

HOODWINKED AND HOODOOED

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

By Ray Sheers

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HOODWINKED AND HOODOOED

By Ray Sheers

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 MEN, 12 WOMEN, FLEXIBLE)

HEATHER (F).....HEATHER is an aspiring actress who works at Eddie's Café as a waitress. Her skills as a waitress leave much to be desired. HEATHER must be able to sing. (76 lines)

EDDIE BRIGGS (M).....The owner of Eddie's Café, EDDIE is a blustery character, though he is easily impressed by the rich and famous. (76 lines)

HILDA (F).....The no-nonsense cook at Eddie's Café. (62 lines)

ZIGGY (M).....ZIGGY is HEATHER's boyfriend and EDDIE's nephew. He works as a waiter in Eddie's Café and is a fast-thinking, fast-talking guy who loves to have a good time. He is completely unimpressed by the rich and famous. (112 lines)

WINNIE GRUPP (F).....A manicurist, WINNIE is HEATHER's best friend and another aspiring actress. She is completely distraught because she thinks her boyfriend has left her for DELILAH BOVINE. WINNIE must be able to sing. (60 lines)

JASPER (M).....JASPER is a likeable loafer who depends on ZIGGY's charity for his meals. (41 lines)

LULU LAGROUX (F).....An aging actress, LULU is well past her prime in every respect. A despicable woman

who treats everyone like her servants, LULU acts as if she's royalty and expects to be treated like it. (83 lines)

MAURICE AMBROSE (M)....LULU's mild-mannered and brow-beaten agent. (51 lines)

NETTIE (or NED, M/F)An aggressive reporter. Though referred to as female in the script, NETTIE can be played by either sex. (30 lines)

CARLA (or CARL, M/F)NETTIE's (or NED's) photographer. Though referred to as female in the script, CARLA can be played by either sex. (7 lines)

MARLENE (F)A rough rancher, MARLENE is ready to resort to her shotgun if the law doesn't put MAURICE AMBROSE behind bars for hitting her heifer with his car. (5 lines)

HUNTER REDMAN (M).....HUNTER is small in stature and should appear vulnerable, though he doesn't act like it. He falls head-over-heels for WINNIE. HUNTER is inexperienced in romance, and thus is overenthusiastic when the opportunity arises. (19 lines)

ARNOLD SLOAN (M)ARNOLD is WINNIE's jealous boyfriend. He is tall and towers over HUNTER. (15 lines)

DELILAH BOVINE (F)DELILAH is the girl ARNOLD is supposedly seeing behind WINNIE's back. (5 lines)

JOE GOLIATH (M).....A match for ARNOLD, JOE is DELILAH's very jealous boyfriend. He's out for blood and is not a man to trifle with. (9 lines)

DR. SIMMS (M/F).....The doctor. Though referred to as female in the script, DR. SIMMS may be played by either sex. (5 lines)

AUNT RUBY (F)AUNT RUBY is the owner of both a tattoo parlor (The Bruised Tattoo) and a fortune-telling business (Hoodoo You). She has been getting some very bad vibrations lately and her predictions are completely wrong, sending everyone into turmoil and confusion. (9 lines)

BEA and BERTHA (F).....Two older women, both BEA and BERTHA are anxious to meet LULU LAGROUX. (6 lines)

SYNOPSIS

Hold on to your hats! The venom-spewing actress Lulu LaGroux is in town and she's spittin' mad. Maddier than usual! The critics have declared her latest film a disaster, igniting rumors of her long-overdue retirement. "I shall act until the day I die! As for critics, they're in the same league as doctors: pond scum!" To make matters worse, her agent, the timid Maurice Ambrose, has gotten them stranded in a backwater town by wrecking their car and killing a farmer's prize heifer in the process.

While their car gets repaired, they stop in at Eddie's Café. There, Lulu is hounded by the press, gawked at by townsfolk who thought she was long dead, wounded by a manicurist, almost poisoned with cranberries, and finally stuffed into a meat locker to save her wrinkled hide. Through all this she has to endure spontaneous auditions by acting hopefuls and the playful barbs of Ziggy, a waiter who will stop at nothing to knock the despicable and demanding Lulu off her crumbling pedestal.

Add to this mad concoction a lop-sided love triangle, a shot-gun totin' farmer out for blood, a love-struck mortician, a mixed-up fortune teller, and you've got a recipe for laughter dished up by the saucy staff and crazy customers at Eddie's Cafe.

This is a frantically-paced farce packed full of eccentric characters and enough hoodoos and hoodwinks to make everyone's head spin, but all comes out right in the end as the curtain falls on this madcap comedy of errors.

SUMMARY OF SCENES

ACT ONE:Eddie's Café

ACT TWO:Same as ACT ONE, an hour later.

PROPS

1. Restaurant furniture: several small tables, chairs, etc,
2. Tablecloths
3. Tray
4. Large envelope
5. Mop
6. Phone
7. Pitcher of water
8. Salt & pepper shakers
9. Ketchup bottle
10. Unbreakable glasses and plates, silverware, napkins, etc.
11. Aprons
12. Chef's hat (Optional)
13. Small paper bag
14. Briefcase
15. Large hat
16. Purse
17. Large photograph
18. Menus
19. Bouquet of flowers
20. Large vase
21. Large bandage

22. Bottle of red juice
23. Sandwiches
24. Cloths to wipe tables
25. Handkerchief
26. Rolling pin
27. Coupons
28. Wig for LULU
29. Manicure set
30. Camera
31. Notebook or laptop
32. Pens
33. Very large purse or shopping bag
34. Doctor's bag
35. Key
36. Two blankets

NOTES

Like any farce, *HOODWINKED AND HOODOOED* should be played for laughs. It needs to be fast-paced, almost frenetic. Much of the humor is embedded in the incongruity of the characters and their interactions and dialogue with one another. Stage requirements are minimal - several café tables and chairs are basically the only furniture required, though the director may choose to make the set far more elaborate. There is an off stage kitchen area and a door leading to the street.

NETTIE (or NED) can be an old-fashioned reporter or a more modern one. She can either use a notebook or a laptop. Whenever she's onstage, she should be shifting her attention to wherever the action is at that moment and directing the photographer. Any "down time" she has should be used to pantomime interviews with characters not involved in the dialogue at time.

LULU needs to wear a wig. Her actual hair should be sprayed gray and placed in a net under the wig. She must look exposed and ridiculous when her wig comes off after ZIGGY pours water on her. She wears a large hat and expensive clothing and jewelry.

ACT ONE

SCENE:

Eddie's Café, a run-of-the-mill restaurant. It hasn't yet opened for the day. There are several small tables and chairs scattered throughout the room. ZIGGY is mopping. HEATHER enters from the kitchen. She is having difficulty carrying a heavy tray full of dishes in one hand at shoulder level. Suddenly, the tray tips and the dishes fall with a loud crash. As she scrambles to pick the dishes up, EDDIE, the owner, enters from the kitchen in disgust. He carries a large envelope.

HEATHER: *(Nervously.)* No problem. See? Nothing broke.

EDDIE: *(Furious.)* You're lucky this time, Heather! From now on, any breakage comes out of your paycheck. I'm sick of your clumsiness. Says she's an experienced waitress! She's nothing but a klutz! Get those dishes back into the kitchen and rewash them. *(To ZIGGY.)* And you! Keep sweeping! We open in less than two hours. I've got to get to the bank. I'll be back in time to open. This place had better be ready for business when I get back. *(Exits.)*

ZIGGY: *(Helping her pick up the dishes.)* You'd better be more careful. You break more than you make.

HEATHER: I was never meant to be a waitress, Ziggy. I'm an actress!

ZIGGY: I know, but a lot of actors have to get day jobs. Everybody has to eat.

HEATHER: That's the only good thing about working here. The meals aren't much, but they're free.

ZIGGY: Is that the only good thing about working here?

HEATHER: No, of course not. You're the best thing about working here. *(Putting her arms around his waist.)*

ZIGGY: Say, didn't you and Winnie have an audition last night?

HEATHER: Yeah, but we didn't get the parts.

ZIGGY: Oh, sorry. Well, something else will come along.

WINNIE, very upset, rushes in and collapses on a chair.

ZIGGY: Hey, Winnie, sorry you didn't get the part. *(She starts to sob uncontrollably.)* Oh, don't cry. *(Comforting her.)* Something else will come along. Don't take it so hard. *(HILDA enters from kitchen.)*

WINNIE: *(Crying.)* I wish I was dead!

ZIGGY: It was only an audition.

HEATHER: Winnie, what's wrong?

WINNIE: You don't want to know. It's too awful!

HILDA: Come on, you can tell us. We're your best friends.

WINNIE: No! *(Sobbing.)*

HILDA: *(Signals to HEATHER and ZIGGY.)* Okay, if you don't want to talk about it, we understand. We certainly are not going to pry into your personal business. *(They start to walk away.)*

WINNIE: *(After a pause.)* Well, don't you even want to know? What kind of friends are you, anyway? I thought you were my best friends. I don't have anybody else! My whole life is falling apart, and you don't even want to hear about it. Some friends you are!

HEATHER: *(Comforting her.)* Of course, we want to know, but you said...

WINNIE: It's over between Arnold and me! Over!

HEATHER, HILDA, AND ZIGGY: *(Relieved.)* Oh.

ZIGGY returns to picking up the dishes, then to his sweeping.

HILDA: You had another fight with Arnold.

WINNIE: This time it's different.

HILDA: Uh, huh.

HEATHER: Now, Winnie, you've said that before, how many times?

HILDA: And you two have always gotten back together again.

HEATHER: He's crazy about you, you know that.

WINNIE: He's not crazy about me.

ZIGGY: Sure he is.

WINNIE: He doesn't love me anymore.

HEATHER: Oh, he does too love you.

WINNIE: No, he doesn't.

HILDA: That's what you always say when you two have a fight.

WINNIE: You don't understand.

ZIGGY: Sure we do.

WINNIE: He's been sneaking around with Delilah Bovine!

HEATHER, HILDA and ZIGGY: *Delilah Bovine?*

WINNIE: The swine!

HEATHER: Men! You can't trust any of them!

HILDA: A worthless lot, all of them!

ZIGGY: Well, there may be one or two exceptions. *(They glare at him.)* Maybe not.

HEATHER: I can't believe it. Arnold and Delilah Bovine?

WINNIE: He was mine, and she stole him right out from under my chin! I turn my back and poof! He's gone.

HEATHER: How did you find out?

WINNIE: My Aunt Ruby saw them.

HEATHER: Your Aunt Ruby?

HILDA: The fortune teller?

ZIGGY: You know, your Aunt Ruby could have been wrong. She is a bit...eccentric.

HILDA: Eccentric? She's just plain weird!

WINNIE: Just because she tells fortunes doesn't make her eccentric...or weird. She's a very gifted psychic.

HEATHER: You mean psychic.

WINNIE: That's what I said.

HILDA: You were right the first time.

ZIGGY: Didn't she tell you a Hollywood agent would come out of nowhere and offer you a big contract? That was what, two years ago?

HEATHER: Do you have to bring that up at a time like this?

HILDA: The poor thing's already upset about Arnold, and you have to bring that up? What is wrong with you?

ZIGGY: Sorry.

WINNIE: Yeah, *(Picks up a bottle of ketchup.)* talk about pouring ketchup into the wound.

HEATHER: Salt. *(Picks up salt shaker.)*

WINNIE: What?

HEATHER: *(Pours salt.)* It's pouring salt into the wound, not ketchup.

WINNIE: Oh, what's the difference? Salt, ketchup...

HILDA: Men are so insensitive.

HEATHER: *(Changing the subject.)* How's your aunt's tattoo parlor doing?

HILDA: Tattoo parlor?

HEATHER: Haven't you seen the new tattoo parlor that opened down on Main Street?

HILDA: I don't pay attention to such things. Do I look like I'd have any interest at all in tattoos?

ZIGGY: *The Bruised Tattoo?* That's your aunt's shop? No kidding.

WINNIE: That's right. She's got two shops now: *The Bruised Tattoo* and right next door is *Hoodoo You*. Between doing tattoos and telling fortunes, she's making money hand over foot.

ZIGGY: Yeah, well, you know what they say. A bird in hand is worth two on the foot.

WINNIE: You can say that again. I could probably get you a discount if you ever want a tattoo.

ZIGGY: No, thanks. Needles and I don't get along. *(Exits.)*

WINNIE: *(Upset again.)* Arnold was going to have two lovebirds tattooed on his arm with our initials. I wouldn't let him. Now I wish I had. I hear it really hurts to have a tattoo burned off!

HILDA: It would have served him right.

HEATHER: You'll find another guy, Winnie. To tell you the truth, I never thought Arnold was much of a prize, anyway. This just proves it.

WINNIE: What do you mean? I thought you liked Arnold.

HEATHER: Well, yeah, I did, but...I just never thought he was good enough for you.

HILDA: You can do better than Arnold Sloan.

WINNIE: What could he possibly see in her?

HILDA: *(To herself.)* What could she possibly see in him?

WINNIE: What?

HILDA: Men! They are all alike!

WINNIE: You can say that again!

HEATHER: Men! Who needs them?

WINNIE: *(With bravado.)* Right! Who needs them? *(Suddenly bursting into tears.)* I do!

HILDA: *(Comforting her.)* Now, now, things aren't always as bad as they seem. You'll see.

HEATHER: Wait! I've got an idea. Arnold was always very possessive of you, wasn't he? Always very jealous?

WINNIE: You can say that again. If I so much as looked at another guy, he'd go ballistic.

HILDA: And then he has the gall to chase after Delilah Bovine!

HEATHER: Winnie, how do you think Arnold would feel if he found out you'd replaced him already?

WINNIE: What do you mean, replace him?

HEATHER: With another guy.

WINNIE: But I don't have another guy, and I don't want another guy. I want Arnold back!

HEATHER: I know. You can get him back; I've got a plan. My cousin's in town for a visit. What if Arnold just happened to see the two of you together?

WINNIE: Your cousin Sheila?

HEATHER: No, silly, my cousin Hunter.

HILDA: What the heck is a cousin hunter?

HEATHER: Hunter is his name, Hilda.

WINNIE: Is Hunter handsome?

HEATHER: Hunter's hardly a hunk, but I imagine some girls might find him attractive.

WINNIE: Do you think he'll do it?

HEATHER: I'll call him and ask him, but I think he will. After all, I am his favorite cousin.

WINNIE: Heather, you're a genius!

HEATHER: You know what they say. Turnabout is fair play!

WINNIE: All's fair in war and peace!

HEATHER: Love and war, you mean.

HILDA: And this is war, honey!

WINNIE: (*Crying.*) I just want my Arnold back!

HILDA: Now, just pull yourself together, girl. We'll get your Arnold back.

HEATHER: Well, I'd better talk to Hunter before it's too late!

WINNIE: Oh, late! I've got to get back to the salon. Mrs. Atkins has an eleven o'clock appointment for a manicure. Thanks for everything. I don't know what I'd do without you two.

HILDA: What are friends for? (*They hug.*)

HEATHER: I'll call you later.

WINNIE: I knew I could count on you! (*Exits.*)

HEATHER: Poor Winnie. Can you believe that Arnold Sloan? With Delilah Bovine, of all people!

HILDA: Well, we'll fix his wagon but good! Who knows, maybe she'll fall for your cousin.

HEATHER: It's not likely that she'll fall for my cousin Hunter. (*Picks up the phone.*)

HILDA: Why not? Is he real ugly?

HEATHER: No, he's just...peculiar. Like, last night he took me to a restaurant after the audition.

HILDA: That was nice.

HEATHER: And he asked the waiter for chopsticks.

HILDA: So? I've seen lots of people do that.

HEATHER: In a pizza parlor?

HILDA: Oh. (*She exits to kitchen.*)

HEATHER: Darn, it's busy. (*Puts down the phone. Looks at her watch.*) This can't wait. I'll just run over there now and talk to him. (*Shouting to kitchen.*) Ziggy, I've got to go out for a few minutes. I'll be back in time to open.

ZIGGY: (*From off stage.*) You'd better be back by the time Uncle Eddie gets here!

HEATHER: (*JASPER enters.*) Oh, hi, Jasper.

JASPER: Hi, Heather.

HEATHER: (*To ZIGGY.*) I'll be back in a jiffy! (*To JASPER.*) Bye. (*She exits to street and ZIGGY enters from kitchen.*)

JASPER: Say, Ziggy, exactly how long is a jiffy?

ZIGGY: A jiffy, Jasper, is about as long as a June bug can jiggle and gyrate on a jigsaw while juggling jelly beans. What brings you here? A free lunch, as usual?

JASPER: (*Cautiously.*) Is your uncle here?

ZIGGY: No, he went to the bank, but he's due back any time. If he ever finds out I've been slipping you free meals, he'll fire me.

JASPER: How's he going to find out? Besides, you're his nephew. He won't fire you.

ZIGGY: (*Shouting to kitchen.*) Hilda, do we have any more of that day-old egg salad?

HILDA: (*From kitchen.*) Why? That freeloading friend of yours back again? (*Entering, arms crossed.*) Uh huh, thought so. Hide the silverware!

JASPER: Day-old?

ZIGGY: It's always better the second day.

HILDA: It's terrific the third day. That's when it starts to ferment.

ZIGGY: And on the fourth day we call it the Surprise of the Day because it'll be a surprise if nobody dies. Make one to go for our friend here, will you, Hilda?

HILDA: He's your friend, not mine. And your uncle had better not find out that you're doling out free food to him.

JASPER: Make it two, please. On pumpernickel. With a dill pickle on the side.

HILDA: (*To ZIGGY.*) I do not appreciate being an accomplice to your criminal activity.

JASPER: Think of it as charity.

HILDA: Charity! Humph!

JASPER: And throw a few cookies into the bag for dessert? I love your cookies!

HILDA: Don't you be trying your flattery on me! Those cookies come straight out of a box. And they can be bought at any grocery store by anybody with a job! (*She exits to kitchen.*)

JASPER: I think she's starting to like me. Where was Heather off to in such a hurry?

ZIGGY: I don't know. She didn't say. She's upset about Winnie.

JASPER: What's wrong with Winnie?

ZIGGY: She's hysterical again.

JASPER: Women!

ZIGGY: Right! They're all prone to these sudden fits of hysteria.

JASPER: Over nothing! What is it this time?

ZIGGY: She found out that Arnold's been going out with Delilah Bovine.

JASPER: Arnold's going out with Delilah Bovine? He'd better be careful.

ZIGGY: Why?

JASPER: You know who her boyfriend is, don't you?

ZIGGY: She's got a boyfriend?

JASPER: Has she got a boyfriend! None other than Joe Goliath!

ZIGGY: Joe Goliath!

JASPER: Yeah, Arnold's playing with fire if he's moving in on Joe Goliath's girl.

ZIGGY: The poor guy will be dead within a week.

JASPER: I'd give him 48 hours, tops. How'd she find out?

ZIGGY: Her Aunt Ruby saw them together

JASPER: The fortune teller?

ZIGGY: *Hoodoo You.*

JASPER: That place gives me the willies. I don't even like walking by it.

ZIGGY: She's a tattoo artist, too. *The Bruised Tattoo* is her other shop.

JASPER: No kidding? *The Bruised Tattoo*? I've been thinking of getting a tattoo. What do you think?

ZIGGY: *(Distracted.)* About what?

JASPER: Me getting a tattoo.

ZIGGY: You're not the tattoo type. You're too timid and terrified to get tattooed. Besides, you don't have the time. You've got to find Arnold and warn him before it's too late.

JASPER: Me?

ZIGGY: Do you want Arnold Sloan's blood on your hands?

JASPER: But why me? Why can't you do it?

ZIGGY: Because I have to work. Some of us do, you know. We don't want Arnold to get killed, do we? Besides, Heather is my girlfriend, and Winnie is her best friend, and I'm your best friend, and you owe me.

JASPER: What do you mean I owe you? For what?

HILDA: *(From kitchen.)* Pick up! *(She tosses the bag to ZIGGY who catches it, then dangles it in front of JASPER.)*

ZIGGY: I feed you at great personal risk.

EDDIE enters and ZIGGY quickly hides the bag behind his back.

JASPER: Hi, Eddie. How's business?

EDDIE: If you're looking for a job, I ain't got no openings. You see any help wanted signs in the window? *(HEATHER rushes in, guiltily.)* But keep checking that window. We may be having some changes in personnel in the very near future. *(He exits to kitchen. Shouting.)* Heather! *(She rushes into the kitchen.)*

JASPER: That was close.

ZIGGY: *(Holding up the bag, just out of JASPER's reach.)* Well?

JASPER: All right, I'll try to find Arnold and warn him. *(Checking bag.)* Darn, no pickle...and no cookies, either! *(He exits to street.)*

EDDIE: *(From kitchen.)* Ziggy! Where the heck is the egg salad?

ZIGGY: *(Calling.)* It was way too old to serve, so I threw it away.

EDDIE: You did what? Get in here!

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO

SCENE:

Same as before; one hour later. LULU LAGROUX and MAURICE AMBROSE enter from street. Both are very well dressed and obviously out of place in this establishment which, while presentable, is not what they're accustomed to. LULU wears a large hat and carries a purse. MAURICE is guiding her in. He carries a briefcase.

LULU: (*Shaking him off.*) Oh, take your silly hands off me. I can walk.

MAURICE: Of course you can walk. It's just that after your ordeal...

LULU: My ordeal? My ordeal? Who was driving the car, you fool? You were! So how was it *my* ordeal?

MAURICE: I just meant...

LULU: I don't care what you meant. If there was an ordeal, *you* caused it! I was almost killed. (*MAURICE pulls a chair out for her. She waits until he takes out a handkerchief and dusts it off. They sit.*)

MAURICE: Let's watch your blood pressure, my darling. You know what the doctor said. Have you taken your medicine? (*HEATHER enters with tablecloths, which she starts putting on the tables.*)

LULU: Doctors say a lot of idiotic things. They're a worthless lot, all of them. In my opinion, none of what they say is worth a hill of beans.

MAURICE: Beans! That's the ticket! (*To HEATHER.*) Do you have any red beans and rice?

LULU: You will *not* consume beans in my presence.

HEATHER: We actually don't open for another half hour.

LULU: Don't be impertinent, young lady. Get me a menu.

HEATHER: But...

LULU: Young lady, I was almost killed today. I am in no mood for chit-chat. I am in the mood for food - the sooner the better. (*EDDIE enters and HEATHER approaches him and pantomimes a conversation about LULU. LULU looks at her watch.*) Oh! Look at the time. I can't go this long without eating. You know how delicate my stomach is. (*EDDIE approaches the table.*) Waitress, where is that menu?

EDDIE: I'm terribly sorry, madam, but the kitchen hasn't opened yet.

LULU: Well, then open it! You act as if a closed kitchen is an act of God. Look, this is a restaurant. The door was open. We expect to be served a meal. (*Looking around.*) Probably nothing to write home about, but some sustenance nonetheless.

MAURICE: You see, our car...

LULU: I was speaking, Maurice. (*To EDDIE.*) You must understand, I am an artist who hasn't eaten since seven o'clock this morning. I was almost killed when Mr. Ambrose here swerved off the road, crashed through a barbed wire fence, and then hit some stupid cow.

MAURICE: I couldn't help it! A dog ran across the road.

LULU: I don't care if a kangaroo bearing the President hopped across the road! I could have been killed. (*To EDDIE.*) Now, if I do not get a meal soon, I cannot be held responsible for my actions. I must warn you that I have been known to become extremely violent if I do not eat.

MAURICE: (*He takes EDDIE aside.*) We would be extremely appreciative if you would accommodate us. I'll make it worth your while. (*Gives him several bills. EDDIE gives him the menus. MAURICE returns to the table. EDDIE motions to HEATHER to serve them, then exits.*)

LULU: (*Looking around.*) What a perfectly dreadful place. (*They look at the menus.*)

HEATHER: (*Bringing water.*) Would you like to order?

LULU: I will have the tuna salad on a croissant with a glass of papaya juice.

MAURICE: I'll have the same with coffee.

HEATHER: We don't have any papaya juice.

LULU: Then go out and get some. (*HEATHER takes the menus and exits to kitchen.*) Of all the impudence! (*Mockingly.*) We don't have any papaya juice!

MAURICE: This isn't New York or Hollywood, Lulu.

EDDIE enters with HEATHER and ZIGGY.

LULU: It's not even Cleveland!

EDDIE: Excuse me...

LULU: Young lady, haven't you gone for that papaya juice yet?

EDDIE: The papaya juice is a bit of a problem...

LULU: Then solve it! Is papaya juice so difficult a request? Shall I have Maurice write it down for you? Maurice, write it down for this poor girl. She's apparently having difficulty understanding English. (*Examining her finger.*) Oh, now look at this! I must have broken a nail when you crashed into that stupid cow. (*Showing MAURICE.*) Look! This will not do. My astrologer told me not to travel today. Oh, why *didn't* I listen to her? Waitress, I will also require the services of a manicurist.

HEATHER: I'm terribly sorry, I don't do nails.

LULU: I don't mean you, you fool! I need one brought here immediately. A professional.

ZIGGY: Hey, who are you calling a fool?

HILDA enters.

EDDIE: This is a restaurant, ma'am, not a beauty shop.

LULU: My dear man, I do not frequent beauty shops. As for this being a restaurant, that remains to be seen.

MAURICE: What Miss LaGroux means is that the beautician and the manicurist always come to her, not the other way around.

HEATHER: Miss LaGroux? Lulu LaGroux?

ZIGGY: Who?

EDDIE: *The* Lulu LaGroux?

HILDA: The actress?

MAURICE: (*Proudly.*) In the flesh!

LULU: Don't be vulgar, Maurice.

MAURICE: I am never vulgar, my dear, merely colorful.

HILDA: I thought she was long dead.

EDDIE: (*Extending his hand.*) Eddie Briggs, manager and owner. This is such a pleasure and an honor, Miss LaGroux. If I had only known... (*She reluctantly accepts his hand. ZIGGY is not the least bit impressed.*)

LULU: Watch the nail.

MAURICE: So, is there a manicurist in the vicinity?

EDDIE: I'm certain we can find one for you. Heather, isn't your friend a manicurist?

MAURICE: (*To HEATHER.*) Tell her she can expect a sizable tip if she makes it snappy.

HEATHER: I'll go get Winnie. Wait till she hears that Lulu LaGroux is here! (*To ZIGGY.*) Remember what her Aunt Ruby said about a Hollywood agent appearing out of nowhere and offering her a big contract? This is it! (*She exits to street.*)

EDDIE: Hilda, make sure you use our freshest and finest ingredients. (*He exits to kitchen.*)

HILDA: Humph! Freshest and finest ingredients! She'll get what we got, and they're far from the freshest and finest, I tell you! *(She exits to kitchen.)*

EDDIE: Ziggy, find some papaya juice for Miss LaGroux!

ZIGGY: Papaya juice for Miss LaGroux! *(To LULU.)* Anything else while I'm at it, your majesty? There's a taxidermist on the next block. He makes house calls.

LULU: I shall be requiring an undertaker if you dilly-dally much longer, young man.

MAURICE: *(Shuddering.)* Oh, don't even joke about such a thing.

ZIGGY: *(Tapping MAURICE on the shoulder and pulling him aside.)* You know, there isn't a lot of demand for papaya juice around here... *(MAURICE holds a dollar bill up. ZIGGY shakes his head. MAURICE offers a larger bill, and ZIGGY takes it.)* I'll see what I can do.

LULU: Yes, you do that, sonny.

ZIGGY: *(To MAURICE.)* Now look, she may be old enough to be my mother, but...

LULU: What did he say?

MAURICE: I believe he said his...old mother might know where to get some papaya juice.

LULU: Well, what is he waiting for?

MAURICE: *(Gives him another bill and pulls him aside.)* Miss LaGroux and I would be most grateful if you could...er...humor her little idiosyncrasies. *(EDDIE returns, obviously in awe of LULU.)*

LULU: I have the stomach of a songbird. I must eat small quantities and often. Just like a bird.

ZIGGY: A vulture comes to mind. *(He exits to kitchen.)*

LULU: What did he say?

MAURICE: He says he doesn't mind, doesn't mind at all.

LULU: I hate men who mumble. What people don't understand is that an artist's intestinal tract is quite unlike that of other people.

EDDIE: Like a songbird's.

LULU: Exactly.

ZIGGY: *(Returning from kitchen without his apron.)* I'll try to find you some nice worms to dip in your papaya juice. *(He exits to street.)*

LULU: There he is mumbling again. What did he say? It sounded like he said something about worms.

MAURICE: *(Comforting her.)* Not worms, dear. He...wanted to know if you wanted your papaya juice...cold or warm.

LULU: Warm papaya juice? How dreadfully uncivilized!

EDDIE: You'll have to forgive the waiter. He's new.

LULU: I neither forgive nor forget. Shouldn't you be supervising the kitchen help or something? *(He exits to kitchen.)* I can't believe you got me stranded in this backwater town. When did they say the car would be fixed?

MAURICE: Well, they weren't exactly...

WINNIE and HEATHER burst in, singing a show tune. HILDA and EDDIE enter from kitchen and watch. MAURICE is quite impressed with the girls' act, to the utter disgust of LULU. At the conclusion of the act, all except LULU applaud vigorously. She remains unimpressed and unappreciative.

MARLENE, furious, enters from street. She approaches MAURICE and pulls him roughly up out of his seat.

MARLENE: You the idiot that trespassed on my property, destroyed my fence, and killed my prize heifer?

MAURICE: It...it was an accident. You see, there was this dog...

LULU: Oh, stop groveling, Maurice! Insurance will cover it, you Neanderthal. It was just a cow! *(MAURICE takes out his wallet.)*

MARLENE: It was not just a cow! You're a cow! That was a blue-ribbon heifer you killed.

LULU: What did you call me?

MAURICE: Do you have any idea who this is?

MARLENE: Sure, she's the old cow who called me a Neanderthal! And don't think I don't know what that is! I have degrees in economics and agronomics!

MAURICE: I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to... Here. *(Nervously handing her a card.)* Here's my insurance card.

MARLENE: *(Takes the card and tears it up.)* I don't want your stupid insurance card! *(Shaking him.)* I want your sorry carcass behind bars! Do you hear me? And if the police won't do their job, you can bet I'll be back here to do it for them! I'll take care of both of you! *(She drops MAURICE to the floor.)*

ZIGGY: *(Entering from street.)* Have no fear, the papaya juice is here!

MARLENE: *(Pushing ZIGGY aside as he exits.)* Get out of my way!

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