



R. Eugene Jackson

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WHINING 'N' DINING AT THE SNACK 'N' YAK

COMEDY. Mr. Crisper has left Zooney in charge of his diner while he is out of town at an enchilada convention. Zooney soon realizes that keeping the Snack 'n' Yak running smoothly isn't so easy. Not only does she have to deal with a waitress who thinks everyone is stealing her tips and a cook obsessed with watching "Oprah," but she soon discovers there's no food in the kitchen. Then a host of unruly customers arrive including a lady who keeps smuggling live chickens into the diner, a pair of accident-prone grannies, a man who claims a spoon leapt into his throat while he was dining, and a mob of tourists who storm the café and make a mad rush for the bathrooms.

Performance Time: Approximately 90 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(4 M, 13 F, 7 flexible, opt. extras)

(With doubling: 4 M, 13 F, 2 flexible)

ZOOEY (Pronounced ZEW-ee): Snack 'n' Yak restaurant hostess; wears a dress or slacks and top.

LOWELL: Zooney's computer-geek boyfriend who carries around a gigantic cup of cola; wears casual clothes.

DETECTIVE MGGLFFOZZBNSHSSSH: Bumbling detective; wears an ill-fitting suit with a huge badge hanging from a string around his neck or pinned to his lapel; flexible. (Note: the name isn't meant to be pronounced but rather garbled, tongue-twisted, mangled, and sputtered.)

LILLIAN: Waitress who thinks everyone is stealing her tips; wears a colorful shirt, black pants or a skirt, and an apron with a pocket.

KENDRA: Waitress in desperate need of change; wears a colorful shirt, black pants or a skirt, and an apron with a pocket.

AMBROSIA: Sassy cook ("clarified tchef") who likes to watch TV talk shows; wears a chef's hat and apron.

JUNE: Customer weak with hunger who has been waiting days to order.

MR. CRISPER: Flighty owner of the Snack 'n' Yak who is obsessed with enchiladas; wears a suit and tie.

MRS. CRISPER: Mr. Crisper's wife whose main goal in life is having her nails done; wears a nice dress or suit.

ISABEL: Elderly customer who claims she fell and broke her ankle in front of the Snack 'n' Yak; she is on crutches, though no part of her leg or foot is bandaged.

AVA: Loud, elderly customer who is in cahoots with Isabel and trying to sue the Snack 'n' Yak.

ALICE: Customer who smuggles live chickens into the Snack 'n' Yak.

MELINDA: Attorney who is trying to sue the Snack 'n' Yak by claiming a spoon leapt into her husband's throat when he was dining.

JOHN: Melinda's meek, mild-mannered husband and spoon victim.

JAMES: Customer who complains that the Snack 'n' Yak serves diners with used plastic dinnerware; wears a coat with pockets.

PATSY: James' wife.

FLORA: Teenage customer who is served leftover food.

COCO: Flora's friend.

SMILEY MOONBEAM: Mayor who always has a false smile plastered across his face; wears a suit (carries a purse if female); flexible.

TOUR DIRECTOR: Wears a whistle on a string around her neck and carries an unrolled umbrella; flexible.

TOURIST 1-4: Wear casual clothing (sandals, Bermuda shorts, T-shirts, sunglasses); flexible.

EXTRAS: As Tourists and Diners.

OPTIONS FOR DOUBLING:

MRS. CRISPER/TOUR DIRECTOR

FLORA/TOURIST 1

COCO/TOURIST 2

ALICE/TOURIST 3

MR. CRISPER/TOURIST 4

NOTE: The names of the characters may be changed to reflect the ethnic makeup of the cast. For flexible roles, change the pronouns in the script accordingly.

SETTING

The Snack 'n' Yak Café, a modest café in South Florida.

SET

The dining area of the Snack 'n' Yak Café. There are four tables with accompanying chairs onstage. Tables 1 and 2 are at USR and DSR respectively. Tables 3 and 4 are at USL and DSL respectively. The tables should be staggered so that they are visible to the audience. At far SR is the entrance to the outside of the restaurant, and there is a hostess station upstage of it. At far SL is the entrance to the kitchen.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I: Snack 'n' Yak Café, 2 p.m.

Intermission

ACT II: Snack 'n' Yak Café, three days later.

PROPS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 2 large buns on a plate | Wrapped hamburger in a bag |
| 2 half-full glasses of tea | Huge police badge on a string |
| Menus | Live chicken (opt.) |
| Plastic knives, forks, spoons | 5 Sets of handcuffs |
| Used dishes for two | Large tote or bag with a "chicken" inside |
| 2 Business cards | Orange prison jumpsuit adorned with bows, ruffles, etc., for Kendra |
| Purse, for Melinda | Purse and wallet, for Flora |
| Legal papers | Purse and wallet, for Coco |
| Restaurant bills | Money in bills |
| Tray of food | Plate of half-eaten food |
| 10 one-dollar bills | Whistle on a string |
| Dishcloth or towel | Umbrella |
| Crutches | Purse, for Melinda |
| Small camera or camera phone | 5 Contracts |
| Napkins | Stainless steel spoon |
| Spatula | 10 Lollipops |
| Suitcase | Watch, for Mrs. Crisper |
| Plane ticket | Purse with some lollipops inside, for Mrs. Crisper |
| Watch, for Mr. Crisper | Large knife |
| Food trays | Men's handkerchief |
| Tray of dirty dishes | Bowl of soup |
| Paper lunch bag | Sombrero, for Mrs. Crisper |
| 2 Wrapped bologna sandwiches | 5 Tiny sombreros to attach to Mrs. Crisper's nails |
| Apple | 5 Tiny Mexican dresses to attach to Mrs. Crisper's nails |
| Purse, for Isabel | |
| Purse, for Ava | |
| Pens | |
| Plate of food | |
| Gigantic cup of cola with a straw | |

Items for tourists (cameras,
hats, fanny packs, bottled
water, sunglasses, etc.)

Larger tote or bag with
several “chickens” inside

Purse full of plastic knives,
forks, and spoons, for

Patsy

SOUND EFFECTS

Clucking chickens (Actors can produce clucking sounds live
backstage or sound effects can be downloaded from the
Internet)

Muffled chicken clucking

Thud

“Mexican Hat Dance” music

**"WELCOME TO THE
SNACK 'N' YAK CAFE,
WHERE EATING
IS A PLEASURE
WHILE YAKKING
AT YOUR LEISURE."**

ACT I

(AT RISE: *The dining area of the Snack 'n' Yak Café, a modest café in South Florida, 2 p.m. James and Patsy are waiting for their meals at Table 1. Two large buns and two half-full glasses of tea sit on their table. There are used dishes on Table 2, but no one is sitting there. June is sitting at the empty Table 3 watching everything that is going on. Holding a menu, Zooey is standing CS and is being berated by Melinda while John silently watches.*)

MELINDA: (*Threateningly, to Zooey.*) I hope you have good insurance.

ZOOEY: (*Confused.*) What? Why?

MELINDA: Because we're going to sue you.

ZOOEY: What? Why?

MELINDA: (*Indicating John.*) Because he swallowed a spoon.

ZOOEY: He doesn't look like the swallowed a spoon.

MELINDA: Cough for the woman, John. (*John obediently manages a few small coughs. To Zooey.*) You see? The spoon is lodged midway down his esophagus. (*Points to his upper chest.*)

ZOOEY: How can you tell?

MELINDA: The relatively high pitch of the cough gives us the exact location.

ZOOEY: But why are you going to sue me because he swallowed a spoon?

MELINDA: Because it was your spoon.

ZOOEY: That doesn't make any sense.

MELINDA: My husband John was sitting there nonchalantly chewing *your* food—

JOHN: (*To Zooey.*) I had the spaghetti and meatballs.

MELINDA: John! (*He coughs. To Zooey.*) When *your* spoon suddenly leaped out of his hand and into his mouth, where it made its way down to its present location.

ZOOEY: But spoons don't *leap*.

MELINDA: Yours did. So it's your fault. How much insurance do you have?

ZOOEY: Why do you want to know?

MELINDA: So I'll know how much to sue you for.

ZOOEY: Well, I don't know. I'm not the owner here. Don't you think you should get him to a hospital?

MELINDA: We'll be using our own personal physician for this examination and extraction.

JOHN: *(To Zooley.)* He's done this for us before.

MELINDA: *(Scolding.)* John...shush! *(To Zooley.)* Here's my card.

(Melinda hands Zooley the card and she glances at it.)

ZOOEY: You sell toothbrush bristles?

(Melinda grabs the card and looks at it.)

MELINDA: Wrong card. *(Pulls another card from her purse and gives it to Zooley.)* I'm an attorney...and I've never lost a case.

ZOOEY: I'm sorry.

MELINDA: Don't be sorry. I've won millions for my clients.

JOHN: *(To Zooley.)* And for us.

MELINDA: John! Didn't I tell you to shush? Didn't I? *(John lowers his head. Melinda looks around the room.)* I've always liked quaint little restaurants. Perhaps I could add this one to my collection.

ZOOEY: *(Surprised.)* You like the Snack 'n' Yak?

MELINDA: The first thing I would do is change that ridiculous name. Is it for sale?

ZOOEY: You would have to talk to Mr. Crisper about that.

MELINDA: I mean, I might be willing to forgive your negligence on this spoon matter if I could purchase this place at a bargain-basement price.

ZOOEY: No, see, I'm telling you I don't own the Snack 'n' Yak.

MELINDA: (*Feigning concern.*) Look how poor John is suffering. (*John does not respond. With emphasis to cue John.*) I said, "Look how poor John is suffering!"

JOHN: (*Reacts.*) Oh!

(*John holds his throat and gurgles in pain. He pauses and does it again. He pauses and does it again.*)

MELINDA: (*Interrupts him.*) That's enough suffering, John! (*John stops. To Zooney.*) You see how effective he can be before a judge and jury? Now, is this place for sale?

ZOOEY: (*Tired of arguing.*) It is not for sale!

MELINDA: Not for sale?

ZOOEY: No.

MELINDA: I'll double the price.

ZOOEY: Double what price?

MELINDA: Any price. I'll double any price.

ZOOEY: Please leave.

MELINDA: (*Angry.*) Very well! If that's the way you want it! (*Removes some legal papers from her purse and slams them into Zooney's hands.*) Here! This is for you!

ZOOEY: What is it?

MELINDA: Court papers.

ZOOEY: What? Why?

MELINDA: For the spoon-in-the-throat thing.

ZOOEY: You had these papers filed before you even came in here?

MELINDA: I like to be prepared.

ZOOEY: But he hadn't swallowed the spoon yet.

MELINDA: John is clumsy. It was bound to happen.

ZOOEY: No. You can't do this.

MELINDA: I just did. If you change your mind about selling the place, call me. But you'd better do it before tomorrow.

ZOOEY: Why?

MELINDA: Because tomorrow is your court date.

ZOOEY: That was fast.

(Melinda looks around again.)

MELINDA: I'd also change the décor. *(Cringes.)* Disgusting!
(Moves to the door SR.)

JOHN: *(To Zooey.)* The meatballs were a bit spicy.

MELINDA: John!

JOHN: Coming, dear.

MELINDA: Stop talking. Cough. *(He coughs. To Zooey.)* You hear that? It's getting worse already.

(John and Melinda exit SR. Lillian enters SL, carrying their bill.)

LILLIAN: *(Calls to John and Melinda.)* Hey! *(To Zooey.)* Where are they going? They haven't paid their bill.

ZOOEY: He swallowed his spoon.

LILLIAN: I don't care if he swallowed his plate and half the tablecloth. He can't just walk out of here without paying his bill. *(Rushes to the front door and calls to them.)* Hey, you! Your bill! *(Pause. She turns back to Zooey.)* He swallowed his what?

ZOOEY: His spoon.

(Kendra enters SL and pauses, feeling the empty pockets in her apron.)

KENDRA: *(To herself.)* Uhhh...

(Lillian goes to Table 2 and picks up a plastic spoon.)

LILLIAN: *(Holding up spoon. To Zooey.)* Then what's this?

ZOOEY: A spoon?

LILLIAN: No, it's not a spoon. It's *his* spoon.

ZOOEY: Well, maybe he swallowed somebody else's spoon.

LILLIAN: *(Loudly to everyone in the café.)* Anyone in here missing a spoon?

ZOOEY: Lillian, please!

LILLIAN: Well, I want to know. (*Looks around the room. No one responds. To Zooney.*) All spoons accounted for, Zooney.

ZOOEY: Well, okay.

LILLIAN: Okay, what?

ZOOEY: Okay, it's his spoon.

LILLIAN: What about his bill?

ZOOEY: Your responsibility.

LILLIAN: Arrgghh! I'm out twenty-six dollars. And a tip! (*Stomps toward SL and stops when she sees Kendra. To Kendra.*) Don't ask me for any change today. I don't have any. (*Exits SL.*)

KENDRA: (*Calls after her.*) Why would I ask you for change? I've got my own change. (*Approaches Zooney.*) Hey, Zoo, could I borrow some change?

ZOOEY: You forgot your bank again?

KENDRA: Normally, I would try to remember it. But I don't remember if I tried to remember it today or not.

ZOOEY: So you don't have any change for your customers?

KENDRA: I guess I didn't remember to remember it.

ZOOEY: Kendra!

KENDRA: Well, I tried to remember it yesterday, but I forgot. So I didn't think it would be right to remember it today.

ZOOEY: What?

KENDRA: I'll just get it out of the till.

ZOOEY: The till's empty, Kendra.

KENDRA: I'll borrow it from Lillian.

(*Lillian overhears Kendra as she moves from the kitchen SL carrying a tray of food to table 1.*)

LILLIAN: I've already told you, Kendra. No change. Besides, you already owe me 60 dollars. (*Places the food on table 1.*)

KENDRA: Oh, sorry. I forgot. (*Thinks. Brightens. To Zooney.*) I know! I'll only serve people who have exact change.

ZOOEY: (*Exasperated.*) No, Kendra. That won't work.

KENDRA: Sure it will. I'll make them show me the money before I take their order.

ZOOEY: (*Gives up.*) Oooookaaay. (*Notices that June is sitting at Kendra's table.*) Kendra, there's a woman sitting at your table.

KENDRA: Yeah?

ZOOEY: What's she doing there?

KENDRA: Uh, waiting for food?

ZOOEY: Haven't I seen her before?

KENDRA: Oh, right. She's left over from yesterday.

ZOOEY: You mean she's been sitting there all night and all morning?

KENDRA: I guess so.

ZOOEY: Well, get her some food!

KENDRA: I will.

ZOOEY: When?

KENDRA: As soon as she orders.

ZOOEY: Kendra!

KENDRA: What?

ZOOEY: Take care of her—now! (*Returns to her station SR.*)

JUNE: (*To Kendra.*) Miss? Hey, miss?

(*Kendra crosses to June's table.*)

KENDRA: Sorry, ma'am. I can't talk to you right now. I've got money problems. (*Exits SL.*)

JUNE: (*As Kendra exits.*) But I'm ready to order. (*Meekly.*) Miss?

LILLIAN: (*To James and Patsy at Table 1.*) Anything else?

(*James and Patsy chat in mime. Isabel and Ava enter SR. Isabel is on crutches, though no part of her leg or foot is bandaged.*)

ZOOEY: (*To Isabel.*) Welcome to the Snack 'n' Yak Café, where eating is a pleasure while yakking at your leisure. ("Pleasure" rhymes with "leisure.") How many, please?

AVA: What do you mean, "how many"? How many does it look like?

ZOOEY: Two?

AVA: *(To Isabel.)* Well, how do you like that, Isabel? She can count.

ISABEL: *(In a flat tone.)* Whoopee.

ZOOEY: Two for lunch?

AVA: No, it's not two for lunch. We've already had lunch. It's two for court.

ZOOEY: What?

AVA: Two for court. We're suing you for a million dollars.

ZOOEY: What? Why?

(Lillian heads SL, carrying the empty tray.)

LILLIAN: Zooey, if they win, let me know. I might try suing you, too. *(Exits SL.)*

ISABEL: *(To Zooey, indicating Ava.)* Did you hear what she said?

ZOOEY: Only too well.

AVA: You can write us out a check now, or we'll see you in court.

ZOOEY: You want me to write you a check for a million dollars?

AVA: Or we'll see you in court.

ZOOEY: *(Sarcastically.)* Sorry. I left my checkbook at home. What's the problem anyway?

AVA: Can't you see? *(Steps aside and indicates Isabel.)*

ISABEL: *(To Zooey.)* Yeah. Can't you see?

ZOOEY: See what?

AVA: She's on crutches.

ISABEL: *(To Zooey.)* That's what these are. They're crutches.

ZOOEY: Yeah, so?

AVA: So she slipped and fell...and broke her ankle.

ISABEL: Foot.

AVA: *(To Zooey.)* I meant foot.

ISABEL: Maybe it's my ankle.

AVA: *(To Zooney.)* One of those.

ISABEL: *(To Zooney.)* On your sidewalk.

AVA: *(To Zooney.)* Right out front.

ZOOEY: When did this happen?

AVA: Five minutes ago.

ISABEL: *(To Zooney.)* Three.

AVA: *(To Zooney.)* Three minutes ago, five minutes ago. One of those.

ZOOEY: If it just happened, how did she get the crutches so fast?

(Ava and Isabel look at each other.)

AVA: She, um, carries them with her.

ISABEL: *(To Zooney.)* She carries them for me.

AVA: *(To Zooney.)* In case of emergencies.

ISABEL: *(To Zooney.)* Like this one.

AVA: *(To Zooney.)* Lucky she had them.

ISABEL: Lucky you had them for me.

AVA: *(To Zooney.)* One of those. We also have pictures. *(Pulls out a small camera or camera/phone.)*

ZOOEY: Pictures?

AVA: Of the accident.

ISABEL: *(To Zooney.)* Me lying flat on the sidewalk. With my broken ankle.

AVA: Foot.

ISABEL: *(To Zooney.)* One of those.

AVA: *(To Zooney.)* Smile. *(Zooney automatically smiles. Ava snaps a photo of Zooney.)* And now we have a picture of you—the one responsible—smiling at poor Isabel's misfortune.

ZOOEY: Sorry. You said "smile" and I automatically—

ISABEL: We're going to have you arrested...failure to maintain a safe sidewalk.

ZOOEY: Ladies, I think the sidewalk belongs to the city. You have to sue them.

AVA: Nope. We've already checked with the authorities, and they told us the steps into your restaurant are your responsibility.

ZOOEY: But you said she fell on the sidewalk.

ISABEL: Um, on the steps...from the sidewalk.

ZOOEY: You said you had a picture of your lying flat on the sidewalk.

AVA: Well, um, we'll take another picture...of her lying flat on the steps. Come on, Isabel. *(Under her breath.)* And look like you're injured this time. I want to see lots of pain in your face. *(Exits SR.)*

ISABEL: *(To Zooey.)* This is going to cost you. *(Snickers and exits SR after Ava.)*

ZOOEY: *(To the world in general.)* What is it about today?! Has the whole world decided to go crazy, or is it just me? *(Everyone in the café stops and stares at her. She looks sheepish.)* It's just me. Sorry. It's just not my day.

JAMES: *(At Table 1, to Zooey.)* Ma'am? Miss?

ZOOEY: Yes, sir. What can I do for you?

JAMES: Will you please tell me why we're using plastic knives and forks?

(With their napkins tucked into their shirts, James and his wife, Patsy, hold up plastic forks in their right hands and plastic knives in their left.)

ZOOEY: Oh, well, it's a new policy, sir.

JAMES: What kind of a policy is that?

ZOOEY: *(To herself.)* A stupid policy.

PATSY: What?

ZOOEY: *(To James and Patsy.)* Oh, well, the owner, Mr. Crisper, is trying to hold down costs.

PATSY: *(Innocently.)* But I think these may have been used before. They've got guck all over them.

ZOOEY: Well, uh, all restaurants reuse their silverware.

PATSY: But these are not silverware. They're...plastic-ware.

ZOOEY: Well, you don't want us to put them through the dishwasher, do you? The hot water would melt them. Do you want to use melted, twisted, and goopy...uh, plastic-ware?

(James rises.)

JAMES: *(Angrily.)* No, I don't.

PATSY: *(To Zooney.)* Well, I don't know. Twisted and goopy doesn't sound so good.

JAMES: *(To Zooney.)* I refuse to dine at a restaurant that uses secondhand, dirty plastic utensils. Come on, Patsy. We're leaving.

PATSY: But, James, I'm still hungry.

JAMES: Then eat this. *(He takes a roll from the table and stuffs it into her mouth. Then he takes her by the arm and pulls her up. To Zooney.)* We're leaving.

(James pulls Patsy a few feet from the table, stops, returns to the table, stuffs his own mouth with a roll, and exits, pulling Patsy with him.)

ZOOEY: *(Calls after them.)* Sir, did you want to leave a tip?

(Lillian enters SL, carrying a bill. She sees that Table 1 is empty.)

LILLIAN: *(To Zooney.)* What did you do with my guests?

ZOOEY: What?

LILLIAN: The two guests who were at my table. Right there.

ZOOEY: Oh, they left.

LILLIAN: *(Indicates their uneaten food.)* But they haven't eaten yet.

ZOOEY: Believe me, they left with their mouths full.

LILLIAN: *(Angrily.)* But that's the second group in the last ten minutes that's left without paying. You're a failure, Zooney—a complete, total, and utter failure.

ZOOEY: What? Why do you say that?

LILLIAN: I left them in your custody.

ZOOEY: My custody?

LILLIAN: And when I get back, they're gone. What did you do with them, Zoo? Did you hide them under the table?
(Looks under table.)

ZOOEY: Why would I hide them under the table?

LILLIAN: So you could steal my tip.

ZOOEY: They didn't leave a tip.

LILLIAN: (Accusingly.) Why should I believe you?

ZOOEY: Because they didn't eat.

LILLIAN: You said they ate before they left.

ZOOEY: I said their mouths were full when they left. It's not the same thing.

LILLIAN: You stole my tip. You took away my only source of income. I may as well take up residence under the expressway in a cardboard box. (Marches SL.)

ZOOEY: Lillian.

(Lillian stops and turns back.)

LILLIAN: And you know what? It gets hot under the expressway in a cardboard box. I understand they don't even have air conditioning.

(Lillian exits SL. Pause.)

ZOOEY: (Calls off.) I didn't take your tip. There wasn't a tip. If there wasn't a tip, I couldn't have taken it. (Pause.) Air conditioning?

(Kendra enters SL.)

KENDRA: (To Zooey.) Lillian's whining again.

ZOOEY: Tell me about it.

KENDRA: No more customers for me?

ZOOEY: (*Points to Table 4.*) Well, Kendra, look at your table.

Do you see anybody sitting there?

KENDRA: No.

ZOOEY: What does that tell you?

KENDRA: Uh, they went to the restroom?

ZOOEY: (*Exasperated.*) No, Kendra. It tells you that you have no more guests.

KENDRA: Oh. By the way, Ambrosia is running a little short of food in the kitchen. (*Goes to Table 4 and straightens things.*)

ZOOEY: Don't be silly. There's plenty of food in the kitchen.

(*Wearing a chef's hat and apron and carrying a spatula, Ambrosia enters SL.*)

AMBROSIA: (*Loudly.*) Did anybody remember to order food for my kitchen?

ZOOEY: Ambrosia, what are you doing out here? You should be in there cooking.

AMBROSIA: I ain't no cook. I'm a "clarified Tchef."

ZOOEY: You mean "certified." Then you should be in there "tchef-fing."

AMBROSIA: Well, I would be, except there ain't nothing in there to tchef with.

ZOOEY: Of course, there is.

AMBROSIA: Not unless the patrons are willing to gnaw on a hambone left over from last week. I could take it away from the dog, if you want. (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, wait. There might be a bean that got caught up in the gristle. I could warm that up. Might be enough there for two people...if they don't mind sharing.

KENDRA: Sharing a single bean?

AMBROSIA: I said, there *might* be a bean in there.

ZOOEY: This is ridiculous. I made out a list for Mr. Crisper two weeks ago. I'm sure he ordered everything.

AMBROSIA: Well, if it was delivered, they didn't put it in my kitchen. Now, I ain't looked out back in the dumpster yet. Want me to check out there?

ZOOEY: Ambrosia!

AMBROSIA: Well, if the food ain't in the kitchen, and it ain't in the dumpster, maybe I could just scrape something off the dirty dishes from yesterday. Make a kind of hash, don't cha know. What do you think? Or I could make a nice soup from the cat litter...

KENDRA: Is anybody other than me gagging here?

ZOOEY: I hope you're being sarcastic, Ambrosia.

AMBROSIA: Who, me? Scar-spastic? *(Pause.)* Well, I might be. But I ain't got no idea what that means.

ZOOEY: Now, I know he ordered everything on that list.

(Mr. Crisper enters SL in a hurry. He is dressed in a suit and is carrying a suitcase in one hand and a plane ticket in the other.)

CRISPER: Zooey, I'm off.

ZOOEY: Mr. Crisper. You're off to where?

CRISPER: The enchilada convention. Didn't I tell you?

ZOOEY: No. And why would you be going to an enchilada convention? We don't serve enchiladas here.

CRISPER: Zooey, for heaven's sake, I like enchiladas.

ZOOEY: There's a Mexican restaurant just down the street called Chill on the 'Chiladas.

KENDRA: Chill on the 'Chiladas?

ZOOEY: Yeah. You know, be cool while scarfing enchiladas.

CRISPER: I also like conventions. Don't worry. Mrs. Crisper will be here soon. She'll take over while I'm gone.

ZOOEY: But, Mr. Crisper, there are these people who want to sue us, and—

CRISPER: *(Glances at his watch.)* Oops. I'm late. Got a plane to catch. *(Starts to exit SR.)*

ZOOEY: And there's no food in the—

CRISPER: Oh, and, Zooney, remember that food list you left me? I lost it. I've got to run. *(Exits SR.)*

ZOOEY: *(Calls after him.)* But I gave it to you two weeks ago! *(Turns back toward CS.)*

AMBROSIA: *(Nods.)* Unh-hunh. Well, if you can find me something to tchef with, let me know. Other wordly wise, I'll be watching ["Oprah"] on my TV. *[Or insert another suitable TV show.]*

(Ambrosia exits SL. Lillian enters SL, carrying an empty tray under her arm and a plastic fork in one hand. She glances at her tables.)

LILLIAN: Tables still empty. No customers and no tips. Looks like I won't need to wash my plastic fork today. *(Holds it up and purposely breaks it.)* Oh! Too bad. It's broken. My last fork. If I have any more patrons, they'll have to eat with their fingers.

(Kendra crosses to Zooney.)

KENDRA: *(To Zooney.)* Do you think I should go home and get my bank? Or I could go to the bank and get some change. Or I could just borrow it from Lillian. *(Crosses to Lillian and places her hands in a praying position. Pleads.)* Lillian, please! Pretty please!

LILLIAN: No, Kendra. You do this every day.

KENDRA: *(Sniffles.)* If I don't have any change, I can't serve my poor, desperately hungry customers. *(Indicates June.)* This lady's been waiting two long days for her food. Look at that face, Lillian. That is pure despair and agony. She looks so hungry.

JUNE: I'm starving!

LILLIAN: Okay, Kendra. You win. I don't like to see anybody starve. Here's ten. *(Pulls some bills from her apron and counts out ten one-dollar bills into Kendra's hands.)* That's all I can spare.

KENDRA: Thanks, Lillian. You're a sweetheart. (*Moves to Table 4 and counts the money.*)

LILLIAN: Aren't you going to serve her now?

KENDRA: What? Oh, sure.

(*Kendra moves to Table 3 as she continues to examine the bills. Lillian crosses to Table 1 and starts to clear it.*)

JUNE: (*To Kendra, innocently.*) Are your money problems solved now? Because I'm ready to order.

KENDRA: Why do you keep trying to rush me? Can't you see I'm busy?

JUNE: (*Meekly.*) Oh. Sorry.

KENDRA: Do you have exact change?

JUNE: (*Meekly.*) Exact change for what?

KENDRA: For your meal?

JUNE: (*Meekly.*) Well, I don't know. I haven't ordered yet.

KENDRA: What's that got to do with it?

JUNE: (*Meekly.*) Oh. Sorry.

KENDRA: Besides, I'm not sure we have any food just now.

JUNE: (*Meekly.*) Oh. Sorry.

(*Kendra moves SL.*)

LILLIAN: (*To Kendra and Zooey.*) Well, I'm just a little upset. I came here prepared to work, but it looks like there isn't any work to work...at.

KENDRA: (*Happily.*) Well, I just made ten dollars. (*Holds up the bills.*)

LILLIAN: Ahhhh, I give up!

ZOOEY: Don't get panicky, people. Mrs. Crisper will handle everything when she gets here. Maybe she called in the order.

LILLIAN: You think?

ZOOEY: (*To herself.*) Not for a minute.

(Zooley wrings her hands and looks around desperately. Lillian exits SL, carrying a tray of dishes. June holds up her hand as if to get Kendra's attention, but Kendra exits SL behind Lillian. Mayor Smiley Moonbeam enters SR, carrying a bag containing two wrapped bologna sandwiches and an apple. He always has a false smile plastered across his face.)

MAYOR: Who's in charge here?

ZOOEY: Uh, well, I guess I am. Are you here for lunch?

MAYOR: I brought my own lunch. *(Holds up the bag.)*

ZOOEY: Sorry, but I can't allow you to eat your bag lunch here in our exclusive restaurant.

MAYOR: I'm from the mayor's office. In fact, I'm the mayor. Mayor Smiley Moonbeam. I bring you happy greetin's from this fair urban area where you here-within reside. Here. Hold this. *(Gives her the bag and searches through his pockets [or purse, if female].)* I have somethin' for you.

ZOOEY: *(Looks in the bag.)* Two sandwiches, a wedge of cheese, and an apple. A good, balanced lunch.

MAYOR: I throw away the apple. It's fruit, you know. I don't like fruit.

ZOOEY: Fruit's good for you.

MAYOR: That's why I don't like it. *(Continues to look through his pockets.)* It's in here somewhere.

ZOOEY: Will you excuse me for just a minute? *(Secretly pulls one of the wrapped sandwiches from the bag and quickly crosses to June.)* Ummm, I know you've been waiting a long time.

JUNE: Two days.

ZOOEY: This just came in. It's on the house.

(Zooley holds out the wrapped sandwich and June reaches to receive it. At that moment, Kendra enters SL and sees Zooley and June. The Mayor looks off SR, as if trying to remember something. Kendra rushes to Zooley.)

KENDRA: Zoo, what are you doing?

ZOOEY: Providing food for our guest.

(June's and Zooney's hands are still extended toward each other.)

KENDRA: You can't do that.

ZOOEY: Why not.

KENDRA: This is my table.

ZOOEY: I know, but—

KENDRA: Give me that. *(Takes the sandwich and unwraps it.)*

A baloney sandwich? We can't serve our customers baloney sandwiches.

JUNE: *(Meekly.)* I'd rather have a taco.

KENDRA: No baloney sandwiches. *(Throws the sandwich on the floor.)*

ZOOEY: Kendra! All right, all right. *(Picks it up.)* Sorry.

KENDRA: *(Aside, to Zooney.)* You took Lillian's tips and now you're after mine. I can feel it.

ZOOEY: No, I did not, and I am not. *(Zooney rewraps the sandwich and approaches the Mayor.)*

KENDRA: *(To June.)* Do you have correct change yet?

JUNE: I don't know.

KENDRA: Well, when you know, let me know. *(Exits SL.)*

ZOOEY: *(To Mayor.)* Here. Something extra for you. *(She drops the sandwich back into the bag.)*

MAYOR: Ah-ha!

ZOOEY: Ah-ha? What does that mean... "ah-ha"?

MAYOR: Caught you. Bribin' a federal officer is a felony.

ZOOEY: Wait. You said you were the mayor. That's not federal. That's local.

MAYOR: It's still ten years in the slammer.

ZOOEY: What?

MAYOR: In addition to the ten years for operatin' an unclean café in violation of the law beyond the expiration date listed on these papers that I just happen to have with me. *(Finally locates the legal papers and pulls them from his pocket and puts them into Zooney's hands.)* Here.

(Lillian enters SL with a dishcloth, goes to Table 1, and cleans it. She listens to the following conversation.)

ZOOEY: No. But I'm not even the—

MAYOR: The Health Department of our fair city has spoken.

ZOOEY: *(Reads over the papers.)* Wait a minute. These papers aren't from the Health Department. They're from the mayor's office. Your office.

MAYOR: Well, they were a little busy, so I did their work for them.

ZOOEY: But you haven't inspected us.

MAYOR: Didn't have to. I responded to citizen complaints.

ZOOEY: What citizens?

MAYOR: Me. I'm a citizen...when I'm not the mayor.

ZOOEY: You can't do that. *(Glances at the papers.)* And these are dated three months ago.

MAYOR: So I'm a little slow on the delivery.

ZOOEY: But you can't hold us responsible for expiration papers that are delivered after the expiration date.

MAYOR: Why not?

ZOOEY: Because we didn't know about any expiration date.

MAYOR: That's your problem. You'll have to vacate the premises by five p.m. today.

ZOOEY: What? No, you can't do this.

MAYOR: No, but Detective Mggllffozzbnshtssh can.

(Note: Everyone who says "Mggllffozzbnshtssh" should mispronounce it in humorous ways.)

ZOOEY: Detective who?

MAYOR: Detective Meggal-frost-bit-ish.

ZOOEY: Detective Meggie-frozz-nee-bish?

MAYOR: No. Detective Maggle-tooth-nesh-ness-ish.

ZOOEY: Detective Mottle-giggly-shsssh?

MAYOR: No! Detective...oh, don't make me say that again!

ZOOEY: Sorry.

MAYOR: However, I am prepared to...misplace...those papers for a certain *je ne sais qua*. [*Pronounced: zhə nə say kwä*]

ZOOEY: "*Je ne sais*" what?

MAYOR: *Qua. Qua*. You know...*qua-qua*.

ZOOEY: "*Qua-qua*?" What does that mean?

MAYOR: How should I know? I don't speak German.

ZOOEY: I think that's French.

MAYOR: I don't speak French, either. I have a hard enough time speakin' Americana. Here's the deal, and there's no appeal. Sell me this nasty place, an' all is forgiven.

ZOOEY: The city wants to buy the Snack 'n' Yak Café?

MAYOR: Not the city. Me! An' I just happen to have the legal documents all made up.

(Mayor produces legal papers and hands them to Zooley.)

ZOOEY: That was fast.

MAYOR: I let no kudzu grow under my feet.

ZOOEY: Kudzu? Is that another...uh, German word?

MAYOR: No. It's Southern. Kudzu is a weed that grows anywheres an' ever'wheres it wants to. Even here in South Florida. Now sign these here papers.

(Mayor hands her a pen.)

ZOOEY: I can't.

MAYOR: I insist!

ZOOEY: *(Shrugs.)* Okay.

(Zooley signs and hands the papers back to the Mayor.)

MAYOR: *(Smile grows larger.)* You won't regret this. *(Exits SR, singing or whistling gaily.)*

ZOOEY: *(Watching him exit, she counts out loud.)* One, two, three, four...five—

(Mayor enters angrily.)

MAYOR: You'll regret this!

ZOOEY: *(Innocently.)* Why?

MAYOR: You signed these papers "Bugs Bunny." You're not Bugs Bunny. You don't even have long ears.

ZOOEY: *(Smiles.)* Well, sorry.

MAYOR: You're goin' to be sorry, all right. I'll be back. An' when I come back, I'll be bringin' Detective Mittle-mattle-goggle-ish-nish-ness with me. *(Exits SR.)*

ZOOEY: *(Calls after him.)* But this is a mistake. We run an absolutely clean restaurant.

(Kendra enters SL, carrying a plate of food.)

KENDRA: *(To herself.)* Uhhh... *(Stumbles and the food slips off the plate onto the floor.)* Oops!

ZOOEY: Well, it *was* clean until Kendra showed up.

KENDRA: Sorry. It was not my fault. The plate is lopsided.

ZOOEY: The plate is lopsided?

KENDRA: Well, why else would the food roll off onto the floor?

JUNE: *(Meekly.)* Is that my lunch? I don't care. I'll eat it off the floor. *(Gets down on her knees and starts to lick it up.)*

KENDRA: Stop that! *(Holds June back.)* I can't let you eat off the floor.

JUNE: Why not?

KENDRA: Because you haven't paid for it.

(Kendra picks up the food, plops it back onto the plate, and exits SL. June, weak with hunger, returns to her chair.)

LILLIAN: *(To Zooley.)* What exactly do those papers say?

ZOOEY: *(Glances over papers.)* In general, that we run a filthy restaurant. It says there are mice in the women's bathroom,

bugs in the kitchen, and spoiled food in the refrigerator. It says the cook sweats onto the food, the dishwasher leaves dirty gunk on the dishes, and ceiling plaster falls into the soup.

LILLIAN: Yeah? So what's the problem?

ZOOEY: Lillian! Get to work.

LILLIAN: (*Looks at the empty tables.*) Doing what?

ZOOEY: I don't care. Anything. Do anything. Just do something.

LILLIAN: Fine. I'll help Ambrosia.

ZOOEY: Fine.

LILLIAN: We'll both watch ["Oprah"] on her TV. (*Exits SL.*)

ZOOEY: (*Holds up the papers. To June.*) The problem with this is...none of it's true.

JUNE: I wouldn't know.

(*Mrs. Crisper quickly enters SR.*)

MRS. CRISPER: Zooeey, there you are. I've been looking all over for you.

ZOOEY: I'm where I always am at this time of the day, Mrs. Crisper.

MRS. CRISPER: Well, I just started looking. (*Pause.*) I want you to take over for me today. Will you do that, sweetie?

ZOOEY: Mrs. Crisper, we have a little problem here.

MRS. CRISPER: And you are so good at solving little problems, aren't you, dear?

ZOOEY: Well, this little problem is a little bigger problem than our usual little problems.

MRS. CRISPER: (*Giggles.*) A little bigger challenge for our clever hostess to overcome.

ZOOEY: No, no. See, Mr. Crisper didn't order the food for this week, and—

MRS. CRISPER: I have some really important business to handle.

ZOOEY: More important than the restaurant?

MRS. CRISPER: Oh, yes, dear. Much more important. Mr. Crisper and I are a little tired of this place anyway. That's why we hired you.

ZOOEY: So I could take care of all the little problems that pop up?

MRS. CRISPER: Yes, exactly. Now, you see, there's a new salon opening that is featuring a new fingernail design, and I just have to have mine done.

ZOOEY: Have to?

MRS. CRISPER: Yes, of course. It's called "Lollipop Swirl." I assume they paint a different colored lollipop on each nail, and then they add this chic new puce swirl.

ZOOEY: Puce swirl? What is that?

MRS. CRISPIER: Well, I'm not sure. But I intend to find out.

ZOOEY: Didn't you have your nails done two days ago?

MRS. CRISPER: Yes, but, Zoo, you don't want me to wear the same design for a whole week, do you?

ZOOEY: (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, no, Mrs. Crisper. No woman should wear the same nails for a whole week.

MRS. CRISPER: Then you understand why I must make this salon debut.

ZOOEY: But we have several very serious problems to deal with. How long will you be gone?

MRS. CRISPER: Three days.

ZOOEY: Three days?!

MRS. CRISPER: Yes, well, the salon is in Kansas.

ZOOEY: Kansas? Mrs. Crisper, two people want to sue us, one wants to send us to jail, and, and there's the matter of the food for the kitchen. We can't go without food for three days.

MRS. CRISPER: Well, of course not, my dear. So...eat something. (*Crosses SR.*)

ZOOEY: No, no. I'm talking about the restaurant. There's no food here.

MRS. CRISPER: Have you checked the kitchen, dear? They always have food in the kitchen.

(Mrs. Crisper exits SR. Zooley runs to the door SR.)

ZOOEY: *(Calls after her.)* No! I'm telling you, there's nothing there! *(To herself.)* She didn't hear me.

(Mrs. Crisper appears at the door.)

MRS. CRISPER: I heard you, dear.

ZOOEY: *(Happy.)* Oh, Mrs. Crisper, thank goodness you're back!

MRS. CRISPER: But I know a joke when I hear one. *(Blows a kiss to Zooley.)* Adios, amigos. *(Exits.)*

ZOOEY: *(Nervously, to herself.)* A joke? She calls this a joke? *(Screams angrily and crosses center.)* Aeeiii!

(Lowell enters SR. He is casually dressed and carries a gigantic cup of cola with a straw in it and a wrapped hamburger in a sack.)

LOWELL: *(Innocently.)* Something wrong, Zoo?

ZOOEY: *(Screeches.)* Oh, no! Of course not, Lowell! Absolutely not! What would make you think that?!

LOWELL: You're screaming.

ZOOEY: *(Screeches.)* Oh! And just because I'm screaming, you think there's something wrong?!

LOWELL: It's just a guess.

ZOOEY: *(Screeches.)* Well, you're right! There is something wrong! Very wrong! We're a restaurant, and we don't have any food—rotten or otherwise! Somebody falls in the wrong place and wants to sue us for a million dollars! A million dollars!

LOWELL: You have a million dollars?

ZOOEY: No, I don't have a million dollars! Do I look like I have a million dollars? Uh, no! And I'm about to be sent away to prison for 20 years!

LOWELL: I'll wait for you, babe.

ZOOEY: So, yes, something's wrong! Everything's wrong!

The whole world has gone haywire—and I'm going nuts!

LOWELL: Well, you're the cutest nutty girl I know.

ZOOEY: Really?

LOWELL: Yeah. I know some non-nutty girls that are cuter, but—

ZOOEY: (*Loudly.*) Lowe, just stop while you're ahead...okay?

Besides, saying I'm cute doesn't help. (*Turns away from him.*)

Well, maybe a little...

LOWELL: (*Points at her with his cup hand.*) Don't I get a little

kiss? (*Puckers up. She turns to him and absentmindedly kisses*

the cup.) You kiss my drink and leave me here all puckered

up and everything?

ZOOEY: Sorry. My mind is off in space somewhere.

LOWELL: Where it usually is.

ZOOEY: Well, if you worked here, yours would be, too.

LOWELL: Yeah. Probably so. I was kidding. You are the cutest girl I know. In fact, you're the cutest girl in the whole world.

ZOOEY: (*Sarcastic.*) Well, thanks. (*Points to the drink.*) That your drink?

LOWELL: No. I'm holding it for a bum I met on the street.

ZOOEY: For real?

LOWELL: Zoo, give me a break.

ZOOEY: (*Joking.*) I'll give you a break. I'll break your arm.

(*Takes his drink.*)

LOWELL: Okay. Just don't drink all my soda.

(*Lowell pulls a wrapped hamburger from his bag. Zooey takes a big slurp through the straw of Lowell's gigantic drink cup.*)

ZOOEY: Lowe, you know you can't eat that in here.

LOWELL: Sure I can. Listen, Zoo, I figured this out. I pull out this burger, and the scent wafts out to the street, see.

ZOOEY: Wafts out to the street?

LOWELL: Yeah. And people smell it and come in here wanting some.

ZOOEY: You're going to share your burger with people on the street?

LOWELL: No, no. They come in here and order from your menu. Don't you see? New customers.

ZOOEY: Guests.

LOWELL: Whatever.

ZOOEY: Won't work. Nobody can smell it from the street.

(Ambrosia, Lillian, and Kendra enter SL.)

KENDRA: We smell hamburger!

ZOOEY: *(Exasperated.)* But they can smell it from the kitchen.

AMBROSIA: That's because there ain't nothin' else in there to smell.

(Mr. Crisper enters SR, carrying his suitcase and plane ticket.)

CRISPER: I smell hamburger. *(Spots Lowell.)* Lowell, get that thing out of here. It stinks.

LOWELL: Yes, sir. *(Stuffs the hamburger back into the bag.)*

ZOOEY: Mr. Crisper? *(Puts the drink down.)* What are you doing here? I thought you went on a trip.

CRISPER: *(Ignores her.)* Does anyone here have any enchiladas to spare? Enchiladas?

LOWELL: How many do you need, Mr. Crisper?

CRISPER: How many do you have?

LOWELL: Uh, none.

CRISPER: I need more than that.

LOWELL: You can have a bite of my burger.

CRISPER: No! I'm going to an enchilada convention, not a burger convention. We're supposed to bring our own enchiladas.

LILLIAN: *(Looks around.)* No enchiladas here, sir.

CRISPER: No enchiladas? What kind of a restaurant is this?

LILLIAN: It's yours, sir.

CRISPER: I'm going to look awfully silly showing up at an enchilada convention without any enchiladas!

(Mr. Crisper exits SR. The Servers look at each other.)

ZOOEY: *(Calls after him.)* Mr. Crisper! Mr. Crisper, we have new problems!

KENDRA: Was he serious?

AMBROSIA: How long you been working here, girl?

(Pause.)

KENDRA: He was serious.

LILLIAN: He shouldn't be eating enchiladas anyway. Know how many calories are in an enchilada?

KENDRA: Know anybody who cares?

JUNE: *(Drooling.)* Did somebody say "enchilada"?

KENDRA: Forget it, ma'am.

(Kendra exits SL, followed by Lillian and Ambrosia.)

LOWELL: *(To Zooley.)* When are you going to get the Wi-Fi service in here? This is the Snack 'n' Yak Café, right? How can people yak without computers?

ZOOEY: Well, Lowe, they might try actually speaking to each other.

LOWELL: You mean, without computers?

ZOOEY: Not everybody is a computer geek like you.

LOWELL: Well, even a geek deserves a kiss once in awhile.

(Lowell moves toward Zooley. Being pleasantly coy, Zooley steps toward him.)

ZOOEY: And even a nutty girl deserves the same.

LOWELL: Then why doesn't this geeky guy get together with this nutty girl and...you know...put his arms around her waist?

(Lowell puts his arms around Zooney's waist.)

ZOOEY: *(Romantically.)* Oh, well. And why doesn't this nutty girl...let him?

LOWELL: She does. So he puckers up and leans toward her.

(Lowell puckers up and leans toward Zooney.)

ZOOEY: And she puckers up and waits for him.

(Zooney and Lowell make silly yummy noises.)

LOWELL: Mmmmm!

ZOOEY: Mmmmm!

(Just as they are about to kiss, Detective Mggffozzbshsssh enters SR. He is wearing an ill-fitting suit with a huge badge hanging from a string around his neck or pinned to his lapel.)

DETECTIVE: *(Gruffly.)* I'm looking for a chicken!

(Startled, Lowell and Zooney move apart.)

LOWELL: *(To Zooney.)* To be continued...I hope.

ZOOEY: *(To Detective as she composes herself.)* Uh, you're looking for a what?

DETECTIVE: A chicken. You know, one of those little feathery things that has no arms and goes "cluck-cluck."

(Zooney goes to the hostess station, where she retrieves a menu and tries to hand it to him.)

ZOOEY: Oh, well...a chicken? Certainly, sir.

DETECTIVE: I'm not a "sir." I'm a detective. Detective Morginknishessh. I mean, Detective Minininineesheesh. I mean...well, forget the name. I'm a duly appointed officer of the law of this fine city of Florida.

ZOOEY: Sir, Florida is a state.

DETECTIVE: I know that. I meant, of this city *in* Florida.

ZOOEY: Yes, sir.

DETECTIVE: Now I want that chicken.

ZOOEY: Of course. (*Points out items on the menu.*) We have a variety of chicken—fried, baked, broiled, roasted, barbecued—any way you like it, sir.

DETECTIVE: I'm looking for a *live* chicken.

ZOOEY: Sorry. We don't serve live chickens.

DETECTIVE: I don't believe that. I was told you have a live chicken in your kitchen.

ZOOEY: No, we don't have a live chicken in our kitchen.

DETECTIVE: I was told you did.

ZOOEY: We don't.

DETECTIVE: Having a live chicken in a café kitchen is a violation of the law, Section Ten, Paragraph 36, Verse 12, punishable by death.

ZOOEY: Death?

DETECTIVE: (*Gruffly.*) Just trying to scare you a little.

ZOOEY: A little?

DETECTIVE: I'll have to close you down. Now, where's the chicken? (*Points SL.*) That the kitchen over there? (*Moves briskly SL.*)

ZOOEY: Yes.

DETECTIVE: You must maintain sanitary conditions. (*Stops and turns to her.*) And live chickens ain't sanitary. (*Exits SL into kitchen.*)

LOWELL: (*To Zooey.*) What are you doing with live chickens in your kitchen?

ZOOEY: There aren't any live chickens in the kitchen, Lowe!

(Detective enters from kitchen SL and approaches Zooey.)

DETECTIVE: I didn't see any live chickens. Must have been a mistake in the report.

ZOOEY: Who would report such a stupid thing?

DETECTIVE: *(As he crosses SR.)* A concerned citizen. Sorry to have bothered you. *(Exits SR.)*

LOWELL: *(To Zooey.)* At least he was polite.

ZOOEY: Understand, Lowe, either the stars are lined up wrong today, or the moon is playing with people's heads because all sorts of ditsy things are going on. I mean, this is not a usual day. This is an *unusual* day.

LOWELL: Looks usual to me.

ZOOEY: That's because you are not standing where I'm standing.

(Lowell gently pushes her aside, stands in her place, and looks up.)

LOWELL: Nothing.

ZOOEY: The next crazy thing that happens is going to be me whopping you over the head with the heaviest table in the place!

(Lowell picks up his drink.)

LOWELL: See if I share my drinks with you anymore.

ZOOEY: Forget your drinks. *(Looks around.)* We're alone again...

(Lowell puts his drink aside.)

LOWELL: So we can continue where we left off...

ZOOEY: Why not?

(Lowell puts his arms around her.)

LOWELL: I put my arms around you.

ZOOEY: And for a few moments, anyway, my problems fade away.

LOWELL: I look deeply into your beautiful [brown] eyes.

ZOOEY: (*Romantically.*) They're [blue]. [*Insert the color of her eyes.*]

LOWELL: They're still beautiful.

ZOOEY: You're sweet.

LOWELL: I pucker my lips.

ZOOEY: I pucker mine.

LOWELL: And I come in for the kill!

(*As they are about to kiss, Alice enters SR, carrying a large tote or bag with something bulky inside.*)

ALICE: (*Angrily.*) I'm looking for my chicken!

(*Startled, Zooley and Lowell pull apart.*)

ZOOEY: (*To Lowell.*) Interrupted again.

LOWELL: I'll wait for you, babe.

ALICE: I said, I'm looking for my chicken!

(*Zooley approaches Alice.*)

ZOOEY: Oh. Well, it's not here.

ALICE: How do you know it's not here? Have you looked?

ZOOEY: Uh, no, ma'am. But Detective Mgggle-ffrozz-snshssh...Detective...Mmm—

ALICE: Then look for it. I want my chicken back.

ZOOEY: Ma'am, we don't have your chicken. And we don't have time to look for it. It's lunchtime.

ALICE: It's *after* lunchtime. That's why I need to find my chicken.

ZOOEY: So you can feed it?

ALICE: I'm not going to feed that mangy thing.

ZOOEY: What?!

ALICE: It's already eaten everything in my apartment—
including half my sofa.

ZOOEY: Ma'am, please.

ALICE: But I can't eat until I find it.

ZOOEY: Why not?

ALICE: Because it's my lunch.

ZOOEY: Ma'am—

ALICE: You don't want me to starve to death, do you?

ZOOEY: No. Of course not.

ALICE: Then give me my chicken.

ZOOEY: I assure you, your chicken is not in this café!

ALICE: It could be in the kitchen.

ZOOEY: It's not in the kitchen!

ALICE: I'll see for myself. *(Heads SL. The muffled sound of a clucking chicken is heard. She looks down at her tote and holds it tighter. To tote.)* Not now, you stupid chicken! *(Clucks are heard again. She holds tote even tighter. To tote.)* I said, "Not now!" *(Exits SL.)*

ZOOEY: *(Calls after her.)* Ma'am, do you have a chicken in that bag?! Ma'am?!

(Detective Mggfffozzbnshsssh enters SR.)

LOWELL: Zoo, the law has returned.

DETECTIVE: *(To Zooey, gruffly.)* I understand there's a live chicken in your kitchen.

ZOOEY: Detective Moggle-noff-shsssh. *(Gives up on name.)* Whatever. We've been through this. There is no chicken... *(Clucks are heard off SL. All turn toward the sound.)* ...in our kitchen.

(More clucks are heard off SL. Alice enters and stands SL. Her bag is now empty.)

ALICE: Detective. Glad you're here. There's a live chicken in that kitchen!

DETECTIVE: *(To Zooney.)* So, there *is* a live chicken in your kitchen! *(Marches off and exits SL.)*

ZOOEY: There's no chicken— *(Slight pause.)* What's going on here?

ALICE: I'm prepared to cancel my complaint if you're ready to negotiate.

ZOOEY: Negotiate what?

ALICE: A deal on this place.

ZOOEY: You want to buy the Snack 'n' Yak?

ALICE: A place like this should go real cheap.

(Detective enters and stands sternly at the kitchen door. [If desired, he can hold up a live chicken. If that is not practical, he holds nothing.])

DETECTIVE: There's a live chicken in that kitchen!

(Alice looks at the Detective and back at Zooney.)

ALICE: Too late.

ZOOEY: *(To Detective.)* What? But she, that lady, she just came in and she, I think she—

DETECTIVE: You are under arrest!

ZOOEY: No, see, this is all a mistake...really. A mistake.

(Melinda and John enter SR.)

MELINDA: She's the culprit, Detective. She's the one who shoved the spoon down my poor husband's throat. Cough for the man, John. *(John manages a few feeble coughs.)* You see?

DETECTIVE: *(To Zooney.)* Looks like you're involved in more than one crime today, young lady.

LOWELL: Zoo, I didn't know you were a criminal. (*Sucks rapidly on his straw.*)

ZOOEY: Lowell, will you shut up? This is serious.

(*Ava and Isabel enter. This time Ava is the one on crutches.*)

AVA: Officer, I'm glad you got here so quickly. That's the woman right there who caused me to slip on the stairs and break my foot.

ISABEL: Ankle.

AVA: (*To Detective.*) One of those.

DETECTIVE: (*To Zooey.*) Just how many felonies have you committed today?

ZOOEY: Wait a minute. (*Points to Isabel.*) Earlier, you were the one on crutches.

ISABEL: (*To Ava.*) Is that right?

AVA: Ummm, well, yes, I think so. (*Hands the crutches to Isabel. To Zooey.*) I was just, ummm, holding them for her.

ISABEL: (*Leans on the crutches. To Zooey.*) She holds them for me all the time. They're heavy.

ZOOEY: (*To Detective.*) This is some sort of scam, Detective...whatever-your-name-is. They don't even know which one of them fell.

AVA: Do, too! I have pictures. (*Holds the camera up for the Detective to see. To Detective.*) That's a picture of Isabel after she fell on the steps. Look at the pain in her face.

DETECTIVE: Certainly looks like pain in her face.

AVA: And here's a picture of this lady... (*Indicates Zooey.*) ...laughing at Isabel's agony.

ZOOEY: I wasn't laughing. I was just smiling.

DETECTIVE: So you admit you enjoyed watching her fall.

ZOOEY: No, of course not.

(*James and Patsy enter SR. They see the Detective.*)

JAMES: Officer, arrest that woman...and everybody in this place.

DETECTIVE: What's the charge, sir?

JAMES: Serving plastic forks.

DETECTIVE: There's no law against serving plastic forks.

JAMES: *Used* plastic forks!

DETECTIVE: Ohhh, tsk, tsk, tsk. That's terrible. *(To Zooey.)*

Shame on you. Okay, line up.

ZOOEY: Uh, I'm as lined up as I can be, Detective.

(Ambrosia, Lillian, and Kendra enter SL.)

LILLIAN: What's happening out here?

AMBROSIA: Yeah. We were watchin' ["Oprah,"] but this is a lot more excitin'!

KENDRA: Is there a problem?

DETECTIVE: Yes, there is. *(To Ambrosia, Lillian, Kendra, and Zooey. Points.)* Line up over here.

(Zooey, Ambrosia, Lillian, and Kendra line up in a row facing the audience. During the following, the Detective handcuffs the wrist of one to the wrist of another.)

AMBROSIA: Hey! You can't do this to me. I'm the tchef. I can't tchef with my hands cuffed.

DETECTIVE: *(Ignoring her.)* I'm taking the lot of you in. You'll be fingerprinted, searched, outfitted with colorful orange jail jumpsuits, and—

KENDRA: You can't do that.

DETECTIVE: Why not?

KENDRA: Because I look awful in orange!

DETECTIVE: And taken before a judge who will set your bail.

JAMES: *(To Detective.)* No bail.

AVA: *(To Detective.)* Why should they get bail?

MELINDA: *(To Detective.)* Absolutely not.

DETECTIVE: Or not. *(To Ambrosia, Lillian, Kendra, and Zooley.)*

Then you'll be sentenced to death.

AMBROSIA/LILLIAN/KENDRA/ZOOEY: Death?!

LOWELL: *(To Zooley.)* I'm not sure I can wait that long, Zoo.

DETECTIVE: *(Gruffly.)* Just a little prison humor.

ZOOEY: You're not a very funny person.

DETECTIVE: Twenty years is more like it.

ZOOEY: Twenty years?! But we're innocent.

AMBROSIA: *(To Detective.)* I don't even know these people here. I was just passin' through the kitchen and got caught up in all this mysterious-ness.

ALICE: Give them what they deserve, Detective.

DETECTIVE: I arrest 'em; the judge sentences 'em. *(To Prisoners.)* Okay. Let's go.

(As they turn SR to exit, the Mayor enters SR.)

MAYOR: Detective Mezzi-gloofi-schnozzi-hssshi-heesh, arrest those people... *(Sees them in handcuffs.)* ...that you already have in handcuffs.

DETECTIVE: Already done, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Take them to jail.

DETECTIVE: That's where we're headed, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: *(To Zooley.)* After this, maybe you'll be willing to sign your real name instead of "Bugs Bunny."

DETECTIVE: Who's this "Bugs Bunny"? Do I need to arrest him, too?

MAYOR: *(Sarcastically.)* Not unless you find someone with buck teeth and long floppy ears.

(Detective looks around.)

DETECTIVE: Don't see anyone of that description.

MAYOR: Then carry on.

AVA: *(To Zooley.)* I'll visit you soon. I've got a little proposition for you.

ALICE: *(To Zooney.)* But listen to mine first...unless you want to find a whole barnyard of chickens in your kitchen next time.

DETECTIVE: Ma'am, what are you saying?

ALICE: What? Oh, nothing, Detective. Just wondering who brought that live chicken into their kitchen.

(Alice winks at Zooney.)

DETECTIVE: *(To Zooney.)* That's it. Let's go. Get moving.

(Detective grabs Zooney and leads her off as the others are pulled along by the handcuffs.)

LILLIAN: *(To Zooney.)* First, you steal my tips, and now this.

KENDRA: *(To Lillian.)* I'm sorry I borrowed all that money. Is that what this is about?

AMBROSIA: Maybe they need a tchef in prison. Maybe they'll have food to tchef with!

ZOOEY: Will all of you stop whining!

LOWELL: Goodbye, Zoo. It's been nice knowing you.

ZOOEY: *(Whines.)* Ohhhhhh!

(As they watch them exit, the Mayor, Ava, Isabel, James, Patsy, and Alice simultaneously fold their arms across their chests and smile with satisfaction. Then they turn to each other and glare suspiciously. Lights fade to black. Intermission.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]