

# PANDA-MONIUM

A Ten-Minute Comedy Duet

by  
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**CAST: RANDOLPH and VIOLET**

**AT RISE: Stage lights up. A few rocks, some twigs and a log are on stage. Light comes bright on stage. A man and a woman, in overstuffed black & white costumes, are sitting at opposite ends of the stage staring at each other. A large yellow plastic food dish is at stage right, a large red one at left. Both waddle when they walk.**

**\*NOTE: For contest purposes, where costumes and props are not allowed, this play can easily be performed without either.**

RANDOLPH: **(sits up and crosses his arms grumpily)** They know I like to be served dinner promptly at six o'clock. What's taking them so long tonight?

VIOLET: **(sighs)** Food is the only thing you're interested in.

RANDOLPH: Nonsense, Violet. I'm interested in many things.

VIOLET: **(fluffs her hair, looks at him hopefully)** Oh? What else are you interested in, Randolph?

RANDOLPH: Well, now. I like to stretch out under the sun lamp they've given me in the cage here.

VIOLET: You never go out into the *real* sun anymore.

RANDOLPH: I've told you, Violet, the air outside is absolutely filthy with pollution. It's much more sensible to stay in this air conditioned grotto.

VIOLET: But you go out to use the swimming pool once in a while.

RANDOLPH: Of course. That makes sense. A quick dip in the pool and then right back in here. Ah, yes. That swimming pool is a wonderful addition to our grotto. I'm so glad my zookeeper in London wrote to the officials here and said I required a clean, chlorinated pool. Most refreshing.

VIOLET: It has those awful plastic water lilies on top. Why couldn't they put in real water lilies?

RANDOLPH: Heavens, no! Real lilies get all slimy and they grow tangly roots and they attract bugs. Oh, my, no. Give me plastic plants any time. Clean, sanitized plants and flowers.

VIOLET: This place doesn't even feel like a grotto anymore...it's so SANITIZED since you came here.

RANDOLPH: My dear, this zoo isn't half as neat and tidy as the London Zoo. The London Zoo had better culture.

VIOLET: Everything was better in the London Zoo. You've told me that often enough...

RANDOLPH: There's no getting around it, Violet. This simply isn't as civilized as the London Zoo was.

VIOLET: **(teases him)** And what if they send you to the Moscow Zoo again?

RANDOLPH: **(panics)** They couldn't. I will *not* be sent there again! The female panda there was the most outrageous animal I've ever seen. Big clumsy Natasha. Always pawing me...slobbering over me. **(does a Russian accent in a high, woman's voice)** "Dollink! Dollink Randolph, my Randolph-ovich! Let me geeeeeve you a beeeg bear hug!" Then she would squash me.

VIOLET: She only wanted you to like her. She wanted to get intimate.

RANDOLPH: Intimate? With Natasha? What do these zoo officials think I'm made of...cast iron?

VIOLET: You should have hugged her back.

RANDOLPH: No! She was the most awful, lumbering hulk of an animal. They can't expect a panda as refined as me to have anything to do with the likes of Natasha.

VIOLET: The zoo officials were probably hoping some kind of magic would happen between the two of you.

RANDOLPH: She used to eat onion peels with her bamboo shoots! The grotto smelled dreadful. And her breath. Well! That's another story. I didn't want to be near her.

VIOLET: But if you have *feelings* about a panda...

RANDOLPH: **(haughty)** Well, I certainly didn't have feelings about a panda like Natasha. **(scratches his chin)** I don't know why all the pandas I meet are so gross, so uncivilized. The males stand around beating their chests – boasting. And the females do nothing but make silly little grunting noises and are always trying to stand too close to me.

VIOLET: Most of us did live in the forest before we were caught, Randolph. That's how it's done in the forests.

RANDOLPH: **(very snobby)** I know nothing about forests. I'm civilized. It's strictly Zoo City for me.

VIOLET: You and your civilization. What about the panda in the Tokyo Zoo. How was she?

RANDOLPH: Awful. Soy sauce all over her whiskers. She insisted on eating soy sauce with her bamboo shoots. The sauce was simply splattered all over. And when I would ask her to dab at her mouth with a napkin to clean up a little bit, she would giggle. She'd hide her face behind a big fan and go **(imitates a Japanese woman's high-pitched laugh)** "Tee-hee-hee-hee-hee." That laugh would drive me crazy. "Oh, Randy-San, come here. Tee-hee-hee-hee-hee! Come here, my Randy-San. Oh, tee-hee-hee-hee!" She drove me crazy. And I'm not stereotyping. This was real!

VIOLET: Poor Randolph. And what about the Rome Zoo?

RANDOLPH: Need I say, Violet? Need I say? Little bits of garlic in our food. Maria used to get garlic stuck between her teeth, and she'd pick it out with her long yellow claws. Then she would come over to me and say, **(does an Italian woman's voice)** "Hey, Paisan – what's da matter? Hmmm? How 'bout giving Maria il bacio...a little kiss. Caro mio, l'amore, Randolpho. I love you, Randolph!" Then she would stomp on me with her feet. **(sighs)** Can you see what I've been through?

VIOLET: And what are you going to tell them about the American panda they put you with?

RANDOLPH: Now, Violet...let's not get into that discussion.

VIOLET: You never have anything to do with me, but you never tell me why. I don't have soy sauce on my whiskers or garlic in my teeth...or...

RANDOLPH: Let's drop the subject.

VIOLET: I don't eat onion peelings with my bamboo shoots...

RANDOLPH: **(sighs)** Hygienically, Violet, you are wonderful.

VIOLET: **(mimics him)** "Hygienically, Violet, you are wonderful." That's all you ever tell me.

RANDOLPH: You're a wonderfully clean little panda. **(pause)** I've told you many times how much I admire that about you Americans.

VIOLET: Oooh! You get me so mad! I've tried everything I know to get you interested in me!

RANDOLPH: Violet, I don't know why you're so agitated lately. When I first met you, you were so docile...so sweet...

VIOLET: **(angry)** Sure I was passive, sweet, meek, and mild when you first came here. I thought you would take an interest in me. I waited and waited. At first I didn't mind. I thought you were shy. But three months of being in this grotto with you...and most of the time, you act like I'm not even here! I'm fed up with you!

RANDOLPH: **(very polite)** Oh, dear. I'm sorry about that, Violet. **(starts looking at his paws intently)**

VIOLET: **(screams)** So I end up *screaming* at you. It's the only way I can get your attention lately.

RANDOLPH: **(turns his paws over)** I need a nail clipping.

VIOLET: Randolph!

RANDOLPH: **(turns to look at her)** Hmmm? Did you say something?

VIOLET: **(screams very loud)** I SAID YELLING AND SCREAMING IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET YOUR ATTENTION

RANDOLPH: **(furrows his brow)** Oh, dear.

VIOLET: **(back to a soft voice)** I've tried being sweet...understanding...*anything* to get your interest...to get you to like me.

RANDOLPH: **(panics)** Oh, dear—oh dear—oh, dear! You know I don't like to talk about this. Please stop.

VIOLET: If it had been only me you weren't interested in, I could understand. But you don't get interested in *any* panda...no matter who they are! You don't want any friends.

RANDOLPH: The zookeeper is my friend.

VIOLET: I'm concerned about you.

RANDOLPH: **(shakes his head)** I honestly can't remember any other panda showing such concern for me...as far back as I can recall. Not even my mother.

VIOLET: Not even your mother? That's sad.

RANDOLPH: No it isn't. I've always had zookeepers...at least since I was a baby. They give me nice clean grottos, and ever so many varieties of bamboo shoots. And look here... **(rolls a small log on the floor)** ...real plastic formica logs. Oh, yes. Everything is taken care of for me by the zookeepers. They care for me very well.

VIOLET: But I care for you too. You're a panda. You're my own *species*!

RANDOLPH: Oh, dear. Species talk.

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