

ONE OF OUR CLOWNS IS MISSING

A COMEDY-DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

By Robert Frankel

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(FIVE WOMEN, SEVEN MEN, TWO EITHER)

LUCY (F).....Sarcastic thief masquerading as high-spirited travel agent; Carlson's wife. (63 lines)

CARLSON (M).....Cautious thief masquerading as manager of travel agency; Lucy's husband. (69 lines)

SANDY (F).....Stressed out, nervous young lady who likes mystery books. She is convinced by Hahmberger that she is really a spy. (128 lines)

MR. / MRS. ELAINE / SAMUEL

HAHMBERGER (M)Sanitarium escapee, voice of intrigue and the escapees' leader. Speaks in foreign accent and thinks he's a woman. (104 lines)

ROLLO (M).....High-spirited sanitarium escapee, well-meaning greaser type with more compassion than brains. (51 lines)

DAPHNE (F).....Emotional sanitarium escapee. High-strung, very shy, speaks in run-on, deep-pitched ramblings. Loves to dance. (18 lines)

TWEETY (F).....Nice sanitarium escapee. When stressed, repeats everyone's last sentence. Attempts plate twirling. (34 lines)

CHIPS (F).....Sanitarium escapee, voice of compassion. Eats potato chips when stressed. (37 lines)

TALLMAN (M).....(ALBERT) Cynical, sarcastic sanitarium escapee. Pretends to be a "tall man" and alternates between grandiose and introverted. Pent up anger and grandeur. (43 lines)

TOOSDAY (M)(FRAN) Chronic liar; sanitarium escapee. (33 lines)

WENSDAY (M).....(DANNY) Chronic liar; sanitarium escapee. Straight-faced Dragnet-style humor. He is Toosday's partner. (22 lines)

GRIMSLEY (M)A tough-as-nail, humorless thief hired by Lucy and Carlson to help with the heist. (21 lines)

POLICE OFFICERArrests Grimsley and helps Dr. Pimpernell. Could be played by a male or female. (11 lines)

DR. PIMPERNELLThe easy-going doctor at the sanitarium. Could be played by a male or female. (19 lines)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE, PROLOGUEWriting Desk
ACT ONE, SCENE 1.....So-Long Travel Agency
ACT ONE, SCENE 2.....So-Long Travel Agency
ACT TWO, PROLOGUEWriting Desk
ACT TWO, SCENE 1.....So-Long Travel Agency
ACT TWO, EPILOGUEWriting Desk

ACT ONE, PROLOGUE

SETTING:

Black stage except for one lamp light on center stage desk.

AT RISE:

SANDY, in glasses, sits at a desk writing a letter to her parents. SHE reads aloud as she writes (could be pre-recorded.). SHE fusses nervously with HER glasses, blows HER nose occasionally, and has the nervous habit of trying to erase HER eyebrows with HER pencil eraser. In general, she makes a very disjointed image.

SANDY: Dear Mom and Dad, I learned something about myself last night. You know, the degree I earned last month in botany? Well . . . *(SHE pauses, nervously erasing HER eyebrows in thought, then notices the plant on the desk near the lamp. SHE looks at it, looks at her letter, back to the plant, and finally, pushes it away saying to it:.)* STOP looking at me! *(SHE continues writing.)* So, I don't really know what I'm going to do with my life now. Except that I just got this job yesterday as a travel agent's assistant. It sounds really fun. But since I'm not really big on fun, I'll probably quit. Other than that, things are swell. Give a kiss to Grandma. Love always, Sandy.

BLACKOUT and immediately right into LIGHTS UP for next scene.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

SETTING:

Full lights up revealing The So-Long Travel Agency. Upstage left we see the back of the office window advertising the agency's name. Stage left is a door to the street. There is a coat tree downstage of the door. Two desks occupy most of center stage. They face the audience at a 45-degree angle, but perpendicular to each other so that the occupants can talk to each other. There is a monitor, keyboard, and a phone on each desk. There is a client chair upstage of each desk. Upstage center is a long table with a variety of office paraphernalia (stapler, hole punch, papers.). Downstage right is a door leading to the boss's office.

AT RISE:

It is a cold November day. LUCY, the high energy, too-good-to-be-true travel agent sits at the desk opposite SANDY. SHE is chewing gum and typing away – alternating between talking and singing to HERSELF. SANDY remains at the same desk from the PROLOGUE. It is HER lunch break and SHE is eating a yogurt and reading a mystery novel.

LUCY: *(Into phone.)* Yes, Mr. Davidson. Have fun! *(Hangs up phone. Talking to HERSELF as SHE merrily types away.)* The Davidsons are going to . . . *(SHE checks HER roster, then starts typing as SHE continues in Spanish accent.)* . . . Me-hee-co! O-le! Fritoos tostados por favor senorita su casa *(Breaks into song.)* La cuca-RAH-CHA! La cuca-RAH-CHA! La la ba-ba ba-ba BA! La cuca-*(Each time SHE sings "RAH-CHA," SHE bumps HER rolling desk chair into the desk making an emphatic "boom" which causes SANDY to jump for HER book.)* . . . RAH-CHA! La cuca-RAH-CHA! Laa la ba-ba ba-ba BA . . . *(SHE drums on the top of her computer emphatically for the final two beats.)* . . . OH-LAY!!! *(SHE laughs and continues with HER work.)* The Gilners are going to . . . *(SHE checks HER roster, then starts typing.)* . . . Florida! The MAGIC KINGDOM! Wow! Goofy, Bugs, MICKY! *(Doing her best Mickey Mouse voice.)* "What have you got for the kids today, Lucy? A vacation!" *(SHE giggles. SANDY looks at HER oddly, then goes back to reading.)* The Finkels are going to . . . *(SHE checks HER roster, then continues typing.)* . . . Vermont . . . *(SHE sings to the tune of, "The Ankle Bone's Connected to the Calf Bone," etc. as SHE types.)* The Finkels are going to - Vermont! The . . . Gilners are going to - Florida! *(CARLSON enters from his stage right office. HE is the ever-cautious manager of the travel agency and LUCY's husband. HE hears the last piece of HER song.)* And me I'm going to - -

CARLSON: *(Swinging HIS arms in mock song as HE sings and dances towards LUCY.)* . . . be FIRED - if you don't get your job done!

LUCY: *(SHE blushes for a moment, laughs, and whacks HIM on the arm.)* Aw shut up. I'm working as hard as I can. We just sold three more "Caribbean Football Cruises" - you know? The one with all those cute *(Name of local favorite professional football team.)* linebackers on it? And a couple of those *(With disdain.)* . . .

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"Madagascar Madness" things that you like for some unknown reason.

SANDY giggles quietly. CARLSON turns to look at HER. The attention shocks her.

SANDY: Sorry! *(SHE immediately drops HER book, begins to reach for it, bumping HER yogurt carton which spills, grabs about a hundred Kleenexes from HER pop-up box with growing anxiety, wipes the yogurt up, can't hold back a sneeze and forgetting, sneezes into HER Kleenexes leaving yogurt on HER face. SHE takes one last look at HER book, a cross-eyed look at HER nose, and then at CARLSON and LUCY before SHE grabs HER coat off the back of HER chair and races out the front door yelling, "I'M SORRY!" (There is a pause. CARLSON and LUCY look at each other.)*

LUCY: You know, that is one high strung lady!

CARLSON: Yes, well, we needed the help, you know.

LUCY: *(Knowingly.)* The "help"? Right. She may screw things up yet.

CARLSON: Not a chance. She's just what we want. She's strung tighter than a ukulele; she's constantly apologizing; in short, she's not paying a bit of attention to what's going on around here!

LUCY: And she's near-sighted, don't forget that.

CARLSON: *(Grinning.)* Yeah! That ought a help when the shipment comes in. *(He puts HIS arms around HER from the back.)* Two more days, baby, and the goods are ours. No more travel agency! *(Laughing.)* Just stolen idols!

LUCY: Right. Straight from the museum and into our hands. And then on the next plane to the Caribbean . . .

CARLSON: With us alongside! Which reminds me, did you get the tickets?

LUCY: It's all set. Two one-way tickets to the Caribbean for tomorrow night - no return. And no way to trace us! I've got that airline reservation system so screwed up, they'll never know we even existed - which, after tomorrow night, we don't.

CARLSON: Well make sure, will you? We don't want the police to find us. And Ramos is going to be waiting for us at midnight tomorrow. And if we're not there, with the stuff, he ain't buying. We can't afford any screw ups.

LUCY: Aww. That's the nicest thing you've said to me since I helped you rob that bank last winter! (*Suddenly thinking.*) Hey, what's going to happen to the travel agency? I mean, won't the police get suspicious when the lights don't get turned on for the next twenty years here?

CARLSON: Who cares? They'll just assume that "So-Long Travel Agency" went - so long! Meanwhile, you keep playing Miss Perfect Travel Agent, okay?

LUCY: Sure, sweetie pie. I'm good!

SANDY re-enters, stiffly, awkwardly, and, trying to go unnoticed, retakes HER seat as the other two watch. CARLSON saunters over to HER.

CARLSON: So, Sandy, How's - -

SANDY: (*Abruptly agitated.*) What? Sorry, sorry, sorry . . .

CARLSON: I just wondered, how's it going?

SANDY: (*HER arms flail spasmodically, sometimes holding up bits of papers from the desk, as SHE tries to be coherent.*) It's - I've got, there's so much, it's, and the customer, well! I mean Europe and hotels and planes. I mean tickets and phones and computers! All the buttons, I mean, codes and hotel agents speaking French, I mean well. I'm so sorry! (*SHE stops abruptly and there is a silent pause.*)

CARLSON: Yes, well. Glad to hear it . . . (*HE shows the "okay sign" to LUCY as if to say, "See? She's JUST what we wanted."*) Any problems just call on ole Lucy.

LUCY shoots him a "thanks a lot" glance and HE exits to HIS office.

SANDY glances at LUCY, and then turns to HER keyboard with a sigh, and begins to type with one-finger, checking the screen each time SHE hits a key. LUCY resumes typing.

LUCY: (*Repeating sarcastically under HER breath.*) "Any problems, just call ole Lucy!"

The phone rings on both desks, breaking the silence. LUCY picks up out of habit. Simultaneously, SANDY picks up very nervously.

SANDY / LUCY: So-Long Travel Agency!

THEY Look at each other. Through the next sequence SANDY and

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LUCY are never in sync, SANDY talks into the phone while LUCY is talking directly to SANDY and vice versa.

SANDY: *(Assuming SHE did something wrong, whispering into the phone looking at LUCY.)* Oh, I didn't . . . I mean . . . I'm sorry . . .

LUCY: *(Holding hand over phone. To SANDY.)* It's okay. You get it.

SANDY: *(Still on phone.)* What?

LUCY: *(Into phone.)* You get it. You haven't had much practice and --

SANDY: *(Hands over phone. To LUCY.)* But what if it's that "Madagascar" you know?

LUCY: *(Into phone.)* That's okay. You can handle - *(Seeing SANDY'S hand over the phone, SHE does the same.)* - you can handle the --

SANDY: *(Into phone.)* NO! I'm not trained on that Madagascar . . . you know. You said --

LUCY: *(Yelling into phone, exasperated.)* Okay. Okay! I'll get it! *(Clearing throat. Back into phone.)* Hello? So-Long Travel Agency may I . . . hello? Hello? *(SHE hangs up the phone and looks at SANDY.)*

SANDY: *(Anxiously.)* What? No answer? Oooh, I bet, I bet it was probably . . . probably the IRS checking to see if we're really a travel agency or . . . or maybe! MAYBE it was a burglar wanting to know if . . . if someone's still here so that he can steal his way into here and -- *(SHE makes a small explosion kind of sound, with shocked expression on HER face and hands raised.)* OR! OR MAYBE it could be this, this street gang and --

LUCY: *(Cutting HER off. In mock amazement.)* Or MAYBE it could have been a CUSTOMER who didn't want to hold on any longer while we talked on the phone to each other!

There is silence as SANDY considers this.

SANDY: *(Doubtfully.)* Well, sure. Maybe.

LUCY: Geez, girl! You've been reading too many mystery books. Did you ever think that maybe you make a bigger deal out of some things than they --

The street door opens suddenly and both WOMEN turn abruptly to

look. It is a man in a big fur coat, matching hat, a cane, and perhaps a mustache. HE clutches a briefcase to HIS coat. HE looks around the room nervously.

LUCY: Hi. I'm Lucy. May I -

HAHMBERGER: *(Pointing to SANDY and going to HER. HE has a foreign accent resembling German.)* No! I speak to her!

LUCY: *(Puzzled, but smiling.)* Sure. That's Sandy.

SANDY: *(Overwhelmed and, of course, nervous.)* Yes, that's - I'm Sandy.

HAHMBERGER: *(Looking at HER closely.)* Yes. You are.

SANDY: Yes, I . . . please sit down Mr. - -

HAHMBERGER: No, sank you. I prefer to stand.

He does. LUCY listens to the conversation as SHE does some minor paperwork and typing.

SANDY: *(Awkwardly.)* Well, I - we here at So-Long Travel . . . this is . . . just a minute! *(SHE searches HER messy desk and finds a piece of paper with a sample travel agency dialogue on it. SHE reads from it stiffly, monotonously.)* Hi, I'm fill-in-your name and I'm . . . oh! *(Realizing, clears HER throat.)* Hi, I'm Sandy. And I'm here to help you make some important decisions about your travel arrangements. Whether you're going to [name-of-local-place] or China, I can make it happen, for you . . . *(SHE studies a little more closely.)* Oh! I . . . *(Still reading, She gestures stiffly toward HERSELF.)* . . . can make it happen . . . for you. *(SHE points stiffly toward HIM.)* Now. . .

HAHMBERGER: Enough! *(SHE jumps startled and puts the paper down. HE continues in lower volume so that LUCY cannot hear.)* You haf zee papers?

SANDY: *(Really flustered now, uncomprehending.)* Papers? You mean brochures. I . . . let's start over. Hi, I'm Sandy. And you are Mr. - ?

HAHMBERGER: Ahh. Zee code. Yes you are right.

SANDY: Mr. - ?

HAHMBERGER: Mrs.! Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger. And . . . *(Leans in confidentially to meaningfully give "The Code.")* "The circus is in town tonight."

SANDY: *(Believing SHE heard incorrectly.)* The circus? Mr. what was

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your name? Mr. Cheese - burg - -

HAHMBERGER: Hahmberger. Mrs. . . . Elaine . . . Hahmberger.
(Looks at HER meaningfully.) It is my disguise – my undercover name, yes?

SANDY: Do you mean your wife is Elaine Hahm - -

HAHMBERGER: No, I am “Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger.” (Leaning in, meaningfully again.) I am . . . under . . . cover. But you know all this Randy.

SANDY: No, no. I’m Sandy. Sss-andy

HAHMBERGER: (Glancing over at LUCY.) Oh, I see, I see. I understand. Stupid of me, ya?

SANDY: Well - -

HAHMBERGER: Ya. Vee get rid of her. (Turning to LUCY.) Oh Miss -

LUCY: Lucy. Yes?

HAHMBERGER: Lucy. I would like a cup of . . . what have you got?

LUCY: (Standing.) Oh sure. We have regular coffee, decaf, and tea.

HAHMBERGER: Do you have decaffeinated tea?

LUCY: (Puzzled.) No, I’m sorry, we don’t have - -

HAHMBERGER: Den dat is vat I would like. Decaffeinated tea.

LUCY: (Puzzled.) Well, okay. Okay. I’ll just - I’ll just run down to the store and get some. Be back in a few minutes, Mr. uh Sandy, would you like to introduce me to your guest?

SANDY: Oh, uh, sure. Lucy, this is - uh - -

HAHMBERGER says HIS line in unison with SANDY.

SANDY: Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger.

HAHMBERGER: Mr. Samuel Hahmberger.

SANDY and HAHMBERGER look at each other for a moment.

SANDY: (Trying again.) This is . . .

Again simultaneously.

SANDY: Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger.

HAHMBERGER: Mr. Samuel Hahmberger.

LUCY: (Wondering what is going on but smiling through it.) Oh. Hello. (Suddenly thinking SHE’S got it. To SANDY.) Ohh! You

must mean his wife is Elaine.

SANDY: (*Resolutely, trying to keep HER wits.*) No. No. We went through that. He distinctly - -

HAHMBERGER: Yes. Yes, that is it. My wife is Elaine. I am Samuel.

LUCY: (*Lost.*) Right, Samuel.

HAHMBERGER: Yes! Goot.

SANDY: (*Confused, agitated.*) Samuel. But you said your name was - (*HAHMBERGER stomps HIS foot down hard on SANDY'S. SHE grabs HER foot in pain.*) Ow!

HAHMBERGER: I'm so sorry. It's a nasty twitch I haf. Ya?

LUCY: (*Baffled.*) Ya! Uh, right. Uh, well, I'll be right back with your hamburger, Mr. Tea. I mean, I'll be right back. (*SHE puts on HER coat and exits through the street door.*)

SANDY: (*Still rubbing HER foot.*) But you said you were Mrs.! Mrs. Elaine Hahmberger.

HAHMBERGER: (*Seriously.*) Yes, of course. That is my deep-cover name. That is, how you say, "Who I am today!" And you are Randy today! Yes?

SANDY: Sandy. I'm Sandy.

HAHMBERGER: (*Smiling understandingly.*) Yes. Of course. So vee continue the charade, huh? You and I - always the friends; always the adversaries, ya?

SANDY: (*Totally bewildered.*) Well I - - (*Grabbing a brochure.*) How does Disney World sound? The weather's nice and - -

HAHMBERGER: (*Laughing and shaking HIS head as HE opens his briefcase on his lap.*) Disney World, ha! Now vat ees funny! (*Adopts a serious tone.*) So, down to work. I haf da names of seven more for you to work with tonight. Some of the greatest performers from around the world. International stars. But dey must leef here by tomorrow night. (*Looks at HER meaningfully.*) Or you know who will get you know what and den - who knows?!

SANDY: (*SHE stands and begins stacking papers, neatening HER desk, pretending that this isn't happening to HER but all the while, extremely nervous.*) Oh well, no Disney World. Probably too many loony tunes there anyway. And "you-know-who" doesn't like it. (*She giggles nervously.*) Okay, okay. Nothing to panic about. Plenty of places you can go. Was this pleasure? No, sounds more like business. Well let's think about this think, think, think - -

HE stands and grabs HER hand suddenly and SHE gasps and freezes in shock. HE moves closer to her.

HAHMBERGER: You know, I have always been charmed by your girlish ways Randy.

SANDY: But I'm - -

HAHMBERGER: *(Passionately.)* You always had all the men Randy - but never me! Don't play the flirt like this. It drives me wild. Let us stay - strictly business!

SANDY: *(In a nervous, high, squeaky voice.)* But - -

HAHMBERGER: *(Putting HIS finger to HER lips.)* Sssh! I know. But it must be this way. *(Taking a file from his briefcase.)* Now, you have our friend zee computer all set to make the necessary transactions?

SANDY: You know I think you're making a big, I mean I'm not, it's just, I've only been working here one week you know.

HAHMBERGER: Ya sure. One week under this disguise. But you are the chameleon, Randy! *(Looking around to ensure nobody's looking.)* Remember the time ven you and I dressed up as a horse to infiltrate the stable? You called Sheila den! Dey didn't know for three days, but by then - - *(CARLSON comes out HIS door.)*

CARLSON: Lucy?

HAHMBERGER: *(Quickly adjusting HIS speech.)* But by then, I think my wife Elaine and I will want to be back home. So let's just check out the April dates to Disney World, hmmm?

SANDY: *(Totally confused.)* Pardon me?

CARLSON: *(Smiling toward SANDY and HAHMBERGER.)* Disney World, huh? Should be great fun in April. Have you seen Lucy, Sandy?

SANDY: *(Wanting to tell CARLSON about HAHMBERGER.)* She uh went to get some tea. Uh, Mr. Carlson? This us . . . he, she, he is . . . I mean . . .

CARLSON: Yes, I understand. *(To Hahmberger.)* It's her first week here. Doing a splendid job. *(To SANDY, smiling.)* Keep it up, Sandy! *(SHE stands to say something to HIM but HE exits to HIS office.)*

HAHMBERGER: Randy, sit down! *(SHE does.)* Vee have not much time before Lucy comes back. Zee computer. We were talking about zee computer. Zee travel arrangements, ya? If vee are to arrange for the trips to Sorbay, vee will need some tickets, ya?

SANDY: Sorbet?

HAHMBERGER: No! Not zee "ice cream." Sor-bay. Many people make vat mistake.

SANDY: But who is going to Sorbay? Where is Sorbay? I mean –
(The street door opens. ROLLO, a muscular man in a tank top, slacks, and a scarf around HIS neck peeks in.)

ROLLO: Yo, Mrs. H., Daphne's getting cold.

HAHMBERGER: Rollo, I told you not to come in here! Get back to the truck.

ROLLO: Yeah, but the plate twirlers' plates are beginning to crack. And Daphne's knees have frozen solid.

SANDY: Plate twirlers?

HAHMBERGER: *(Sighing, to SANDY.)* Yes. Remember the performers I told you about? Zee international stars? Vee better let them in, ya?

SANDY: Oh no, please, let's not. This could be, I mean - -

HAHMBERGER: Come in, but quick! Quick!

ROLLO enters, followed by DAPHNE, a pretty woman in a ballet costume, leotards, and slippers. SHE walks in slowly, lock-kneed, in some pain.

ROLLO: *(Pleading with HER.)* Yo Daphne. Let me crack 'em. You want me to crack' em? I'll crack' em for you. *(He bends down to HER knees. SHE shuffles away from him. SHE is painfully shy, and speaks in a deep-pitched rambling that is often unintelligible but always understood by ROLLO. As SHE speaks, SHE gestures at HER frozen knees and the outside.)*

DAPHNE: *(Mumbling in pain.)* Don't do it don't do it don't touch my knees please don't don't - -

ROLLO: *(Turns to HAHMBERGER.)* Daphne doesn't want me to crack 'em, Mrs. H., her knees are killing her but she doesn't want me to crack 'em. Ballerinas! Go figure!

HAHMBERGER: Never mind, never mind, Rollo. Just sit quietly while I finish business. *(Through the next dialogue, ROLLO tries first to help DAPHNE sit, which is impossible because of HER knees, then finally to lie down on LUCY'S desk, still stiff-kneed.)* Now tonight, vee must all meet to arrange The Plan and the tickets. *(HE grabs a green ticket envelope and shows it to HER.)* And den you must, oh, but vy am I telling you all dis again. You remember all of

dis, ya?

SANDY: No, no, NO, NO! I - -

HAHMBERGER: Sssh!

SANDY: (*Sotto voice.*) I don't remember anything! I mean, I'm not who you think, I, well, I'm Sandy, not Randy. I just started working here last week, and oh, now you tell me about Sorbay and then - -

HAHMBERGER: (*Admonishing her again.*) Sorbay. Not zee "ice cream." Sor-bay.

SANDY: (*Almost screaming.*) That's what I said! And then the tickets and The Plan and the code and - -

HAHMBERGER: That's it!

SANDY: What is?

HAHMBERGER: (*Slowly circling her and observing HER closely.*) You don't remember anything, do you?

SANDY: Well, no, I mean yes. I remember just fine. But I've never met you before.

HAHMBERGER: (*To ROLLO and DAPHNE, amused.*) Ha! She says she never met me before! (*They chuckle with HIM. HE becomes serious again.*) Tell me, Randy. Did you have any accidents in the past, oh, two weeks? Any spills or bumps?

SANDY: No, of course not. I - - (*Remembering.*) Well, yes. A little one. It was nothing.

HAHMBERGER: A-ha! I think it was something.

SANDY: I just opened a kitchen cabinet and I bumped my head a little. And scraped my finger, (*SHE holds up a finger with a band-aid on it.*) But really - -

HAHMBERGER: (*Slowly as if HE has discovered the secret of the universe.*) And you cannot remember anything that happened before that, ya?

SANDY: Well, no I can remember everything that - -

HAHMBERGER: (*Staring into HER eyes.*) Vat did you have for lunch two weeks ago Thursday at noon?

SANDY: (*Thinking hard.*) I had - I had a tuna fish sandwich on whole wheat!

HAHMBERGER: Ha! Wrong! It was on rye, and it was 11:30!

SANDY: Well I don't remember - (*SHE assumes HE is right and is taken in.*) But how did you know?

HAHMBERGER: Vee haf you under surveillance always, Randy. Every move. Every step. You are too valuable.

SANDY: But why didn't someone know about my bump on the head?

HAHMBERGER: *(He shrugs anticlimactically. Matter-of-factly.)* Vee goofed. Vee must've missed it. Oh vell. Sue me. It happens.

SANDY: *(Thinking to HERSELF, mesmerized by the melodrama of it all.)* So I don't remember who I used to be. I've lost my memory. I'm not this neurotic mess named Sandy. I'm really -

HAHMBERGER: One of the world's greatest spies! James Bond if there ever was one!

SANDY: *(Stunned, but believing it. Looking down at HERSELF.)* And I'm not, Sandy?

HAHMBERGER: Not today! Today, you are Randy! AND, you don't wear GLASSES! *(HE takes them off HER face dramatically. SHE now has a sight problem seeing for the rest of the show.)*

SANDY: Wooooow - -

HAHMBERGER: Tell me, have you had nightmares? Where you think there are police after you, und street gangs, und dat sort of thing?

SANDY: No. No I really, well, people say I tend to exaggerate, make a big deal of things. I let my imagination run wild - -

HAHMBERGER: *(Smiling to ROLLO and DAPHNE.)* She let's her imagination run wild. *(To SANDY.)* This is Randy! You are Randy!

SANDY: *(To HERSELF.)* I even read mystery books.

HAHMBERGER: *(Smiling to ROLLO and DAPHNE.)* She even reads mystery books.

SANDY: *(Realizing the connection HERSELF.)* Wooooow - -

HAHMBERGER: Let me feel your muscles.

SANDY: My what?

HAHMBERGER: *(Folding HER arms into curls, HE examines each bicep.)* Your muscles. I must see if you have been keeping in shape.

LUCY returns with a grocery bag. As SHE enters, she stops and stares. ROLLO by now has DAPHNE stretched out on LUCY'S desk and is blowing warm air on HER knees, HAHMBERGER is feeling SANDY'S biceps.

ROLLO: Yo Mrs. H., Daphne's knees thawed out!

HE holds HER hand as SHE tentatively sits up, then throws HER legs over the side of the desk and gets down. She walks slowly at first.

DAPHNE: *(Getting happier with each step, still a high-pitched squeal.)* Ohhh, ahhh, not bad not bad not bad, not great, but not bad, no way uh uh - - *(SHE commences doing leg exercises to limber up with ROLLO looking on.)*

LUCY: *(Awkwardly going to desk.)* Well, got quite a crowd of travelers while I was gone, huh, Sandy?

SANDY: *(Squinting at LUCY to see who SHE is.)* Yes, yes, Lucy! But I think you should know something. It's Sorbay - -

LUCY: Sorbet?

SANDY: Yes, I mean - - *(All movement stops as EVERYBODY'S eyes turn to SANDY. HAHMBERGER looks at HER with finger to lips.)*

SANDY: I - - *(Gesturing toward HAHMBERGER.)* - she - he - *(Gesturing toward ROLLO and DAPHNE.)* - - they are all - *(SHE stops, looks at HER watch, re-adjusts her attitude.)* It's quitting time. We are all - going out for sorbet down the street. Would you like to join us?

LUCY: Uh, no. No thanks. Mr. Hahmberger? I've got your tea right here. Would you like - -

HAHMBERGER: *(Standing.)* No. No sank you. As Randy, er, Sandy said, vee are going to have sorbet together. Some other time perhaps.

LUCY: Uh, right. *(SANDY has gathered HER things, and puts on HER coat along with the others. As THEY head out the door, LUCY waves, bewildered.)* Bye.

SANDY / OTHERS: Bye!

SANDY bangs myopically into the side of the door. And then THEY exit. LUCY stands there a moment, coat on, bag in hand, puzzled. CARLSON enters.

CARLSON: Oh there you are, babe. We need to get those boxes over to Grimsley right now. He's busy making the arrangements for the heist of the museum pieces - and our escape.

LUCY: *(Putting down HER bag, and grabbing some tickets in a bright green envelope off of HER desk.)* They're already in my trunk. I'll take them over right now.

CARLSON: *(Smiling.)* Thanks. Gonna be a piece of cake. *(Notices SANDY'S absence.)* Hey where'd Sandy - ?

LUCY: It's quitting time, boss. She went out with some . . . friends.

CARLSON: Oh, right. Slow day today, huh? They'll all be slow in the Caribbean! *(HE chuckles.)*

LUCY: Yes - - *(Still preoccupied.)* Did you see the strange - ? *(SHE starts to gesture to the door, then gives up. As SHE heads out.)* Never mind.

CARLSON: Hey, by the way, Grimsley wants to meet with us one last time tonight to make sure we got the plan straight.

LUCY: *(SHE shudders.)* I hate that guy. He gives me the creeps.

CARLSON: Don't sweat it. He's not going to the Caribbean – we are!

LUCY: Right baby. And we deserve it.

CARLSON: You know it! We're gonna be rich!

SHE waves back and exits. HE closes HIS office door and locks it. HE straightens up some odds and ends, papers. HE goes to get HIS coat and the street door opens. In walks one man and one woman, dressed in white, with white overcoats, if possible. BOTH are straight from "Dragnet" and speak in very serious, no-nonsense tones. THEY have no sense of humor.

CARLSON: We're just closing up I'm afraid.

TOOSDAY: *(SHE is the senior of the two. SHE holds up a hospital badge for an instant as SHE begins to talk.)* We'd like to talk to you. I'm Toosday.

WENSDAY: *(Pad of paper and pencil in hand.)* I'm Wensday.

TOOSDAY: We're security for the Jeffers Sanitarium down the road. *(WENSDAY points succinctly toward outside.)* We're looking -

CARLSON: *(Not following.)* Pardon me? You're - ?

TOOSDAY: Toosday. He's Wensday. We're -

CARLSON: *(Trying to make light and break the serious mood.)* And since today's Monday, I guess that makes him Day-after-tomorrow!

He chuckles. THEY look at each other completely straight-faced.

TOOSDAY: *(Perfectly deadpan.)* Never heard that before.

WENSDAY: *(The same.)* Very funny.

CARLSON: *(He puts a serious face back on and clears HIS throat.)* Yes, well, what can I do for you?

TOOSDAY: We're security for the Jeffers Sanitarium down the road. *(WENSDAY points as HE did before.)* Several patients escaped

ONE OF OUR CLOWNS IS MISSING

two weeks ago at . . .

WENSDAY: (*Referring to pad.*) 9:42 -

TOOSDAY: - a.m. They were believed to be heading -

WENSDAY: (*Referring to pad.*) - this -

TOOSDAY: - direction. We don't believe them to be dangerous but we - -

WENSDAY: - do need to find them.

TOOSDAY: Anything unusual, Monday?

CARLSON: I thought you said his name was Wednesday?

TOOSDAY: It is. I was talking to you. Anything unusual, Monday - today? You know odd occurrences, odd people, doing or saying odd things? That's usually a sure sign of our patients.

CARLSON: (*Thinking.*) No, no, it was a slow day, all 'round.

WENSDAY: (*Writing.*) "Slow day all 'round."

TOOSDAY: You're sure there was nothing unusual? NO talking ducks? No men dressed up as monkeys? No - -

CARLSON: Men dressed up as monkeys?

TOOSDAY: (*Thinks HE'S onto something.*) A-ha. Why did you say "men dressed up as monkeys"? Perhaps you did see something unusual.

CARLSON: No I - I said it because you said it. There was a man in a fur coat today - -

TOOSDAY: Do you find that unusual sir?

CARLSON: Well, no, no, I guess - -

TOOSDAY: Well, we do think they're in this vicinity. So if you do run into any strange characters - - (*Handing CARLSON a card.*) here's my card, Mr. - -

CARLSON: Carlson.

TOOSDAY: Carlson. Odd name if you don't mind my saying so.

WENSDAY: (*Writing.*) "Carlson."

CARLSON: Not at all.

TOOSDAY: Mr. Carlson. I wouldn't leave town for the next several days if I were you.

CARLSON: (*Surprised.*) Why? Am I a suspect?

TOOSDAY: No. Just heard the weather was going to be bad.

CARLSON: (*Examining card.*) It says here, "Associate Partners: Friday Toosday and Wensday." Where's Friday?

TOOSDAY: That's my name - "Friday Toosday."

WENSDAY: His mother had a sense of humor.

CARLSON: I see, I see.

TOOSDAY: Call us if you run into anything.

WENSDAY: Toosday works on Wednesdays and Fridays.

TOOSDAY: Wensday works on Mondays and Thursdays.

CARLSON: Nothing Tuesdays?

TOOSDAY: Pardon me?

CARLSON: Nobody works on Tuesday?

WENSDAY: (*Looking at Toosday, then HE suddenly reaches over to CARLSON and grabs HIS shoulder in a pinch-like hold resembling Star Trek's Spock and Vulcan Death Grip. CARLSON gets this sudden, pained look on HIS face and is helplessly frozen in a contorted position.*) Nobody works on Toosday, unless they want to deal with me.

CARLSON: (*Gasping in pain.*) Oh . . . I see.

TOOSDAY: Bye, sir.

WENSDAY: (*Releasing CARLSON and back to HIS straight-faced self.*) Goodbye, sir. (*THEY exit.*)

CARLSON: (*Rubbing HIS shoulder and rolling HIS head to get the kinks out.*) Goodbye, goodbye. (*HE shuts the door after THEM, pauses, then laughs hysterically.*) I think it was those two that escaped from the sanitarium! (*Still laughing and shaking HIS head, HE turns out the light, locks the door, and exits. END OF SCENE.*)

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

SETTING:

The same.

AT RISE:

That evening. LUCY sits at HER desk flipping aimlessly through a magazine. CARLSON paces center stage looking occasionally at HIS watch.

LUCY: Will you relax? I'm the one who can't stand the guy. You're making me nervous.

CARLSON: Grimsley said he'd be here at eight sharp. Where is he?

LUCY: (*Looking at wristwatch.*) It's only five minutes to eight.

CARLSON: I like a man who's early!

The office door suddenly opens and standing there is GRIMSLEY. He

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is an ape of a man, completely dressed in black, with clothes way too small - sleeves too short, pants too short. HE is tough as nails, and equally humorless. LUCY and CARLSON are surprised by HIS sudden entrance.

LUCY: How'd you get in through there?

CARLSON: Grimsley - ? *(Moving toward HIM to shake HIS hand.)*

GRIMSLEY: *(When HE speaks, it is pure steel.)* Keep that thing away from me. *(CARLSON withdraws HIS hand quickly.)* And don't call me by my name again, or I'll take my right index finger and see how far it'll go into your left ear. My name is the letter 'G' from now on. 'G' - got it?

LUCY: *(Sarcastically in mock amazement, unafraid.)* Geeeee - -

GRIMSLEY: Don't be cute.

CARLSON: *(Nervous.)* Don't worry. She couldn't be, 'G'. Got it. So, 'G', are we all set? What do you think?

GRIMSLEY: *(Strolling like a cat stalking its prey, examining every insignificant thing.)* I think you're a bunch of third-rate amateurs and you don't know what you're doing. But you've got me. And for fifty thousand dollars, I'm the best.

CARLSON: *(Grabbing the briefcase from under the coat rack.)* We've got the money right there, Gri - 'G'. Fifty grand. Right here.

GRIMSLEY takes the bag from HIM, and lets it flop in HIS hand several times, assessing its weight.

GRIMSLEY: Feels like only forty-five. You two wouldn't con me, would you? 'Cause if you would, you might want to look out your window for a minute. *(Curious, THEY both move to the window and peer out, Grimsley sitting on the edge of SANDY'S desk.)* See that pair of shoes on the ground?

LUCY: No.

CARLSON: *(Nudging HER and pointing.)* Yes. Yes I see them. Face down in the dirt, right?

GRIMSLEY: There's a person still wearing those shoes. That's the last man that tried to con me.

THEY turn slowly toward HIM scared.

CARLSON: Well it's all there. You can count it.

GRIMSLEY: Let's cut the small talk and play out the scenario. *(HE removes a notepad from HIS pocket and references it for the following.)* At exactly fourteen hundred tomorrow afternoon -

LUCY: Ooh, I just love military talk.

GRIMSLEY: *(Squinting at HER.)* Interrupt me again and you'll have your chance to read your magazine while hanging upside down from your travel agent sign - by your toes *(LUCY and CARLSON exchange looks of "be quiet.")* At fourteen hundred tomorrow afternoon, the museum shipment will arrive in a steel, impenetrable truck, with two armed guards, a team of five Dobermans trained to kill on command, and two grenade launchers. AT fourteen-oh-five, I'll be heading to this office with the museum shipment in my truck.

CARLSON: *(Amazed.)* But how? Those guards, the dogs, a steel truck, the grenade - -

LUCY stuffs a hand over HIS mouth and HE immediately is silent.

GRIMSLEY: I won't count that as an interruption. I'll count that as amazement. How will I do it? Let's just say . . . *(HE picks up a flexible metal ruler out of LUCY'S pencil cup and holds it up.)* . . . you're paying twenty-five thousand per hand. *(HE deftly bends the ruler in half. It slowly springs back up afterward. HE tosses it on the desk. THEY watch agape.)* At fourteen forty-two, fifteen forty - two, and seventeen forty-two, I will exchange trucks, completely erasing my trail.

LUCY: What will happen at sixteen forty-two?

GRIMSLEY: *(Pausing and looking at HER, flexing HIS fingers. HE continues striding around the room, slowly.)* I'll arrive here at precisely six o'clock tomorrow evening with three boxes of priceless museum heirlooms and trinkets, which I will deposit by the computer. You will be here with my escape ticket. After that, you're on your own, and you will never see me again.

LUCY: *(Involuntarily.)* Thank -

CARLSON clamps a hand over HER mouth just in time.

CARLSON: - you. Thank You. It's perfect, 'G'. Perfect.

GRIMSLEY: Of course

LUCY: But what about the police? Won't they find out what

happened and come after us?

GRIMSLEY: Exactly thirty-seven seconds after I grab the goods, there'll be more sirens, alarms, explosions, dog hunts and noise than the Fourth of July. The police will be coming after us like a swarm of ants to a honey-dipped baby.

LUCY: Carlson did you hear that? Are you sure we –

CARLSON: Don't worry, honey. That's where our escape route comes in and the tickets. Between the taxi and our car, we're gonna be fine. No one can stop us.

GRIMSLEY: (*Checking HIS wristwatch and then HIS notepad.*) I'll be going now. I've got to break both legs on Grandma Peachtree. She welched on a gambling debt. And since nobody sees or hears me exit, close your eyes, stick your fingers in your ears, and count to five loudly. (*THEY look at each other.*) NOW!

THEY BOTH do as HE asked. HE goes to the front door, tries it out, and finds it locked. HE turns back and by this time, THEY have finished counting and opened THEIR eyes.

GRIMSLEY: (*HE gestures to THEM, impatiently.*) Again. Again.

THEY repeat THEIR performance, and HE heads out the office door, closing it after HIM. They finish and open THEIR eyes.

LUCY: (*Going to HER desk and removing a blue envelope with "So-Long Travel Agency" written on it.*) He did say six o'clock tomorrow evening, right?

CARLSON: Yes, sugar plum. Six o'clock.

LUCY: (*Examining the tickets in the envelope.*) Good. Sandy leaves at five, so she's no problem.

CARLSON: And our plane is not until . . . eight?

LUCY: (*Reading the tickets.*) Eight-o-five.

CARLSON: We've got plenty of time.

LUCY: Good. (*SHE shudders and puts the tickets back in the desk.*) Man that guy gives me the creeps!

THEY EACH collect their things – purse, coat, etc. – in preparation to leave.

CARLSON: But he's the best there is. And that's what we need if we want to end up rich in the Caribbean, baby!

LUCY: I'm beginning to wonder.

CARLSON: Well don't. Now let's get out of here. We've got some packing to do before tomorrow night!

THEY turn off the LIGHTS, EXIT, and lock the front door after THEM. After a pause, a figure in a trench coat with turned-up collar carrying a flashlight is seen at the door peering in. SHE fiddles at the lock for a moment, and suddenly CHIPS gets the door open. We see now that CHIPS has on sunglasses, and a brightly colored stocking cap. SHE is nervous and is breathing hard. SHE removes her sunglasses and looks around the room expectantly. SHE proceeds stage right toward the computer. Suddenly, there is another rustling at the door. SHE looks around quickly and dives behind SANDY'S desk. In walks another WOMAN, TWEETY, also dressed in a trench coat with upturned collar, a brightly colored stocking cap, and wielding a flashlight. SHE has HER sunglasses on and shines the flashlight around expectantly. Slowly, she moves stage right.

TWEETY: *(Sotto voice.)* Pssss! Elaine? Mrs. Hahmberger? Pssss! *(There is a pause. And then the sound of a large crunch under SANDY'S desk causing TWEETY to jump. SHE grabs for the nearest blunt object, which is a stapler off of SANDY'S desk, and holds it aloft, while pointing the flashlight shakily toward the desk.)* Alright, come out of there. I know how to use this!

CHIPS rises shakily, putting one more potato chip in HER mouth, as SHE puts HER arms about HER head, one hand holding a bag of chips.

CHIPS: D-don't! D-don't s-s-shoot - - *(SHE stops and looks a little closer at TWEETY'S implement of destruction.)* -s-s-staple me!

TWEETY: Staple you? *(SHE puts down the stapler and takes off HER sunglasses.)* Chips, it's Tweety! It's only Tweety. Oh, you scared me!

CHIPS: *(Taking HER hands down and digging for a chip from HER bag.)* Tweety! I scared you? You scared me! I was just waiting for Elaine. *(Starts eating another chip.)*

TWEETY: You were just waiting for Elaine?

CHIPS: *(Admonishing HER as SHE eats another chip.)* Tweety, you're repeating my last sentences again.

TWEETY: I'm repeating your last sentences again?

CHIPS: *(Pleasantly.)* Yes, Tweety. Remember what Dr. Pimpernell said: It is a demonstration of repressed hostility. *(SHE has yet another chip.)*

TWEETY: A demonstration of repressed hostility? A demonstration of repressed hostility?

CHIPS: Tweety . . .

TWEETY: *(Miffed.)* Sorry. Well what about those, hmmm? *(SHE indicates the bag of chips.)* Dr. Pimpernell wouldn't be pleased about that, would he Chips? Emotionally unstable I believe he'd say. Give me those! *(SHE holds out HER hand, and CHIPS reluctantly hands them over to TWEETY. TWEETY takes a look at the chips, and decides to have one HERSELF.)* There. Now don't you feel better?

CHIPS: No.

TWEETY: Let's turn on the lights in here. *(SHE looks around, finds switch near door, and turns them on.)*

CHIPS: *(Changing subjects.)* Did you get the word from Elaine about tonight?

TWEETY: Did I get - - *(Catching HERSELF, SHE pauses and clears HER throat.)* Of course I did. That's why I'm here. *(Taking piece of white bread out of HER pocket and reading it.)* "Emergency meeting. So-Long Travel Agency. Dress inconspicuously." Mayonnaise.

CHIPS: Mayonnaise?

TWEETY: *(Dabbing the bread and licking HER finger.)* Yeah, mayonnaise. I hate when he gets these ideas at lunch.

CHIPS: *(Anxiously, unconsciously reaching into HER pocket and removing another bag of chips.)* So, what's the emergency? Don't tell me Dr. Pimpernell - -

There is another rustling at the door. CHIPS dives under SANDY'S desk, and TWEETY under LUCY'S. ROLLO and DAPHNE, both dressed as the other, in trench coats, etc. enter through the door with flashlights. DAPHNE also carries a baton.

ROLLO: Elaine?

DAPHNE: *(Pointing at LIGHTS.)* Sssh! The lights the light the lights they're on and on and on.

ROLLO: *(Looking at the room lights.)* Oh, yeah. Right. That is

strange that they're on. *(HE snaps off the flashlight and looks around.)* She must be here already. *(There is a loud crunch from under both desks.)*

DAPHNE: Ssssh!

ROLLO raises the flashing over HIS head and stands between both desks.

ROLLO: Alright, come out of there you's guys!

Slowly, both CHIPS and TWEETY stand. EACH has a bag of chips in THEIR hands this time, as THEY raise them over THEIR heads.

DAPHNE: *(Taking off sunglasses.)* Cheeps! Twitty! *(SHE throws HER arms open wide.)*

TWEETY: *(Throwing HER arms open wide.)* Daphne!

ROLLO: *(Removing HIS sunglasses and throwing HIS arms open wide.)* Tweety!

CHIPS: *(Throwing HER arms open wide.)* Rollo!

Overcome with joy, THEY race to each other in one huge hug, with the appropriate sighs and pats on the back. While this is taking place, nobody notices another figure enter through the door. HE is TALLMAN. HE wears the same trench coat with lapels raised. When HE is feeling grandiose, HE walks on HIS toes and holds HIS arms up slightly in an attempt to feel and look tall. When HE is introverted and turns cynical or hides, HIS body collapses to HIS normal self. Right now, HE is in HIS grandiose state.

TALLMAN: *(In grand, but nasal voice.)* Hey, Where's the party? Where's the party?

The GROUP breaks in surprised "ahs" and "ohs."

ROLLO: *(Squinting at the TALLMAN.)* Is that you, Tallman?

TALLMAN: Who'd you think it was? Wilt Chamberlain?

ROLLO: I couldn't tell with your glasses. Neat disguise.

TALLMAN: *(Removing HIS glasses.)* Yeah, well, you know what the note said . . .

ONE OF OUR CLOWNS IS MISSING

HE reaches in his pocket, as does EVERYBODY. THEY are ALL now holding a piece of white bread, reading in unison.

ALL: "Dress inconspicuously." (*THEY each dab at THEIR bread in unison and lick THEIR fingers.*)

TALLMAN: I'm glad this is white bread.

TWEETY: You're glad this is white bread?

TALLMAN: (*Body collapsing to normal as well as voice turning to cynical.*) Someone give Tweety's phonograph needle a push, huh?

ROLLO: Well, you can sure read the letters better on the white bread than the Swiss cheese.

TALLMAN: Yeah. The Swiss cheese notes stunk. I hated the cheese notes. Hated them. Hated them.

CHIPS: There's that 'H' word, Tallman. What would Dr. Pimpernell say? Love. Let's talk about love. There's too much -

TALLMAN: Cram it, Chips! I hate Swiss cheese, okay? (*Adopting loud, grand, still nasal voice.*) I - AM - TALLMAN! . . . I - AM - TALLER - THAN ANYONE! . . . EVEN - THE DOCTOR . . . WHO YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED IS NOT HERE ANYMORE ANYWAY.

CHIPS: (*Trying to placate HIM, reaches into HER pocket for yet another bag of chips.*) Here, Tallman. Have some chips. They'll make you feel better.

TALLMAN: (*Back to normal voice.*) Thanks, Chips. (*HE takes a few and eats them.*)

TWEETY: So where is Elaine, anyway?

ROLLO: Yeah, and what's the emergency?

HAHMBERGER emerges from behind upstage table with a clipboard in hand.

HAHMBERGER: I'll tell you what the emergency is!

EVERYONE is startled.

ROLLO: Elaine!

TWEETY: Mrs. Hahmberger!

TALLMAN: Cut the chit-chat! What's going on, Hahmberger?

HAHMBERGER: (*Crossing toward TALLMAN and pointing menacingly at HIM.*) I am varning you, Tallman. It's Hahmberger, not cheeseburger!

TALLMAN: Seriously folks, is this guy psycho or what? (*EVERYONE stops shocked. HE responds to THEM.*) What? It's not like I said "sanitarium" or something! (*THEY ALL gasp.*)

TWEETY: (*To CHIPS, anxiously.*) What did he say? Did he say –

CHIPS: I think he did. (*Fumbling for some chips nervously.*) Don't worry. I won't tell.

DAPHNE: (*Agitated, but can't face TALLMAN.*) Who's he calling psycho, like he should talk, talk psycho, psycho talk, psycho.

ROLLO: It's okay, Daphne. He didn't mean it.

HAHMBERGER: Tallman, think about this. Do you not want to go to Sorbay with us?

There is another shocked pause. TWEETY and CHIPS mouth the word "Sorbay" in awe.

ROLLO / DAPHNE: (*Reverently.*) Sorbay . . .

TALLMAN looks one way, then the other, then ducks into the corner behind the coat rack, ashamed.

HAHMBERGER: (*Corrects ROLLO and DAPHNE gently.*) Not ice cream. Sorbay.

CHIPS: (*Lovingly, imagining it.*) Sorbay – where all the trees have leaves in pastels. Pink and mauve and baby blue . . .

ROLLO: (*Chuckling.*) Her and her pastels, huh? I hope the trees aren't *all* pastels, right Mrs. H?

HAHMBERGER: No not all. But enough.

CHIPS: (*Smiles, imagining.*) I heard the potato chips grow right in the ground, right beside the soda water fountains.

TWEETY: Right in the ground?

CHIPS: Yeah. In little bags. And the squirrels store them up for the winter. Only there's not really a winter – (*SHE wraps HER arms around HERSELF cozily.*) just one month when there's a cool breeze that blows all the time. Isn't that right, Mrs. H?

HAHMBERGER: Certainly, Chips.

TWEETY: The breeze! It blows sweet music through the peppermint trees. Like flutes and clarinets. And music you like, it knows them

all! And you can sing right along with the bluebirds, and nobody will tell you if you're singing flat because the breeze fixes all the notes and makes them right.

TALLMAN: *(Emerging hesitantly from HIS corner, earnestly talking about HIS dreams. This is as close as HE gets to normal.)* And . . . and sand castles that you could climb. Yeah. Right up to the sky, see? And when you get to the top, you could look down and see . . . and see the whole world and streams of lemonade.

CHIPS: You could see all of Sorbay . . .

TALLMAN: Yeah, and the rest of the world, too. And you guys could come with me.

DAPHNE: *(Smiling, slowly dancing around the room. Lovingly.)* Oh and the clouds hang low, so low you jump and dance on them like pillows. They are right near the ground they are - -

ROLLO: *(Eyes glued to DAPHNE.)* Daphne says that the clouds are so low, you can dance on them. That right, Mrs. H?

HAHMBERGER: That's right, Rollo.

CHIPS: *(Eating HER chips.)* Beautiful.

TALLMAN: *(Worried.)* But if the clouds are so low, they're gonna block my view. I'm not gonna be able to see the whole world. What gives, Mrs. H?

TWEETY: What gives, Mrs. H? I'll tell you Mr. Top-of-the-World! You think you own the place, that's what gives.

TALLMAN: *(Overlapping TWEETY after her first sentence.)* Oh, there goes the phonograph again! Someone blow on her needle. She's repeating herself, Dr. Pimpernell. She's doing the parrot routine again!

DAPHNE: *(Overlapping HIM while doing some serious exercises, trying to escape.)* Wish he'd shut up, would he, no, he wouldn't, not him, stop him, someone please stop . . .

ROLLO: *(Overlapping DAPHNE, trying to calm her down.)* It's okay, Daphne. You can have your clouds. Daphne? You can have 'em. Honest.

CHIPS: *(Overlapping HIM, stuffing chips into HER mouth.)* You're all making Chips upset. This is not nice! It is not the right way to behave! Please everybody!

There is general pandemonium for a moment.

HAHMBERGER: *(Claps for their attention.)* People! People! *(THEY*

all fall silent, listening to HAHMBERGER.) We won't be going to Sorbay . . . (THEIR expressions become shocked, worried, and anxious.) . . . unless vee are ready to perform. (THEY look at each other, questioningly.) Yes. Remember the deal. They let us come if we can put on zee circus acts for them. Zee circus, remember? Ya, of course you do. You have all been professionals, before Dr. Pimpennell, ya? So, I know you are out of practice but! - vee must be on that plane tomorrow night, ya? Or Dr. Pimpennell finds us and . . . (HE draws HIS finger across HIS throat and makes a cutting sound. THEY gasp. HE shrugs.) Not to worry. Practice ees all we need. So, lets haf a look, ya?

ROLLO: Sure, Mrs. H.

DAPHNE: *(Still recovering from the commotion.)* Oh my oh my oh my oh my oh . . .

ROLLO pats HER back reassuringly.

HAHMBERGER: *(Referencing HIS clipboard.)* Rollo, why don't we start with you. You are our juggler, ya?

ROLLO: Yes, ma'am.

EVERYONE looks on expectantly as HE comes forward and takes three sponge balls from HIS pockets. HE places two balls in one hand, and one in the other. HE studiously looks from the balls to the ceiling several times, and when HE finally feels HE has it timed just right, HE tosses the two balls over HIS shoulder and the one ball in HIS other hand, catching it. There is a pause, and then HE smiles. EVERYONE bursts into sincere applause. This is the best thing THEY'VE ever seen.

TWEETY / CHIPS: Bravo! Bravo!

TALLMAN: That was pretty good, Rollo. Pretty good!

DAPHNE: *(Marveling.)* Lovely Rollo wonderful Rollo so good you were so good you were - -

ROLLO: *(Thrilled by HER kudos.)* Thanks, Daphne.

HAHMBERGER: *(Making notes on HIS clipboard. Then, sincerely.)*

Vell, if everyone has been practicing like Rollo, vee vill be on dat plane to Sorbay tomorrow night! Vell! This ees vunderful! Dat leaves us just with . . . *(Looking around.)* Vere are Fran and Danny? Dey were supposed to come too.

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ROLLO: I don't know.

HAHMBERGER: Fran and Danny are not here? Dees ees not good.

TWEETY: I gave them the white bread like you said, Elaine. I did. They said they'd come.

CHIPS: (*Munching a chip.*) They're always lying, those two. Dr. Pimpennell never could cure them. One time he thought he had cured them of lying, but then he asked them if they were lying, and they said 'yes'!

HAHMBERGER: Ya, well, dey are supposed to be da clowns. Vee must find dem before tomorrow. Okay, so. Vee are done, ya?

TALLMAN: (*Rising to HIS tallest height, arms outstretched, and adopting HIS "tall voice," HE lurches around the stage proudly.*) NO – WE – ARE – NOT - DONE! I - AM - TALLMAN! I – AM - THE - BIGGEST - MAN - IN - THE - WORLD! (*HE completes HIS circle around the stage. EVERYONE applauds and whistles.*)

HAHMBERGER: (*Laughing.*) Vonderful, Tallman! You are perfect.

TALLMAN: (*Proud of HIMSELF.*) Yeah, well, I've been practicing, see.

HAHMBERGER: (*Making final notes on HIS clipboard.*) Goot. Once vee find Fran and Danny, vee are ready for . . . SORBAY! (*Everyone cheers once again. SANDY opens the door, dressed in a sweatsuit, sunglasses. SHE jumps in surprise at the cheers, and sags against the door, panting. HAHMBERGER notices HER and goes to HER.*) Randy! You made it!

EVERYONE settles down and notices SANDY.

SANDY: Well, yes. I mean - (*SHE reaches into HER pocket and pulls out a piece of pumpernickel bread, quizzically.*) - I got your pumpernickel.

TALLMAN: Pumpernickel? We get white and she gets pumpernickel? What gives, Hahmberger?

HAHMBERGER: Tallman, don't push me. (*To EVERYONE.*) This is who I was telling you about.

TALLMAN: Oh, you mean the one who's - - (*He makes a circular motion near HIS head.*)

TWEETY: (*Telling on TALLMAN.*) He's doing it again.

HAHMBERGER: (*Warning.*) Tallman . . . (*To EVERYONE.*) Of course she gets pumpernickel. She is Randy! She is the crucial cog, as vee say, the vital key to our journey. She will make

Sorabay happen!

SANDY: Well, I, it's not clear whether - -

TWEETY: (*Approaching HER as if SANDY was the president.*) So nice to see you again, Randy. It's been awhile.

SANDY: Well I – it has?

TWEETY: It has? Yes, it has.

CHIPS: Likewise, it's a pleasure Randy. Remember me, Chips? (*Pulling yet another bag of chips from HER pockets, SHE offers them to SANDY.*) Want some?

SANDY: Nice to meet, uh, no. No chips, thank you. I mean, no Chips, thank you. I think.

ROLLO: (*Waving to SANDY.*) Yo, Randy.

DAPHNE: (*Waving also.*) Randy hi Randy hi Randy hi . . .

HAHMBERGER: Isn't Randy wonderful? You know she was quite something in his day. Master chameleon . . .

SANDY: I, well, thank you. (*SHE heads toward HER desk and bumps into LUCY'S. To HAHMBERGER, gesturing toward HER eyes.*) You sure I don't . . . ?

HAHMBERGER: No. You do not wear glasses, Randy.

SANDY makes HER way through EVERYONE to HER desk. SHE sits at it, not quite knowing what to do. EVERYONE looks to HER in great anticipation. SHE has been concentrating on HER desk, so that when SHE looks up and notices all the attention SHE is startled.

SANDY: I, well, what do we, I mean, where do we - -

HAHMBERGER: This is your show, Randy. You always helped us in the past. You are our leader. You know our aim, our quest, our mission. To perform our circus tricks, as we have done so many times in the past. Only this time . . . in Sorabay!

EVERYONE applauds. Then there is silence, as EVERYONE looks at SANDY expectantly, smiling. SHE looks from one to the other uncomfortably.

SANDY: I, well . . . (*SHE clears HER throat.*) I'm not sure well...

DAPHNE: (*Piping in animatedly.*) Not sure? Not sure oh boy when I'm not sure oh boy . . . (*SHE grabs HER baton and hands it to a bewildered SANDY.*) This will help. Use it and you will feel better braver I do I do I do - -

ROLLO: She says this is what she always uses when she's not sure.

ONE OF OUR CLOWNS IS MISSING

SANDY: Oh -

ROLLO: (*Showing SANDY how to hold it and wrapping HER fingers around it.*) Like this!

SANDY: (*Holding baton.*) I see, well. If it works for you performers, then - - (*Clears HER throat.*)

TALLMAN: (*Suddenly, calling out from the back of the crowd.*) Stand up. You need to stand, see?

SANDY: (*Squinting at TALLMAN whom SHE cannot see clearly without HER glasses.*) - what, what's that? Who is that tall man in the back?

HAHMBERGER: (*Beaming.*) Ha, ha! She remembers!

EVERYONE applauds again.

TALLMAN: That's right, Randy. It's me – Tallman. You wanna take charge, see, you gotta stand. Be tall.

SANDY: Oh, uh, yes I suppose - (*SHE stands reluctantly, with the baton.*) Now, uh - -

TALLMAN: Taller, taller. On the desk, see?

SANDY: Well I don't - -

HAHMBERGER: He's right, Randy. You are our leader! (*HE leans in and helps HER, reluctant as SHE is, to the desk top with HER baton.*)

SANDY: Well I'm not, okay, okay - this, I'm, hmmm - - (*SHE finally gets onto desk top, and slowly, carefully stands to HER full height. Expectant silence again.*) Sorbay - - (*EVERYONE moans reverently and leans in.*) Yes, Sorbay. We need to get each of you to Sorbay tomorrow night. Right?

ROLLO: Yes! Yes!

THEY all burst into applause and whistle.

CHIPS: That's it, Randy!

TWEETY: That's it, Randy!

HAHMBERGER: (*Beaming.*) I knew he could do it!

ROLLO: He's good!

SANDY: (*Smiling tentatively, with an ounce more self-confidence than SHE had a moment ago.*) Well now, Sorbay. I think, I think the first thing we need to do is - - where is Sorbay?

CHIPS: (*Concerned to TWEETY.*) She's right.

TWEETY: *(To CHIPS.)* She's right? Yes.

HAHMBERGER: Brilliant, Randy! So. How do you propose, we do that?

SANDY: *(A bit puzzled.)* How do I - well, you know, don't you? I mean, you told me about Sorbay.

HAHMBERGER: *(Undaunted by this logical snafu.)* Yes, of course, of course. Now help us find it.

SANDY: Well . . .

CHIPS: *(Excitedly.)* Wait a minute! Wait a minute! I know how to find it! Rollo, find a map.

ROLLO: Yeah, a map! Sure, Chips. Sure. *(He begins wandering quickly around the room.)*

SANDY: Well, I don't think - -

CHIPS: Sure. On a map you can find anything.

ROLLO discovers a phone book and brings it hurriedly to the desk.

ROLLO: Got one! Got one. Look - - *(He opens book on desk. EVERYONE peers in.)*

SANDY: But this is just a street map. I don't think - -

CHIPS: *(Racing to other side of room.)* Here. Here. I'll be Australia. *(SHE reaches a position and stops in some pose.)*

SANDY: But - -

HAHMBERGER: Splendid idea. I'll be India. *(HE walks stage left and stops.)*

TALLMAN: Europe over here. *(Walks upstage.)*

TWEETY: Europe over there? Africa right here. *(SHE moves downstage right a bit.)*

ROLLO: Uh, Daphne and me'll be North and South America. *(HE takes DAPHNE and THEY move stage right a bit.)*

CHIPS: *(Proudly.)* Okay, okay! Now where is it?

THEY all look at SANDY expectantly.

SANDY: *(Looking out over them, puzzled.)* Well I, I don't know - -

EVERYBODY moans, concerned.

HAHMBERGER: *(Silences them. To EVERYONE, quietly not wanting to disturb RANDY'S "thinking.")* This was always Randy's

way. Always thinking. Always the planner.

SANDY: Well I would think, I would think it must be somewhere . . .
(*Finally pointing near TALLMAN.*) near France. It sounds French.
Sorbay - -

TALLMAN: (*Looking down at HIS feet happily.*) I'm almost there and
I didn't even know it! Hey everyone. C'mon over!

THEY all move happily to HIM except for Hahmberger.

HAHMBERGER: France. Of course! Brilliance, sheer brilliance!
Now, Randy. What is it? What's the plan? Do not hold us in
suspense any longer! You are our leader! You are the chameleon!

Then there is a pause. SANDY stands up to HER full height, baton in hand. SHE takes a deep breath. We see the beginning of a change come over HER. SHE speaks now in HER most confident tone yet.

SANDY: The Plan?

TALLMAN: Yeah.

SANDY: (*Tentatively.*) Well, okay. Here it is. (*SHE takes a deep breath and plunges in.*) Tomorrow night, at about six, we will - -

HAHMBERGER: (*To HER quietly.*) Exactly, say, "Exactly oh-eighteen-hundred hours." That is your way, Randy.

SANDY: Oh, I didn't know. (*To EVERYONE.*) Tomorrow night, at exactly eighteen-hundred hours, I will make some excuse to stay here later than normal. You, Rollo, will take Daphne to the mailbox out front there. (*SHE points toward the window.*)

ROLLO: (*Repeating and trying to memorize it.*) The mailbox.

SANDY: Yes. And then - -

ROLLO: Hey, has anyone got a piece of white bread? I'm not gonna remember this.

TWEETY and CHIPS search THEIR pockets and eventually give HIM a piece while the remainder of the scene goes on.

SANDY: And you, Tallman, will be the lookout.

TALLMAN: Yeah, yeah, lookout - I like that!

SANDY: Now everyone come here and look at this map -
(*EVERYONE gathers around HER desk as SHE points at the map. SANDY gives instructions now, arms are moving, heads are*

turning this way and that way, but the audience cannot make out what SHE'S saying. HAHMBERGER steps back and looks to TALLMAN.)

HAHMBERGER: I knew he'd come through for us.

TALLMAN: Yeah, she's something. I'm the lookout, you know?

HAHMBERGER: Yes, Tallman. Good for you. *(To HIMSELF.)* I only hope we can get to Sorbay before Dr. Pimpernell gets to us!

HE turns back to join the crowd as there is a BLACKOUT. END OF ACT.

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