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SF PERUSALS

HOTBED HOTEL

AN AMERICAN FARCE

by

Michael Parker



SAMUEL FRENCH

FOUNDED 1830

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HOTBED HOTEL

First produced at the Delray Beach Playhouse, Delray Beach, Florida, on October 15th, 1992, with the following cast:

HOPKINS	Jack Gordon
TERRI CODY	Nedria DeGrotta
BRIAN CODY	Michael DeGrotta
MAJOR PONSENBY	Michael Parker
MAUREEN	Darrah Devereaux
SAM LEWIS	Marc Streeter
ASHLEY	Pamela Schreck
HAYLEY HARRINGTON	Susan Barnes
DOROTHY	Carolyn Gordon

Directed by Randolph DelLago

Designed by Ann Caderet

The action of the play takes place in The Turtle Beach Hotel in the Florida Keys.

Time: The Present

Act 1	An afternoon in January
Act II	Scene 1: The action is continuous
	Scene 2: Later the same evening

CHARACTERS

HOPKINS (Age 50 – 60): The hotel handyman. He is an endearing comic character who continually surprises the audience by producing, throughout the play, bottle after bottle of liquor which he has hidden all over the stage. He guarantees his life-long employment by never fixing anything permanently and is at the heart of most of the visual comic sequences.
A natural comic, usually tipsy, occasionally drunk.

TERRI CODY (Age 30 – 40): While her husband Brian calls himself the hotel manager, it is very apparent that she runs the place. She clearly has to love him very much to be able to put up with his blunders, inefficiencies and disasters. While she is the brains behind the Hotbed Hotel façade, she remains a gentle, loving, loyal wife.
Smart, efficient, competent yet tender and patient.

BRIAN CODY (age 35 – 40): The hotel owner and manager, he is one of life's hopeless incompetents. Meaning well and trying hard, without a mean bone in his body, he somehow always manages to end up with a disaster on his hands. He is not dominated by his wife, but it is just his great good fortune that she is always there to make any decision that needs to be made for him. He is one of life's dreamers who wanders through every day with little understanding of what is going on around him.
Kind, helpful, understanding, naïve.

MAJOR PONSENBY (Age 50+): A product of an almost by-gone age, that of the upper class British military officer. He is a total eccentric, but nevertheless a real character who, while changing back and forth into the role of his twin brother, creates hilarious diversions from the main plot, culminating in an extraordinary *coup-de-theatre* at the final curtain.
As Major Ponsenby: Eccentric (to say the least) but with a sparkling dry wit and sense of humor.
As Abdul El Hajj: Serious, dour and taciturn.

MAUREEN (Age 18 – 25): The hotel maid. She really doesn't have a brain in her head. However, she is always bright and cheery, al-

ways tries very hard and should appear like a ray of sunshine every time she steps onto the stage.
Young, sexy, pretty, full of energy.

SAM LEWIS (Age 40 – 60): A New York business man, full of flash, bravado and moral judgment. It is not until the arrival of his wife, late in the play, that we realize he is, in fact, staying in the hotel with his girlfriend. A different Sam then emerges, a fawning, hen-pecked husband, completely dominated by Mrs. Lewis.
Brash, loud, a moral hypocrite.

ASHLEY (Age 30 – 45): Sam Lewis' girlfriend is glamorous, sexy and a real "looker." Through no fault of her own, her clothes keep disappearing throughout the play. As she wanders in and out wearing only a towel, she is hardly aware of the bedlam going on around her.
Gorgeous, but not cheap or tawdry, with a kind, affectionate nature.

HAYLEY HARRINGTON (Age 30 – 45): Also known as "The Barracuda" for her aggressive attitude towards men. She is glamorous and sensuous. Her reputation as a predator has preceded her. Focusing on one male after another, sometimes in a lighthearted, almost frivolous way, she does not let the audience down. (If Terri is responsible for the Hotbed of intrigue in the Hotel, Hayley is responsible for the literal Hot Bed.)
Voluptuous, sexy, a determined nymphomaniac.

DOROTHY (Age 45 – 60): Although it is late in the play when, to the total surprise of the audience, she is introduced as Sam's real wife, her character of "the old battleaxe" completely dominates the final twenty minutes. After a loose screw in the number of her hotel room door, 6, is dislodged causing it to flip down and become 9 (the Barracuda's room) and she is visited by all Hayley's paramours, she is at the heart of one of the great comic sequences of the play.
Severe, matronly, self-opinionated

ACT I

(The curtain rises on an empty set. It is the reception area, hallway and room 7 of The Turtle Beach Hotel. Situated in the Florida Keys, it has been converted from an old mansion into a small but functional hotel.

The hallway D.R. leads to the bar, dining room and front entrance of the hotel. R. is the reception area with a double-hinged door leading to the office. The reception area has clearly been adapted from a corner of the old house and is rather cramped and cluttered. The wall has key racks, booking charts, etc., and there is a call bell and telephone on the counter. U.R. is a staircase [See Author's Note.] with a landing facing the audience. D.R.C. are two low backed easy chairs, a small coffee table and a stand-up ash tray.

U.C. and U.L. are the doors to rooms 6 and 8, their numbers large enough to be seen by the audience. On the wall between rooms 6 and 8 are two paintings. The one on the R. is hinged with a recess behind it. The one on the L. is a still life with a bottle of wine as part of the subject matter. [See Author's Note.] In the center of the hall, slightly L. of the door of room 6, is a hanging light fixture [See Author's Note.] U.L., the hallway leads to other rooms, laundry, etc.

The L. side of the stage consists of room 7, its number clearly visible when the door is open, with its rear wall cut away immediately R. of the door frame. There is a "do not disturb" sign hanging on the inside doorknob. U.L. is the door to the dressing room and D. L. the bathroom. Extreme D.L. would be French doors, but one is cut away leaving only one, opening onto the garden patio. The room contains a double bed and two bedside tables with a phone on the L. one. There is a vase of flowers on a small semi-circular table against the wall L. between the dressing room and the bathroom doors. The bedspread is a light floral design and the room is delineated with a carpet.

After a few moments HOPKINS enters the hallway from U.L. He is easily identifiable as a hotel handyman. He wears scruffy white overalls, T-shirt and baseball cap. He has a variety of tools slung on his belt. Age perhaps 50-60. He has definitely seen better days. The ravages of time and alcohol have clearly taken their toll. He is, however, a friendly soul who wouldn't be happy if he didn't have something to complain about.

He comes R., looks up the stairs, peeks in the office door, comes D. R. and has a quick look towards the front entrance. Seeing no one, he quickly retreats to the picture hanging on the wall between rooms 6 and 8. He reaches into a recess behind the R. picture and produces a bottle of liquor from which he takes a long drink as the phone in the reception area rings. He hurries to put the cap back on the bottle, replaces it in its hiding place and exits U. L. as TERRI comes downstairs to answer the phone.

She is an attractive woman age 30 to 40, very business-like in her manner and quietly efficient in everything she does. She is dressed in a light-weight cotton skirt and blouse.)

TERRI. *(Calling as she appears at the top of the stairs.)* Brian. Brian. Now where's he gone? *(Sighs.)* I only asked him to watch the phone for fifteen minutes. *(Picks up phone.)* Turtle Beach Hotel. May I help you? — I'm afraid the manager *(She rolls her eyes heavenward.)* is out. I'm his wife, Mrs. Cody, could I help you? — When? — Next Saturday, one double? We are very busy, could you hold on a minute while I check. *(She places her hand over the speaker and silently counts to ten.)* We're very lucky sir. I see we have a cancellation, we can definitely fit you in. — Good. — The name is? *(Writing on a small pad.)* — Right, I've got that, and that's Saturday the 17th. One double for three nights. I'm sure you'll enjoy it sir. Thank you. *(She hangs up.)* Well that doubles our occupancy rate!

(Enter BRIAN from the front entrance. He is middle aged, rather nondescript looking, always nervous, and seems to be perpetually on the edge of panic as though he can barely cope with life. He is not dominated by TERRI but he simply prefers to leave all major decisions to her. He is wearing cotton pants and a short-sleeve

tropical shirt. He is limping, wearing one shoe and holding the other out in front of him at arms length.)

BRIAN. That damn dog next door!

(He comes upstage to the entrance to the reception area and pauses.)

TERRI. How do you know it's the dog next door?

BRIAN. Because he always does it in the same place.

TERRI. If he always does it in the same place, why do you step in it dear?

BRIAN. *(Looks blank.)* Why do I —?

TERRI. Never mind. Where were you anyway? I asked you to watch the phone.

BRIAN. Well. Nobody called so I went down to the beach.

TERRI. Oh Brian, you're hopeless. Why don't you leave your shoes outside the front door?

BRIAN. I can't do that. Leave *(Holds out shoe.)* this? For people to see. Really! This is a first class hotel.

TERRI. Oh? Has it changed hands while I was upstairs?

BRIAN. *(Limping into office.)* You know what I mean. What would the guests think?

TERRI. Guests? We've only got one, and I don't believe he's capable of thought.

(She is busy with the booking chart. BRIAN comes back in, now minus both shoes.)

BRIAN. I don't think you should make rude remarks about the Major. At least he pays his bills.

TERRI. Yes, I will say that for him.

BRIAN. You know, he's not short of money. The other day he showed me a painting he'd just bought for seven hundred dollars.

TERRI. Good God. Seven hundred dollars? And you can't even wear it.

BRIAN. Anyway, he's not a guest. He's — well — he's a permanent resident.

TERRI. Well, I know that dear, but why a retired British army officer would stay in this hotel for nearly two years, I can't imagine. I don't believe he's all there.

BRIAN. What do you mean, you don't think he's all there?

TERRI. Well, you know, his elevator stops — *(She holds her hand across her neck.)*

BRIAN. I don't know at all. He's led a very interesting life. You'd be surprised at some of the places the Brits find to send people. He lived all over the world before he retired.

TERRI. Oh Brian, you can't believe all his ridiculous stories. You know as well as I do, he's as nutty as a fruitcake.

BRIAN. I'm not so sure — speak of the devil. Good afternoon Major.

(MAJOR PONSENBY has entered from U. L. and comes R. toward the foot of the stairs. Age, perhaps 50. A tall, straight gentlemen dressed very smartly in well-pressed pants and a semi-military short-sleeve white shirt with pockets and epaulettes.)

MAJOR. Good afternoon Brian. How are you today?

BRIAN. Just fine, thank you Major.

MAJOR. Ah — The fair and beautiful Mrs. Cody. How are you my dear?

TERRI. I'm fine, thank you Major.

MAJOR. Good. Good. If you don't mind my saying so, you look very beautiful today.

TERRI. Well thank you Major.

MAJOR. Did I ever tell you that sometimes you remind me very much of my dear old mother.

TERRI. Really?

MAJOR. You're not as sad as she was though.

TERRI. Sad?

MAJOR. Yes. All her life she seemed sad. On account of my brother I suppose.

BRIAN. What happened to your brother?

MAJOR. I've no idea.

BRIAN. What?

MAJOR. We never knew. It was very sad. My twin brother, and I never saw him.

TERRI. How can you have a twin brother that you've never seen?

MAJOR. Well, you see he was gone before I was born.

TERRI. What?

MAJOR. Yes. You see Mother was married to this nomadic North African Sheik and all he wanted was a son. As soon as my brother was born he packed up his tents, took the baby and abandoned Mother to the desert. He never knew she was carrying twins. Two hours later, I arrived. Later that day we were saved by a wandering caravan. Very romantic in a way.

TERRI. Well, you certainly can tell a tale Major. Why — you almost had me going then.

MAJOR. Yes, quite. *(Seeing BRIAN in his socks.)* I say old chap, joining the barefoot brigade are we? Reminds me of the time I was in Buano Buano. Lost me boots in the quicksand, spent 42 days —

TERRI. *(Can't stand another of the MAJOR'S stories.)* I'm sure that's very interesting Major, but I have to — er — go and get Brian some shoes. *(She heads upstairs then turns.)* And Brian?

BRIAN. Yes dear?

TERRI. Stay by the phone.

(TERRI exits upstairs.)

BRIAN. Oh! Right.

MAJOR. She's got you on duty, eh?

BRIAN. Well, she doesn't want to miss any calls.

MAJOR. Quite right. Quite right. Must keep the lines of communication open. Reminds me of the time General Sinclair sent a runner 31 miles across the desert. That was in Booticapa you know.

BRIAN. Where's that?

MAJOR. What? Booticapa? Africa old chap, sort of — er — in the middle.

BRIAN. What was it like?

MAJOR. Well now. Let me think. How would you describe Booticapa? Lets put it this way, if the world needed an enema, Booticapa is where you would insert the tube!

BRIAN. Well, either there or Miami Beach!

MAJOR. Ah, very good old chap, very good. *(He pauses.)* You know Brian, I'm very happy here at Turtle Beach.

BRIAN. And we're happy to have you Major. You do know we're trying to sell the place don't you?

MAJOR. Well, I'd heard rumors. May I ask why?

BRIAN. Well, what you probably don't know is that this hotel is run as a nonprofit organization.

MAJOR. I say, that's damned noble of you old boy.

BRIAN. No-no-no. We didn't intend it to be. It just worked out that way.

MAJOR. Oh, I see.

BRIAN. The fact is that it's almost impossible to make money with a twelve-room hotel. We haven't got the capital to expand so we have to sell it to someone who has.

TERRI. *(Entering down the stairs with a pair of BRIAN'S shoes in her hand.)* Are you still here Major?

MAJOR. No, I left a couple of minutes ago.

TERRI. *(Ignoring his response.)* Mr. Cody has things to do you know. He can't stand around chatting all day. Here you are dear. *(She hands BRIAN his shoes.)*

MAJOR. Very well madam. I can take a hint. I know when my presence is no longer required. There's no need to say any more. May I remind you that my family motto is "NIHILGENDO E PLANITUS SANCTIVITUS ENIM IMPEDIMENTO".

BRIAN. Good heavens. What does that mean?

MAJOR. No one's ever known really! Have a nice day.

(He exits jauntily to the front entrance.)

TERRI. *(Laughing.)* I'm going to miss him when we sell this place.

BRIAN. Talking of selling, where do we stand with that right now?

TERRI. We appear to be down to one good prospect. That Mr. Lewis from New York, and he's supposed to be coming down in a week or two.

BRIAN. I suppose we really do have to sell, huh?

TERRI. Yes we do. We've never made a nickel out of this place, and in the eight years we've owned it the land value has absolutely shot up. We can make a fortune by selling it. Well, a small one anyway.

BRIAN. I do wish we didn't have to sell it. Money doesn't buy everything you know.

TERRI. I know that. That's why I have credit cards. Anyway, we can barely make the payroll, and apart from the dining room, we've only got two employees. A maid and a handyman.

BRIAN. Well, we're supposed to have a gardener as well. If I could only find one.

TERRI. That reminds me. What happened to that young boy who applied last week?

BRIAN. Oh, he wasn't any good.

TERRI. What was wrong with him?

BRIAN. He said he wanted to start at the top, so I sent him into the garden to dig a hole. An hour later he quit.

TERRI. Oh, that reminds me. I meant to tell you. Hopkins might be drinking again, so I'm keeping the bar locked during the day. I've put beer, wine and soft drinks in the fridge in the office. Incidentally, did you get Hopkins to fix that running toilet in number seven?

BRIAN. *(Very proud.)* I didn't need to. I fixed it myself.

TERRI. *(After the longest pause.)* You what?

BRIAN. I fixed it myself.

(TERRI stares at him for a moment unable to believe her ears, then turns, goes up the hall and calls off U. L.)

TERRI. Hopkins! *(She enters room 7, goes to bathroom, opens door and looks in. We hear water running, she turns to the audience, rolls her eyes to the heavens, comes out of room 7, then back R. to reception area.)* Cody, Find Hopkins!

BRIAN. But dear—

TERRI. Find Hopkins!

BRIAN. Well I—

(BRIAN hurries out of the front entrance. TERRI opens the door of

room 6, looks in, then goes to room 8, looks in.)

TERRI. Maureen, would you get a bucket and mop please, quickly. *(TERRI heads R. to the reception room as MAUREEN comes out of room 8 and quickly disappears U.L. MAUREEN is very young, very pretty and, as we shall see, not too bright. She is wearing very short shorts, T-shirt and no shoes. Enter HOPKINS from the front entrance.)* Ah, Hopkins. We have a disaster in room 7.

(TERRI goes back into room 7 followed by HOPKINS. She leads him to the bathroom. He looks in.)

HOPKINS. Has Mr. Cody been fixing things again?

TERRI. I'm afraid so.

HOPKINS. I ought to get hazardous work pay, with him living in the place.

TERRI. Can you fix it?

HOPKINS. I dunno. Looks like he might have cracked the bowl. Anyway, I'm not paid to get my feet wet. I'll go and turn the water off and get my tools. You'd better do something about all that water.

(HOPKINS exits out of room 7 and U. L. as MAUREEN enters with a bucket and mop.)

TERRI. Thank you Maureen. Could you please try to mop up all this water. Hopkins'll be back in a minute to fix the toilet.

(TERRI exits out of room 7, R. to reception and up the stairs.)

MAUREEN. Yes ma'am. *(She starts to mop, and has just bent forward in the bathroom doorway, her derriere in full view of the audience , as HOPKINS enters room 7, a toolbox in one hand and a plunger in the other. He steps forward with the plunger in his outstretched arm, close to MAUREEN'S derriere, then stops and thinks better of it as MAUREEN turns and sees him.)* What are you staring at?

HOPKINS. Well — er — I — er — If they got any shorter, you'd

have two more cheeks to powder.

MAUREEN. *(Laughing.)* You're a dirty old man.

HOPKINS. Old? Yes, I suppose I am. They say the first thing that goes is your memory. Well, I forgot I'm not supposed to enjoy looking at a pretty girl *(MAUREEN giggles.)* How are you doing there?

MAUREEN. Are you kidding? I only just got started.

HOPKINS. Right. Might as well make myself comfortable then. *(Singing softly to himself, he goes to the door, takes the "Do Not Disturb" sign off the inside doorknob, places it on the outside, closes and locks the door. He then puts his toolbox on the bed, opens it and takes out a whiskey glass. He breathes into it, polishes it with his handkerchief, then produces a thermos out of which he tips ice cubes into the glass. He then pauses and looks around the room.)* Now. Lets see. Room 7. Ah, yes! *(He moves to the flower vase on the table between the dressing room and the bathroom doors, lifts out the flowers with one hand, reaches in with the other and produces a bottle of liquor. He pours a generous shot into the glass, replaces the bottle and the flowers, returns to the bed, takes out a small red and white checkered cloth from his toolbox, spreads it on the bed, sits up with his feet on the cloth and sips his drink.)* It's a hard life!

MAUREEN. I noticed. *(She continues to mop.)* What'll you do if they sell this place?

HOPKINS. Oh, I guess I'll stay here. The place would fall apart without me.

MAUREEN. You know I noticed that. There always seems to be something going wrong.

HOPKINS. That's my pension plan.

MAUREEN. What?

HOPKINS. My pension plan. The secret is never fix anything permanently.

MAUREEN. One of these days they're going to catch on. What's that you're drinking anyway?

HOPKINS. Oh, you wouldn't know.

MAUREEN. You'd be surprised what I know.

HOPKINS. As a matter of fact, it's a nice Polish vodka. It's what the Pope drinks.

MAUREEN. Yeah? That's probably why they have to carry him

everywhere! *(Picks up the bucket.)* Well, that's about it. It's pretty dry now.

HOPKINS. *(Getting off the bed and packing up his tool box.)* O.K., I'll see you later. *(He watches wistfully as MAUREEN unlocks the door and exits U. L. He flexes his hands like a pianist about to play.)* Here comes the genius of the John!

(He picks up his toolbox and plunger, exits into the bathroom and closes the door as the phone in the reception area rings. BRIAN rushes in from the front entrance, sprints around the counter and picks up the phone, just as TERRI appears at the head of the stairs. He grins at her and she retreats.)

BRIAN. Turtle Beach Hotel — Yes — Yes — What? Mr. Lewis — today — half an hour ago — well, I suppose so. O.K. Bye. *(He hangs up and starts running in sheer panic, all over the place.)* Terri, Terri, quick, Oh my God what are we going to do? *(TERRI comes quickly downstairs.)* The place is a mess, we've got a hole in the front yard, the hotel is empty, he'll never buy it. We'll be poor for the rest of our lives. Everything's gone wrong and that damn dog's done it again out front. *(Sees TERRI.)* Terri, what do you think?

TERRI. I think compared to you, Murphy was an optimist. What is it?

BRIAN. Mr. Lewis from New York, — you know, the guy who's interested in buying this place — his secretary called. He flew into Miami this morning. He's driving down and he should be here about four o'clock.

TERRI. I see. *(Looks at her watch.)* Well, at least that gives us a little time, but not much.

BRIAN. What are we going to do? How are we going to sell a hotel, when we've only got one guest in the middle of the season?

(Enter the MAJOR from the front entrance.)

MAJOR. Is everything alright old chap? I heard shouting.

TERRI. *(Taking charge.)* Yes, everything is going to be fine.

BRIAN. Fine! How can you say that? How can we sell an empty hotel?

TERRI. Because it is not going to be empty. I've got an idea. We're going to create some guests. Major, do me a favor will you? See if you can find Maureen for me, and bring her back here. Brian, would you please get Hopkins. He's in the bathroom in number 7. *(Exit MAJOR U.L. BRIAN goes into room 7 and into the bathroom. He reappears with HOPKINS who carries his toolbox and plunger.)* Now — if I remember correctly.... *(She looks at the booking chart on the wall.)* Ah-ha. Oh dear. Not her! Well, beggars can't be choosers. *(The MAJOR comes R. with MAUREEN and they all stand around the reception area, except BRIAN who slumps dejectedly into one of the chairs.)* Now, pay attention everyone. As you've no doubt heard, Mr. Cody and I are trying to sell the hotel, and we need you all to help us.

MAUREEN. Why should we help?

HOPKINS. Yeah. Why should we help you put us out of work?

TERRI. Because if we don't sell it, we'll probably have to close the hotel, and you really will be out of work. But if we do sell it, you'll all be getting big fat bonuses, and who knows, maybe you'll be able to work for the new owner.

HOPKINS. That makes sense. Alright then. We're with you Mrs. C.

MAUREEN. That's right.

MAJOR. Jolly good show.

TERRI. Listen everyone. A Mr. Lewis, from New York, is arriving this afternoon and we need to create the right impression. We're going to convince him that this is a busy, prosperous hotel.

HOPKINS. This I've got to hear.

BRIAN. Well, we are a one star hotel you know.

MAJOR. Jolly good show. How good is that?

HOPKINS. Well let's put it this way, there's no such thing as a no-star hotel!

TERRI. Now. Here's what we're going to do. Brian, you're going to be on your own in charge of everything.

BRIAN. Where are you going to be?

TERRI. I'm going to be shopping in Miami.

BRIAN. *(He leaps up, starting to panic again.)* Oh great! That's just great! That's wonderful. That's typical, just like every women in the world. When the chips are down, you go shopping. You're going to leave me to —

MAJOR. Steady on old chap. Don't panic.

BRIAN. What else is there to do? You heard her, she —

TERRI. Brian! For heavens sake. I won't really be in Miami. You'll just tell Mr. Lewis I am.

BRIAN. I will?

TERRI. Yes.

BRIAN. Why?

TERRI. Because that way I can check into one of the rooms and pretend to be a guest. We're going to make him think the hotel is full.

HOPKINS. That's brilliant Mrs. C. You and the Major make two.

TERRI. I haven't finished yet. You're going to be a guest too, Hopkins.

HOPKINS. Me?

TERRI. Certainly. All we have to do is get you out of those overalls, and into some casual clothes. I'm sure we can pass you as a distinguished and influential guest.

MAJOR. Jolly good show. Reminds me of the time —

TERRI. I'm sure we'd all like to hear about it Major, but some other time perhaps. We are in a bit of a hurry.

BRIAN. Well, now you've got three guests. That's hardly full, but I suppose it's better than one.

MAJOR. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Can't I pretend to be someone?

BRIAN. You're already a guest Major.

MAJOR. Ah-yes. Quite right old chap, but couldn't I pretend to be another buyer and drive the price up?

BRIAN. That's one hell of an idea.

TERRI. No Major. I don't think so. You just be yourself. Now Maureen, you're going to do all the things I usually do. As well as maid and laundry, you're going to have to be receptionist and room service. You're going to have to spread yourself around.

MAUREEN. What's room service? I don't think I like the sound of servicing somebody in their room.

TERRI. I'll explain it all to you in a minute. You have nothing to worry about.

MAUREEN. I'm scared Mrs. Cody. I'll never remember what to say.

TERRI. Don't worry. I'll write it all down for you. Now about

our fourth guest.

(They all look at each other counting.)

BRIAN. We've run out of people.

TERRI. No. I just checked the booking sheets. We have another guest checking in today. A real one.

BRIAN. Who?

TERRI. That's the problem. Hayley Harrington!

(There is a long silence. MAUREEN looks blank, the others look knowingly at each other.)

HOPKINS. Oh my God!

BRIAN. Anyone but her. She'll ruin everything.

MAUREEN. Who's Hayley Harrington?

MAJOR. The Barracuda!

MAUREEN. Who?

TERRI. Roboslut!

MAUREEN. Who?

TERRI. Let me explain, Maureen. Miss Harrington stays here every year, and while she's on vacation she — er — pursues her hobby.

MAUREEN. What's wrong with that?

TERRI. Her hobby is men!

MAUREEN. Men? I don't understand.

TERRI. You know how men in the old west used to cut notches on the handles of their guns? Well she collects men in much the same way, only she cuts notches on her bedpost. If you know what I mean.

HOPKINS. Well she's never tried to collect me.

MAUREEN. You mean she — in bed?

BRIAN. Let's put it this way. She lost her virginity a long time ago.

MAJOR. But she's still got the little box it came in!

MAUREEN. You mean she goes after men — all the time.

MAJOR. She's so used to being on her back she gets dizzy when she stands up.

BRIAN. Just like the Mounties, she always gets her man.

HOPKINS. Well she's never tried to get me.

MAUREEN. How long has she been coming here?

BRIAN. I dunno. Since before we bought the place eight years ago.

MAUREEN. It's a wonder there's anyone left.

HOPKINS. I'm left.

MAUREEN. How long have you known her Major?

MAJOR. *(Thoughtful.)* Well, when you say "known," do you mean in the biblical sense?

TERRI. Never mind that. The important thing is to keep her away from Mr. Lewis.

BRIAN. Never mind that, keep her away from me.

TERRI. I've got it! Major. You wanted to be a part of this. That'll be your job.

MAJOR. Jolly good show! What'll be my job?

TERRI. Keep the Barracuda away from Mr. Lewis.

MAJOR. How am I going to do that?

TERRI. *(Teasing.)* Oh, I'm sure you'll find a way.

MAJOR. Steady on old girl. I'm not sure I'm very good with aggressive women. I remember once the General's daughter, big strapping lass she was, had a mouth on her just like horse. Well, one day she got me on the billiard table, I think it was, and do you know in the heat of the battle I couldn't get my little soldier to salute!

TERRI. *(Laughing.)* I'm sure you'll do just fine Major.

MAJOR. I must say you appear to have put me in the front lines.

HOPKINS. That's right Major. You'd better get ready for the frontal assault. And if I know the Barracuda, probably a full frontal! I think you should put in for combat pay Major.

MAJOR. I'm not sure it's going to be that bad old chap, but I do seem to remember she can knock the fruit right off your loom if you're not careful.

TERRI. Come on you guys. Let's get going. Hopkins, is the bathroom in number 7 OK?

HOPKINS. Working like a charm, Mrs. C.

TERRI. Good. We want to put Mr. Lewis in there. It's our best room because it has that little dressing room. O.K. Lets get started.

Hopkins, Maureen, let's get upstairs so I can see what I can turn you into.

HOPKINS. I'll just put my tools away Mrs. C. and I'll be right up.

(He exits U. L. as TERRI and MAUREEN head up the stairs. MAUREEN exits, TERRI stops and turns.)

TERRI. Oh — and Brian?

BRIAN. Yes dear?

TERRI. Do you think you might be able to change that light bulb in the hall without blowing up every power station south of Atlanta?

BRIAN. Nothing to it my love.

TERRI. I know that. But do you think you can handle it?

BRIAN. Of course.

MAJOR. I'll lend a hand Mrs. Cody. Fear not. Combined Anglo-American forces will be brought to bear. Pressure will be exerted, armies will be mobilized, reserves will be brought up and the campaign will be fought to a successful conclusion.

TERRI. Why do I get the feeling this isn't going to work?

(Exit TERRI upstairs.)

BRIAN. O.K. You get the step ladder from the garage. I'll get a light bulb.

(Exit BRIAN U. L. Exit MAJOR front entrance. Enter HOPKINS from U. L. He comes R. to the foot of the stairs, sees there is no one around, goes down to the front entrance, looks furtively outside and hurries back to the stand-up ash tray. He lifts off the top section, reaches in and produces a bottle of liquor from which he takes a long drink. He replaces the bottle and ash tray top and exits upstairs as the MAJOR enters from the front entrance carrying a step ladder, and BRIAN enters from U. L. with a light bulb. They meet in the middle of the hall.)

MAJOR. *(Setting up the ladder under the light.)* Here we are old chap.

BRIAN. Major, would you make sure the switch is off please.

MAJOR. *(Goes to the foot of the stairs and looks.)* Right, it's off.

BRIAN. O.K. Up we go then. *(He climbs the ladder which the MAJOR holds.)* Now, let's see. Here, hold this Major. *(He hands down the bulb he has just unscrewed.)* Now what's this? It looks like a loose wire. Major, could you get me a small screwdriver please?

MAJOR. Right on, old chap.

(The MAJOR exits out the front entrance. TERRI enters down the stairs. As she reaches the foot of the stairs, she flicks on the switch and, without breaking stride or looking up at BRIAN, exits U. L. BRIAN has been frozen in place. As soon as she is gone, his legs lose contact with the ladder and go straight out sideways almost doing the splits as he hangs by one hand. [See Author's Note.] TERRI returns almost immediately with a bundle of clothes over her arm.)

TERRI. *(Walking straight past him with hardly a glance.)* Stop pretending to be Tarzan, Brian, and just change the bulb.

(She turns off the switch and exits upstairs.)

BRIAN. AEIOOOW!

(BRIAN slumps back on the ladder. Enter MAJOR from the front entrance with a screwdriver in his hand.)

MAJOR. I say, old chap, are you alright?

BRIAN. A-a-a-r-r-gh!

MAJOR. Your shorts too tight or something?

BRIAN. A-a-a-r-r-gh!

MAJOR. You really ought to take something for that you know.

BRIAN. A-a-a-r-r-gh!

MAJOR. You sound just like the mating call of the Nigerian Nymphomaniac Nambians. Did I ever tell you about the time —

BRIAN. Stop Major! This is no time to discuss the sexual habits of the Nambians whatever they are. I'm going to get this job done,

come hell or high water. Now, would you please pass me the screwdriver.

(The MAJOR hands BRIAN the screwdriver. BRIAN, who still has the light bulb in one hand, now realizes that he needs both hands on the fixture. He pops the screw end of the light bulb in his mouth to hold it and reaches up with both hands. Enter MAUREEN from upstairs. She is now in her room service outfit. She wears a wig and is dressed in a black dress, white apron, hose and high heels. She carries more clothes on a hanger over one arm. She holds a number of 3 x 5 cards from which she is reading.)

MAUREEN. Good morning sir or madam. Welcome to the Turtle Beach Hotel. I am your receptionist. I am here to be of service. Would you kindly complete this form. *(As she reaches the foot of the stairs she flicks on the light switch. The light bulb in BRIAN'S mouth now lights up as he goes totally rigid on the ladder. MAUREEN continues on behind the counter and hangs the extra clothes on the landing banister rail. The MAJOR, seeing BRIAN, rushes to turn off the switch and the bulb in BRIAN'S mouth goes off. The MAJOR returns to the ladder. MAUREEN flips to the next card.)* Good morning sir or madam. I am your room service waitress. Would you like to see the — er — er *(She squints at the card, goes over, switches on the light again.)* M.E.N.U. *(The light bulb in BRIAN'S mouth lights up again.)* What does M.E.N.U. spell?

(The MAJOR rushes to the switch again and turns it off. The light bulb in BRIAN'S mouth goes off.)

BRIAN. A-a-a-r-r-gh!

MAUREEN. I know. It's menu.

BRIAN. A-a-a-r-r-gh!

MAJOR. There it is again, you sure we don't have any Nigerian Nymphos in this hotel?

BRIAN. A-a-a-r-r-gh!

(He slumps down, draped over the top of the ladder like a rag doll.

Enter SAM LEWIS from the front entrance. He could be any age from 40 to 60. Smartly dressed in a business suit and tie, he is carrying a suitcase. He is followed by ASHLEY. A "looker," she is voluptuous and a little flashy without appearing too cheap. She is dressed in a very smart light-weight summer suit, high heels, lots of jewelry, etc. She too carries a small suitcase.)

ASHLEY. *(Looking around.)* Oh, Sam, it's just lovely.

SAM. Not bad. Not bad at all. (*He sees the MAJOR who has rushed D.R. to prevent them from seeing BRIAN.)* Good afternoon. My name is Lewis. (*He hands the MAJOR his card.)* I believe you're expecting me. Do you have my room ready?

MAJOR. Mr. Lewis? Room? Oh yes. Our receptionist Miss Maureen, will get you registered.

MAUREEN. *(Aside to the MAJOR.)* I'm not the receptionist. *(She indicates her dress.)* I'm room service.

MAJOR. Remember? Spread yourself around. You are the receptionist.

MAUREEN. But I've got my room service dress on.

MAJOR. Then you'll have to take it off.

MAUREEN. Major! *(He points to the other clothes.)* What?

MAJOR. Why don't you go into the office and get our receptionist?

MAUREEN. Oh, right.

(She grabs the clothes on the hanger and rushes into the office.)

MAJOR. She'll be out in a second.

SAM. *(Who has been listening in amazement to the last part of this conversation.)* You must be Mr. Cody.

MAJOR. Oh goodness me no old chap. I'm Ponsenby. Major Ponsenby of the 14th.

SAM. *(Pause.)* 14th what?

MAJOR. Her Majesty's 14th regiment of foot.

SAM. *(Pause.)* Foot?

MAJOR. Yes old chap, The P. B. I. You know.

SAM. *(Pause.)* P. B. I.?

MAJOR. Poor bloody infantry. The fighting 14th.

SAM. Right. Well, I'm Sam Lewis and this is Ashley, er — Mrs. Lewis.

MAJOR. A vision of loveliness. *(He takes her hand and kisses it.)* Enchanté Madame.

ASHLEY. *(Giggling.)* Oh, Sam. I do think we're going to like this place.

MAJOR. *(Looking at the card.)* I see you're from New York.

ASHLEY. That's right.

MAJOR. I loved a girl in New York once. *(Thoughtful.)* Well maybe twice. You remind me of her a little bit.

ASHLEY. Do I really?

MAJOR. We were engaged to be married. Very sad. Very sad.

ASHLEY. *(Pause.)* What was very sad?

MAJOR. She died the day after the wedding.

ASHLEY. Oh you poor man, you must have been devastated.

MAJOR. What?

ASHLEY. Well, to lose your wife after being married one day.

MAJOR. Not my wife old girl. We'd broken up a year before that. She married old Fotheringay. Very sad. Very sad.

ASHLEY. Oh, I see. I'm sorry.

MAJOR. You do remind me of her, though perhaps you are a little more beautiful.

SAM. Ahem! Is Mr. Cody here?

MAJOR. (*Looking over his shoulder he sees BRIAN beginning to stir.)* He's out at the moment. He's had a nasty shock recently, but I think he'll be coming around soon.

SAM. Good. Good.

(Enter MAUREEN from the office. She is now in her "receptionist" outfit. A tailored blazer-type jacket with matching skirt and plain white blouse. She has one of the 3 x 5 cards in her hand.)

MAJOR. Ah Maureen. This is Mr. Lewis. Here is his card.

(Hands her the card.)

MAUREEN. *(Takes the card.)* There's nothing written on it.

MAJOR. No — No. Here. *(He turns the card over.)*

MAUREEN. Why would they put the printing on the back of it?

MAJOR. Ahem. Why don't you check Mr. Lewis in, while I go and see if I can find Mr. Cody.

(The MAJOR goes up the hall and tries to arouse BRIAN. There is little response, so he opens the door to room 8, drags BRIAN off the ladder, pushes him inside room 8, closes the door and exits U. L. carrying the ladder.)

MAUREEN. *(Who has been standing smiling at SAM and ASHLEY, suddenly remembers her cards. Reading:)* Good morning sir or madam. Welcome to the Turtle Beach Hotel. I am your receptionist. I am here to be of service. Would you kindly complete this form? *(She looks up and smiles.)*

SAM. *(Eventually.)* Yes, O.K. *(MAUREEN, frozen in place, continues to smile.)* The form?

ASHLEY. *(Moves behind the counter.)* I think she might be a bit new Sam. Let's see if I can help. Here we are.

(She produces a form from the beneath the counter which SAM starts to complete.)

MAUREEN. Thank you. You see, I've never done this before.

ASHLEY. There's nothing to it. Now, do you know which room we're in?

MAUREEN. You're in the reception area.

ASHLEY. No — no. Which room are we going to sleep in?

MAUREEN. I know. I know. Mrs. Cody told me.

ASHLEY. Yes?

MAUREEN. *(Very proud.)* You're in number 7. First on the right.

ASHLEY. Good. *(She takes a key from the board.)* All set Sam?

SAM. *(Puts down the pen.)* Right.

(MAUREEN exits to the office. SAM and ASHLEY pick up their suitcases and enter room 7. SAM puts his down U. S. of the dressing room door and closes the door to room 7. ASHLEY puts hers

down on the bed.)

ASHLEY. What a lovely room.

SAM. Not bad. Not bad at all.

ASHLEY. *(Opens the dressing room door and switches on the light.)* Oh look Sam, a dressing room. A vanity and everything.

SAM. *(Unimpressed.)* Wonderful. *(He takes off his jacket and tie and leaves them on the bed, then wanders down to the French windows and looks out into the garden.)* Now that is nice. A little private patio, and you can see the beach.

ASHLEY. *(Now in the bathroom.)* The bathroom is so cute. Look Sam, its got pink wallpaper.

SAM. *(Gazing out of the French windows.)* Not bad, not bad at all.

ASHLEY. *(Comes just R. of him by the open window and puts her arm around him.)* Are you really going to buy this place?

SAM. Maybe pussycat, maybe. *(He turns and gives her a little peck on the cheek.)* Why don't you unpack and freshen up a little. I can't wait to explore the place.

ASHLEY. Alright. Don't be too long.

SAM. O.K. See you in a little bit. *(Gives her another quick kiss.)* I'll be down on the beach.

(SAM exits out French windows. ASHLEY takes her suitcase off the bed, goes into the dressing room, returns for SAM'S jacket and tie, picks up SAM'S suitcase and exits to the dressing room, closing the door. Enter from the front entrance ABDUL EL HAJJ. It is, of course the MAJOR, now in Arab costume, a long flowing robe and a red and white chequered burnoose held by black bands. He carries a small suitcase. He rings the reception bell. MAUREEN enters from the office still in her receptionist outfit.)

MAUREEN. Oh! It's just like that movie. The dark handsome Sheik comes to the rescue of the fair damsel in distress and carries her off to his harem in the desert.

ABDUL. My name is Abdul El Hajj. I would like a room please.

MAUREEN. *(Produces her card and reads:)* Good morning sir or madam. Welcome to the Turtle Beach Hotel. I am your reception-

ist. I am here to be service. Would you kindly complete this form?

ABDUL. Certainly.

MAUREEN. *(Just stands there for the longest time then —)* Oh, I know. Here. *(She produces a form and ABDUL starts to fill it in.)* You know you look just like the Major.

ABDUL. Really?

MAUREEN. Of course, you're much more handsome.

ABDUL. Thank you.

MAUREEN. *(Goes to look at the booking chart and comes back with a key which she hands to ABDUL.)* Here you are sir. You'll be in Room 6.

(ASHLEY has come out of the dressing room. She picks up the bedside phone and dials. It rings on the reception counter. MAUREEN picks it up.)

MAUREEN. Turtle Beach Hotel.

ASHLEY. May I have room service please?

MAUREEN. Room service? Oh yes that's me. *(Looks at her clothes.)* Well, it will be in a minute,

ASHLEY. May I have some ice in room 7 please?

MAUREEN. Ice? Yes ma'am. Room seven. Yes ma'am, right away ma'am.

(She hangs up the phone and has the jacket off before she hurtles out of the office door. ABDUL continues to write. ASHLEY returns to the dressing room, leaving the door open. BRIAN emerges from room 8, comes R. and takes one look.)

BRIAN. Major? Is that you? What the hell are you doing?

ABDUL. I beg your pardon.

BRIAN. Oh Major, I haven't got time for this. Mr. Lewis'll be here any moment and the Barracuda, and don't forget when she gets here, you've got a job to do. Now go and get changed will you.

ABDUL. I beg your pardon, sir!

BRIAN. You've had your little joke, but we've got things to do, remember Major?

ABDUL. I'm afraid I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about.

BRIAN. *(Pauses briefly and has his first doubt.)* You know you do that very well, but we all agreed your job was to head the Barracuda off at the pass.

ABDUL. Are we speaking the same language sir?

BRIAN. Very funny Major.

ABDUL. As I have no intention of being funny, perhaps it would be better if we re-started this conversation from the beginning. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Abdul El Hajj, at your service.

(He offers his hand with a slight bow.)

BRIAN. *(Shakes hands.)* How do you do! I'm Brian Cody.

ABDUL. Ah, Mr. Cody. How pleased I am to meet you. I understand your charming little hotel is for sale. I want you to know that I am seriously interested in it, and a little later when I have completed my observations, I should like to talk business with you.

BRIAN. *(Really doubtful now and peering at ABDUL'S face.)* Is it you or isn't it?

ABDUL. You're not making sense again Mr. Cody.

BRIAN. Well you've got me convinced Major. But Terri said not to do it, and every time we don't do as she says, you know we get into trouble, so why don't you just concentrate on the Barracuda.

ABDUL. I fail to see what diverting our attention to a fish has to do with our conversation.

BRIAN. What?

ABDUL. Are you confused sir?

BRIAN. Oh, I'm always confused. I say, you are the Major aren't you?

ABDUL. That's the third time you've asked me that question. I don't want to spend the rest of my life answering it. Please try to understand before one of us dies.

BRIAN. *(Looks at him.)* I think Terri had better handle this.

(He turns to go into the office as MAUREEN, now in her room service outfit, hurtles out of the door and flattens him against the wall.

BRIAN holds his head and staggers into the office. ABDUL looks on in amazement and continues to complete his form. MAUREEN runs to the door of room 7 and knocks.)

ASHLEY. Come in.

MAUREEN. *(Opens the door, steps in, takes out a card.)* Good morning sir or madam, I am your room service waitress, would you like to see the menu?

ASHLEY. *(Laughing.)* Are you new as well?

MAUREEN. Er — yes!

ASHLEY. I just wanted some ice.

MAUREEN. The ice! I forgot. *(She sprints back to the office. ABDUL picks up his key and exits to room 6 as MAUREEN re-appears with an ice bucket and sprints back to room 7.)* Here you are.

ASHLEY. Thank you.

MAUREEN. You're welcome. Would you like anything else?

ASHLEY. No thank you.

MAUREEN. Would Mr. Lewis like anything?

ASHLEY. No thank you. He's gone for a walk.

MAUREEN. O.K.

(She just stands there.)

ASHLEY. What is it?

MAUREEN. Well, I was wondering, if you needed anything later, from room service that is, maybe I could get it for you now.

ASHLEY. Why?

MAUREEN. It would save an awful lot of time.

ASHLEY. I'm sure it would, but if I need anything later, I'll call room service later.

MAUREEN. Yes ma'am.

(MAUREEN leaves for the reception area. ASHLEY closes the door of room 7 and takes the ice with her into the bathroom, leaving the door open.)

BRIAN. *(Coming out of the office.)* Where the hell were you go-

ing in such a hurry?

MAUREEN. *(Very proud.)* I'm room service sir.

BRIAN. Maybe you should just slow down the service a little. What on earth did the Major want at this time of day?

MAUREEN. Oh, it wasn't the Major sir. It was Mrs. Lewis.

BRIAN. Who?

MAUREEN. Mrs. Lewis.

BRIAN. They're here already?

MAUREEN. Yes, sir, in room seven.

BRIAN. *(Starting to panic again.)* Why didn't somebody tell me? I was supposed to meet him. *(Moving L.)* I'd better go and introduce myself. He'll expect to see me.

MAUREEN. He's not there sir.

BRIAN. *(Turning back.)* But you said —

MAUREEN. Mrs. Lewis is in room 7. Mr. Lewis has gone for a walk.

BRIAN. He's outside?

MAUREEN. Yes sir.

BRIAN. Damn. He'll probably fall down the hole. I'd better go and find him. You stay in charge here.

MAUREEN. I'm the receptionist again?

BRIAN. Yes.

(MAUREEN dives for the office and exits. Enter the MAJOR from the front entrance.)

MAJOR. Ah, Cody old chap. I was looking for you.

BRIAN. *(Looking him up down.)* That's much better Major. Now — no more of that Arab nonsense, eh?

MAJOR. Hang on old chap. What's all this about?

BRIAN. Never mind. I've got to find Mr. Lewis.

MAJOR. That's what I wanted to tell you. He's wandering about the garden.

BRIAN. *(Starting to panic and run around again.)* He's not supposed to be doing that. Heaven only knows what he'll find. I'm supposed to meet him first. I knew this was going to happen. Terri will be furious and —

MAJOR. Steady on old chap. Calm down. He seems like a nice old boy and his wife is an absolute crackerjack.

BRIAN. Something will go wrong. I just know it. Where was he?

MAJOR. Just out front.

BRIAN. I knew it. I knew it. That damn dog next door. He'll find it.

(BRIAN EXITS out the front entrance on the dead run. TERRI enters from upstairs. She is now wearing an off-white linen suit, a turquoise silk blouse, hose, heels, an enormous wide-brimmed hat, and is absolutely dripping with jewelry.)

TERRI. Hello Major. Where's Maureen? More to the point, where's Brian?

MAJOR. I say old girl, you look absolutely spiffing.

TERRI. *(Now downstairs and fussing behind the counter.)* Thank you. Where's Brian?

MAJOR. He's making a forward foray for the purposes of reconnaissance.

TERRI. For heaven's sake, Major, can't you speak English?

MAJOR. I might remind you madam that if anyone here can't speak English, it's certainly not me!

TERRI. I'm sorry. What I meant was, I didn't understand you.

MAJOR. Mr. Cody is outside looking for Mr. Lewis.

TERRI. Mr. Lewis? He's here already?

(MAUREEN bursts out of the office, now back in her receptionist outfit, but has forgotten or not had time to put on the skirt. She is seen to be wearing a black lace teddy with garter belt and stockings. She dashes out from behind the counter in view of the audience.)

TERRI. Maureen!

MAUREEN. *(Stops and turns.)* Yes ma'am?

(TERRI just looks at her. MAUREEN eventually looks down, shrieks and rushes back into the office.)

MAJOR. I say old girl. This the new uniform? Jolly good show, what? Reminds me of the time the Colonel's wife lost her drawers. Never saw anything like it, there she was standing in the middle of the polo field and this damned great dog jumped right up her skirt —

TERRI. Really Major. You must tell me about it sometime, but right now I'm more concerned with Mr. Lewis.

MAJOR. Ah, quite right old girl, but Mr. Cody has things in hand. He's gone to look for him so you don't have to worry.

TERRI. If Mr. Cody's gone to look for him, that's precisely why I do have to worry. *(MAUREEN enters from the office, now in the skirt and TERRI brings her out beyond the counter.)* Yes, that outfit looks very nice. Now, you're going to have to work in the dinning room this evening, so I'll have to find you something else to wear. I'll see if I can find something suitable and bring it down for you.

(Enter SAM and BRIAN from the front entrance. TERRI moves L. so as to be well clear of the counter and steers MAUREEN behind it.)

BRIAN. Yes sir, it's a little gold mine. It's just a pity that you won't be able to meet *(Sees TERRI.)* my wife! *(TERRI signals.)* She's — er — shopping in Miami. Yes sir, you know what they say, behind every successful man is a woman—with nothing to wear.

SAM. *(After an awkward pause.)* Aren't you going to introduce us?

BRIAN. Right. This is the Major. You've met him of course and this is er — er —

TERRI. *(Stepping forward towards SAM.)* I'm Mrs. Winthrop-Smythe. *(She pauses for effect.)* I'm from Palm Beach.

BRIAN. I would never have guessed.

SAM. *(Takes her hand.)* I'm delighted to meet you. *(Turns to BRIAN.)* You seem to have a very high class clientele Cody. You certainly seem to know how to run the place.

BRIAN. Oh I wouldn't say that.

TERRI. You say that all the time.

MAJOR. Right then. I'll be off now. Maureen, could you bring my afternoon tea to my room please?

(Exit MAJOR U. L.)

MAUREEN. *(Looks at BRIAN.)* Room service?

(He nods and she hurtles into the office. HOPKINS enters down the stairs. He is totally transformed. He wears a dark suit, black shirt and a clerical collar, and carries a large Bible.)

TERRI. Mr. Lewis. May I introduce you to the Reverend Hopkins.

SAM. How do you do Reverend? Are you staying in the hotel or do you live in town?

TERRI. The Reverend is a guest in the hotel, aren't you Reverend?

HOPKINS. *(In his best voice — attempting to sound "posh.")* Indeed I am. Indeed I am. You see the work I do is very hard. I'm rushed off my feet day and night, never get a minute to myself, and of course the rewards — oh, the rewards are meager you know, very meager. *(Looking at TERRI.)* and the worst part of my job is fixing broken bowls —

BRIAN. He means souls. He fixes broken souls.

TERRI. Cool it your eminence.

SAM. What?

BRIAN. She said he's a fool for penitence.

SAM. Oh. Well Cody, it's very refreshing to find that a man of the cloth should choose your place for his vacation. You could hardly have a better recommendation.

TERRI. Yes, that's what I thought.

SAM. Tell me Reverend, how do you spend your time here?

HOPKINS. I keep pretty busy, for instance, somewhere there always seems to be a leak in the john.

SAM. What?

BRIAN. He said he always reads St. Luke and St. John.

(Enter ABDUL from room 6.)

BRIAN. Oh no!

ABDUL. *(Strides right up to SAM and bows.)* Allow me to introduce myself. I am Abdul El Hajj. I am here for the buying of the hotel.

SAM. What?

TERRI. Brian, what's going on?

BRIAN. *(Grabs SAM and gently leads him U. L.)* Mr. Lewis you must be tired after your walk, why don't you go and freshen up a little? We can meet later and talk some business.

SAM. Good idea Cody.

BRIAN. *(Steering him to the door of room 7.)* It's a pity my wife can't be here to entertain Mrs. Lewis, but we really weren't expecting you today, and you know how these women are about their shopping.

SAM. *(Goes in room 7.)* No problem Cody. *(Closes the door and comes down to the open bathroom door.)* I'll be on the patio for a while.

(Closes the door then exits French windows. BRIAN comes back R. from the door of room 7 and puts his arm around ABDUL'S shoulders.)

BRIAN. Why don't you go back to your room. I'll send tea in as soon as it's ready.

ABDUL. Tea would be excellent, thank you.

(Exit ABDUL to room 6. BRIAN comes R. to the counter and no one pays any attention to which room ABDUL goes in.)

TERRI. Brian, I expect you to control the Major.

BRIAN. That's easier said than done my love. He keeps appearing out of nowhere, dressed in that ridiculous costume. How am I supposed to stop him?

HOPKINS. Maybe I should take him downtown with me.

TERRI. What good would that do?

HOPKINS. I thought it would keep him out of the way, you know, we could have a drink or something.

TERRI. The last thing we need is you and the Major drinking. Anyway, we need you here, and the Major is still our best bet to keep the Barracuda away from Mr. Lewis.

HOPKINS. I wouldn't mind volunteering for that job.

TERRI. No, Hopkins. We need you as the Reverend. Didn't you hear what Mr. Lewis said? He was impressed.

HOPKINS. Well, I'm not impressed. All I do is get to talk about sin, the Major actually gets to do it.

BRIAN. Oh come on, Hopkins. We're all in this together.

TERRI. *(Takes two keys from the rack.)* Here Hopkins, you take room 8. I'll take 11. Brian will you please get Maureen back in here.

(Exit TERRI U.L. BRIAN exits to the office. HOPKINS looks carefully around, opens his Bible and takes out a bottle of liquor, has a good swallow, replaces it and exits to room 8 as MAUREEN, now in her room service outfit and carrying a tea tray, tears out of the office and exits U.L. Almost immediately the MAJOR enters from U.L. as HAYLEY enters from the front entrance. Age perhaps 35 — 45, she is attractive and smartly dressed. Sensuous and sexy, she is full-figured but not in any way cheap, tawdry or flashy. She wears a low-cut summer dress with a small bolero jacket and high heels. She carries a small fashionable suitcase.)

HAYLEY. *(Drops her case by the counter near the front entrance.)* Major Ponsenby!

MAJOR. Miss Harrington!

HAYLEY. *(Advancing on him.)* I remember you.

MAJOR. (*Backing away.)* And I remember you.

HAYLEY. *(Stops and looks at him.)* Aren't you pleased to see little old Hayley back again?

MAJOR. Yes — yes. Of course.

HAYLEY. *(Advancing again.)* I won't bite you know. How about you and I getting together later?

MAJOR. Well — er — I'm rather tied up tonight.

HAYLEY. Oh goody. A bondage party!

MAJOR. Oh my God —

HAYLEY. I'm just teasing.

MAJOR. *(Circling to keep the chairs between them.)* Quite right old girl. Did I ever tell you about the time I was in Sidi-Berani —

(HAYLEY has now reached him. She flings her arms around his neck and gives him a passionate kiss, full on the lips, as he falls backwards over one of the chairs. His head goes down, his legs go up

in the air as she falls over him, her legs between his. BRIAN comes out of the office, sees them, comes down and peers at them for the longest time as the MAJOR waves his arms and legs. BRIAN looks at the audience, shrugs his shoulders, salutes and returns to the office. Eventually the MAJOR and HAYLEY disentangle and stand up.)

HAYLEY. Oh Major! It's just like old times. It really is nice to see you again. How about seeing me safely to my room?

MAJOR. You haven't got a room.

HAYLEY. *(Goes behind the counter and takes a key off the board.)* I do now.

MAJOR. But how do you know which one is yours?

HAYLEY. That's easy. I always have the same room every year. I book it a year in advance. I always stay in number seven.

MAJOR. Number seven?

HAYLEY. Yes, I call it my rumpus room!

MAJOR. Yes, but don't you think you ought to check with —

HAYLEY. Just give me a minute or two. Why don't you bring my bag? You big strong soldier boy.

(She kisses him on the lips again, then goes to room 7, enters, closes the door and goes into the dressing room.)

BRIAN. *(Peers round the office door, then enters.)* Ah Major. *(Comes out to the foot of the stairs.)* Been doing your duty I see.

MAJOR. Now look here Cody old chap. I'm not sure I can go through with this. I've known some women in my time, but this one is — er — er a bit much, if you know what I mean.

BRIAN. I know Major, but try to do your best. Remember your job is keeping her away from Mr. Lewis.

MAJOR. Yes, but who's job is it to keep her away from me?

BRIAN. Come off it Major! It can't be all that bad. You must admit, she's one hell of a good looking woman.

MAJOR. Damned attractive actually. Come to think of it old chap, you're right. I'd better learn to start enjoying my work.

MAUREEN. *(Enters from U.L. and comes R.)* Your tea is in your

room Major.

MAJOR. Thank you my dear. I'll just have time for it. Looks like I'm going to have to keep my strength up.

(Exit MAJOR U.L.)

BRIAN. Right Maureen. You hold the fort here. I'm going to find Mrs. Cody.

MAUREEN. Reception?

BRIAN. Yes.

MAUREEN. Oh no!

(She rushes into the office. BRIAN turns to go upstairs as HAYLEY comes out of the dressing room with a bundle of clothes on hangers over her arm and SAM'S suitcase in her other hand. She comes out of room 7, closes the door and comes down to the reception area.)

HAYLEY. Mr. Cody, how nice to see you again.

BRIAN. *(Hurriedly getting back behind the counter.)* Miss Harrington. Welcome back. What can I do for you? *(HAYLEY stops dead in her tracks, looks at BRIAN, raises her eyebrows to the audience.)* Don't answer that. I mean, how can I be of service? *(HAYLEY looks at the audience again.)* I mean, what do you want?

HAYLEY. In answer to your three questions: One, I can think of lots of things you can do for me. Two, how you can be of service is an interesting question, but I'll leave that to you, and three, you should know by now what I want!

BRIAN. Oh my God!

HAYLEY. Oh relax. I'm just kidding. I don't think you're on my list this year. *(She drapes the clothes across the counter and drops the suitcase behind it.)* However, someone left a bunch of clothes in my room. Really Brian, you're slipping. You really will have to talk to the maid.

BRIAN. *(Confused.)* What? O.K. I'll do that. I'll find Mrs. Cody right away, she always deals with the staff.

(He shuffles sideways to get past HAYLEY and escape up the stairs.

HAYLEY gives his rear a pinch as he goes by. Enter HOPKINS from room 8 still carrying his Bible. HAYLEY sees him coming and playfully ducks behind the counter. HOPKINS is now slightly tipsy and holds his liquor bottle, now empty, upside down. He comes D.R. to the reception area, wobbles just a little, then reaches down behind one of the chair cushions, finds a full bottle, puts the empty one back in its place, puts the new one carefully in his Bible and turns to see HAYLEY smiling at him.)

HAYLEY. Well, well. A clergyman. Are you a Reverend?

HOPKINS. Oh yes. Very reverend.

HAYLEY. This is one of my fantasies.

HOPKINS. Really?

HAYLEY *(Looks him up and down and then has a terrible thought.)* You're not Catholic are you?

HOPKINS. I'm Episcapoleon, I mean Apascapilion, I mean Opiscapoolian. *(He pauses.)* I'm reformed.

HAYLEY. *(Advancing on him.)* Well I'm not! *(Runs her finger round his collar.)* How would you like to hold services with me a little later?

HOPKINS. Me?

HAYLEY. You know I've always had this thing for clergyman.

HOPKINS. How nice. What thing?

HAYLEY. Come now Reverend. You know what I mean. You and I should definitely have an organ recital together.

HOPKINS. You're putting me on.

HAYLEY. That can be arranged too. Why don't we say my room. Number seven in about fifteen minutes?

HOPKINS. Right. Fifteen minutes. I think I'll just take a little walk outside to cool off. I seem to be a little hot under the collar.

(Exit HOPKINS front entrance. Enter ABDUL from room 6. HAYLEY'S eyes light up.)

ABDUL. Good afternoon madam. May I introduce myself. I am Abdul El Hajj, The Lion of the Desert, at your service.

HAYLEY. *(Takes his proffered hand.)* You look just like —

ABDUL. And you madam, look just like the desert rose in the first blush of full bloom.

HAYLEY. Oh my! I'm Hayley.

ABDUL. Hayley — Hayley — Such a beautiful name. You know there's an Arabic word pronounced much the same as Hayley.

HAYLEY. Really. What does it mean?

ABDUL. Well, loosely translated —"The gentle parting of ruby red lips beneath the dark cloudless sky of the new moon."

HAYLEY. Oh my!

ABDUL. Would you permit me to accompany you on a stroll down to the beach?

HAYLEY. *(Looking at her watch.)* Well I had arranged to — oh what the hell — why not. But I have to be back in ten minutes.

(They both exit front entrance arm in arm. MAUREEN comes out of the office in her receptionist outfit and sees the clothes on the counter. She picks up the dress, holds it up in front of her, smiles, picks up all the clothes and exits to the office as TERRI enters U.L. and BRIAN comes downstairs.)

TERRI. Ah, there you are Brian. Have you talked with Mr. Lewis yet?

BRIAN. No, but I've arranged to meet him later.

TERRI. *(Busy with papers etc. behind the counter.)* I really think we've impressed him. Even Hopkins seemed to pull it off.

BRIAN. Talking of Hopkins, you might be right. I think he's been drinking again.

TERRI. Well, we've done everything we can. The bar's all locked up during the day, there's absolutely no way he can get his hands on any booze till he clocks out at six.

BRIAN. Oh well, I hope you're right.

TERRI. Has the Barracuda put a move on you yet?

BRIAN. No, she says I'm not on her list this year.

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