

THE GRACELANDIA

By Michael Soetaert

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CHARACTERS

Nash Adams: He is the young (mid-20s), single owner/operator of the Gracelandia Hotel. He has all but given up hope that the hotel will ever be profitable, and now is waiting for the inevitable. He is oblivious that Kay is madly in love with him.

Kay Worthington: She is also in her mid-20s, single, and in love with Nash, but too shy to come right out and tell him. She works at the hotel, often without pay, simply to be near NASH.

Cletus Jinks: He is a newly wed hick on his honeymoon. To say he's not very bright would be a compliment.

Jolene Jinks: She is Cletus' newly wed wife. Whereas she may be the smart one of the two, that isn't saying very much.

Clark Conrad: He is a middle-age shoe salesman from Iowa. He is the epitome of an obnoxious salesman who is always "on," but who secretly hates his job.

Abigail Conrad: Clark's wife, she is resigned to a life of living with an obnoxious shoe salesman, but determined to always see the brighter side of everything.

Sandy Dizenski: She is a young, gung ho reporter from the *American Enquirer*, as well as an undercover cop investigating fraud.

Ken Calypso: He is the middle age legal representative for the real Graceland. He is determined not to let the Secret Disco Tapes out into public, but, of course, they don't really exist.

Lily Hex: She is pure evil. Of non-descript age and single, she never married because she simply hates everybody. She wants to steal the tapes from whomever finds them, and is not opposed to killing everybody, even if it's not necessary to do so.

Eddie Kahn: Also of non-descript age, Eddie is Lily's unfortunate side kick. He would love to be rid of Lily, but doesn't know how. He lives in fear of her, as well as just about everything else.

All of the characters must be played in the sex they are cast since, in the end, they will all match up, more or less. Whereas it would be possible to play both Lily and Sandy as men, it is important to keep them as

women's roles for the conclusion, where strong women go against the stereotype.

TIME & PLACE

Tomorrow (the day after at the latest). In the lobby of the Gracelandia Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee

SET

A run-down hotel lobby. The hotel desk occupies the right side of the stage. There is a standard letter box behind the desk, but it is mostly filled with dust. The main entrance to the hotel is UC; it is on a stepped platform and has two large columns on either side of the platform. DR there is an "exit" that leads offstage to the dining room. UL there is an "exit" that leads to the ground level rooms. LC is an ornate stairway that leads up a half flight to a landing, and from there disappears down a hall to the upper level rooms. There is another "exit" DL that leads off to more lower level rooms. At both DR and DL, on the apron, are groups of two lobby chairs and a coffee table (one group on each side). The walls of the lobby are decorated with many assorted pictures (velvet paintings add a nice touch) and there are assorted large potted plants and hall trees in the lobby. Tacky is good. In addition, there is a lighted velvet painting of Elvis on the wall to the right of the main entrance.

In the original production, there was a large, lighted hotel sign that was mounted on the right proscenium arch. At the play's open, the lights flickered several times, and then the sign blew out (a flash pot was mounted on the wall behind the sign). The lights on the sign stayed off until the end, when they were turned back on.

PROPS AND COSTUMES

Nash Adams: Wears a conservative, cheap suit with a tacky name tag. Jacket is optional. He will need a deck of playing cards.

Kay Worthington: Wears ankle length, cotton dress with a name badge. Conservative, but pretty. A sweater or shawl can be added and removed for variation. She will need a crossword puzzle book, pencil, name tag, folded towels and sheets,

Cletus Jinks: Plays the hick role to the max. Wears coveralls over a plaid shirt (or no shirt at all), a straight, poorly tied black tie, garter around one leg, bare feet, straw hat, even a hay stalk to chew on. He will need a miner's light, hacksaw (without blade), plumber's helper, swim fins and mask (optional).

Jolene Jinks: She wears a very cheap wedding dress loosely over her coveralls. She will need a bouquet, rubber snake, "passport" (subpoena), lumberjack saw, and a full size rifle.

Clark Conrad: Tacky is key with his costume. Think pro golfer. A bright, multi-colored (plaid?) jacket over pastel pants and a pastel shirt and tie. It's important not to match. White shoes and belt. He will need a sales suitcase that folds out into a display rack filled with brightly colored shoes (red, white, blue, and avocado), a squirt bottle of Odor Guard, a crowbar and a chainsaw.

Abigail Conrad: Classy, full-length dress with optional sweater. Pearls would be nice. She will need a large purse, axe, sledgehammer, and gun. In addition, she will need a spare bra.

Sandy Dizenski: Dresses somewhat nerdish. Pant suit or a conservative dress with a sweater, glasses on a chain, dark glasses, hair up. She will need a note pad, pencil, at least two copies of her tabloid, small purse, business cards, large magnifying glass, cigarettes and matches (optional), and an official looking badge.

Ken Calypso: Very much the lawyer, he wears a very nice suit, complete with hat, along with a trench coat. He will need three subpoenas/court orders, a Chinese menu, and business cards.

Lily Hex: Leather pants and jacket over a light-colored top. In addition she will need a bad hat. She will also need a handgun (this gun, as with any of the guns used, can be an obvious cap-gun/prop gun if needed), silencer, and a large knife.

Eddie Kahn: He is obviously someone who doesn't think much about his appearance. Dark pants and shirt to begin with, but he will change into the ugliest, full length calico dress possible and the mangiest wig you can find. Purse and high heels are optional.

Various Hotel Props including register book, tabloid magazines on the tables (two), potted plants, hall trees, pictures for the wall, a lighted velvet Elvis picture, a lamp with a detachable cord, a telephone (screwed

down) with a fairly long cord, and a large vase with a cassette tape inside.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Gracelandia was first presented by Michael Soetaert on February 2, 2006, at the Aurora High School Theatre, Aurora, Missouri, with the following cast:

(in order of appearance)

Nash Adams, Gracelandia manager:	Cody Isaacson
Kay Worthington, hotel worker:	Erica Lee
Cletus Jinks, Arkansawyer honeymooner:	Justin Gill
Jolene Jinks, Cletus' wife:	Kerri Mulford
Clark Conrad, Iowan shoe salesman:	Josh Jenkins
Abigail Conrad, Clark's wife:	Sarah Patchin
Sandy Dizenski, a reporter:	Jenna Smith
Ken Calypso, a lawyer:	Michael Means
Lily Hex, a really evil criminal:	Tara Swadley
Eddie Kahn, Lily's sidekick:	Steven Ramirez
Student Director:	Audrey Nash
Lighting:	TJ Nyberg & Kaylee Brite
Curtains:	Brittany Richardson
Props:	Rebecca White

Directed by Michael Soetaert
Scenery by Linda Priester
Publicity by Peggy Dial

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ACT I

At Rise: It is late morning. As the curtain rises we see the lobby of the Gracelandia Hotel. The stage will stay in darkness for a few seconds, with the only light being the one that is on the velvet Elvis. It would be kind to say the place has seen better days, but this is probably as good as it is ever going to get. NASH is standing behind the desk very slowly turning over cards in a game of solitaire HE obviously has no real interest in. KAY enters UR and will move to a chair DR, where SHE will sit by the coffee table doing a crossword that SHE truly has no interest in either. They continue to do this for several moments, each occasionally yawning.

KAY: Nash, what's a six letter word meaning "having no guests?"

NASH: *(barely looking up from his game)* Vacant.

KAY: *(lowering her book; somewhat eager)* Has anyone called?

NASH: *(surprised by the question, HE has to think for a beat)* No.

KAY: Nobody's made any reservations?

NASH: No, Kay, Nobody's called.

KAY: Are you sure?

NASH: Yes.

KAY: Try the phone. Maybe the line's dead?

NASH: The only thing dead around here is business. *(HE picks up the phone and listens)* Just like I suspected. There's a dial tone.

KAY: *(rising, alarmed)* Quick! Hang it up!

NASH: *(does so without thinking. Then asks--)* Why?

KAY: *(trying to be nonchalant)* Oh, no reason. I just thought someone might be trying to call.

NASH: Are you serious? No one's called in two months, and then that was a wrong number. We haven't had a reservation since the Shriners' Convention, and they canceled.

KAY: Well, maybe things will pick up. Today might be the day.

NASH: That I'd like to see. If business doesn't pick up in a hurry, I'm going to have to let you go. What am I saying? If business doesn't pick up, I'm going to have to let *me* go. In fact, I don't know why either of us are still here.

(KAY reluctantly goes back to her crossword and NASH takes up his game again.)

KAY: What's a four letter word that means "a strong attraction to the opposite sex?"

NASH: **(without any thought)** Like.

KAY: **(tossing down the crossword on the coffee table as she gets up)** No! That won't work! **(SHE crosses to the stairs; almost in tears)** I'm going to check on the rooms! **(SHE exits up the stairs.)**

NASH: **(absently looking up from his game)** Huh? I wonder what was bothering her.

(NASH returns to his game and slowly plays for a few moments. CLETUS enters DC carrying JOLENE. As they enter, NASH, startled, quickly puts away his cards. It is all CLETUS can do to keep JOLENE off the ground. CLETUS is wearing a poorly tied straight black tie, along with his usual attire. JOLENE is wearing a very cheap, poorly fitted wedding dress, obviously over her coveralls. SHE will wear the dress for the entire play. SHE is also carrying a pathetic bouquet.)

JOLENE: Cletus, put me down, you idiot!

CLETUS: But, Jolene, I'm suppost ta carry ya over the thresholt!

(JOLENE forces herself out of CLETUS' arms. HE is obviously relieved.)

JOLENE: **(Straightening out her dress, which involves spinning it around until SHE is convinced which side is the front.)** This ain't no thresholt!

CLETUS: How would you know?

JOLENE: Well I don't. . . but neither da you!

CLETUS: Well how's a feller ta know? They tell ya, "ya havta carry her acrost the threshold," but they never tell ya what a thresholt is! At least I didn't fergit the garter! **(HE points to the garter he's wearing on his leg over his jeans.)**

JOLENE: If you got the garter, then I guess I don't need this one. **(SHE takes out a wiggling snake from underneath her dress and puts in the plant DC)**

CLETUS: **(Noticing NASH, who has been eagerly watching the two)** We're here ta check in! Are you the manager?

NASH: Yes, I am. This is my hotel. **(smiles at his own joke)** Owner, manager, maintenance man and janitor. My great uncle Larry left me this place when he passed on.

CLETUS: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

NASH: To hear what?

CLETUS: That your great uncle died.

NASH: Oh, he didn't die. He just passed on. He moved to Montana. You know, I used to think he left me this old place because he liked me. But more and more I'm thinking it might be otherwise. **(as an afterthought)** I'm Nash Adams. **(HE reaches his hand across the counter for CLETUS to shake.)**

CLETUS: **(HE firmly takes NASH's hand, but only after wiping his own off on his coveralls, checking it for dirt, spitting on it, and then wiping it again.)** The name's Cletus. Actually, it's Jethro Cletus, but I go by Cletus.

NASH: **(CLETUS finally lets go of his hand, HE's a bit disgusted, but tries not to let on)** That makes sense. Let me guess. Your last name's Bodine. . .

CLETUS: Nope. It's Jinx. Like bad luck. You know, I used to go by Jethro. I kinda like the way it sounds. Jethro Jinx. Just rolls right off your tongue right nice an' perty, like molasses on a 'tater. But Jolene thought it made me sound too hickish. . .

NASH: Is that possible?

CLETUS: I never thought so. So where do we check in?

NASH: Do you have reservations?

CLETUS: Why, I reckon everybody does. My buddy Buddy said it was just cold feet. But I don't see how that was possible since Jolene made me wear shoes. Still, I stuck with it and went ahead and got married. Buddy was my best man. **(In confidence)** Tell ya the truth, he really wasn't that good.

JOLENE: **(nonchalantly)** Oh, you'd be surprised. . .

CLETUS: **(not picking up on what JOLENE said)** He said that marryin' would be the best thing I ever did, but so far it's just been a pain in the. . . **(JOLENE steps up next to CLETUS).** Why, hiya, honeybunch!

NASH: So, you two are on your honeymoon?

CLETUS: **(proud as a peacock)** Yup! **(with pride)** We came all the way up from Toadsuck, Arkansas.

NASH: Is that a real place?

CLETUS: That's what they always told me. Lived there all my life. The only time I ever left was to see the big city.

NASH: **(tentatively)** And which big city was that?

CLETUS: Smackover. But when me and the Mrs.—that's my honeybunches, Jolene—well, when we got married, we decided to have us a real adventure, just like in one of them reality TV shows. So we loaded up the truck and we headed for Tennessee. Memphis that is. My Uncle Eustis let us borrow his truck. **(confidentially)** I

thought it would be easier than that, you know, drivin' an' all. But I had the hardest time figurin' out how to make that darn thing go. The "D" worked jus' fine for the dirt roads, but when we got to the pavement, that "P" didn't do a darn thing. But then Honeybunches figured it out. "R" is for road. (**rubbing his neck**) It worked fine, but it seems like a pretty silly way to get somewhere. But here we are. We made it all the way to Graceland!

JOLENE: And we didn't even have ta use our passport!

(KAY enters UR. SHE stands off unobtrusively. JOLENE pulls out a large, blue folded piece of paper and hands it to NASH. HE unfolds it and slowly reads it.)

NASH: Subpoena. . . (**HE folds the paper back up and hands it back to JOLENE**) Well, um. . . So you've come to Memphis for your honeymoon. . .

CLETUS: Sure have. We've come to Graceland! (**HE slowly spins around taking in the entire lobby.**) Just think, we're stayin' at the very same place where Elvis usta live!

NASH: (**concerned**) You do realize that this is the Gracelandia Hotel. It's not the *real* Graceland. . .

CLETUS: Graceland, Gracelandia. . .what difference does it make? Just as long as Elvis usta live here. . .

KAY: (**stepping forward**) Elvis did stay here once. . . sort of.

NASH: (**obviously not wanting to lie**) That's not exactly true, Kay. Only the Colonel stayed here. But Elvis had reservations.

CLETUS: (**impressed**) He had reservations, too? Why I never woulda thought that. Why, ifins I woulda married someone as sweet and perty as Priscilla, I wouldn't a had any reservations atall! (**JOLENE hits him with her bouquet, which HE ends up holding.**) I mean... (**trying quickly to change the subject**) Besides, we're not here just for the honeymoon. We're here for the treasure, too!

NASH: (**has no idea what CLETUS is talking about**) What treasure?

KAY: (**Taking CLETUS by the arm. SHE doesn't want to give either CLETUS or JOLENE the opportunity to answer NASH's question.**) Let me show you to your room!

JOLENE: What do we need a room for?

(CLETUS whispers in her ear, after which HE smiles and nods great big.)

JOLENE: (**lacking his enthusiasm**) But we've already done that!

CLETUS: But not in a room.

JOLENE: (**cuddling up to CLETUS**) Well, I guess that's different!

(Led by KAY, JOLENE and CLETUS head to the stairs UL. CLETUS who still has JOLENE's bouquet in his hands, makes a few attempts to pick up JOLENE before heading up the stairs. HE makes the realization that HE can't pick up JOLENE and hold the flowers, so with a shrug HE pitches them over his shoulder—right into KAY's hands. KAY holds onto them for a beat, and then realizes what SHE has, and in alarm tosses them—right to NASH, who immediately tosses them out of sight under the counter. CLETUS, meanwhile, who has been oblivious to all the shuffling has finally given up on trying to pick up JOLENE.)

KAY: *(SHE and NASH have caught eyes after the bouquet shuffling. They hold it for an awkward moment, and then with a blush KAY turns away.)* Your rooms are right up these stairs.

CLETUS: *(to KAY, as they're heading up the stairs.)* Can I ask ya a question?

KAY: Certainly.

CLETUS: What's a thresholt?

(They all exit.)

(Enter DC CLARK CONRAD and his wife ABIGAIL. HE is carrying a chainsaw in one hand, and a large suitcase in the other.)

CLARK: *(Striding to the front desk and offering his hand to NASH)*
Clark Conrad from Providence, Iowa. And this is my wife, Abigail.
Also from Providence, Iowa. *(HE laughs at his own joke)*

NASH: *(takes his hand with some trepidation)* Welcome to the Gracelandia.

CLARK: *(becoming serious)* Are you the manager?

NASH: Owner, manager, maintenance man and janitor.

CLARK: I bet you spend a lot of time on your feet. . .

NASH: Yes. . .

CLARK: I'm in shoes. *(NASH looks over the counter at his feet, giving him a puzzled look)* Sales, that is. Shoe sales. Wholesale and retail. After 27 years in the business I've found you can tell a man's success by his shoes. As I've always said, "A man's fortune can be measured by his Florsheims." And you, sir, you look like you could use a new pair of shoes. *(HE finally lets go of NASH's hand)*

NASH: *(downcast)* Well. . . I. . . um. . .

CLARK: Shoes are my calling. Here. Take a look at these. *(HE produces a pair of white dress shoes from his suitcase, which*

folds out into a display rack) These babies are guaranteed for the rest of your life.

NASH: Guaranteed to do what?

CLARK: (***missing the sarcasm***) They'll never wear out. Never lose their comfort. And they'll never go out of style.

NASH: (***aside***) Because they've never *been* in style. . .

CLARK: Exactly! I knew right away you were a man of business. We also carry them in blue, red, and avocado. I'm guessing you wear a 10 ½ C. Am I right or am I right? (***NASH is caught speechless***) And sir, if you order today, I will throw in the Odor Guard free. (***HE produces a can***) Just one squirt three times a day and your feet are guaranteed never to stink again. That's the kind of confidence a man on his feet needs to have. Am I right or am I right? And the Odor Guard also works on upholstery, carpets, and pets. And it's perfectly safe. You can even swallow it with no lasting side effects whatsoever! (***HE proceeds to squirt some in his mouth, which is immediately followed by violent choking and coughing.***)

ABIGAIL: (***Coming to NASH's rescue while CLARK continues to choke***) Now stop that, Clark. Let's not talk shop while on vacation.

NASH: (***eager to change the subject***) So, you two are on vacation. . .

CLARK: (***starting to regain his composure***) I like to think of it as a working vacation. Abigail and me got treasure to find!

(With that, CLARK tries to fire up his chainsaw. Though HE gives it several pulls, it won't start.)

NASH: (***coming out from behind the counter while CLARK is still pulling on his chainsaw***) What are you trying to do!

CLARK: Start my chainsaw.

NASH: Stop it!

CLARK: No, start it.

ABIGAIL: Honey, please stop! It's obviously not going to start. (***SHE opens her rather large handbag***) Besides, we can just use the axe! (***which SHE produces***)

(CLARK takes the axe and tries to chop the counter, but is stopped at the last moment by NASH.)

NASH: You can't tear up the lobby!

ABIGAIL: (***taking back the axe***) He's right, honey. We can't go tearing up the lobby. We just got here. Let's start on our room.

CLARK: (***as HE's gathering up his suitcases***) Great idea! And then we can get some lunch!

(The two head for the stairs.)

NASH: Wait a minute! I didn't even give you a room yet.

CLARK: ***(as they're starting up the stairs)*** Oh, it don't matter. I imagine they're all pretty much the same.

(The two head up the stairs and are met by KAY coming back down. SHE hesitates when SHE sees SANDY enter UC. SANDY, in dark glasses, shows obvious disdain for the entire hotel. SHE crosses to where NASH is standing UR.)

SANDY: ***(SHE takes a business card out of her small purse and offers it to NASH)*** Sandy Dizenski. I'm from the *American Inquirer*. You must be Nash Adams.

NASH: How did you know that?

SANDY: I'm a crack reporter. And you're wearing a name badge.

(SHE offers NASH a business card, which HE takes, but before HE has time to read it, SANDY thrusts a copy of the American Enquirer in his face.)

NASH: ***(reading headline)*** "Elvis Reincarnated as a Houn' Dawg. Tells Me Secret Disco Tapes are Hidden at Gracelandia Hotel." This is insane!

(KAY, upon hearing NASH read the headline, slinks back up the stairs)

SANDY: That's exactly why I'm here--to check up on the validity of the story.

NASH: ***(incredulously)*** But you already published it!

SANDY: Hey! Who's the journalist here? You don't tell me how to run a paper, and I won't tell you how to run a hotel.

NASH: So what are you going to do when you find out it's wrong?

SANDY: When? Don't you mean *if*?

NASH: No! I mean *when*. There's no way this can be true.

SANDY: Why not?

NASH: Don't be ridiculous!

SANDY: I can't help it. It comes with the job. Besides, *if* I find out it's not true, then we'll run a retraction.

NASH: A retraction?

SANDY: A retraction.

NASH: Where?

SANDY: Where?

NASH: Why are you repeating me?

SANDY: I thought you wanted me to.

NASH: No!

SANDY: OK. Suit yourself. If we run a retraction it'll go on page 13, that's where we run all of our retractions.

NASH: **(quickly thumbing through the magazine)** I don't see any retractions.

SANDY: Right below Bigfoot's Meatloaf recipe.

NASH: I still don't see it.

SANDY: Try using a magnifying glass. **(SHE offers him one, which HE doesn't take)**

NASH: Oh good grief! **(HE tosses the paper in disgust)** Look this makes no sense at all. Why would you check the validity of a story that you've already written just so you can run a retraction that nobody can read?

SANDY: Mr. Adams, can I be honest with you?

NASH: What? I get to choose?

SANDY: **(ignoring NASH's comments)** There's a story here, and I want it.

(CLETUS enters from DR carrying JOLENE and crosses to UL and exits.)

NASH: Well you can have it! And take all these crazy guests with you!

SANDY: **(continuing to ignore NASH)** Just let me talk to Kat.

NASH: Who's cat?

SANDY: The one who talked with the dog.

NASH: What dog?

SANDY: The Elvis dog.

NASH: Elvis' dog talked to a cat?

SANDY: No. Elvis, who is reincarnated as a dog, talked to somebody named Kat. Katrina Wolinski.

NASH: **(the name sounds vaguely familiar, but HE can't place it)**
And you want to talk with Kat?

SANDY: Or dog. I'd love to talk to the dog. Actually both.

NASH: Are you out of your mind?

SANDY: Maybe.

NASH: I don't have a dog. I don't have a cat. And I don't have a clue what you're talking about.

SANDY: OK. Now try and follow along. In the spring of 1977, Elvis was overweight, wearing sequined jump suits, and spending his time shooting TV sets. In a word, he was a has been. Nobody cared about the King. So he tried to revive his career by recording an entire album of disco music.

NASH: Disco?

SANDY: You know. . . (**SHE strikes a Travolta pose**) disco.

NASH: (**in disgust**) Disco.

SANDY: So after he recorded all these songs he has this tape, see. And he listens to this tape and realizes that it's awful. Absolute rubbish. In fact, these songs are so bad that it sends Elvis into a depression. A depression he never recovers from. By that August, Elvis is so far gone that he kills himself.

NASH: Wow. Elvis was killed by disco!

SANDY: He wouldn't've been the first.

NASH: (**coming back to reality**) What have you been smoking? Elvis reincarnated as a dog telling somebody who doesn't exist about tapes that Elvis wouldn't want anybody to ever know about. That's the craziest story I've ever heard.

SANDY: I've seen crazier, trust me. But what should I care? This stuff sells.

NASH: But what happened to the tapes? I mean, what did the dog, or the cat, or Elvis, or some crazy reporter down at your crazy magazine say happened to the tapes?

(KEN CALYPSO enters UC as NASH is saying his lines.)

CALYPSO: (**with a flair of his long coat**) There are no tapes, sir. And if there are, let me assure you that they are the property of Graceland Enterprises, Limited, the sole licensing agent for all Elvis-related memorabilia. But there are none. (**HE crosses to where NASH and SANDY are standing, and with equal flair produces a business card for each.**) Ken Calypso, legal representative of Graceland Enterprises, hereto forth known as *Us*.

SANDY: *Us*? You copyrighted the name *Us*?

CALYPSO: Somebody was bound to.

NASH: I'm sorry, but why did you say you were here?

CALYPSO: I didn't, but there's no need to be.

NASH: No need to be what?

CALYPSO: Sorry. Though many people are, and rightly so.

NASH: Are what?

CALYPSO: Sorry.

NASH: So am I.

CALYPSO: What?

NASH: I have no idea.

CALYPSO: Let me explain. . .

NASH: Do you think it will help?

CALYPSO: (**ignoring him**) I am here to protect the rights and pecuniary interests of Graceland Enterprises, Limited, which in no way is

associated with the Gracelandia Hotel or any of its subsidiary holdings. Should these tapes that never were made and subsequently do not exist. . . should they happen to materialize, then I am here to claim ownership on behalf of Us. **(to SANDY)** And you, I assume, are Miss Dizenski, an alleged reporter for the *American Inquirer*.

SANDY: You know what they say when you assume. . .

CALYPSO: Yes. I'd just as soon sue you as me. This, my dear, is a restraining order against you and your alleged publishing company. It states that you are to cease and desist disseminating said allegations concerning the firm and this establishment of hostelry. **(hands her a folded piece of blue paper)**

NASH: And I thought I couldn't understand her.

SANDY: Say, this isn't a restraining order. It's a Chinese menu!

CALYPSO: Indeed! **(takes it back and replaces it with the real thing)**

SANDY: How dare you attempt to stand in the way of the free press's pursuit of the truth!

CALYPSO: The free press hasn't been concerned with the truth since 1972. **(to NASH)** I have a subpoena for Katrina Wolinski. **(brandishes another folded blue piece of paper)**

NASH: Who's Katrina?

SANDY: **(to NASH)** She's the cat who wrote about the dog.

NASH: Oh no, we're not doing that again.

CALYPSO: So you know this alleged person, do you?

NASH: I had never heard of her before this morning.

CALYPSO: **(to SANDY)** And how about you?

SANDY: We just publish them. We don't care if they're real. But if you find her, send her my way.

NASH: I assure you she's not an employee. Aside from myself, there's only one other employee in this entire hotel, and I haven't paid her in a month. I have no idea why she's still here.

CALYPSO: Then she must be a guest. Let me see your register. **(reaches for the register)**

SANDY: **(blocking CALYPSO)** Hold on there just a minute, bub. You've got no right to see that. **(to NASH)** Don't you dare show it to him!

NASH: Ah, what's the use? There's nobody on it anyway. **(HE shoves the book toward CALYPSO, who picks it up.)**

CALYPSO: It's blank. But what about all the guests I've seen?

NASH: The rooms are full, but nobody's checked in.

SANDY: That sounds like my last husband.

CALYPSO: Well I can assure the both of you that I shan't leave this establishment until I've gotten to the bottom of this hoax. The good name of the King shall be expunged! **(HE turns and starts left toward the stairs with a flourish)**

NASH: Where are you going?

CALYPSO: To my room!

NASH: But you don't have a room!

CALYPSO: That doesn't seem to matter.

(NASH exits up the stairs. SANDY takes off after him.)

NASH: Where are you going?

(SANDY turns and motions up the stairs, and SHE follows after CALYPSO. As SHE is going up, KAY comes down.)

NASH: Where have you been.

KAY: I was trying to get the rooms ready before the guests checked in, but they don't seem to care.

NASH: This is crazy! All over some stupid story that got put in some equally stupid tabloid. Who the heck would've done a thing like that?

KAY: ***(sheepishly, almost a whisper)*** I did.

NASH: What?!

KAY: I did. ***(almost pleading)*** I was only trying to help. I thought if we could get some free publicity then maybe we could get some customers.

NASH: You call this help? We've got the hotel full of customers who haven't paid, and probably won't, and all they want to do is tear the place apart. I can't believe you'd do such a thing! If this is your way of helping, please stop.

KAY: ***(trying not to cry)*** But I was only trying to help. Can't you see?

NASH: ***(HE can't)*** Oh, maybe we would be better off if the place did fold. Then maybe we could all go get other jobs. Real jobs. We could all get out of this rat trap.

KAY: ***(taking a step toward NASH)*** But then we wouldn't be together...

NASH: ***(not seeing the obvious)*** What difference would that make?

KAY: ***(turning away)*** I guess it makes no difference at all.

(There is the sound of a chainsaw being revved up off stage)

NASH: Oh, good Lord!

(Both NASH and KAY exit UL. The stage is empty for a beat, then enter EDDIE and LILY UC)

LILY: ***(with her usual evil glee)*** Look around you, Eddie. Somewhere in this pathetic hotel is a fortune just waiting for us to take it. Somewhere are hidden the secret disco tapes of Elvis.

EDDIE: Oh-h, I like Elvis.

LILY: You would, you uncultured boob. Remind me again, Eddie, why I have you around?

EDDIE: It's because every great criminal needs a sidekick. A right hand man. . . **(HE holds up his left hand)**

LILY: More like comic relief. I need you, because, try as I might, I can't do it all myself. And you're going to help me get those tapes.

EDDIE: **(eager)** Where should we start looking, Lily?

LILY: Look? I'm not looking for anything, and neither are you. We're going to let one of these other rubes find it, and then we'll take it from him. And the way I figure it, someone already knows. We just need to find out who.

EDDIE: But how are you going to do that?

(LILY removes a gun* from an inside pocket and slowly starts to screw on a silencer.)

EDDIE: **(alarmed)** You're not going to shoot them all, are you, boss?

LILY: That's not a bad idea. . . I could line them all up and shoot them one at a time. Whoever knows where those tapes are will certainly spill his guts before I have to spill his guts. And it would be fun, too.

EDDIE: But how can you be certain that there are even any tapes?

LILY: It was in a magazine. They wouldn't've printed it if it wasn't true, now would they? And besides, even if it's not, we still get to shoot a few people. . .

EDDIE: **(upset)** But. . . but. . . what if the first person you shoot is the only one who knows where the tapes are?

LILY: **(disappointed)** Ah. . . you're right. . . **(EDDIE is obviously relieved)** I'll have to wait until I get the tapes, then we can take care of the witnesses. I'll just have to learn to be patient.

EDDIE: **(hopeful)** But what if there are no witnesses? Then we wouldn't have to shoot nobody! Right, boss?

LILY: Don't you ever watch TV? There's always a witness.

EDDIE: **(HE slowly does the calculations in his head; the more horrified HE becomes, the more evilly happy LILY gets)** But if you start shooting all the witnesses, wouldn't there just be more and more people you'd have to shoot? There'd always be somebody more you'd have to kill!

LILY: Yes, wouldn't there be...

EDDIE: And. . . eventually. . . you'd have. . . to. . . shoot. . . me. . .

* If the company cannot use a gun onstage, it is possible to substitute another weapon. The company also may make a choice to use an obviously fake gun, such as a cap gun.

LILY: I can start with you, if you'd like.

EDDIE: (**scared**) No! I mean. . . I. . . ah. . .

LILY: Then don't become a liability.

EDDIE: Oh, no, boss! Whatever you say! I'm with you 100%. Even more if necessary.

LILY: Good. Because for now, I need you. I need you to help me get those tapes. But I need a plan. . .

EDDIE: Of course. If we had those tapes, then you could sell them to a record producer, and then we could go straight. (**hopeful**) Or maybe we could just forget the tapes and go straight.

LILY: That's a wonderful idea!

EDDIE: What? About going straight?

LILY: (**grabbing EDDIE by the collar**) What do you mean about going straight? What kind of woman do you think I am? (**SHE lets him go**) I was talking about being a record producer. What a brilliant plan. I'm going to pretend to be a big time record producer. Whoever has the tapes will come to me.

EDDIE: What about me, boss? What do you want me to do?

LILY: You're right. We need a backup plan. (**thinks for a moment**) The way I see it, people are motivated by two things. I've got the money part covered, but we need someone to set the trap of seduction.

EDDIE: The trap of what?

LILY: Didn't you ever pay attention in school? We need a *femme fatale*. . . (**EDDIE looks even more puzzled than before**) We need sex.

EDDIE: (**a bit embarrassed**) But I thought we was going after the tapes.

. . .

LILY: (**running out of what little patience SHE has**) We are, you dolt. No man can resist a beautiful woman. In the arms of a woman, no secret is safe.

EDDIE: But, boss, we ain't got no woman.

LILY: (**her anger flares**) What do you think I am?

EDDIE: (**stammering**) I. . . I. . . I meant a lady. (**trying to flatter**) And you could play a lady really good if you wanted to. I bet you'd even look real pretty in a dress. (**quickly**) Maybe something low cut with lots of lace and maybe some dangly earrings. . . I saw the prettiest dress just the other day. . .

LILY: Would you shut up! There is no way that I'm going to wear a dress. And there is no way I'm going to pretend to be nice to *any* man, much less those ignorant boobs in this pathetic hotel! The last man that tried to be nice to me ended up in the hospital. I'm not sure if he ever came back out.

EDDIE: Oh, really? And who was that?

LILY: My father. But we still need a woman. We need somebody that can pull the wool over these provincial moron's eyes.

EDDIE: (*excited that HE's figured something out*) So were gonna disguise somebody as a woman and trick 'em in to telling us where the tapes is at!

LILY: Exactly.

EDDIE: (*slowly figuring this out, too*) But. . . who ya gonna get to dress up like the dame?

(LILY simply looks at EDDIE and smiles her evil smile.)

EDDIE: Oh, no, boss. I couldn't do that. I ain't no dame. Everybody would know. I would make a worse lookin' dame than you. And I don't look good in no dress. . .

LILY: (*checking the sights on her revolver*) Then I guess you've just become a liability. . .

EDDIE: (*They exit UC while EDDIE is saying his lines*) I was thinkin' somethin' in a calico print. Somethin' that would bring out the color in my eyes. Maybe some matching shoes and a nice handbag.

Curtain

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