HOPEFULS!

"Pilot"

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD

CLEAN. HIP. MODERN. YOUNG ACTORS HANGING OUT AT TABLES, SHOOTING THE BREEZE, SMILING, SIPPING LATTES.

NARRATOR

There once was a place where actors could come, get comfortable, share a laugh, a belch, a bond. (A BEAT OR TWO) No, not this place.

FREEZE AS ACTORS SLOWLY TURN THEIR HEADS TO US WITH A SHOCKED, DISTURBED LOOK ON THEIR FACES.

CUT TO:

EXT. DILAPIDATED PINK STUCCO HOUSE OFF HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD WITH MODEST FRONT PORCH. AN OLD SIGN HANGS DOLEFULLY NEAR THE FRONT DOOR THAT READS: "ROOMS FOR RENT - ACTORS FORBIDDEN," WITH MAYBE A YELLOW CONDEMNED STICKER OR TWO.

NARRATOR

This place. Sooner or later, hungry Hollywood wannabes wend their way to this door. You probably know them by another name:
EXT. FRONT PORCH - BURKE RESIDENCE

JOEY CICERO, 20S, IN JOGGING SWEATS, IS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY. HE SETS DOWN HIS BACKPACK. KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.

THE DOOR OPENS. AN OLD-TIMER IN HIS 70S, JAMES BURKE, PEERS OUT.

JOEY

Hey, I'm an actor, I'm down on my luck, I'm looking for a place to crash.

JAMES

Can't you read the sign?

JOEY

I'm sign-averse. Thanks, I knew you'd understand.

HE BARGES PAST JAMES. THREE MORE ACTORS APPEAR AT THE DOOR: MARJORIE PETERS, 20S, PRETTY IN A CHUBBY SORT OF WAY; VICTOR COHEN, A JEW WITH A TOUPEE, AND SUZETTE DANIELLE, A TOUGH, DARK-HAIRED GAL, BUILT LIKE A BRICK SHITHOUSE.

MARJORIE

We're actors. We're broke. They were all full up at the inn.

JAMES POINTS TO SIGN. SUZETTE TEARS IT DOWN.

SUZETTE

Thanks a bunch.

THEY BARGE PAST HIM.
3.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - BURKE RESIDENCE

CLARISSA BURKE, THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE, 70S, WATCHES AS THE NEWCOMERS CONGREGATE IN THE LIVING ROOM, WHICH CONSISTS OF A PIANO, AN OLD PHONOGRAPH, A COUCH.

JAMES

I just did a really stupid thing.

CLARISSA

I'll get my stupid book and add another checkmark. Who are these people?

JAMES

Our new tenants.

CLARISSA

They're actors, aren't they. You rented to actors.

JAMES

Well --

CLARISSA

James?

JAMES

They trampled on my sympathies.

CLARISSA

No excuse.

JAMES

Made a mockery of my generosity.

CLARISSA

You know the rules.

(MORE)
CLARISSA (cont'd)
I'm gonna sic a plague of locusts on your underwear drawer. You remember what happened with our last tenants.

JAMES
They stole all the silverware. But they did leave a nice pair of chopsticks and a thank you note.

CLARISSA
This calls for harsh measures.

JAMES
You're not going to throw them out?

CLARISSA
No. I'm going to throw you out!

SHE POINTS. (END COLD OPENING)

CUT TO:
FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BURKE RESIDENCE

JAMES ADDRESSES THE NEWCOMERS.

JAMES
You probably wonder why we opened our home to you here.

JOEY
Actually, we forced our way in. But go on, we're listening.

JAMES
Because we're generous of heart and spirit.

JOEY
Meaning, you have evil plans for us in your laboratory.

JAMES
No, no, my dear friends. It's not like that at all.

JOEY
Said Hannibal Lector through the cage bars.

JAMES
Oh my dear friends, we're here to help you.
JOEY
Isn't that what Dr. Frankenstein
told the villagers? You know what
happened next.

JAMES
I'm simply a benevolent old man, and
this is my benevolent -- (OFF A
HOSTILE LOOK) not-so-old wife.

JOEY
And we're benevolent wanderers who
will be on our benevolent way.

JAMES
Wait. We are, how do you say it,
mucho simpatico.

MARJORIE
Wasn't Hannibal Lector fluent in
Spanish?

JAMES
We share your suffering plight. You
see, we were once in showbiz. Indeed,
there was a time when the wife and I
were all the rage on the British
dance hall stage.

VICTOR
When was that, during the late
Pleistocene era?
JAMES

Early Paleozoic.

HE SNAPS HIS FINGERS. CLARISSA HANDS HIM A FRAMED BLACK AND WHITE BBC STILL PHOTO OF THE TWO OF THEM IN THEIR PRIME.

JAMES

James and Clarissa Burke, known professionally as the Dancing Burkes.

HE HANDS PHOTO AROUND.

JAMES

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, eat your heart out.

JOEY

"Eat your heart" -- I knew it.

JAMES

If we learned one thing from our professional experiences, it's this -- it pays to be realistic. That's why you're here.

JOEY

We're here because we broke the door down.

SUZETTE

And since when are actors realists?

JAMES

Well, broke actors.
JAMES
My friends, you made your way to this particular door, which means reality has got you by the short hairs. I mean, does this look like the Polo Lounge? Come this way.

THEY MOVE INTO THE LIVING ROOM. JOEY PATS JAMES ON THE SHOULDER.

JOEY
Remember, friends don't ask friends for body parts -- friend.

JAMES
This is the living room. Provided you pay your rent, this is one of the few to no perks afforded you. Now, means test -- pockets please.

THEY TURN OUT THEIR POCKETS IN TURN, EACH WITH A SHRUG -- NOTHING.

JAMES
House rule number one: you must pay your rent. House rule number two: it is imperative that you pay rent. House rule number three --

VICTOR
Yeah, yeah -- we have to pay the rent.

JAMES
No pets.
PAUSE.

SUZETTE
We have about as much chance of paying the rent as Donald Trump does of hosting a Muslim dinner party.

MARJORIE
Come on, if we hurry we can catch the last bus to Wichita. Dinner theater is thriving there.

JOEY
No, that's "diner" theater. You get to sing and they throw plates at you.

JAMES
Let's not be too hasty. Now, why don't you introduce yourselves.

JOEY
(TO SUZETTE) You first, while I slip away and alert the authorities.

SUZETTE
Suzette Danielle, the bitch from hell. Five foot two, eyes of hellfire blue. And my feet aren't long fellows.

VICTOR EYES HER BREASTS. SHE SLAPS HIS HAND.

SUZETTE
Pig!
VICTOR

Victor Cohen. (BOWS) It has been said that casting directors' doors learned everything they know about slamming from me. I'm a real nice guy if you don't get to know me.

HE TURNS TO MARJORIE.

MARJORIE

Marjorie Peters. The ingenue who came in from the cold. Midwest girl, yanked on a lot of cow tits to pay my way through acting school. It was an udder mess.

A BEAT OR TWO.

JOEY

Joey da bad boy Cicero. Don't mess with me.

HE FLEXES HIS MUSCLES.

JOEY

I'm from Brooklyn, baby. Is it safe to admit that?

JAMES

So, do any of you thespians have a job? (HEADS SHAKE) Rich uncle? Expertise at second story break-in? (A BEAT) I thought actors were supposed to be resourceful.
THE LAND LINE RINGS. HE ANSWERS IT.

JAMES
Burke residence, last refuge for aspiring thespians, King James speaking, how may I be of little or no assistance to you? (LISTENS) Marjorie? Just a minute. (TO MARJORIE) For you.

SHE THROWS A QUIZZICAL LOOK, RELUCTANTLY TAKES THE PHONE.

MARJORIE
(INTO PHONE) This is Marjorie. Yes, I'm the really cute six wide strapless with the crappy instep. I'm sorry my credit card bounced, Franklin, it was nothing personal. How did you find me? What, right now?

SHE MOVES TO WINDOW, LOOKS OUT.

MARJORIE
I can have the shoes anyway, your compliments? I can't take gifts from you. No, not even if I let you sniff my feet. On the other hand, a little cash wouldn't hurt. I also take Visa, American Express and expired Doritos . . . Tonight?

(MORE)
MARJORIE (cont'd)

I don't know, I don't have anything to wear. You'll leave a couple of hundred under a rock? You wouldn't. (SHE PEEKS OUT THE WINDOW) Yeah, that rock should do. Look Franklin, you're a nice guy, but I don't really think you're my type. Your old man is a well-connected producer? You're my type. Pick me up here at eight o'clock. But please, no more stalking or I'm gonna disguise myself as the little old lady from Pasadena.

END CALL.

MARJORIE

Great, I can't go out with that pimple face.

JAMES

Somebody check under the rock.

SUZETTE

On it.

SHE EXITS.

MARJORIE

I've got to date an ugly shoe clerk, for what?
JAMES
His money. Look, it's just one date. Victor, you pretend to be Marjorie's agent. She needs up-front money to jump-start her career.

MARJORIE
What career? My last acting gig I played a tree in The Petrified Forest. I can't stoop this low. Even actors have their dignity.

JAMES
For ten grand, up front, cash.

MARJORIE
Alright, I'm a slut. No, let someone else be the sacrificial lamb. Let her do it. She's got the big bazookas.

SUZETTE
But you've got the insole he wants to know better, baby. If the shoe fits. . .

CLARISSA
You can't make this girl do this. It's dishonest.
JAMES
Dishonest was you discarding my blowup Petula Clark sex doll. I'll never forgive you.

CLARISSA
I got tired of whooshing sounds at night.

A BEAT OR TWO.

JAMES
Look, I like this idea, I like it a lot.

CLARISSA
You like stinkweed and Lady Gaga.

JAMES
Come on, she's an actor, she can pull it off.

MARJORIE
You mean he can pull it off. That's what worries me.

SUZETTE RETURNS WITH THE MONEY.

SUZETTE
Three-fifty in unmarked bills. Let's hit it, sweetie, the boutiques are beckoning.

MARJORIE
I don't --
SUZETTE

Come on, come on. Men are transitory, fashion is forever.

SHE LEADS MARJORIE OUT.

JAMES

(WIDE CHESHIRE GRIN) I don't know about you, but I feel awfully hopeful.

CUT TO:
ACT ONE
SCENE B

INT. DINING ROOM
(James, Clarissa, Suzette, Joey)

GATHERED AROUND THE DINING ROOM TABLE LUNCHING ON TUNA SALAD SANDWICHES.

JOEY
Wow, this is disgusting. What is it?

CLARISSA
My favorite wow-this-is-disgusting recipe. Chicken of the -- whoopee!
Starvation is also an option.

JOEY
What am I crazy, this is great!

ENTER VICTOR AND MARJORIE.

VICTOR
Remember, tell yourself "I am Meryl Streep." Affirmations are very important. You need to build up your ego.

MARJORIE
My ego is fine. But it won't be if I stoop to dating that pimply geek.
VICTOR
Say it -- I am Meryl Streep. Go on.

MARJORIE
(VAPIDLY) I am Meryl Streep.

VICTOR
With conviction.

MARJORIE
I am Meryl Streep. I am Meryl Streep. But I'm not Meryl Streep.

VICTOR
Not even Meryl Streep is Meryl Streep. But does she look in the mirror and say "I am Betty Grable"? That's why she's Meryl Streep.

SUZETTE
Words to the wise from Charlton Heston.

MARJORIE
Look, I like being me. I like it so much, I'm going to say it three times. I'm gonna give me a hug.

SHE DOES SO.

CLARISSA
And now, the you you like being is welcome to join us for lunch.

MARJORIE AND VICTOR SIT AT TABLE. VICTOR TRIES TO SIT NEXT TO SUZETTE.
SUZETTE

(TO VICTOR) This seat is for non-creeps only. Stop staring at my Willy Wonkas. Willy may wonka, but he ain't gonna getta.

JAMES
Okay, now when Marjorie's date arrives tonight, Victor, you introduce yourself as her agent. You turn to your protege: "Marjorie, don't forget that big audition you've got on Monday. Oh, I forgot, you can't afford to take time off from work. If only you had the money to afford to take the day off." Franklin chirps in: "I'll give you the money." We make the grab.

MARJORIE
I have a better plan. It's called running for my life.

JAMES

(TO SUZETTE) How did the shopping go?

MARJORIE
She made me buy a trollop outfit. I refuse to stoop to the level of trollop.
SUZETTE
Late trollop. Kim Kardashian beat us to the early trollop rack.

MARJORIE
I don't want to be an early trollop, a late trollop, or any trollop. Why can't someone else be the sacrificial lamb?

SUZETTE
The guy was nice to you. Gave you a fistful of money and free shoes. Never look a gift shoehorn in the mouth.

MARJORIE
Great.

JAMES
Marjorie, think of all the insoles you'll bring joy to.

MARJORIE
Most of them are sitting around this table. They're called heels. (SWIPES SANDWICH) Excuse me, I think I'll go finish unpacking my decency in my room.

SHE EXITS.
CLARISSA
You can't force her to date some jerk. James, you're better than this.

JAMES
No I'm not. I'm a greedy old man with bad teeth. Come on, one and done.

CLARISSA (cont'd)
That's what you said on our wedding night. How did I know you were a sex maniac with Jack the Ripper-like tendencies.

JAMES
Oh my dearest Clarissa. . .

JOEY
The reassuring voice of Dr. Frankenstein, after he's left half a stolen corpse on the cutting room floor.

JAMES
Besides, this will buy us time to dream up another insidious plan.

JOEY
Yeah, like selling my limbs to pay the water bill, or celebrity grave-

(MORE)
JOEY (cont'd)

robbing. It's always wise to keep your options open.

JAMES

Oh ye of little faith.

JOEY

Look, if it will make you feel any better, I can go along as a chaperone or something. You know, do the brotherly thing.

JAMES

I don't think that will be necessary. Do you, dear?

CLARISSA

Finish your lunch, Hannibal Lector. I'll deal with you later.

CUT TO:
ACT TWO

SCENE C

INT. LIVING ROOM - 8 PM

JAMES TINKERING ON THE PIANO. THE OTHERS WAITING AROUND NERVOUSLY, ALL EXCEPT FOR MARJORIE. SOUND OF DOORBELL BUZZER.

CLARISSA

Where's Marjorie?

SUZETTE

She locked herself in her room.

CLARISSA

The doors don't have locks.

SUZETTE

These ingenues, what won't they think up next.

CLARISSA

See if you can get her. (TO JAMES)

If this guy turns out to be hideous, he gets the bum's rush, scheme or no scheme.

JAMES

But darling.

DOOR BUZZER AGAIN. CLARISSA ANSWERS DOOR. TO HER ASTONISHMENT, A HOT HUNK OF A MAN -- CROSS BETWEEN TOM CRUISE, BRAD PITT AND ROB LOWE -- SPORTS JACKET, BODY SHIRT OPEN AT THE NECK -- IS STANDING THERE. HIS NAME IS BRUCE JAMES.

BRUCE

Hello. You would be the lady of the house.
CLARISSA

(JAW DROPPING) I'll be anything you want me to be. (ASIDE) Can we run off to Marrakesh?

BRUCE

Franklin couldn't make it, so he sent me instead. I'm supposed to ask for Marjorie.

CLARISSA

Marjorie? Oh yes, Marjorie. Forgive me, I was just admiring your -- everything. Oh Marjorie, dearest... you have a visitor. She's a little shy. (ASIDE) Look, if this doesn't work out, Marrakesh is still on the table.

AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, SUZETTE PUSHES MARJORIE INTO VIEW. MARJORIE IS NOT WEARING THE DRESS THAT SUZETTE PICKED OUT, BUT NEVERTHELESS A LIGHT-COLORED DRESS WITH SHOULD RUFFLES AND SCOOP NECKLINE.

MARJORIE'S VOICE

I will not --

SHE SPIES BRYCE.

BRUCE

(CUPPING HANDS SO THAT MARJORIE IS SURE TO HEAR) As I mentioned, Franklin couldn't make it, and he sent me in

(MORE)
BRUCE (cont'd)

his place, but if there's a problem,
I guess I can leave.

MARJORIE LITERALLY FLIES DOWN THE STAIRS.

MARJORIE

Wait. Did you say Franklin couldn't make it?

BRYCE

I did. Think of me as the un-Franklin.

MARJORIE

Un-Franklin, I'm the very-much Marjorie. (THEY SHAKE HANDS) You saved me from a life of zits.

BRUCE

Oh come on, he's not that bad. Alright, he's that bad. I guess I owe you an explanation.

MARJORIE

No explanation necessary.

BRUCE

Franklin had a little problem. I think it's called disgusting acne. He sent me, his cousin. He didn't want you to be disappointed.
MARJORIE  
(SWOONING) I'm heartbroken... You don't mind if I just stand here and gawk? I know it's cheap and vulgar, but it's Hollywood and I'm horny.  
(TO CLARISSA) Am I hallucinating?  
CLARISSA  
I saw him first.  
 
PAUSE.  
 
BRUCE  
Nice dress.  
 
MARJORIE  
Oh, it's just a little something I threw together.  
 
SUZETTE ASIDE TO VICTOR.  
 
SUZETTE  
She wouldn't wear the trollop outfit. I tried.  
 
BRUCE  
Dinner date alright?  
 
MARJORIE  
Can't I just gawk for a while? I mean, vulgar is so au courant.  
 
BRUCE  
Anyway, I called ahead to Spago.  
(MORE)
BRUCE (cont'd)
I figured Burger King would be booked solid. Of course, I'd hate to steal you away from all these wonderful people.

MARJORIE
(TAKING HIS HAND) No you wouldn't.

CLARISSA
Dear, aren't you going to introduce Bruce to your extended family?

MARJORIE
My extended family was wiped out in the blizzard of 1856. Shouldn't we be going?

CLARISSA
Now now, she knows how much we adore her.

MARJORIE
Don't be fooled. She's in league with Hannibal Lector and the others.

BRYCE
Yes, I'd love to meet the rest of your "family."

MARJORIE
You were warned. (TAKING HIS HAND, LEADING HIM TO LIVING ROOM.

(MORE)
MARJORIE (cont'd)

RE: CLARISSA) That's Morticia. Oh, I'm sorry, I meant Clarissa. And that's her husband, Victor Frankenstein. He likes to keep busy in his cutting room. Stay on his good side.

CLARISSA

We were professional dancers on the British stage -- James and Clarissa Burke.

VICTOR STEPS FORWARD.

BRUCE

A pleasure.

VICTOR

(EXTENDING HANDSHAKE) Hi, I'm Marjorie's agent -- Victor Cohen.

BRUCE

Oh, you have an agent. I'm impressed. What agency do you work for?

VICTOR

The Godammit We're Good Talent Agency.

BRUCE

I know every agency in town, all two of them. That's a new one on me.

VICTOR

That's 'cause we're that good.
BRUCE
Would I be familiar with any of your clients?

VICTOR
Probably not, since we don't have any -- except Marjorie.

BRUCE
In other words (TO MARJORIE) -- no offense -- you're a charlatan.

VICTOR
Right.

BRUCE
I'm with William Morris, slated for the lead role on "CSI: Caracas."

SUZETTE
Wouldn't I love to carry his castanets.

JOEY
Joey.

BRUCE AND JOEY SHAKE HANDS.

BRUCE
Strong hands.

MARJORIE
In addition to being a gym rat, Joey's very versatile.

(MORE)
MARJORIE (cont'd)

He speaks three different dialects --
duh, duhhhh, and dahhhhh.  Shouldn't
we be running along?

SUZETTE

Haven't you forgotten someone?

MARJORIE

No, it was quite intentional.

SUZETTE

Hello, hunk.

MARJORIE

Be careful, she tried to push me
into trollopdom.

BRUCE

Trollopdom?

MARJORIE

She wanted me to wear some hooker
outfit.  I like to think I have higher
standards, but I know better.

SUZETTE

(TO BRYCE) Suzette Danielle.

THEY SHAKE HANDS.

SUZETTE

If you get bored with Shirley Temple
there, I'm your high-voltage option.
BRUCE
You seem familiar. Have I seen you in something?

SUZETTE
I had the lead on Broadway in Boobs-Too-Large-to-Box-With-God. Beat out Kim Kardashian.

MARJORIE
Well, we'll be on our way.

CLARISSA
I was so hoping you'd stay for rum punch.

BRUCE
I think we should be running along.
(SOTTO VOCE) Get me out of here.

MARJORIE
(TAKING BRYCE'S ARM, THEN SOTTO VOCE)
I warned you.

THEY START TO EXIT.

CLARISSA
We could spend such a nice quiet evening together just gawking.

MARJORIE
Come on.

MARJORIE AND BRUCE EXIT.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - BURKE RESIDENCE

AS THE COUPLE EMERGE.
MARJORIE
I know what you're thinking -- why would I waste my time in a dump like this.

BRUCE
No, I was thinking why would I waste my time in a dump like this, but you were close.

MARJORIE
I'm sorry you got roped into this. We can call it off if you want.

BRUCE
Don't be silly. Well, you can be silly. We can both be silly.

MARJORIE
It's just that I'm not sure I'm exactly what you expected.

BRUCE
Actually, you're way more than I expected. After all, this is Franklin we're talking about, pimply shoe salesman to the stars. How did you get roped into this?

MARJORIE
I felt sorry for him.

(MORE)
MARJORIE (cont'd)

(OFF A LOOK) And he fed me that phony line about his old man's connections. Actually, those blood-suckers in there pushed me into it.

BRUCE

Come on, let's go have some fun.

CUT TO:
SCENE D

EXT. SPAGO'S - BEVERLY HILLS

TO ESTABLISH.

INT. SPAGO'S

MARJORIE AND BRUCE ENTER. MAITRE D' APPROACHES.

BRUCE

Hello, Roberto.

MAITRE D'

Mr. James. The usual?

BRUCE

Yes, please.

MARJORIE

My usual is the drive-up window at KFC.

HE GUIDES THEM TO A TABLE. THEY ARE SEATED.

MARJORIE

You sure you wouldn't settle for a Big Mac? (PAUSE) I can't believe we're dining at Spago.

BRUCE EYES HER.

BRUCE

This is okay, right?

MARJORIE

You kidding, this is life-altering. Eight hours ago I stepped off a bus from Wichita.

(MORE)
MARJORIE (cont'd)
Wait till I tell my kids about this.
I know they'll be amazed, because I
don't have any kids.

BRUCE
I wanted only the best for Franklin's
girl.  (BEAT) I have a little
confession to make.  I'm not really
Franklin's cousin.  I caught a glimpse
of you in the shoe store.

MARJORIE
You were peeping my Tom?

BRUCE
I was ogling your insoles.

MARJORIE
Which means you bribed Franklin to
take his place.  So Franklin bribed
me, you bribed him.  Which means, in
effect, you bribed me.  (OFF A GUILTY
LOOK)  I've never felt so happily
bribed in my life.

YOUNG WAITER BRINGS MENUS.

BRUCE
Can I bribe you with a cocktail?

MARJORIE
Si senor.  See that, I even speak
French.
BRUCE
Tequila? (SHE SHRUGS - WHATEVER)
You have a choice of Devil in Disguise
or Indecent Exposure?

MARJORIE
Let's get raw. (ASIDE) Did I say
that?

BRUCE MOTIONS TO WAITER.

BRUCE
Two Indecent Exposures.

WAITER EXITS. MARJORIE SURVEYS THE OTHER TABLES.

MARJORIE
Don't you hate people in restaurants
who stare? The only thing I stared
at as a kid was cow nipples. They're
big and they squirt a lot. Oh look,
isn't that Robert Redford over there
picking his nose? Uh-oh, Eddie Murphy
just came in with his favorite
transvestite.

THEY EXAMINE MENU.

BRUCE
Moving right along, what shall we
order for our main course?

MARJORIE
From where I sit, it's already been
delivered.
BRUCE
I'm dessert. Might I recommend the veal filet mignon tartare?

MARJORIE
You might, but your plot to subvert my bad taste will never work.

BRUCE
The sauteed Maine Skate lobster is also very good. Wolfgang has outdone himself with that.

MARJORIE
Thanks to my sophisticated knowledge of Latin and Greek, I have no idea who Wolfgang is.

BRUCE
Puck.

MARJORIE
The hockey player. Of course.

(PAUSE) About this menu, I ask myself, because I have no other self to ask, what would Meryl Streep order?

BRUCE
Meryl Streep?

MARJORIE
(CHANTING) I am Meryl Streep, I am Meryl Streep. Affirmations, baby.
BRUCE
If you're Meryl Streep, who's that sitting in the corner?

MARJORIE
(A GLANCE) I can't believe she's not home polishing her trophies. Okay, I'm not Meryl Streep, I'm not Meryl Streep. The curse is lifted. So how is it that someone apparently knee-deep in the business like yourself came to be a shoe peeper?

BRUCE
It's a long and tortured tale filled with sound and fury, signifying -- swollen arches.

MARJORIE
I suppose I should take pity on you, but I don't see it here on the menu. I'll try the lobster. I think I'd feel safe in the arms of a crustacean.

WAITER RETURNS WITH DRINKS.

WAITER
Ready to order, sir?

BRUCE
We'll have the lobster.
WAITER
We are out of the lobster tonight, with chef's apologies. The lobsters are on strike.

BRUCE
How can lobsters be on strike?

WAITER
There was a contract in their clause. I'm training to be a stand-up comedian.

MARJORIE
How'd you like to see the contract in my claws?

GESTURES WITH FISTS.

BRUCE
I suppose we'll have to settle for the veal tartare. Okay?

MARJORIE
Shoot the moon, baby.

WAITER BENDS OVER AND MOCK MOONS THEM.

MARJORIE
And -- he did.

BRUCE GESTURES -- 'TWO.' MARJORIE GIVES WAITER PEACE GESTURE.

MARJORIE
Peace, baby.

WAITER NODS, EXITS.
MARJORIE
I suppose that's his global warming joke.

BRUCE
Both hemispheres.

MARJORIE
I can't believe we're out on the town on a night like this, just the two of us, and so romantic. While lesser mortals sit at home toiling over sweaty Seinfeld reruns, chewing their toenails.

BRUCE GLANCES DOWN.

MARJORIE
Don't go there. . . I've never dined out with a foot fetishist before -- come to think of it, I've never dined in with one either. I think I'm getting a little nervous. Why don't we go have some real fun.

BRUCE
Hell yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORE FRONT ON HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

MARJORIE AND BRUCE ARE MUNCHING HAMBURGERS, DRINKING BROWN-BAG BEER, FLIPPING PENNIES INTO AN OLD HAT.
BRUCE

Double or nothing.

THEY EACH FLIP A PENNY -- SHE SUCCEEDS, HE MISSES.

MARJORIE

That's two orders of fries.

BRUCE

Says you. Just wait.

SHE TAKES A SWIG OF BEER. A DRUNK PASSES BY, DOES AN ELABORATE CHAPLINESQUE FLIP OF A COIN INTO THE HAT. BOWS.

BRUCE TAPS HIM ON THE SHOULDER, GIVES HIM A TWENTY DOLLAR BILL. DRUNK BOWS, EXITS.

BRUCE

(RE: DRUNK, ROLLING HIS EYES)

Professional.

HE FLIPS COIN.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BURKE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

JOEY AND SUZETTE PEER THROUGH THE WINDOW.

JOEY

Here they come.

EXT. SAME

BRUCE AND MARJORIE STAGGER UP THE WALK, SLIGHTLY DRUNK.

MARJORIE

It's your fault.

BRUCE

No, it's your fault.
MARJORIE
I never drink beer with strangers.
Not even to-die-for handsome ones.

SHE STUMBLES, FALLS. HE QUICKLY CATCHES HER.

MARJORIE
I think I'm stewed. You stewed me.
I feel like bouillabaisse your arms.
(GESTURES) They're probably watching from inside. Perverts.

SHE GETS TO HER FEET.

MARJORIE
Uh-oh, moment of truth time. Your tongue attempts a high-wire act on my adenoids. I warn you, I have vengeful tonsils.

THEY KISS.

MARJORIE
Not that vengeful.

THEY KISS AGAIN.

MARJORIE
No, I won't marry you. That'll only mean more trouble with the lobsters union. (PAUSE) Hey, that was fun. I mean, the whole evening.

BRUCE
Will I see you again?

SHE EXAGGERATEDLY TILTS HER HEAD, SMILES, SHRUGS.
MARJORIE
That's a cockeyed yes.

BRUCE
Good. I guess I'll say goodnight then. You steady on your feet?

SHE NODS, STILL A BIT WOOZY. HE STARTS TO LEAVE.

MARJORIE
Bruce?

SHE MOVES TO HIM, THEY KISS. A LONG, PASSIONATE ONE.

MARJORIE
I may be cockeyed, but I'm not a fool.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

JOEY AND SUZETTE SLAP HIGH FIVES.

JOEY/SUZETTE
Yes!

MARJORIE ENTERS.

MARJORIE
Chalk up one for the farm team.

SUZETTE
How hot was he? Come on. On a scale of one to ten.

MARJORIE
Moooooooo!

SHE STAGGERS OFF TO BED. SUZETTE AND JOEY EXCHANGE LOOKS.
JOEY

Don't look at me. Mooooo!

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW