

Crap

A Comedy in Three Acts

by

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CHARACTERS

ABNER CLARK - Actor. Male, mid-30's. Very simple and stupid, but only when he's NOT acting.

LEONARD SEDGWICK - Assistant Associate Producer. Male, mid-30's. Obsequious, manic.

CARLA MAXWELL - Actress. Female, mid-30's to mid-40's. Bitter, loud, sharp, clever.

RANDALL GARDNER - Assistant Director. Male, late-20's. Overwhelmed.

REX ROGERS - Leading Man. Mid- to late-40's. Arrogant, pretentious, clueless Soap star. Errol Flynn wannabe.

LAINÉ MENCKEN - Ingenue. Female, late-20's. Naive, sweet.

KEN PRITCHETT - Actor. Male, mid- to late-40's. The old pro. Worked too long for this position. Stiff.

JOEY BAGGIO - Union Representative. Male, late-30's to late-40's. Mafia thug-type.

IL PAPA - Director. Male, 60's or older. Bigger than life, flamboyant, incoherent Italian director.

LYDIA RUBINO - Production Assistant. Female, mid-30's. Overly efficient, plucky, sarcastic.

SIDNEY COHEN - Rex's Agent. Male, 50's or older. Eastern-European Jewish-type. Kindly but no-nonsense.

SETTING

The play takes place in the "Second Banana's" dressing room in a large Broadway theater. It is present day.

ACT I

(The "Second Banana's" dressing room in a large Broadway theater. It is cluttered and busy with plenty of chairs, tables, a typewriter, a bulletin board covered with papers and costume racks. There is a pay phone on the wall. There is a door upstage center. ABNER CLARK enters, looks at the bulletin board and takes off a note. He reads in a thick southern drawl.)

ABNER

(Reads pedantically) "Dear Abner: Once again you have failed to proper... properly fill out your W-2. I regret to inform you that your cats can not be considered dependents. Please fill out this new one and return to me as soon as possible. Leonard." Hmpf.

(ABNER takes a pen out of his pocket and starts to fill out the new form while holding it in his palm. The pen pushes through the paper. He sees a letter-sized manilla envelope on a table and uses it to write on. LEONARD SEDGWICK enters. He looks around with concern.)

LEONARD

Abner, have you seen the Stage Hand's union contracts? They're in a plain manilla envelope.

ABNER

Nope.

LEONARD

The Executive Producer signed them and said they were delivered down here.

ABNER

Hadn't seen 'em.

LEONARD

Are you certain? It's crucial to the show, (under his breath) not to mention my health.

ABNER

Pos'tive.

LEONARD

Please let me know if you do.

ABNER

I'm fillin' out the W-2 like you wanted.

LEONARD

Congratulations. Please do it correctly this time.

ABNER

I'll do my best.

LEONARD

One can't ask for anything more.

(LEONARD exits. After a beat, CARLA MAXWELL enters with a bang.)

CARLA

CRAP! This play is CRA-A-A-A-A-A-AP!!! Unbridled, unmitigated, unadulterated, unparalleled, unbelievable crap! I can't understand why such crap is actually being put onto a stage! This is the worst experience of my entire life! My career will be ruined! I HATE my agent! I HATE the producers! I HATE THIS SHOW! Please, close the show now and put us out of our misery!

(Stops to look at ABNER for a moment.)

Hey, Lil' Abner. What do you think of the show?

ABNER

S'alright.

CARLA

It's not alright! Is it alright that monologues babble on endlessly?

ABNER

It's only three pages.

CARLA

Is it alright playing a one-dimensional character of no specific description?

ABNER

It's an acting challenge.

CARLA

Is it alright that you have to imagine this ill-conceived, non-functioning contraption that the whole show centers on?

ABNER

What is that thing, anyway?

CARLA

Come on, Abner. It sucks.

ABNER

Well, it's no Ibsen...

CARLA

You can't tell me that you have no opinion of the DRECK you're acting in.

ABNER

Oh, I have 'pinions.

(While CARLA speaks, RANDALL GARDNER enters quietly. He watches CARLA rant.)

CARLA

Share with the class, would you? Don't you think this show is the most ill-conceived piece of crap ever to grace a stage? Don't you think that the director's best quality is that he barely speaks English? That the one special effect that the entire show centers on doesn't even work? That the script has had so many writers attached to it that they refuse to even credit a pseudonym?! That the producers wouldn't even open it out-of-town to avoid the bad advance?!

ABNER

Uh... I don't know...

CARLA

Abner, how does it feel to know that you'll never work again if this show opens?

RANDALL

Excuse me...

CARLA

(Startled) Jesus! Who are you?!

RANDALL

I'm sorry. Randall Gardner. Where would I find Leonard Sedgwick?

CARLA

Fused from the lip to the Executive Producer's ass.

(LYDIA, the Production Assistant, bursts in frantically. She carries a clipboard.)

LYDIA

LEONARD!

CARLA

Get in line.

LYDIA

Damn. I can't wait around. I'm supposed to pick up script changes from him.

CARLA

From which writer?

LYDIA

God knows.

(notices RANDALL)

You must be Randall Gardner.

(shakes his hand)

Lydia Rubino - production assistant. If you need anything, let me know first. Please.

CARLA

Hey, Lids - when am I up next?

LYDIA

The schedule's out the window. I'll let you know

(turns to leave)

And if you see Leonard, make sure I get the changes from him.

(as she exits)

LEONA-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-ARD!!!!

CARLA

Poor girl's gonna have a coronary before she's forty.

RANDALL

(Realizes) Hey! You're Carla Maxwell!

CARLA

(Suddenly flattered) Yes, yes I am. You've seen me before?

RANDALL

Oh, dozens of time! I love your work – especially that commercial you do for the tampons where you...

CARLA

Yes, yes, we've all seen that one. And you were looking for again... uh...

RANDALL

Leonard Sedgwick. I'm the new Assistant Director.

CARLA

Another one?! The last one was fired only yesterday!

RANDALL

(A little startled by this) What?!

CARLA

Nothing, nothing. Leonard usually pops in here about a thousand times a day. Get comfy.

RANDALL

(Sits) Say, aren't you Abner Clark?

ABNER

(Looking up from his form) Huh? Oh! Where are my manners. Pleased't meet'cha. Abner Clark.

RANDALL

I know! Wow! I thought for sure you were going to win that Tony Award last year.

ABNER

Heck, I was happy jes'ta be nominated.

RANDALL

I know you say that, but I'm sure you were really disappointed.

ABNER

Naw, I was happy jes'ta be nominated.

CARLA

Everything is face value with Abner.

RANDALL

Wow. So, who is this Leonard?

ABNER

Leonard is the 'sistant 'sociate producer.

(Unseen, LEONARD enters.)

RANDALL

What does that mean?

CARLA

That means he's the lowest man on the totem pole who can sign things.

ABNER

(Noticing LEONARD) Hey, Leonard.

CARLA

LEONARD! Oh... I... uh...

LEONARD

Relax. That's exactly how I would describe my position. Leonard Sedgwick. You must be Randall Gardner. Welcome aboard. Carla darling, have you seen the effervescent Lydia around lately?

CARLA

Just zipped by.

LEONARD

(Gives CARLA a manilla envelope) Could you be a peach and give her these script changes?

CARLA

Why me?

LEONARD

Why not? Oops, look at the time. Love to chat, but I have some contracts to find. If you need anything, see Lydia. Thanks, Carla. I owe you again. Ta ta. (starts to exit)

RANDALL

So, what do I do now?

CARLA

Assume responsibility.

(LAINE MENCKEN enters. She swoons.)

LAINE

Oooh, I LOVE this show! I'm so glad I decided to take that acting class in college.

CARLA

Somebody's been rehearsing the kissing scene with King Rex again.

LAINE

(Singing, dancing) I'm in love, I'm in love...

CARLA

I'm in pain, I'm in pain.

ABNER

With who?

LAINE

With Rex, of course.

CARLA

Rex isn't your type, hon.

LAINE

You're just jealous.

CARLA

Of who, you or Rex?

RANDALL

Rex?

CARLA

Rex Rogers. Weren't you told ANYTHING when they hired you?

RANDALL

No, actually.

LAINE

Rex is the kindest, sweetest, most handsome man in the world.

CARLA

Note how she strategically left out "talented."

RANDALL

Rex Rogers the soap star?

ABNER

Yep.

RANDALL

He's a stage actor?

CARLA

Barely. Rex is the "name". Without Rex on board, the backers wouldn't pay out.

(LYDIA bursts in.)

LYDIA

Abner, you're up.

ABNER

But th' schedule says I'm not up for 'nother fifteen minutes...

LYDIA

He wants you now.

ABNER

But I'm not finished with my W-2.

RANDALL

Shouldn't I eventually meet with the director?

LYDIA

You'd think. Just stay here.

(exits, beat, returns)

Today, Abner.

CARLA

What about me?

LYDIA

Not yet. (exits)

ABNER

I reckon I gotta go. Nice't meet'cha, Randy.

(ABNER leaves the envelope
and W2 on the main table and
exits.)

RANDALL

So, I don't believe I've had the pleasure.

CARLA

Randall Gardner, new Assistant Director - meet Laine Mencken, ingenue-in-training.

RANDALL

Hi.

LAINE

Hi.
(quietly, to CARLA)
He's cute.

CARLA

He's not your type.

LAINE

How do you know?

CARLA

I just do.

LAINE

You do not.

CARLA

Trust me on this one, Lainey.

LAINE

Nice eyes... nice hands... cute butt...

CARLA

I agree. But listen to me, sweetie. He's not your type.

LAINE

Is ANYBODY my type?! First Rex isn't my type, now this guy isn't my type...

CARLA

Relax.

LAINE

I will not! Ever since we began working on this show you'd keep meddling into my personal life - telling me that I shouldn't go after this guy and I shouldn't go after that guy. What's wrong with this guy, huh?!

(directly to RANDALL)

What's wrong with you?! Am I your type?

RANDALL

What... uh... no, I'm sorry...

CARLA

See?

LAINE

And who IS his type, Miss Know-It-All?

CARLA

Oh, gee, maybe Leonard?

RANDALL

She's right.

LAINE

You mean he... oh my God, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to embarrass you...

RANDALL

That's okay...

CARLA

(Laughs) You have to forgive Lainey sometimes. It appears they don't have homosexuals in Ohio.

LAINE

It's not funny.

(REX pokes his head in from the door.)

REX

Excuse me, but have any of you seen Leonard?

CARLA

Nope.

REX

Pity. If anyone does before I do, please tell him I'm looking for him. It's VERY important.

LAINE

Anything for you, Rex.

CARLA

Oh, please.

REX

(Noticing RANDALL) Excuse me, but I don't believe we've met. (extends his hand) Rex Rogers.

RANDALL

Hello. Randall Gardner. I'm the new Assistant Director.

REX

Splendid, splendid! Where do you hail from, old chap?

RANDALL

Uh... Hartford.

REX

Hartford, Connecticut?! Lovely town, just lovely.
Say, you wouldn't happen to know Allison Orfitelli?

RANDALL

Sure I do! She runs the Baldwin Theatre Company. I
worked with her when I was going to college.

REX

Allison and I go way back. She's such a dear. It's a
small, small world, isn't it? Welcome aboard, old
chap. Ta. (exits)

RANDALL

What a nice guy!

LAINÉ

Isn't he dreamy?

CARLA

I was thinking something very similar.

LAINÉ

He has the nicest eyes...

CARLA

He's spaced out beyond belief! And what's with that
accent? The man was born and raised in The Bronx!

(LEONARD enters.)

LEONARD

Has anybody seen Rex?

CARLA

Tall? Greasy hair? Vacant expression? No talent?

RANDALL

He was just here.

LEONARD

Was he looking for me?

CARLA

Yeah...

LEONARD

Look folks, we have a tiny problem.

CARLA

Just one?

LEONARD

Please, Carla. I just got a call from Rex's agent. Rex is an unhappy little soap star. It's important that we all do whatever we can to make Rex happy.

CARLA

Are you talking Tell-Him-a-Joke happy or Get-Him-Laid happy?

LEONARD

Whatever it takes.

LAINÉ

You can count on me, Leonard.

CARLA

So what are the consequences?

LEONARD

Rex could leave and the show would close and I don't get to move up the food chain and a whole ugly series of events occur, understand?

CARLA

Okay, okay, okay. We'll kiss King Rex's butt next chance we get...

(to LAINÉ)

... or any other body part you'd like.

LAINÉ

Carla!

LEONARD

That's all I'm asking.

RANDALL

Leonard?

LEONARD

Yes, new guy?

RANDALL

Shouldn't I be doing something?

LEONARD

Like what?

RANDALL

I don't know - working with the director maybe?

LEONARD

Get a load of him! Fifteen minutes and he's running the show. You just wait here. Il Papa will see you when he's ready.

RANDALL

The Pope?

CARLA

That's what the director wants us to call him. Lydia says it's like "grandfather."

LEONARD

I'll check the chorus dressing room. Carla, did you give Lydia that envelope I gave you?

CARLA

All taken care of.

LEONARD

Good.

(goes to exit)

Oh, by the way, did anyone see the Stage Hand's union contracts around?

CARLA

Are they important?

LEONARD

Only if you consider Guido and Nunzio breaking my thumbs important. They're in a plain manilla envelope.

LAINE

We'll let you know if we see 'em.

LEONARD

Thanks. Ta. (exits)

LAINE

(Pensively) Carla?

CARLA

What.

LAINE

Carla, I feel I can talk to you.

CARLA

I don't know why.

LAINE

Could I ask you for a little... advice?

CARLA

I get the feeling if I don't I'll never hear the end of it. What is it, Princess?

LAINE

I want to tell Rex how I feel.

CARLA

Mistake.

LAINE

Carla, I need support.

CARLA

Then why did you ask me?!

LAINE

I wrote him a letter expressing my feelings for him.

(takes out the letter)

What do you think?

CARLA

(Takes the letter, looks it over) "I'm sure it's no secret to you how I feel... "

LAINE

(Embarrassed - referring to RANDALL) CARLA! Please!

CARLA

Oh, a thousand pardons. (reads letter to herself)

LAINE

Well?

CARLA

You don't mince words, do you.

LAINE

I'll admit it's a bit forward.

CARLA

No, no. It's perfect... for a ransom letter. Baby, this is an assault!

LAINE

You don't think he'll like it?

CARLA

Oh, he'll like it alright. If he's BREATHING, he'll like it.

LAINE

(Gleefully happy) Thanks. That's all I need to know.

(LAINE snatches the letter from CARLA and puts it into, yes, you guessed it, a manilla envelope.)

LAINE (cont'd)

I'll slip it under his dressing room door during lunch.

(KEN PRITCHETT enters.
LAINE nervously tosses the envelope onto the table with the others.)

CARLA & LAINE (unison)

(deadpan) Hi, Ken.

KEN

Hello, Ladies. (makes himself a cup of tea)

RANDALL

(To KEN) Don't I know you?

KEN

I don't think so.
(extends his hand)
Ken Pritchett.

RANDALL

You look so familiar.

KEN

I've been in a lot of shows. Maybe you've seen me?

RANDALL

Wait... I think I have. Were you in "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" at the Beaumont?

KEN

I certainly was.

RANDALL

And the revival of "An Inspector Calls"?

KEN

Yes.

RANDALL

And didn't you just do Shakespeare in the park?

KEN

(starting to get annoyed) ...yes...

RANDALL

And that Neil Simon play a couple of years back ...

KEN

...then you've...

RANDALL

And the Roundabout revival of "1776"... One of the Delaware delegates, I believe...

KEN

...that's just fine...

RANDALL

...and you were also in...

CARLA

Alright already! Ken's the old pro. He's seen more stages than the touring company of *The Fantasticks*.

KEN

It took me twenty eight years to earn a role of this distinction.

CARLA

You mean a credit that's not in tiny print?

KEN

Precisely.

RANDALL

Well, I've always been a big fan of your work.

KEN

Thank you. Thank you. Who are you?

RANDALL

Oh, I'm sorry. Randall Gardner, new Assistant Director.

KEN

Oh. It's a pleasure.

RANDALL

Is there anyone else I know in the show?

CARLA

No, we're pretty much it. Rex is upstairs, and the chorus members share a room down the hall. This is the official Second Banana Dressing Room - Me, Laine, Ken and Abner.

RANDALL

Outstanding!

KEN

So, where do you hail from, Randall?

RANDALL

Hartford. I answered an ad and next thing I know I'm here!

KEN

Have they told you?

RANDALL

About the show?

KEN

No, about your position. You're the twelfth Assistant Director we've had so far.

LAINE

Ken, don't scare him off!

KEN

If this man is to be a professional, then he needs to know what he's up against.

RANDALL

Thank you. I appreciate it ... I think.

KEN

You'll be better off.

RANDALL

At least you're not going to tell me how bad the show is and how it'll ruin everybody's career and how it has to close before it opens and all.

KEN

Who would say anything like that?

RANDALL

Well ... I mean ...

KEN

Listen Randall, working as an actor in the theater is a privilege – one I'm not too eager to give up. As far as I'm concerned it is my sole job to portray my character to the best of my ability. No matter how good or bad a show is, as long as I know my lines and don't detract too much then I know I've performed a job well done. And what kind of misinformed malcontent would say that this show will ruin their careers?

CARLA

Hey New Guy – did I ever tell you about the guy who's kneecaps I busted?

RANDALL

Uh ... well ... you just kind of hear things, you know?

(LYDIA runs in.)

LYDIA

He's coming! Get ready, he's coming!

(Everybody stands.)

CARLA

I hate this.

(IL PAPA enters with a flourish.)

IL PAPA

Ciao! Ciao bella! My beautiful, beautiful actors!
Ciao, ciao!

ALL

(LYDIA encourages their response) Ciao, Il Papa.

IL PAPA

Ah, bellissima. My beautiful actors! You all work so hard for Il Papa, yes? You all make the good show for Il Papa yes? Yes?

ALL

(LYDIA encourages) Yes...

IL PAPA

You do all you can do for Il Papa, yes?
(Goes right up to CARLA)
Yes?

CARLA

You gotta lay off the garlic knots, Pops.

IL PAPA

Eh?

CARLA

Yes, Il Papa.

IL PAPA

You see, Il Papa no think you give all you can give.
Why is Il Papa so sad about what he see on stage?

(To KEN)

Eh?

KEN

I'm sure it's nothing like you think, Il Papa...

IL PAPA

I tell you go up and you go down. I tell you go in and
you go out. I say big and you do small. (Looks at
LAINE)

LAINE

I'm sorry, Il Papa. I'll do better.

IL PAPA

Ah, bella. You make the old man heart sing. Such a
pretty girl. You make the stage light up, but you make
my ears ache. And you...

(turns to RANDALL)

You stink! I never see such a nothing performance. Is
like you not even on stage.

LYDIA

Il Papa...

IL PAPA

Like the chair you are. Like the lamp. I see her and
her and him but I no see you. What you have to say,
eh? You speak now to Il Papa.

LYDIA

Il Papa, you really should...

IL PAPA

No, I want this one to speak. You speak now for you
will not speak again to Il Papa.

RANDALL

I... uh...

(takes IL PAPA's hand and shakes it)

Randall Gardner. I'm your new Assistant Director, and
I just want to say that this is such an honor...

IL PAPA

(To LYDIA) So, this is my new one, eh?

LYDIA

I tried to tell you.

IL PAPA

(Pulls RANDALL aside, ushers him around the room) You see... I am Directoire, yes? I move my beautiful actors across stage, yes? I say "go" and they go. I say "laugh" and they laugh. You know what I say, yes? Is like big tree. All dance around tree, la la la, until night come. Then, tree still there but everybody go home. You understand, yes? That is how my beautiful actors are. They are like big tree... no, they are like mighty river and I am fish. Is better, yes?

When I was little I want to direct the stage. I go to Hollywood and direct the big shows - dancers and animals - big, BIG sets - BIG monies. I do two, three, six movie. Big, big actors - Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly. Then I do no movie. I go to Italy and make the wine. Now I get call from New York - they ask Il Papa to come and do stage. I say, "I do movie many, many long time ago," but they say "we must have Il Papa." So I come and I here and I do.

So, you be my new one, eh? You got'a good face. Whassa his name?

LYDIA

Randall.

IL PAPA

Ronaldo. You be Il Papa's boy, Ronaldo. You stay by my side and you see with my eyes and you do what I say and you be okay. When I say jump, you tell them to jump. When I say to be funny, you tell them to be funny. We get along okay. Ciao!

(IL PAPA turns to leave.)

RANDALL

But... what should I be doing?

IL PAPA

Insolencia!

(IL PAPA exits, babbling in Italian.)

LYDIA

NEVER ask Il Papa a question. (storms off)

CARLA

So, are we looking at lucky thirteen?

RANDALL

What have I done?

CARLA

You asked a reasonable question to a lunatic.
Unforgivable.

RANDALL

And this is bad?

KEN

Il Papa is a legend. Working with him is one of the
highlights of my career!

RANDALL

He's that good?

KEN

I have absolutely no idea.

(LYDIA pokes her head in the
door.)

LYDIA

Laine, you're on.

LAINÉ

No I'm not.

LYDIA

Please, Laine. He wants you on stage.

LAINÉ

But I just got here.

LYDIA

But he wants you on stage NOW.

LAINÉ

But...

LYDIA

NOW!

LAINÉ

But I...

LYDIA

Ank!

CARLA

Bye, Lainey.

LYDIA

Laine...

LAINÉ

I'm coming! I'm coming!

CARLA

Hey, Lids...

LYDIA

Not yet.

(LAINÉ and LYDIA exit.)

RANDALL

Um... Ken... I'm sorry, but where's the... um...

KEN

Men's room? Next door down to the right.

RANDALL

Thank you... I mean...

KEN

It's alright. We all did that when we first met Il Papa.

RANDALL

Thanks.

(RANDALL darts out. KEN sheepishly looks around and takes out, yes, a manilla envelope from his stuff and examines the contents.)

CARLA

What 'cha got, Kenny?

KEN

Have you ever heard of Sidney Cohen?

CARLA

The agent or the pastry chef?

KEN

The agent. He's one of the biggest in the business.

CARLA

Sidney Cohen wants to take you on? He only handles real stars!... and yet he still represents Rex...

KEN

(Like an old Jewish man) You shouldn't be number two your whole life, bubbie...

(as KEN)

...he says. He's so cute.

CARLA

You've got the voice down and everything.

KEN

I have Rex to thank. He set the whole thing up.

CARLA

Ken, that's great!

KEN

Anyway, he wanted me to get these. Take a look.
(shows her)

CARLA

Nice tear sheets. Who is it?

KEN

It's me!

CARLA

No! (looks) Yes? Ken, you look kind of...

KEN

He's a very good photographer. Sidney's recommendation.

CARLA

Ken ... you look fabulous! If you looked like this in real life I'd be all over you!

KEN

(Uncomfortable) But I thought you were... uh...

CARLA

Just because I'm gay doesn't mean I'm dead. (whistles)
Very spicy, Kenny.

(Indicates one of the photos)

Are you wearing anything in this one?

KEN

(Looks) That one? No. The photographer really felt it was necessary, and who am I to argue with an artist.

CARLA

You're not thinking of... You know...

KEN

Oh, heavens no. But let's face it. Even if we open we'll all be on the audition calls in a few weeks. Sidney says...

(like an old Jewish man)

Your old headshots wouldn't get you a kid's party.

(back as KEN)

Do you think they represent the real me?

CARLA

Well, that depends. Is there something about you I don't know?

KEN

No, I'm a pretty up-front kind of guy.

CARLA

Let's put it this way... I'd cast you from these headshots.

KEN

Splendid!

CARLA

Look, Kenny... between you and me, I wouldn't show these around to anyone here.

KEN

Why not? If they're as good as you say... ?

CARLA

Look, everyone's a little jumpy. If someone caught wind of this, they'd think you were trying to bail.

KEN

But I'm not.

CARLA

I know that and you know that. Just wait for the show to close and then paper the town with these babies. You can pass a few my way as soon as they're printed up. (indicates) Can I get this one in a poster size?

(JOEY "THE BAGMAN" BAGGIO enters.)

JOEY

Okay, who's in charge here?

(RANDALL enters.)

RANDALL

Thanks again, Ken.

CARLA

(Pointing to RANDALL) That would be him.

RANDALL

Huh?

CARLA

Assume responsibility, kid.

JOEY

I'm lookin' for Lenny Sedgwick.

CARLA

Lenny?

RANDALL

Uh... who are you?

JOEY

Dey call me Joey da Bagman. I'm in da right place, ain't I?

RANDALL

Uh, certainly Mr. Bagman. "Lenny" could be here any minute.

JOEY

He didn't leave town or nothin'?

CARLA

Excuse me for being so inquisitive, but has Lenny done something wrong?

JOEY

Not yet. Jus' let me know when he comes in, okay?

RANDALL

Just sit tight. Leonard should be along any time.

(Pause as all wait
uncomfortably.)

JOEY

So, this is a theater, huh?

RANDALL

Hmm? Oh, yes it is.

JOEY

You'se guys actors?

RANDALL

They are. I'm the assistant director.

JOEY

I did some actin' a few times.

RANDALL

No kidding.

JOEY

Yeah! I did some community theater a few times in Queens. Y'know what I did?

CARLA

"Guys and Dolls"?

JOEY

Nah - I don't sing too good. I did "Doc" in "Come Back, Little Sheba." A beautiful but depressing play. Not a very difficult part. There was no monologues or nothin'. Lots of "Yes, Lola." "Sure, honey." That kinda stuff. But it was worth it to chase the old broad around the stage with a hatchet.

RANDALL

Uh... wow.

CARLA

(Approaches JOEY -- placating) So, Mr. D'Bagman... I can call you Joey, can't I? What does a good looking, well dressed, obviously talented man want with our little "Lenny"?

JOEY

Hey, you're cute. Ain't I seen you on TV?

CARLA

A little. Come on ... what did Lenny do?

JOEY

Aw, it ain't nothin'. I'm just here to pick up the stagehand's union contracts. Y'see, my cousin Paulie is workin' that big thingy you got goin' back there. Now, I could care less about no contracts, but Paulie is a bit of a screw-up, and his dad ... my boss ... wants to be sure that he don't go losin' his job or

JOEY (cont'd)

nothin'. But, y'see, Lenny was supposed to get us those contracts last week. So I was sent to make sure that I got the papers and they're signed and all.

CARLA

You're not gonna "rough him up"?

JOEY

Naw. Not unless he gives me lip.

KEN

Uh-oh.

JOEY

What - did he say somethin'?

RANDALL

I'm sure Leonard has what you need. Just wait here and I'll go find him for you.

JOEY

You're a good kid. If you ever need a favor, just let me know.

RANDALL

Oh, I will.

(turns to exit)

LEONA-A-A-A-A-A-A-ARD!!! (exits)

JOEY

(To CARLA) So, Baby ... what'cha doin' later tonight?

CARLA

Sorry Slick. I got a date.

JOEY

What's he got that I ain't got?

KEN

Don't go there, Carla. Don't go there.

(LEONARD and RANDALL burst in.)

LEONARD

Joey! What a pleasure it is to see you again!

JOEY

Where's the contract, Lenny?

(LEONARD takes an envelope
from the table.)

LEONARD

It was right here all the time. I'm sorry for any
inconvenience it may have caused you.

JOEY

No problem...

(pulls LEONARD aside)

...as long as you can get the fiery one to have a drink
with me.

LEONARD

CARLA? I ... uh ... I'll see what I can do.

JOEY

Then everything is fine. You takin' care of Paulie?

LEONARD

He's a fine stagehand.

JOEY

He's a fuck-up. But thanks for kissin' up.

(JOEY exits.)

LEONARD

Knee-breaking averted.

CARLA

Oh, Lenny, we have SO many questions for you.

LEONARD

Honey, I have so many questions for you three that I
don't even know where to start. Just tell me this ...
where did the contract come from?

CARLA

I don't know ... where was it SUPPOSED to come from?

LEONARD

(Goes to leave) I need a series of drinks.

CARLA

Wait a minute, Lenny. This ape wants to date me.

LEONARD

Did you tell him you don't play on that team?

CARLA

I get the feeling he might find that interesting.

LEONARD

Just tapdance around him. That's your specialty.

(LYDIA bursts in.)

LYDIA

Leonard, the stage hands have destroyed another set of pulleys.

LEONARD

Christ. (exits)

LYDIA

Ken, you're up.

KEN

But I just got here. My tea is steeping.

LYDIA

Tough. He wants you. You too, Ronaldo.

RANDALL

Me?

LYDIA

Let me tell you this up front; I have no sense of humor.

CARLA

What about me?

LYDIA

Not yet.

RANDALL

Well ... here goes nothing.

LYDIA

I certainly hope not.

KEN

Uh, Carla ... those tear sheets ...

CARLA

I'm not done with 'em. I'll get 'em back to ya.

KEN

Please don't misplace them.

CARLA

Trust me. Now, go before Il Papa gets more ill.

(KEN and LYDIA exit.
RANDALL stands a bit
disoriented. LYDIA returns
for him.)

LYDIA
Randall ...

RANDALL
Oh. Coming.

(RANDALL and LYDIA exit.
CARLA looks through KEN's
photos, puts them in the
envelope and tosses them
onto the table with the
others. She then realizes
the envelope with the script
changes.)

CARLA
(To herself) The changes! Hmm...

(CARLA looks at the changes.
She looks around the room,
goes to the typewriter, puts
in a sheet of paper and
starts typing. After a few
moments, LYDIA enters a bit
less frantically - almost
friendly.)

LYDIA
Wat'cha doing?

CARLA
Taking care of some insurance.

LYDIA
Il Papa says you can go to lunch. He won't need you
until later this afternoon. Then again, the way he
works he'll have you on stage for the next eight hours
- or not at all. I can't take him much longer.

CARLA
Then why do you put up with him?

LYDIA
One: Nobody else will. Two: Nobody else can. Three:
Well, let's just say if I can prove myself here I'll
get a nice bonus.

CARLA

Lydia, you've proved yourself on six shows now.

LYDIA

This one is a favor. If I can keep everything together then on the NEXT show ...

CARLA

You think they'll actually come through?

LYDIA

I have enough on Leonard to have his job now. I'll do it the honest way first.

CARLA

You're a better girl than I am, Lydia Rubino.

LYDIA

Thanks. Hey, have you seen those changes yet?

CARLA

Oh, there's so much junk around here. I'll look for it. You go back to dealing with the zoo.

LYDIA

You're a doll. (exits)

CARLA

Let's see...

(reads some pages of changes)

"Gentlemen. I feel it important to tell you that I was not in fact the person you suspected, and furthermore..." Oh please.

(starts typing - reads slowly as she types)

"Gentlemen. I feel it important to tell you..."

(starts to laugh - quietly at first, but building)

(like a sheep) Ba-a-a-a-a-a-a-a! (continues laughing)

Fadeout

* END OF ACT I *