush in to find out who it was?

RITA
No.

LYONS
You didn't attack your husband's mistress with carving knife or a plastic spatula?

RITA
No.

LYONS
You didn't flail away at your husband with a pepper grinder or a garlic press?

RITA
No.

LYONS
Very unusual..... The natural reaction is to burst in and confront these individuals who are humiliating you by flagrantly displaying their infidelity within the proximity of where you prepare your family meals..... Are you sure you didn't try to hurt them?

RITA
Yes, I'm sure. Ijust got upset and left.

LYONS
Puzzling. Most of the time the jilted wife rushes in to find her husband with his hands on the soft, creamy flesh of a younger woman and then launches into a tirade that usually ends with one or more of the adulterers on the way to Intensive Care.

RITA
Really?

LYONS

Oh, yes. I once heard of an investment banker whose wife bludgeoned him to death with a cupcake pan.

(pauses to think)

You realize that contradicts the typical behavior patterns of an American female of your particular demographic.

RITA

Well, that's what happened.

LYONS

(pacing and pondering, speaking softly to himself)

Hmmm..... Why didn't the wife get upset and storm the kitchen? Why didn't she sneak a peek through the doorway? Why didn't she react naturally? Unless –

(turning to confront RITA)

Unless you, yourself, have something to hide.

RITA

Oh, please! I hired you to investigate my husband – not me.

LYONS

Right. My apologies. So where does your husband work?

RITA

Johnson Elementary. He's a school teacher.

LYONS

But it's summer. School is out - there's no need for teachers now. Are you sure that your husband has been telling you the truth? He may be using that as a cover story.

RITA

Of course he's not teaching now. He's off on summer vacation.

LYONS

What has he been doing during this alleged time off?

RITA

Just enjoying his vacation.

LYONS

No employment? Special projects?

RITA

Just a few chores.

LYONS

Too much idle time – not good. A man with too much time on his hands, often wants to put his hands where they don't belong. So where does your husband spend his time?

RITA

Sometimes he hangs out with his actor friends - the coffee shop on the corner, the softball field - a lot of the time he just hangs around here.

LYONS

Here?

RITA

Yes.

LYONS

In this house?

RITA

Yes, he lives here.

LYONS

(begins looking around as though someone might be hiding , listening in)
Mrs. Moore, it is very dangerous for us to be meeting in a place that your husband frequents –he might associate me with you and then that could compromise the entire investigation.

RITA

Well, he won't be here today. He's helping some friends build sets for a play at Centennial Park.

LYONS

All right..... I'll set up surveillance on your husband. Determine what he does with his time, where he goes, with whom he associates.

RITA

Great. Look, I really need to get back to the office.

LYONS

Certainly. Just one more thing – do you have a photograph of your husband?

RITA

Yes, right here.

RITA goes to desk and removes the file of head shots. SOUND: Cell Phone. RITA hands the folder to LYONS, removes phone from purse, and answers it.

RITA (cont'd)

Excuse me.

(in the phone)

Hello..... yes, Marty. Just a minute.

(to LYONS)

Just take one of the photos in there.

(in the phone)

What now, Marty?

During the conversation, LYONS removes CODY's headshot from the folder and returns the folder to the desk drawer. RITA has her back to him and does not see the photo. LYONS places the photo inside his notebook and places gold pen in his pocket.

RITA

Right..... Sure..... She did what?.....Great, okay, let me think..... I assume you've tried to re-boot....No? Well then do it..... Sure, I'll wait.

(to LYONS)

Did you get the photo?

LYONS

Yes, nice looking man. No wonder the ladies are after him.

RITA

Thanks a lot.

LYONS

Oh, sorry. Um ... I'll be in touch with you.

RITA

Okay.

LYONS

I'll just let myself out.

RITA

Right. Thanks.

(back to phone)

Okay, now what does the screen say?.....

LYONS exits.

RITA

Good. Okay, hit control-alt-delete ...Good..... Administrator

(beginning to unbutton her blouse)

.....A-D-M-I-N-I-S-T-R-A-T-O-R.Right..... capital G - Seven - Three - Two -
Lowercase R - Seven - Nine - Capital W - Four - Lowercase Q. Have you got
that?..... Good. Press enter. What does the screen say?.....Good.
That should do it. Alright, I'll be back in the office in thirty minutes. Right.

RITA hangs up, returns cell phone to purse,
and rushes through the hallway door,
removing her blouse as she goes. CODY
enters.

CODY

Larry? Larry?

He goes to the TV and turns it on. RITA
returns wearing a new blouse, buttoning it
up and tucking it in as she enters.

RITA

Cody! What are you doing here?

CODY

Looking for Larry. What are... uh...I didn't expect to find you home.

RITA

Oh, yes, I ... I just needed to change my blouse, so I came home. To do that.

CODY

Oh.....Well, I ..just.. is Larry here?.

RITA

I thought he was with you. Building sets for your play.

CODY

Oh, right! Actually I wasn't building the sets. Larry was ... umhelping some of the
other guys. I've never been very good with the whole hammer and nails thing.

RITA

Then he's probably over at the Park. Look Cody. I need to get back to work. I'll see
you later.

RITA rushes past him and out the door.
CODY pauses for a moment.

LIGHTS FADE OUT

ACT I

Scene Five

CHELSEA and LARRY are rehearsing.

CHELSEA

“Do not you chide, I have a thing for you.”

LARRY

“A thing for me? it is a common thing—“

CHELSEA

“Ha.”

LARRY

“To have a foolish wife.”

CHELSEA

“O, is that all? What will you give me now for the same ha-A-nd-KER-chief?” Okay, what was it Leonard said about the handkerchief?

LARRY

It was about your pronunciation of the word.

CHELSEA

And what’s wrong with that?

LARRY

I don’t think he likes the little musical flair you put into it.

CHELSEA

What musical flair?

LARRY

When you say ha-A-nd-KER-chief.

CHELSEA

I say it like that?

LARRY

Yeah.

CODY

(offstage in kitchen)

You guys sure you don’t want anything?

LARRY

No thanks.

Say it again. CHELSEA

Ha-A-nd-KER-chief. LARRY

(offstage)
Ha- A-nd-KER-chief. CODY

Ha-A-nd-KER-chief? CHELSEA

CODY and LARRY

Right!

CHELSEA
Okay try it again. “O, is that all? What will you give me now for the same handkerchief?”

LARRY
Good. “What handkerchief?”

CHELSEA
“What handkerchief?”

CODY
(offstage)
Much better.

CHELSEA
Thank you. “Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona; That which so often you did bid me steal.”

LARRY
“Hast stol'n it from her?”

CHELSEA
“No, 'faith; she let it drop by negligence. And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up. Look, here it is.”

CODY enters from kitchen with sandwich.

LARRY
“A good wench; give it me.”
(takes sandwich from CODY)
And good sir, give me a bite.

LARRY takes a bite and gives it back to
CODY.

CHELSEA

“What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest to have me filch it?”

LARRY

(with a mouth full of food)

“Why, what's that to you?”

CODY

(answering LARRY)

Twas my sandwich, knave!

CODY sits on sofa next to CHELSEA.

CHELSEA

“If it be not for some purpose of import, Give't me again: poor lady, she'll run mad when she shall lack it.”

LARRY

“Be not acknown on 't; I have use for it. Go, leave me.” Anybody want some chips?

LARRY exits into kitchen.

CODY

Yeah, chips would be great.

CHELSEA

Do you have the fat free, reduced calorie, organically grown kind?

LARRY

(offstage)

Don't think so.

CHELSEA

I don't want anything cooked in animal fat – are they cooked in safflower oil?

LARRY enters with a bag of chips as the
front door opens and RITA enters.

LARRY

This is what we've got. Take it or leave it.

LARRY sees RITA and freezes. CODY pushes CHELSEA onto the floor between the sofa and the coffee table.

LARRY

Hi honey. Want some chips?

CHELSEA starts to rise.

CHELSEA

Wha-

CODY puts his hand over CHELSEA's mouth and shoves her back down.

RITA

No thanks, I just need to get something.

CODY

Hi, Rita. How are you?

RITA

Hi Cody.

RITA exits through hallway.

CODY

(quietly)
What now?

CODY helps up CHELSEA.

LARRY

She can't see Chelsea.

CHELSEA

What the hell are you doing?

CODY

She can't know that you're here. Larry will get in trouble.

CODY pushes CHELSEA into the closet and shuts the door as RITA enters and heads toward closet.

RITA

Larry, have you seen my black portfolio?

LARRY

No. Not recently. I mean –it’s not in there.

RITA

No?

LARRY

No, I just looked through there. I was looking for my tennis racquet – to play tennis – and I didn’t see any portfolio at all. You know, I bet it’s in the kitchen. Why don’t you check in there?

LARRY moves RITA toward the kitchen as
CODY pulls CHELSEA out of the closet.

RITA

Why would it be in the kitchen?

RITA turns around midway and heads
toward the desk.

RITA

Maybe it’s in the desk.

CODY shoves CHELSEA back behind the
sofa. As RITA nears the desk, CODY pulls
CHELSEA up and pushes her toward
LARRY. LARRY grabs CHELSEA and
pushes her into the kitchen. RITA checks
the desk drawers.

RITA

Not here. Maybe it IS in the kitchen.

LARRY

No. Not in the kitchen.

RITA

Didn’t you say you thought it was in the kitchen?

LARRY

Yes, but that was probably a stupid idea. It’s probably in the closet.

LARRY escorts RITA to the closet.

RITA

I thought you said you looked in there and didn’t find a portfolio.

LARRY

Yes but I didn't find the tennis racquet, either, so that shows what a lousy looker I am.

RITA looks in closet. CODY jerks CHELSEA out of the kitchen and pushes her down the hall.

LARRY

Did you find it?

RITA

No.

LARRY

Well, the only place left is the kitchen.

RITA looks at LARRY suspiciously and goes into kitchen. CODY pulls CHELSEA from the hallway and pushes her toward the front door.

RITA

(offstage)
Not in here, either.

CODY, realizing he can't get CHELSEA out in time, swings her back into the hallway as RITA enters from the kitchen.

RITA

Maybe it's in the trunk of the car.

CODY

That's where I would have put it.

RITA

Okay, see you guys later.

CODY

Have a nice day.

LARRY

Oh, honey, I was wondering, where is the gold pen I got you last week?

RITA

The what?

LARRY
The gold pen. The one I got you.

RITA
It should be in the desk.

LARRY
But it's not – I looked.

RITA
Well.....I probably left it at work.

LARRY
I didn't realize you took it to work.

RITA
Of course. I wanted to show it off.

LARRY
Oh, okay. Well, have a nice day.

RITA
What's that smell?

LARRY
What smell?

RITA
Smells like air freshener or perfume.

LARRY
I don't smell anything

CODY
Me neither.

RITA
You guys aren't using girly deodorant again are you?

LARRY
Not me

CODY
Me neither.

RITA
Whatever. I've gotta go.

Bye

LARRY

Bye.

CODY

RITA exits.

CODY

That was way too close.

LARRY

Tell me about it. I don't even know what a portfolio is.

CODY

So what's up with her, anyhow? She seems kind of touchy.

LARRY

She's been really short-tempered lately, like I've done something wrong. Again. I'm afraid to ask. Maybe I'd better increase throttle on the kiss-up program.

CHELSEA

(offstage)

Can I come out now?

LARRY

Oh, sure. Sorry.

CHELSEA

(entering)

So what the hell was that all about? I haven't been bounced around that much since college.

CODY

Rita couldn't see you here. It would have gotten Larry in trouble.

CHELSEA

Why? Doesn't she like you to share your chips with your friends?

LARRY

Rita doesn't know I'm in the play. If she saw you here then she'd think something was up.

CHELSEA

So I'm not even supposed to be here?

LARRY

Yeah, and your perfume almost got us in trouble.

CHELSEA

What was that about girly deodorant?

CODY

Long story –.

LARRY

Cody once went to an audition but had run out of deodorant, so he borrowed Rita's. He got a call back, but only because they liked the way he smelled.

CHELSEA

You guys are weird. Why didn't you tell her you were doing the play?

CODY

Even longer story – she would kill Larry if she found out.

CHELSEA

You guys make her sound like some kind of troll.

LARRY

Sometimes I wonder –

CHELSEA

Larry! Don't you think the way she treats you reflects on the way you treat her?

LARRY

She just seems so complicated.

CHELSEA

Women aren't that different from men.

“Have not we affections, Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?

Then let them use us well: else let them know, The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.”

CODY

Don't you just hate it when she quotes Shakespeare to emphasize a point?

LARRY

You're just jealous because she actually knows her lines, not like some prettyboy Cassio.

CODY

What ho, you jackass!

Blackout. End of ACT ONE

To read the rest of the play, contact Dave@drichardtucker.com