

The Will O' the Wits

Characters:

Donny Bonespurs (billionaire real estate developer, part-time U.S. president)

Melatonina the 4th (his wife, a vampiress)

Donny Jr. (his oldest son)

Bathead (Donny Jr.'s girlfriend)

Herrlick (Donny's younger son)

Liara (Herrlick's wife)

Evilanka (Donny's daughter)

Lottie (her housekeeper, practitioner of voodoo)

Jarhead (Evilanka's husband, a wealthy slumlord)

Uncle Noodles (Jarhead's criminal genius uncle and enforcer)

Steppen Mierdeaux (Donny's personal lackey and chief advisor)

Rootie Tootiani (Donny's lawyer)

Messenger (an ancient, stooped, arthritic but energetic elder with a youthful face and a long, thin white beard)

Two Guards

The Bat

ACT ONE

Scene One: *Donny Bonespurs' lavish but tacky office, much of it decorated in tissue-thin gilt, furnished in expensive but pretentious taste. Enter Steppen Mierdeaux.*

Steppen Mierdeaux: Looks like I'm the first one here... unless there's someone hiding behind the curtain or under the desk. Around here, you never know. I'd better take a look if I'm gonna spill my guts out to you. *(peeks behind curtain and under desk)* Yeah, the coast is clear. Nobody here except me, Steppen Mierdeaux, his chief consigliere, which is to say Donny Bonespurs' official lackey and footstool. I always show up early to these meetings. I'm no fool. It doesn't pay to be late. If you're the last one, the others all stare at you as if

you're some kind of disloyal garbage, plotting a conspiracy or rebellion, or just running some kinda scheme to pump up your wallet or suck up to Donny, which amounts to the same thing. So much for the collegiality you can expect from a pack of hyenas each biting off the same rotten carcass, though their dispositions might not be completely unjustified when you consider the circumstances they operate under. Then there's the boss. Oh boy! Does he get suspicious at the slightest deviation from his expectations and whimsies! The man trusts nobody and disbelieves everybody, including me- would you believe it?- Me!- and I can tell you from experience that any advisor he takes on makes a convenient fall guy when things go sour, not that you can expect a bonus, praise or even a simple acknowledgement when your schemes succeed fabulously. That credit inevitably goes to him. To make things even more jolly, if his mind is set on something, good luck trying to encourage him to change it. In fact, the best way to persuade him of anything is to suggest that it was his idea in the first place. And when it comes to these meetings, Donny blows up if he's kept waiting, especially if he himself arrived late- and he's likely to storm out cursing and threatening to fire everybody present no matter how early they showed up. You know how precious he thinks his time is, and he'll constantly remind you of it, too. I'm surprised I've lasted this long. Even worse, he can get distracted and forget why we're meeting in the first place. Then he'll do his famous weave, and who knows where that can lead. It's like reading a map of New York City and winding up in Timbuktu. The beginning will never recognize the end, like last year while we were doing his income taxes. Donny was insisting that he could claim his girlfriend as a dependent, maybe write off her apartment, the dinners and entertainment, and the lousy presents he regifted as business expenses. Novel idea, for sure, fueled by the six Diet Cokes he had consumed, and abetted by his pals at the IRS. When he was done describing how her many obvious charms- which he made sure we were aware he paid for- should be written off, he began complaining about the disloyalty of women in general, their treachery and spitefulness, which, of course, led him to 19th Amendment and how he will repeal it one of these days when he gets around to it. Yeah, and he's still bringing that voting thing up. Next, naturally, he had to explain why he is the greatest president history has ever known and that the Civil War could never have occurred under his administration because slavery's unpopularity was merely a matter of misguided branding, at which he is a master. After he finished criticizing Lincoln for wokeness, Washington and both Roosevelts for being lousy commanders-in-chief with socialist sympathies, he had to list all the billionaires, dignitaries and muckety-mucks who had urged him to run for the office and were delighted to contribute to his campaign the moment he announced his candidacy. This reminded him of his many opponents, so he had his seventh Diet Coke and spent the rest of the meeting describing exactly how he's getting back at them for all the insults and injuries that he has suffered on their account. Two hours of retribution later, when I asked him how he wanted to approach the girlfriend

dependency angle so that we could fill out the forms, he excused himself to go to the bathroom and never returned. We finally wrote her off as massage therapy under his medical expenses, which didn't matter anyway since the head of the IRS was his appointee. Jeez, I hope that someday I'll be rich and influential enough to be able to do cool stuff like that and get away with it. So, you see why I mind my p's and q's, agree with everything he says, and let him think that my ideas were originally his. *Enter Rootie Tootiani*. But it looks like we have company. Here comes his top legal eagle and fixer, Rootie Tootiani.

Rootie Tootiani: Greetings and felicitations, Steppen my boy! So how's the swimmin' in our shark infested think tank today? Have you any recent frenzies to report? Are you gratified by your triumphs? Tell me true and don't be modest: Have you blackmailed a politician or CEO yet? Forged a document? Laundered any cash? Suborned a witness? Tampered with evidence? Bribed a judge? Sued a critic? Stiffed a contractor? Extorted a building inspector? Cheated any employees out of their overtime? Surely you must have carried out all these trifles by now: Time's a wastin', Son- it's nearly ten in the morning! Let's get crackin'!

S. M.: Nothing pedestrian like that, Rootie. Besides, I don't do elementary, run-of-the-mill productions anymore. We have an army of flunkies to take care of humdrum business like that. I've been promoted to chief honcho on permanent special assignment now.

R.T.: Holy moly, and congratulations, Steppen me lad! Glad to hear it! I always knew that it was merely a matter of time before the boss would reward your unique talents. Your promotion couldn't have gone to a better man, though I have been hearing grumblings lately.

S.M.: Grumblings? You said grumblings? Seriously? What kind of grumblings?

R.T.: A rumbling of grumblings, Steppen. Murmurings and mutterings. Intimations and insinuations. Hints and suggestions. Whisperings and occasional growls. My boy, you must remember that power engenders jealous animus. And people talk. They can't help themselves, poor deluded bastards. Sad but true. Very very true. They can't ever seem to keep their mouths shut and their dopiness to themselves. Just look at what happened to me!

S.M.: Rootie, please! You couldn't possibly have said anything unpleasant. Everyone knows that you're the very model of discretion!

R.T.: I'm not referring to anything I might have said. I'm talking about the backbiters.

S.M.: Oh! Them! Well, consider the low-life source and let 'em grumble, Rootie! I'll just follow your noble example and hold my head high despite their blathering. And you just

wait 'til they get a load of my- I mean Donny's- latest project! That'll shut up any foolish and ill-advised loudmouth!

R.T.: Ah-ha!! A new caper would be the purpose of this meeting today, would it? That is, if we can stay on point and not improvise, do the weave, as it were?

S.M.: I see why people kowtow to your keen legal mind. Exactly so, Rootie. And you're just the mouthpiece that can make it all come together. Are you interested?

R.T.: "Are you interested?" he asks! "Are you interested!" My boy, I am fascinated. Just as long as it's not another bankruptcy. I can't take any more of those. They're wearing me out. Six is plenty enough for me. No- give me something titillating to sink my fangs into. Like a good old-fashioned defamation of character lawsuit- they're always amusing. A labor dispute would be fun too, though hardly challenging. Or another juicy sexual harassment complaint. Yeah- I like those! Yummy yum yum! (*licks his lips salaciously*) Even a breach of contract or an NDA would be oke. They never bore me. Give me anything- anything! - but spare me those lousy bankruptcies.

S.M.: Ha ha! No, Rootster, relax: It's not another bankruptcy. We don't want to waste your valuable skillset on piddling trivialities. This new case is big, and I mean big. Very bigly big, as the boss would say.

R.T.: Now you're talkin', Son! I like 'em bigly, the biglier the better! And I love the publicity! The bigger the scandal, the bigger the noise when it all comes crashing down! And if there's enough noise, maybe I can even get my old mayor job back and resume the war against crime. (*sighs deeply*) Ahh Steppen, Steppen! Those were the good old days! How I miss profilin' an' friskin' an' warrantless searchin'! How well I remember the sting operations and entrapment! Good times! Good times!

S.M.: Good times! You said it, Pal!

R.T.: Man, we were strict- but boy oh boy! - didn't we have fun! You know, the felonious element has made a major comeback since I've been gone. When the tiger's away, the rats will play, especially the commie Democ-Rats who stand for nothing better than mayhem and rapine. The decent people are clamoring for relief. They're turning to us for help. We can't let 'em down! And more importantly, we mustn't let ourselves down. So be a good boy and don't keep me in suspense- what's the pitch?

S.M.: Rootie, Rootie! With a heart as big as a whale! What's the pitch you ask? Ha! Merely the dispensation of Donny's entire fortune... every last penny of it. There. I hope I didn't overstate it.

R.T. (*stunned*): What's this? Dispensation? (*aside*) He said dispensation? (*to S.M.*) Dispensation? Of, of ...Donny's entire fortune? ... of, of Donny's very last penny? ...

S.M.: You heard me. Donny's entire fortune... his very last penny... and he has so many very last pennies, you know.

R.T.: ...Donny's entire fortune... (*still in shock*) Whaaa...????? Can I be hearing you right? You did say his entire fortune? You're joking, of course!

S.M.: No joking, Rootie. I'm being serious. That's exactly what I said. His entire fortune. Twenty-six multi-scandillion, four thousand and thirty-seven megakleptillion, eighty-three optilarcillion, seventy-two extortillion...

R.T.: ...fifteen ridiculillion and thirty-nine collossosquazillion, fourteen thousand and eighty one ultracryptillion...

S.M.: ...three impossillion, forty-nine quadrillion, five trillion, fifty-seven billion, two-hundred and twenty-two million, seventeen thousand, four hundred, thirty-three dollars...

R.T.: ... and nineteen last cents!

S.M./R.T.: Wheeeewww! (*They wipe their brows.*)

S.M.: And that's only what he has in untraceable foreign accounts. Then there's the rest of it.

R.T.: You mean he's also giving away God only knows how many oligarillions of dollars in stocks, bonds, annuities, personal properties and Crypto? I am wobbled! When has he ever given away anything in his entire life? He's the guy who charges you for charging you. Why, the man invented the conveyance fee!

S.M.: And the transaction fee.

R.T.: And this is not connected in any way to another bankruptcy?

S.M.: Not this time, Pal.

R.T.: You're sure about that?

S.M.: Does Donny love a combover? Sure I'm sure. But let's not jump to any conclusions, Rootie. With Donny, there's always a catch: everything is a transaction as you well know. So, you're right, of course, in saying that he's never given nor ever will give anything away without gaining some sort of profit or advantage. In a dog-eat-dog world what else can you expect from a winner? Charity? Patronage? Volunteerism? Picking up the tab? Or even

leaving a tip? That's for suckers, not real men like Donny. How do you think they got loaded in the first place?

R.T.: Ha! The rich can afford to be measly; that's for sure. But I guess I'm still confused by this dispensation business. Is he or isn't he giving away his fortune?

S.M.: The dispensation is in the form of a will. He's finally decided to write a will and name his beneficiaries.

R.T.: A will! As if a god would concede his own mortality!

S.M.: A will indeed! But allow me to rephrase: "alt-dispensation" might be the more accurate term to use.

R.T.: Alt-dispensation! Ha! You know, Steppen, sometimes I think you have the makings of a fine lawyer the way you bend and twist basic vocabulary into unrecognizable forms with unfathomable meanings and multiple interpretations. Alt-dispensation!

S.M.: You're making me blush, Rootie, especially since the compliment is coming from the best of the best: You!

R.T.: You intrigue me, Steppen. Please proceed. Especially about that profitable part you mentioned.

S.M.: Rootie, there comes a time when all men must face the ultimate consequence of a life long lived. Donny, as we all are aware, despite his youthful appearance and buoyant outlook, his sharp acuity and progressive mindset, is no spring chicken.

R.T.: Nor summer nor fall chicken, my dear Steppen. Indeed, winter seems to have passed him by. Four seasons are sorely inadequate to describe his antiquity.

S.M.: He is rumored to be at least 157 years old- and that's by conservative reckoning.

R.T.: Just so, but a youthful 157. Nobody in fact has ever seen his birth certificate. He had all traces of it destroyed decades ago, when the subject of his nationality first came up. I remember working on that when I was just a young lawyer, 75 years ago.

S.M.: Exactly. Nobody knows how old the boss really is. And he sues anyone who tries to find out, arguing that he has an NDA with the Census Bureau. All we know is that he's very, very old, albeit a young-at-heart very, very old.

R.T.: That's certainly true. Think about this: he's even on his 4th Melatonia, and that's not counting the legion of others who came before Melatonia the First. Imagine his energy! His flamboyance! His Olympian mojo!

S.M.: Excellent observation, Rootie. As he himself so often reminds us, nobody has a friskier mojo. All this is given. But please don't misunderstand. It's not that he's planning to kick the bucket or retire in any foreseeable time. Why should he when everything has always gone his way? No, it's not the clammy drag of old age that's behind this latest scheme, a scheme that I can turn to our profitable advantage with your incomparable participation.

R.T.: Because I'm the best lawyer in America, universally renowned for my professionalism and feared for my killer instinct?

S.M.: Your reputation certainly precedes you, Rootie. The extraordinary talent and experience you command will be fundamental to achieving our mutual benefit, especially given the context of alt-dispensation.

R.T.: My talent and experience! But I'm still puzzled. You mean like lying for my clients? Justifying their bad behavior? Finding loopholes that exploit the system? Pursuing frivolous lawsuits without any legal basis? Tying up cases for years? The possibilities are only limited by the number of laws that can be broken and appealed ad infinitum. Don't keep me hanging. Tell me: how can I be of service?

S.M.: All right then, Rootie. Perhaps I'm not being as direct as I should. Let me put it bluntly. Donny, as I told you, with some clever prompting from me involving a slant he can profit from, has agreed- is excited in fact- to have his will drafted and his beneficiaries named. And do you know what that suggests?

R.T.: Yeah, baby! A fat fee! Maybe a cut! Man oh man what I wouldn't do for a sweet percentage!

S.M.: A percentage! That's rich! Come on, Rootie. Don't be naïve. You know perfectly well he's never paid you for any work that you've ever done for him. A fat fee! When was the last time you saw him reach for a check or even open his wallet anywhere? Do you think that's ever gonna change?

R.T.: Oh man! You're so right. I don't believe that he even carries a wallet. I've never seen him holding one. Forgive my naivete: for a second, wishful thinking got the better of me, and I really thought I might finally be compensated for my services. What a dopey dreamer! So, tell me. Don't keep me in suspense. How's he going to benefit from the will while he's alive? But more importantly, what's in it for us?

S.M.: As I told you, Donny's not planning to check out anytime soon, and if you listen to those quacks- I mean, doctors- of his, we won't have the pleasure of posting his obituary anytime soon. But having spent a lifetime or two manipulating a world of self-serving liars

and cheats, and conscious of a rising tide of critics and traitors infiltrating the ranks, Donny is fixated on exposing these turncoat upstarts and rewarding the lickspittles most loyal and subservient to him- the ones who'd cheerfully sell their own daughters to an Arabian spermatorium before disappointing him in even his most trivial demand.

R.T.: My God- there are so many like that who surround him! You may have more success taking a census of all the cockroaches occupying his slumlord son-in-law's ramshackle tenements. Wheeew! Just the thought of it is exhausting! Let me take a deep breath and steady myself. *(takes a deep breath)*

S.M.: Care for a Xanax before we continue?

R.T.: Normally, I'd bite. But my doctors have warned me about mixing tranquilizers and booze.

S.M.: Ah! So you've come prepared! Perfect. I wouldn't want to shock your system.

R.T.: Just the hair of the dog. Now come to the point, Steppen. Are you suggesting that- Heaven forbid! - that we rig the will?

S.M.: Shocking, isn't it? Who would have thought us capable of such scurrilous chicanery!

R.T.: Only everybody.

S.M.: Including his children, that is to say, his heirs and would-have-been beneficiaries.

R.T.: His children! Of course! But even then, sometimes I wonder if he'd even think of leaving his fortune to them.

S.M.: A doting father he hasn't been- with the exception perhaps of Evilanka- but who else in the vast pool of coiffed and pomaded no-accounts do you suppose could possibly become a beneficiary?

R.T.: Certainly not you or I. That's for sure.

S.M.: But that's where alt-dispensation and a profitable partnership come into play. If we stick together...

R.T.: If we stick together...

S.M.: That's right, Pal!

R.T.: If we stick together...

S.M.: And if we play our cards right...

R.T.: You mean, we might get paid? Finally? After serving him for years without being compensated? That's what I'd really like to know.

S.M.: Neither of us has ever been paid! Work, work, work! But good luck collecting your fee! That's the rub. Getting compensated has always been the rub for both of us.

R.T.: That's always been the rub.

S.M.: But if we're writing the will...

R.T.: Which I'm sure I'll be doing...

S.M.: Why then, we can phrase it in such a way as to make it advantageous for both of us!

R.T.: You mean, my chance to finally get paid?

S.M.: Our chance of finally getting paid.

R.T.: Paid! Paid at last!

S.M.: But better than merely being paid. Think, Rootie. We'll be the ones who'll be drafting the will... and no matter whom he chooses, we could name certain- what shall we call them? (*pauses thoughtfully*) - alt-beneficiaries...?

R.T.: Alt-beneficiaries!

S.M.: That's right... and if we can get him to sign off on it, even if these particular alt-beneficiaries aren't exactly the heirs he had in mind... well, then...

R.T.: Get a grip on your mutatis mutandum's for a moment and let me get this alt-beneficiary angle straight. Are you saying that we name ourselves his beneficiaries? Without his awareness? No matter whom he's chosen?

S.M.: That's the idea, Bubey. Alt-beneficiaries: You and me. Us.

R.T.: Holy shit! There's one ballsy scheme that's consistent with your repute! I am impressed and you have me riveted!

S.M.: Thanks, Pal.

R.T.: But wait! What if he reads the will before he signs it? Our asses are ipso facto fried if he discovers what we've done. He'd have us stretched out on adjoining waterboards, enjoying the balmy Guantanamo breezes.

S.M.: If he finds out! Since when has he ever read a book or even a road sign let alone a legal document? He never looks at anything without comic strips. And even then, he struggles with the drawings, and I end up explaining the jokes which he never understands

anyway. I don't know why he bothers. Maybe to dispel the rumors that he doesn't know how to read.

R.T.: Wowsie wow wow...

S.M.: Yeppity yep yep! To the bold comes the prize, Sweetie!

R.T.: But what about his kids? What happens when they realize that they're out and we get the dough?

S.M.: Tough cookies to them. The will's a legal document, signed and notarized.

R.T.: I gotta think about this, Steppen. You do make it sound workable. Of course, I still think we'd be in a quicksand of shit if we were to be exposed. You know how merciless he is- we'd be screwed if he found out that we made ourselves his beneficiaries.

S.M.: Alt-beneficiaries.

R.T.: Alt-beneficiaries does make it sound more legitimate. Still, the whole scheme looks like we're trying to defraud the boss.

S.M.: Defraud the boss? Heaven forefend! You gotta think of alt-dispensation as a standard legal fee, and not any penny-ante fourteen or fifteen hundred bucks per hour, which you tried but have never been able to collect. Fraud? What fraud?

R.T.: But they'd take it to court! We could end up in prison!

S.M.: Rootie- I am surprised by you! Where's that lawyerly hutzpah you're so famous for? Since when has the premier member of the universal brotherhood of ambulance chasers ever queried an opportunity this rewarding to his personal portfolio?

R.T.: I really could use the dough- and I'm as sick of not being paid as I am of malnutrition.

S.M.: Besides- what kind of legal case could he make? Have you ever heard of a lawyer taking less than 40% in any settlement? Shouldn't that pay scale apply to any legal dispensation, alternative or not, if not for any justification but the fairness of being consistent? And since there are two of us, doesn't that mean we're entitled- yes; entitled! - to 80%? That's only simple undeniable math. As to the remaining 20%, that should just about cover our neglected back wages. After all, these are standard operating charges the clientele has always borne. No Sir! If just compensation is fraud, the consequences mock not only the *Canonicus legalis*, but the *corpus legitimus* and the entire capitalist system of jurisprudence. We're not bloody commies after all! And if it went to court, why, every lawyer in the country would understand that defending us pro-bono is the same as protecting their own interests. In other words, their legal fees. Why, by defending us, they'd be upholding

the profession's historic traditions. Can you imagine the alternative? The consequences of setting a precedent that legitimizes not compensating two dedicated guys like us? What makes you think that any other lawyer would ever collect his outrageous salary ever again if we lost our case? Any lawyer would understand that and jump at the chance to represent us. We'd have a team of them defending us, and any jury would recognize the justice of our cause.

R.T.: So that's alt-dispensation! And I thought Donny was a genius!

S.M.: Alt-compensation, my friend! Alt-compensation! We gotta look out for ourselves. He's certainly not going to do it for us. But if we put our heads together and work this smart, there's plenty of dough that can be split. It's time Donny settled up with us. You haven't exactly amassed anything but lip blisters kissing his ass, Pal. He owes us. He owes us plenty.

R.T.: Oh how I know it! Look at me, eating raw Pop Tarts and cold Hot Pockets because I can't afford a microwave oven. Lining my shoes with cardboard. Driving a 24-year-old Saab. Who could go on like this? No money. No health insurance. No pension. No women. Let's face it: life sucks if you don't have the do-re-mi to enjoy it.

S.M.: It doesn't have to be that way... that's the beauty of alt-dispensation.

R.T.: You know how I need the dough, Steppen, but I'm still scared. I keep imagining what would happen if we got caught.

S.M.: You gotta think positively, Rootie. Ask yourself: Has the grifter savant ever been caught? Why, if it wasn't for the two of us watching out for him, the guy would be doing time at the Rikers Resort and Racket Club as we speak.

R.T.: That's some sleazy shit he's been into, Baby!

S.M.: *Stercus sordidus!* (*sleazy shit*) The sleaziest, Pal. But we've managed to keep his little hands clean. So...

R.T.: If we've been able to keep him out of prison all these years...

S.M.: ...the best fixer and consiglieri in the business can keep themselves out of prison as well. It's time for you to accept that we're the victims here. We're long due justice. Think about all that lovely money, Rootie... if we put our heads together...if for once we think about ourselves instead of him. Picture the lifestyle you'll enjoy once the alt-reparations are conveniently and electronically deposited into your checking account.

R.T.: Alt-reparations! Ubi jus, ubi remedium! (*where there is a right, there is a remedy*) Alt-reparations! I gotta hand it to you Steppen. Still, I can't help but worry about what his kids will do. You gotta figure on how upset they'll be.

S.M.: Those nitwits? Once we put our two beautiful minds together, they won't stand a chance. And here's another benefit that should comfort and reassure you: alt-reparations means that we're dividing the risk as well as the dough.

R.T.: Half the dough and half the risk... obviously a case of in pari delicto. (*"in equal fault"*)

S.M.: Right. Why should either of us take the whole blame if anything were to happen? But what could happen? Donny's never been in trouble, thanks to us. How can we get in trouble if we direct our talents to work for ourselves? Just keep thinking about all that fabulous money, Rootie. Even half of it will make you the second richest man on earth. You won't think twice about spreading caviar on your Hot Pockets and Pop Tarts once all that moolah starts bouncing in. And you'll be spreadin' it thick... thickly thick.

R.T.: What the hell! You're right!

S.M.: Damned straight: Res ipsa loquitor! (*"The thing speaks for itself."*)

R.T.: Think about it! A real microwave oven- and maybe a new Saab! It's time I got mine!

S.M.: That's what I like about you Rootie. You're always thinking. Mostly about yourself, but you're always thinking.

R.T.: Well, it's about time both of us were paid, and we can always argue his negligence is a matter of in quantum merit. (*R.T. and S.M. are entitled to quantum merit payment because they have no set hourly wage or contract*) Armani suits don't grow on Goodwill racks. Tell me, what progress have you made so far? How far have you gone with Donny?

S.M.: The boss is all in. His preoccupation began a few months ago when the idea first came to me, and he's been steadily becoming more obsessed. Lately, there's been nothing else that he's been absorbed with as much as this.

R.T.: Don't tell me he's been neglecting his other projects...

S.M.: Not as long as he can get his lackeys to do them.

R.T.: He hasn't given up trying to get himself carved on Mount Rushmore has he?

S.M.: Nope. That's already in the works.

R.T.: Buying the Statue of Liberty and converting it into a casino?

S.M.: That's old news.

R.T.: Renaming Florida Donnyistan and Miami Donnygrad?

S.M.: Those dumps? You gotta be kidding! As you know, Rootie, obsessed as he becomes, our boss is not detail oriented. He is leaving the minutia to us as he follows the bottom line. In fact- and keep this close to your vest- my informants, the guards, have reported some interesting information. It turns out that he has been walking the corridors of Mierdalago at night, babbling speeches to himself like the ghost of a lunatic insomniac in a mental institution. Two of the guards have resigned their posts already, he spooked them so.

R.T.: Then there's no telling what he may do. I'm getting nervous again.

S.M.: It won't be easy, Buddy, but I'm convinced that we can't lose as long as we stick together. All that's ever interested him has been his money and his mojo. We'll turn his inclinations to our advantage as we design the will. Then remember those lucre-grubbin' lackies surrounding him. In his case, hundreds, if not thousands. All of 'em trying to out-flatter one another, all the scavengers poking for his dough with their sticky fingers.

R.T.: He loves the adoration...

S.M.: And all their barefaced groveling will distract him from our machinations.

R.T.: All those slick toadies! Each one confident that he'll be the chosen one! Each one trying to outlick the other... never knowing that the beneficiaries have been preselected through the wonders of alt-beneficence.

S.M.: Ha ha- yes! Alt-beneficence! Now you're talking! And we'll succeed because we're slicker than the slickest, slimier than the slimiest.

R.T.: Toadier than the toadiest! ! And as the plot unfolds, help ourselves to the choice morsels.

S.M.: Exactly, Partner. There will be more than enough of those tidbits for the both of us.

R.T.: Now you're talking my kind of language, you sly devil you! So, how do we start this venture, Partner?

S.M.: Simple, Partner. Pixilated as he might be, his certainty that money can buy anything will never change. We'll spread the word that you're drawing up the will. Then we'll just watch how the vampires start slurping up to him- and ripping each other's throats in the process as they compete for his... eeeerrrr... affection.

R.T.: By which you mean his money.

S.M.: Money. Affection. Same thing. And our job will be to keep him convinced that their rivalry will separate the most loyal and subservient suck-ups from your basic standard suck-ups.

R.T.: He'll like that. Steppen my boy, you're a genius! The worship of money is so deeply ingrained in him that he'll never doubt its power to get him whatever he wants. If we flatter him as the plan progresses, it's a win/win. For you and me that is.

SM.: Exactly. As he sees the possibilities that a will can open up, he won't be able to resist the rewards. As for us and any benefits that we might accrue, we'll start by gaming the will... and worry about the obituary later. In the meantime, we'll continue praising his brilliance for coming up with the ploy. Appealing to his lunatic ego and greed will fuel the plan. And the resulting throat slitting should prove to be very profitable for each of us.

R.T.: Yeah, and entertaining- as long as those throats aren't ours!

S.M.: Brace up, Rootie! Our throats will be warbling on champagne and truffles long after the will has been read.

R.T.: And you really believe we can pull this off?

S.M.: I certainly do. You know he'll go for it: toadies playing up to him make him feel so superior. He won't be able to resist the plan, especially since it won't cost him a penny.

R.T.: I'm proud of you, Sonny Boy. Your mother did a great job raising you.

S.M.: Thanks, Partner. But let's keep our lips tight and the toads wondering. Oh, how I love the sound of rumors buzzing and conspiratorial juices splish-splashing! Let 'em think we're on a secret mission... and then watch them carve each other up like Thanksgiving turkeys.

R.T.: It's a beautiful thing, Partner.

S.M.: And perfect justice ... Partner.

R.T.: And a win/win, Partner.

S.M.: For us, Partner.

R.T.: Exactly so, Partner. Audaces fortuna juvat! (*"fortune favors the bold"*)

S.M.: That's what I say!

R.T.: Exitus acta probat! (*"the end justifies the means"*)

S.M.: Ditto!

R.T.: Ubi concordia, ibi victoria! (*"where there is unity, there is victory"*)

S.M.: Bet your ass, Pal!

R.T.: Veritas vincit! (*"truth conquers"*)

S.M.: So true! So true!

R.T.: Let's shake on it then! (*The two shake hands and embrace.*)

S.M. (*aside, still embracing, face to audience*): I don't like that greedy look in Rootie's eyes! I'd better watch him carefully!

R.T. (*aside, still embracing, face to audience*): I don't like that greedy look in Steppen's eyes! I'd better watch him carefully!

Enter messenger. He is bent over and ragged but energetic. The two unclench sheepishly.

Messenger: Oopsies! Excuse me for innerruptin'! Sorry it took me so long to find youse. I hadda look all over, and here youse are at last. I gots a message from Mr. Bonespurs: says he to tell youse that he can't be attendin' your meetin' today 'cause important matters have come up in Bedminster which he must attend to. He sends his regerts and asks that you fill him in on what youse all have disgust.

S.M.: Well, Partner, looks like we have a plan to carry out.

R.T.: Yes, we do, Partner. Yes, we do. (*They begin to leave.*)

Messenger: Hey! How's about my tip? It took me an hour to find youse!

S.M.: Ha ha ha!!! Your tip! You gotta be kidding!

R.T.: Here's one for ya: Get a real job!

Messenger (*aside, mumbling*): No even a thank-you! The plusher the suits, the cheaper the gentry!

Exit all three.

Act One; Scene Two:

Same place. It is nighttime. Lights are low. Enter Donny. Two guards are hiding in the background, listening.

Donny: Eight million! Eight! Can you believe it? Eight million bucks! And for what? Making a mouse transgenic! That's right! That's what I said. Transgenic mices. Bad enough libraries making the kids transgenic. Now we got the mices getting queer on us too. As if mices needed some kinda sex identity therapy! Isn't it bad enough that we have so many confused people on this planet without screwing up the mices too? I mean, look at them.

All they do is eat and screw screw screw. Yeah, and leave their shiny black doo-doo's all over the place. You'd think they'd be satisfied with that. I know I would be. But no. That's not enough for them, so now these sickos are encouraging them to experiment with kinky sex changes. It's not natural. These weirdos want to make morphodites out of them- as if we don't have enough psychos in this country already and need more perverts. What a disgrace! When I was growing up, we had the boy mices and we had the girl mices with nothing in between. Mickey and Minnie was good enough for us. We didn't need any more. But look at what we got now thanks to the woke radical extremist liberal nutjobs and try not to throw up. Transgenic mices. What a disgrace! They started by ruining the country and now they're messing up the mices. Transgenic mices! Can you believe it? And so many of them are not your basic domestic mices who follow the rules and obey the laws, but the criminal undocumented mice element who have entered the country illegally, without passing through border security like the rest of us did. And you know they send their worst mices to us and keep the best ones for themselves. No wonder the country is falling apart! And what did the Clinton, Biden and Obama crime conspiracy do about it? Nothing. Just gave us more transgenic mices and more fake news and hoaxes dumped into my lap. But that's where they made their mistake because I have concepts, plans, plus concepts of plans. They were too dumb to have any, but we're gonna use that 8 million to mice-proof the country with our great and glorious wall and put a moat with sharks, piranhas, crocodiles and electric eels around it to keep them out permanent. And wait 'til they see our great army of American cats patrolling it- not fake illegal Mexican or Canadian cats like them Muslim Persian cats, but real patriot American cats. Think about how much we'll save by not feeding them. Them mices will piss their pants when they see our hungry cats. The traitor deep states will try and stop us, but they don't have no intelligence. They gotta go messing around with the mices' gender as if that's gonna keep them outta here. And that's why we never win anymore. They're encouraging them illegal mices to come to this fantastic country and apply for benefits which our taxes pay for. But not my taxes. I'm too smart to pay for their transgenic therapy that they should be paying for themselves. But that's what woke traitors do. They'd pervert the dogs too if they weren't so busy eating them. And when there are no more dogs left, just watch- they'll eat the cats. So what's to stop them from eating the mices next? You got to ask yourself who'll protect the mices? Especially the mices that support me and my campaign. Because these degenerates will do anything, believe me; believe me- anything. Then they'll hug and kiss each other like it's the greatest thing since color tv. But have you ever smelled the breath of someone who just ate a mouse? Not even a full-size rat- just a lousy mouse? There aren't enough mints on the planet, let me tell you. And if there aren't enough mints, how can there be enough glamour? I mean, I like the glamour- it's one of my favorite words. You know that word? I love that word. Glamour.... It sounds so good because its got more of the gla in it- that's why they call

it the glamour. See? More gla. Gla-mour. And you know when you got the glamour, the broads let you do it. Anything at all. They can't help themselves. You don't even have to push them around. But you got to have the glamour first, because that's class, especially if you want to bang the attractive ones. Bingy bing bing bong! Bingy bing bing boom! Because why waste your time with the ugly ones? I know. I know, because I've had them all, unless they were eights or less. I won't bother with anyone under a nine. Even some of the nines. Why should I wear down my batteries on them? Only losers go for the uglies. And while I'm doing it they all call me "Sir," like "Sir, may I get you this?" or "Sir, would you like some more of that, Sir?" Just as long as they stay away from the liquid gold. We have more liquid gold than any other country in the world, so I gotta keep reminding them "Ya gotta stay away from that liquid gold." But other than that, they should all go and have a good time. Like on January 6th when we had the immaculate border and everyone had fun. I know because I took two cognitive tests. I'd like to see Lincoln or Washington try that, but they haven't got the guts like mine. I took two physical exams each year... and I won two regular club championships, not even senior. To do that you have to be quite smart and you have to be able to hit the ball a long way- and I do it. I do it every time and everybody knows it except Lincoln and Washington. They couldn't do it; they can't hit the ball 50 yards. They don't have the numbers. We had the best H2O numbers ever. They gave me the statistic just now actually. So we got the numbers. But the others got schlonged. Boy did they get schlonged! But what else could you expect from those losers? No numbers; no cards. No nothing. Just the shlong. Not a big, beautiful shlong either. Just a dinky shriveled up shlong. Beause if you're gonna be a winner you got to have a big, beautiful well-documented shlong like mine. The dogs eat the dogs, and the cats eat the cats and the mices eat whatever they can get because in life you got to shlong, or you're gonna get schlonged- that's the point: Survival of the Bigliest they call it. So ask yourself: Are we gonna be suckers who put up with the mice pervs or are we gonna step up and do something about it? To ignore it we'd be like Sleepy Joe living in his fantasy world- will that help the mices or ease our tax burden? It's something every American hopes for, but how we gonna do all transgenic mices? Because you'd be surprised how many there are. And who's gonna be next? Sure, there's the rubber, but what are we gonna do with the used ones makes me wonder. A pile of mine alone would reach the penthouse balcony. That's one reason I don't bother with them. I mean, who could put up with the mess after the fun is over? And think about all those clogged toilets. They don't flush like they used to, believe me. Believe me. I seen a lot of toilets plugged up. The old flush is gone. They took it away. But you got to ask yourself what happens to the used rubbers. And who'd want to see one drooping off somebody that's just been grunting and sweating? Who'd want to touch the nasty thing and slide it off? Or what if it should slip off and splatter the rug? And I'm just talking about the mices. What if it happens to the rest of us? Especially the females who's supposed to be the ones keeping

the place clean? It's their job- a woman's place is in the penthouse, you better believe it. Wearing them heels. Don't forget about them heels. They gotta wear them, especially the dumpy broads, even though they're disgusting. They gotta wear the real high ones. But the men. Where are they? What are they doing about it? That's what I want to know. I got to find the right one or the mices won't have a chance. We got to do it for the legitimate mices because the bad ones are making them look so bad. And that doesn't help the gerbils either. So sad.... *(exit Bonespurs, murmuring; both guards reveal themselves)*

Guard 1: Let's rush over to Mr. Mierdeaux and tell him what we just heard!

Guard 2: Hurry up then. Time's a wastin'. This he's gotta hear.

Act One; Scene Three:

The living room of Jarhead and Evilanka. Same pretentious tackiness, lots of spray-on gilt.

Jarhead: Really, Evilanka, Sweetie, why did you have to go and invite them over? Can't we handle this will thing on our own? We don't need their help, and besides, I don't understand why you'd want to share a penny with them. You are his favorite, after all. He's always talking about dating you if you weren't his daughter. Sometimes I think he would anyway. We- I mean, you- deserve all of it.

Evilanka: Really yourself, Jarhead darling. Don't sound so jealous. Sometimes I wonder how you became the biggest slumlord in Jersey. If it was up to you, you'd handle the entire matter with a hitman. Bing bing bang bang boom! That's the way all you tough guys think. I don't get why you can't be patient and redirect all that masculinity in a more cultivated way. Don't you see that we should try a more subtle approach before coming out with both guns blasting? You don't need an AR to knock off a bed bug, Dear.

Jarhead: A more subtle approach! That's helpful. Since when has being a softie ever gotten anybody anywhere? Look at who we're dealing with: vicious, money-grubbin' shmahe *(Yiddish for "scum")* who'd plug their own mothers if they burned their toast!

Evilanka: That's whom- whom we are dealing with, Dear. People with poor grammar got no savoir faire.

Jarhead: Who, whom. Whom gives a shit? The point is that these parasites wouldn't hesitate a second to shoot you in the back if it meant making a quick buck. You're just too kindhearted for your own good, Sweetie. That's your only character flaw. When are you going to learn you can't charm a flea? I say hit 'em before they hit us. Hit 'em hard and make sure everyone sees you doing it. An early offence is our best defense. That'll teach the bastards.

Evilanka: Now Jarhead bubbeleh, you're talking about my two brothers after all. Don't you think you're being somewhat harsh, Honey? You don't bait the rat traps in your apartment houses with horseradish, do you? Mellow out already!

Jarhead: Sometimes I wonder if the three of you had the same mother, you're so much nicer than them.

Evilanka: That's they, not them, my ziseh. So much nicer than they. What am I going to do with you, my sweet darling Jarhead?

Jarhead: They, them. Alright already! Enough! We gotta figure out how we're gonna handle this inheritance situation! But I'm telling you, one call to Uncle Dovey Noodles and the problem disappears... I mean permanently.

Evilanka: You and your Uncle Noodles! That's just what I need! Has he been released from prison yet?

Jarhead: He graduated from Rahway State last month and he's looking around for something productive to do. You gotta keep active guys like that occupied or they can get into trouble.

Evilanka: Why don't you start him out on something lighter- like collecting your rents? And if my way doesn't pan out, we always have him to fall back on. Come on, Honey, don't be such a chooch. Work with me on this. I'll make it worth your while...

Jarhead: It's against my better judgment but waiting a week or two before knocking 'em off shouldn't hurt nothin'.

Evilanka: Anything, not nothin'. Won't hurt anything. Why can't you ever steer clear of not neglecting that double negative, Dearest?

Jarhead: Nothin', anything! It's the same thing!

Doorbell rings. Enter Herrlick and Liara.

Evilanka: Herrlick! Liara! Jersey's most fashionable couple! Welcome to our humble abode!

Jarhead (*aside*): They're a couple all right. I won't say a couple of what.

Liara: Darling Evilanka! So nice of you to invite us! And Jarhead! So good to see you!

Herrlick: Hi Sis! Hi Jarhead.

Jarhead: Always a pleasure, Liara. And you too, Herrlick.

Evilanka: Let's make ourselves comfortable and have a nosh. (*Points to sofa, chairs, etc. They sit.*) Oh Lottie! Lottie! (*calls her maid*) Where is that lazy no-account? (*Enter Lottie*)

Lottie: Here I am, Miss Eve-lanka! Just finishing changing the diapers!

Evilanka: Well, hurry up and serve the delicacies! We're famished! And be sure to wash your hands before you touch the food this time!

Lottie: Yes'm. (*Aside*) Yeah. Sure. I'll wash my hands. I hope the whole bunch of 'em come down with the trots! (*Exit Lottie*)

Herrlick: I don't understand why you keep her. What a sourpuss!

Liara: You're just too kindhearted for your own good, darling Evilanka!

Jarhead: More than you know, Liara, more than you know. She welcomes all kinds of sponging riffraff into our home. I'm surprised that little body can contain such a big heart.

Liara: Yes, I was just telling Herrlick the other day how lucky he is to have a sister like her. I should know: My own family is totally dysfunctional.

Herrlick: Toxic, as a matter of fact. They'd have each other knocked off on a bet. I can't understand how she tolerates them.

Evilanka: It must be her loving nature.

Jarhead: Yeah. Maybe she was adopted.

Herrlick: Nobody can be that tolerant and loving except for her. Daddy thinks she's great too, and he's a fantastic judge of character. You remember how we met? She was working in Daddy's office. The moment I saw her, I knew she was the one.

Jarhead (*aside*): Yeah, the one the boys would score with under the football bleachers.

Liara: It was love at first sight! Herrlick swept me off my feet!

Evilanka (*aside*): That must be how she got those bunions!

Liara: He was so handsome and elegant! My heart went pitter patter!

Evilanka (*aside*): That patter came five months after they were married! I still think the baby is Daddy's. It looks just like him.

Liara: He takes after his father: A 100% masculine man!

Jarhead (*aside*): Wait 'til I call my Uncle Noodles. Then she'll meet a 100% masculine man!

Liara: Every day I count my lucky stars and offer a prayer of gratitude for my good fortune!

Evilanka *(aside)*: And she'd better be content with it because she won't be getting Daddy's.

Herrlick: Me too, Dollface. Me too. *(The two snuggle and exchange kisses.)*

Evilanka *(aside)*: Illllkkkkk!!!

Jarhead *(aside)*: I'd horsewhip 'em if I had a horse! I'd hogtie 'em if I had a hog! *(Enter Lottie)*

Lottie: The hordovies are served, Miss Eve-lanka.

Evilanka: That *IS* hors d'oeuvres, Lottie! Hors d'oeuvres! *(aside, in frustration)* How many times do I have to repeat myself?

Lottie: Sorry, Ma'am. The hordovies *IS* served! Come and get 'em! *(Lottie leaves the tray on the coffee table and exits)*

Evilanka: You'll have to forgive her. She was a troubled youth from the other side. We're doing our best to raise her up, but as you can see, she's just like the others: dumb as a potato peel.

Liara: You're an absolute angel for taking her in and giving her the opportunity to better herself. Not many would take the trouble or have the kindness. I feel so sorry for their kind, but they only have themselves to blame: We do so much for them as it is.

Evilanka: Thank you for understanding, Liara. I believe that those of us who have so much have a duty to help those who have so little. That's how Daddy raised my brothers and I.

Aside. Lottie's voice in the background: It's "and me"! "And me"! Not "and I" "And meee"!! Use your goddamn object pronouns!

Evilanka: Did you hear a voice calling?

Liara: Not me!

Herrlick: Not me!

Jarhead: Not I!

Evilanka: Well, that settles that. It must have been my imagination. Let's dig in and shmooze. *(They do so.)* So, I hear Daddy is writing his will at last. I hope he never has to use it!

Liara: I hope he stays with us forever! It hurts me so just to imagine him gone. Oh, the pain! The pain!

Jarhead: Well, there's got to be some consolation to being buried by the 7th hole at Bedminster.

Herrlick: Yeah- it has a great view. And think of all the people who will be paying their respects as they putt past him.

Liara: It's a perfect tribute to a monumental man who loved teeing off with the pros. They never stop talking about him, you know. He could have gone pro so easily. And the caddies get such a thrill watching him play that he never has to pay them.

Evilanka: Yes. If he wasn't such a brilliant businessman, think of the records he would have set on the links as a professional. He's a man of extraordinary talents and abilities. It's undeniable.

Liara: Yes. I hope we can manage the course as well as he did after he passes.

Jarhead (*startled*): "We"? (*to Evilanka*) Did she just say "we"?

Evilanka: Did you just say "we", Liara?

Liara: I think that's what I said. (*to Herrlick*) Did I just say "we"?

Herrlick: That's what I heard. I think. "We." Right?

Evilanka: But when you said "we," if you really did say "we", just what did you mean by that?

Jarhead: That's exactly what I'd like to know. What do you mean when you said "we"?

Liara: Us. I mean us. What do you think "we" means?

Herrlick: "We" is like "us," probably, except that "us" doesn't do nothing. You know, like when we say, "We will take care of the golf course." You wouldn't wanna say "Us will take care of the golf course." That wouldn't be so good English, though it might be ok American.

Evilanka: Oh! You mean "we" as in Jarhead and I because we have experience doing these things? And you two as "us" because you don't?

Liara: Well, somebody will have to run the golf course whether it's we or us.

Jarhead (*aside, pointing to Liara and Herrlick*): And as long as it's not them.

Evilanka: He's not even dead yet, and already somebody is running it. Have you no manners? At least be polite. Show some respect. Be grateful for everything that he's done for you.

Liara: But we are grateful! Ever so grateful!

Herrlick: And so are us. But the course ain't gonna run on its own. And there's so much that needs to be done. You should see Daddy's desk sometime. You've never seen such big piles of stuff. I don't know how he can keep up with all of it.

Evilanka: How dare you! How dare you imply Daddy keeps a messy desk! Daddy's desk is always so neat. And as for piles, everything is always put away in boxes. You see them every time you use the washrooms.

Jarhead: Why, the man doesn't even have a computer on it! Just a 4-function calculator at most!

Evilanka: Yes, that and a gold pen and pencil set I gave him when I was 5.

Jarhead: That's right- try it yourself sometime if you don't believe her. It still works.

Evilanka: Not a book, not a newspaper or magazine. Not even a framed portrait of me! And that has always made me so sad! *(sobbing)*

Jarhead: See that? Now see how you hurt her feelings!

Liara: I am so sorry, Evilanka dearest! If only I had known... *(Evilanka whimpering)*

Herrlick: She didn't mean nothin', Sis! Honest! *(Evilanka moaning low)*

Liara: We're just thinking ahead. That's all. We think of maintaining the golf course as a sacred duty- a tribute to him and his great accomplishments, a way of keeping his vision alive in perpetuity. Nobody wants to see it go down the drain if anything ever happens, not that it ever could. Besides, nobody's seen the will. They're still writing it. There's no sense in getting ahead of ourselves.

Evilanka *(recovering, generously)*: Or squabbling, I suppose. *(sniffles once or twice)*

Jarhead: But that's not what Junior said.

Herrlick: Huh?

Jarhead: That's not what Junior said.

Herrlick: You mean Junior's been talkin'?

Jarhead: Yeah he's been talkin'. He's been talkin' plenty. But not when he thinks we're listenin', if you get the picture.

Liara: Does he know something we don't know?

Evilanka: Well, he is the oldest one. We all know that.

Jarhead: And with age come certain entitlements. Primate geniture they call it. Both my brothers were older than me- until they met their untimely demises. Such a shame. Life can be rough, but somebody has to carry on.

Liara: That's it- exactly what I meant! But you said it so much better than me! I mean, than I.

Evilanka: And just between us, Liara, Junior's a man, and you know what that means for we women no matter how popular we are or think we are. It can happen to us. Did you know that Jarhead's mother wasn't even mentioned in his father's will, just the oldest son? When the old man died, she had to move into one of his tenements! And pay the full rent!

Liara: No! No! Not that!

Evilanka: Oh yes. That. No heat. No showers, just a cold-water kitchen sink. A toilet in the hallway. Two electrical outlets for the entire apartment, not that they always worked. No garbage pickup. Just the stench of three families, probably illegal, living in each one-bedroom apartment with their radios blasting jungle music all night long. But that's how these people are, living like wild beasts. Anything they touch turns to kuh-kuh.

Liara: Kuh-kuh! How can anyone be so depraved!?!

Evilanka: We don't want to end up like she did, Liara. But I have it on good authority that Junior means to take over the course and that he'll do anything he can to get Daddy to leave him not just the course, but his entire fortune.

Liara and Herrlick: No!

Liara: Everything?

Herrlick: You mean all of it?

Liara: Every poltroonillion of it?

Evilanka: I'm afraid so. Every last penny. I know. Steppen told me so himself.

Liara and Herrlick: No! Not Steppen!

Evilanka: Oh yes. And he should know: He and Rootie have been writing the will and handling the details.

Herrlick: Writing the will!

Liara: And handling the details?

Herrlick: Writing the will!

Liara: Behind our back?

Herrlick: Writing the will!

Liara: Without telling us?

Evilanka: That's right. Without telling anybody. They've been keeping it their little secret. Now just the four of us know.

Liara: This is so hard to take in. But how did you find out?

Evilanka: Like all men, Steppen has a crush on me. They all do, you know. They always have, ever since I was a child. So don't blame me. It's not my fault I'm irresistible.

Herrlick: Yes, you are. I'm sure that I would be dating you if you weren't my sister.

Liara (*feeling slighted*): Oh Herrlick!

Evilanka: (*aside*): Ilk! (*to Liara*): He's been coming on to me for months, like gum stuck to my shoe. I have him wrapped around my little finger, the dope. He tells me everything that goes on. And I mean everything.

Liara and Herrlick: Wow!

Evilanka: From what I've been able to get out of him, it's obvious that he and Rootie are gaming the will, and since Daddy never reads anything, they figure he'll sign off on *whoever* they put in.

Jarhead: And you know what that means: They're gonna cut the four of us out. We'll probably end up owing money. If I know them, we'll be stuck with Donny's funeral expenses, the probate costs and Rootie's fees, not that we'd ever pay them.

Herrlick: You mean we won't be running the golf course?

Evilanka: You'll be lucky if they let you on the golf course.

Jarhead: You'll be lucky if they let you on the miniature golf course.

Herrlick No, no, no!

Evilanka and Jarhead: Yes, yes, yes!

Liara: Say it isn't so!

Evilanka: It's so.

Liara: What are we going to do? Everybody is against us!

Evilanka: Not everybody, Liara.

Herrlick: My own big brother! I remember he'd give me pony-back rides when I was a kid. And give me a bite off his fudgsicle, too!

Evilanka: I'll give you your very own fudgsicle, Herrlick.

Herrlick: You will?

Evilanka and Jarhead: Of course we will.

Herrlick: Promise?

Evilanka: Certainly. Double cross my heart and hope you... I mean, to, die. We've got to stick together.

Jarhead: That's right. We won't get anywhere squabbling among ourselves.

Evilanka: You stick with us and together we'll find a way to get the golf course and all the money for ourselves. *(aside)* As long as ourselves doesn't include those two.

Jarhead: So what do you say? Is it a deal? Or would you like to try out some of that good ol' tenement living?

Liara and Herrlick: Deal! *(Jarhead and Evilanka wink at each other, grinning conspiratorially)*

Liara: I'm scared of mice!

Herrlick: And I'm scared of cockroaches!

Jarhead: After we fix the two-legged ones, the others won't be giving us no trouble.

Evilanka: Then we're all set. I'll be seeing Steppen shortly- the man is always pestering me to have lunch or coffee or anything he thinks he can get away with. Let me get the latest scoop on the will, and report back so that we can make our plan. Agreed?

Liara and Herrlick: Agreed!

Jarhead: A toast to our success! *(They lift their cups and bang them together. Lottie, who has been hiding behind a panel, reveals herself to the audience.)*

Lottie: I'd best stay on my toes! Those crazy white people are sure enough up to something suspicious!

Act Two

Scene One: *A secluded table in a small, cozy café/bar. Dim lights. Steppen is sitting alone, waiting for Evilanka to arrive.*

Steppen: Late again. Always late. You could set a clock by her, if you set it half an hour earlier than hers. Well, at least she makes waiting for her worth it. What a piece! The pug-nosed dream poets die for! Absolutely stunning. Not a blonde hair out of place. The flawless complexion of a porcelain doll that has never known a pimple. Violet-blue eyes that shimmer like a breeze-blown oil spill in the noonday sun. And with a runway body like

hers- Oh man! Step aside, Zeus! Move over, Heff! Toss that Viagra, Don Juan! Outta my way, you amateurs! I could write the sequel to the Kama Sutra with her as my inspiration! Yes, she's a goddess. Everything about her reeks of class. So how can anyone blame me for this love of mine- a love that grows more obsessive with each passing day? Every one of my thoughts swirls around her. My imagination is out of control. All day long I dream about exploring her from the bottom of her pedicured toesies to the part in her hair, making all the local stops in between. But all that had better happen soon. Perspiration follows inspiration, after all, but so far she has always left me high and dry. I'm starting to suspect that she's been giving me the runaround, forever promising that she'll be able to get away next time we meet while making excuses for cutting our dates short. Well, maybe today I'll be able to pin her down for a real date instead of these brief, frustrating yaks where we always seem to end up on the subject of her father's business instead of our own. But faint heart never won fair lady, as they say, so I will keep cool and carry on this unconsummated romance until she comes to her senses- or at least puts out. I could settle for that.

Enter Evilanka, furtively, wearing dark sunglasses and a very wide-brimmed hat pulled down low. Steppen rises and approaches her.

Steppen: Baby! *(rushes to her and tries to embrace her but she pulls her head down and the brim of her hat slaps his face)* Ouch!

Evilanka: Shhhhhh! Steppen, please! Don't make a scene! You're attracting attention...

Steppen: I can't help myself. You bring out the gypsy in me! The whole damn tribe of 'em!

Evilanka: Of course I do! I always do! - but not in public! Control your impulses! People will see us!

Steppen: Well then, how about we slip away to a cozy, private place I know nearby where we can... *(whispers suggestively)*?

Evilanka: Oh... you're so bad!... How I wish I could...

Steppen: You're driving me crazy! Crazy!

Evilanka: Yes, yes, I know. I drive all men crazy. I am a flame to their moths. But we've got to be careful with the proximity. I'm a married woman, you know. With kids. We must contain our passion... at least in public.

Steppen *(petulantly)*: You gotta remind me?

Evilanka: Do I sense a tone?

Steppen: No, not at all- it's just that it feels as if we can never get away by ourselves. I guess I'm starting to feel a little frustrated.

Evilanka: Frustrated? Frustrated?! With everything I'm going through is that what's troubling you? What about my problems? You don't seem to understand the chances I'm taking- the sacrifices I make for you, Steppen. If we ever were seen...

Steppen: But when oh when will we be able to come out? This waiting and longing for you is killing me.

Evilanka: Killing you? Killing you! There you go again, thinking about yourself! What about me and my delicate situation? Do you ever stop to think about how much I have been giving up to see you like this? Don't you know how much I forgo? The chances I must take? How much I suffer? All for your sake. To make you happy. And then to be abused so cruelly this way by the sufferee that I suffer for? Don't you care about me even a little bit?

Steppen: Of course I care! You're all I think about. I'd do anything for you.

Evilanka: You have a funny way of showing it! Can you even begin to imagine what would happen if our meetings were discovered? Oh, you men and your unquenchable libralidos! You get on your knees, groveling and begging. You know exactly what we want to hear. You tell us how our souls are as beautiful as our little petite bodies and how our love will last forever. Ha! There's no end to the vows you make. And once you get what you want, you break our trusting hearts and dump us for your next target! Oh stupid, stupid me!

Steppen: But I'm not like that! I would never let you down in any way!

Evilanka: I'm a fool, and you're all alike! Here I am, making sacrifices for you, taking incredible risks. And how do you respond? By complaining about your own needs. Well, what about mine? Don't you ever think about poor, little me? Here I am, surrounded by vicious, hateful enemies- people who would like nothing better than to see me out on the street, abandoned by everyone. What do you think they'd do if they found out about our... affair? And what do you think Jarhead would do? I'd lose my house, my money- even the kids. Do you ever stop to think about that? Our assignations will be the end of me, I know. I must be crazy to be seeing you!

Steppen: You're right, Baby- I'm being selfish. Of course I care about how hard this has been for you. I'm glad you're telling me this...

Evilanka: Sure you're happy to hear how I'm suffering on your account- after all, diminishing me makes you feel so powerful and masculine. You men and your power trips!

Steppen: But Honey- I'm trying to help you. I'm not on any power trip!

Evilanka: Well, you're not helping things with your impatience. And I don't appreciate the guilt trip you're laying on me. Don't the chances I take for you mean anything? Can you even begin to imagine everything that I've already lost just to be with you? Don't you know that I should be at the hairdresser's right now? And all you do is complain! That's not very sexy, you know. Why, if it wasn't for your intelligence, I wouldn't give you any time at all!

Steppen: Gee, Evilanka, when you put it that way...

Evilanka: You have no appreciation at all for what I have to go through to see you! Don't you understand how hard it is for me to get away from the kids and especially Jarhead, who, believe me, is the most jealous man in the universe and has spies everywhere? What do you think he'd do if he found out?

Steppen: I know; I know. It's not easy.

Evilanka: "It's not easy?" "Not easy"? Is that how you see it? You tell me that you understand what I'm going through, but you still carry on about how hard it is for you. Are you really concerned about me? Don't you understand what can happen to poor petite little me if anyone sees us together like this? Do you think I enjoy this sneaking around? And telling all those lies so I can get away? Is that the kind of girl you think I am? A liar and a sneak?

Steppen: But honest, Baby, you're all I think about! You're all I care about! I wouldn't ever sneak around with a girl who lies.

Evilanka: You have a funny way of showing your devotion!

Steppen: Let me show it! Let me show it!

Evilanka: Why don't you start with some gratitude then? I don't think you're grateful at all. You sit there and whine. Is that what you call gratitude? Where is your appreciation? Why can't I get any consideration?

Steppen: I'm grateful! I'm grateful!

Evilanka: You have no idea what I have to go through to see you! It makes me so nervous to always be on my tippy toes like this. I must be out of my mind to do it. Look, Steppen, I'm going home. I can't take this anymore!

Steppen: Please don't go, Baby! I'm truly sorry. I know I've been a jerk.

Evilanka: Yes, you surely have. And I don't waste my time on jerks. I gotta go!

Steppen: Baby please!

Evilanka: It's a little late for that! I'm leaving.

Steppen: But, but...

Evilanka: And don't you even try to sweet talk me again! I'm outta here!

Steppen: I know I screwed up. I'm so sorry.

Evilanka: You've done it before, and you'll do it again. Hello- and goodbye. I must be going.

Steppen: But I really mean it this time!

Evilanka: Sure, you do. You're like all the rest: They'll promise you all the cheese in Wisconsin and after they're through, they leave you alone and crying. That's our reward for living only to please you.

Steppen: But that's not me! I got no cheese! Where do you see any cheese? I bring you news, not cheese. Very interesting news.

Evilanka (*sniffing*): You don't love me! Not even a little bit...

Steppen: Come on now- I'd bring you all the cheese in China if you asked me for it.

Evilanka (*sniffing*): You're saying that now... but later you'll change your mind and leave me alone and brokenhearted. All you men are alike. You make us poor women promises like you were our fairy godfather and when you get what you want, you drop us for your next victim, as if we were playthings you've grown tired of.

Steppen: Not me! I'm not like that! Please don't judge me by the way other guys are. I didn't even know that you wanted some cheese.

Evilanka (*sniffing*): Oh, how I try to believe you! You don't know. You don't know. And after all I've done for you, after how I've suffered on your account. Oh... those lonesome nights when I can't get you out of my mind... when all I can do is cry, and dream about how sweet it would be if we could be together for all time...

Steppen: Believe me then. You won't be disappointed.

Evilanka (*sniffing*): Oh, I do want to, Steppen... but you make it so hard...

Steppen: I know I was wrong, Baby. I'm just a man- I make mistakes. But when I do, I admit it and try to fix them. I'm not perfect, but for you, I'll try to be.

Evilanka (*sniffing*): Oh Steppen, Steppen! Do you promise, Steppen? Do you truly mean it? I can't go through much more of this anguish if you don't. It's wearing me down. I could get wrinkles.

Steppen: Of course I promise! And wait 'til you hear what I have to tell you...

Evilanka (*whimpering*): Oh, Steppen. You can be so convincing. When I'm with you it's like you're mesmerizing me and I lose control of myself. I'm a puppet in your big, strong hands. I do hope you're sincere...

Steppen: I'm more sincere this time than I've ever been before- trust me.

Evilanka (*reaches out to touch his hand*): Oh, I do want to... so much... you don't even know. And your intelligence is terribly attractive...

Steppen: Then trust me. (*takes her hand in both of his*)

Evilanka (*pulling her hand out from between his*): Nails! Nails, Darling!

Steppen: Nails?

Evilanka: Yes. I just got out of the salon- aren't they lovely? I did them just for you... Do you like them? (*flashes her nails provocatively*) You probably didn't even notice...

Steppen: Sure I did!

Evilanka: You're just saying that.

Steppen: No! Honest! They're beautiful!

Evilanka (*getting upset*): I spent all that time under those hot lights, and you didn't even notice them!

Steppen: Of course I noticed!

Evilanka: Then why didn't you say something?

Steppen: I meant to. I really did.

Evilanka: Do you know they charged me \$200? That's \$25 a nail!

Steppen: And worth every penny.

Evilanka: You should have paid for them! I did them for you, after all... and they're your favorite color, too: Opaque Couche. (*flashes her nails again*)

Steppen: I know. I know. Thank you- they're gorgeous... and so are you.

Evilanka: That's what you're saying now, but where were you when I needed you? Huh? Where were you? Oh, you men... You have no idea what it's like to be a defenseless woman in a man's world!

Steppen: Well, Baby, you know how busy I've been with the will. You can't imagine the time it's been taking. Your father has been making all sorts of demands. I can barely keep up with him. And then, he keeps changing his mind so we never have any definite idea what he wants the will to finally say. I'm constantly running around and getting nowhere.

Evilanka: That sounds like him, but has he said anything about me? Has he? I am his favorite, after all.

Steppen: You may be his favorite, but he hasn't mentioned you yet.

Evilanka: What?! Are you sure? How can that be? He's always talking about how much smarter and more loyal I am than his other children. I can't believe I'm not in the will!

Steppen: Not yet anyway, Dear. He's still mulling over the potential beneficiaries. He seems to think that Jarhead has enough money already and doesn't want him to get any of his.

Evilanka: That Jarhead! He's always spoiling everything for me! I hate him! I simply hate him! Oh Steppen, Steppen- if it wasn't for you, I don't know what I'd do... He's sucking the life out of me!

Steppen: Yeah- but it doesn't have to be that way...

Evilanka: What do you mean, Honey?

Steppen: What I mean is that there has to be way to sidestep him somehow so that you can get the dough. That's what I've been working on- but it hasn't been easy what with your father and Rootie constantly looking over my shoulder.

Evilanka: I know it can't be easy, Honey, but you're an intellectual, and intelligence is power. That's what I really find attractive in a man! His brains. That's where your sex appeal lies, Steppy. When I think about how smart you are, I get excited. I get very excited. I know you can figure something out so that I get a fair shake. You wouldn't leave your poor helpless Evilanka alone and penniless in this cold, brutal world, would you?

Steppen: Never, Baby! Never!

Evilanka: Do you promise? Can I trust you?

Steppen: Baby, of course you can!

Evilanka: And are you going to help your little girl get through all this meanness and misery?

Steppen: That's my job, Baby- and you can bet that's what I'm gonna do.

Evilanka: 'Cause you know, Honey, I'm kind of an intel-LEG-tual myself. *(checks around to be sure nobody is watching, then pulls up her skirt to mid-thigh)*

Steppen (*reaching for her*): Legs, Baby, legs! You know what a leg-man I am!

Evilanka (*pulls skirt back down*): Well, that's enough for now. I really must be going.

Steppen (*devastated*): So soon? But I thought that maybe we could get away for a while. There's a very nice, discreet hotel just down the street...

Evilanka: Oh, that sounds wonderful Darling, but I must get home to the kids.

Steppen: But they're in school! We can spend a few hours together...

Evilanka (*rising*): And I'd love to, but I really do have to dash off. How about a raincheck?

Steppen: I guess. (*rises, tries to embrace her*)

Evilanka (*dodges him*): Silk, Darling!

Steppen: Silk?

Evilanka: Let's not crush the fabric and make it wrinkly crinkly! You don't want Jarhead or Daddy to start asking questions, do you?

Steppen (*dejected and frustrated*): No, I guess not.

Evilanka: Because they are so jealous and suspicious...

Steppen: I know. I know.

Evilanka: ...and would like nothing better than to spoil all our dreams.

Steppen: I know. I know.

Evilanka: So until next time, tell me you love me.

Steppen (*dejected*): I love you.

Evilanka: That's so sweet! Bye-bye now- and don't forget to help your poor, weak, petite, little Evilanka! She's depending on big, strong, intellectual you! (*exits*)

Steppen: Woof!! What a wonderful girl! I think she likes me!

Act Two; Scene Two

Same setting. Rootie Tootiani is sitting alone at a table in a dark corner of the same cozy bar/café waiting for Melatonia to arrive. A bat that he can't see is fluttering above him.

Rootie: Dumb broad, late again. Must be operating under Transylvanian standard time. You'd think she'd have enough brains to learn how to set an American clock, but I guess dead reckoning has worked out well for her so far. Funny though, how she comes out only

at night, as if that's when she starts to live. Come to think of it, I can't remember if I ever saw her during the day. Strange. And kinda creepy, too, always meeting her so late. On the other hand, her exotic beauty has something of a hypnotic effect on me, although her face is capable of making only three expressions: harsh, very harsh and very, very harsh. Still, when I look into her eyes, I find it impossible to resist her. I fall into a love trance. I'm mesmerized. Is it some eastern European gypsy reverie that I fall under? Is she a witch casting her spells on me? Or is she just another soft-core Euroslut that I've become addicted to? The attraction is there for sure. I mean, why else would I want to take such a chance canoodling the boss's wife? Man oh man- am I in a dangerous position! And if I ever get caught... But I can't seem to control myself when it comes to her. She has this power over me. *(lowers his head into his hands as if in desperation)*

Flittering Bat exits. Enter Melatonia wearing a cape, dressed like a bride of Dracula. She seems to float to Rootie's table- her feet do not touch the floor. His head is down, so he does not see her as she alights across from him. He looks up and is scared shitless.

Rootie: Holy shit! You scared the crap out of me, Melatonia! *(in the background, a coyote can be heard, yipping)*

Melatonia: But Dahlink, it is merely I- your lovink Melatonia! *(coyote yips)* Do not have ze fears. Zere's nozink to be afraid uff. Nozink at all!

Rootie: I'm still shaking!

Melatonia: Yet, you are vise to beware, Rootie Tootiani! Ze speereet uff eveel ees tryeeng to enter zees room- as eet always does.

Rootie: That's not helping my nerves very much.

Melatonia: Haff no fear. Ze fires uff death veel guard us.

Rootie: Well, that's a consolation. Maybe there is nothing to be afraid of, but you still scare the crap out of me every time you do that! Can I order you a coffee?

Melatonia: I never dreenk... coffee. Vhat vee need today ees youngk blood... undt brains! Lots of blood... undt lots of brains...

Rootie: You women seem to have a predestination for understanding these things.

Melatonia: Yes, mine Luff- undt ze sufferings zat come uff zees knowledges!

Rootie: Well, your suffering will soon be over, Melatonia, *(coyote howls)* if you let me help you.

Melatonia: You're sooch a sensiteef boy, Rootie dahlink! That ees vhat I luff about you! Your depth of emotions ees like a dark pool lit up by electric eels. Achh! How I luff to sdare eento your eyes! They are zo... varm, zo bassionate! I could eat zem right up! (*licks her lips; little fangs protrude*)

Rootie: Are you sure you wouldn't prefer a bite off the menu instead? Maybe a nice glass of warm tomato juice?

Melatonia: Ach, mine Dahlink, for me zere ees only one choice... ze love-bite! Vonce you are beetten, eet ees ze beegeeneeng! Undt zen you are eereeseesteeble!

Rootie: Better stick to a ham sandwich, Melatonia. (*coyote cries*)

Melatonia: Why I need ze hams vhen I got you? Eh, Rootie Dahlink?

Rootie: No ham could do what I'm doing for you- and no ham that I know would take the risk.

Melatonia: Ach, yes- you are my brave leetle champion. Undt vhat news does mine hero bring his zad Melatonia (*coyote wails*) today? You know her beerthday eet ees gumming up. She'll be three-hund... I mean, zerty years old very zoon, undt you know vhat ze pre-nups zay. Out she goes- out, out, out mit ze trash, like ze three before her! Zhen vhat's she gonna do? Eh? You tell me, vhat? Ees deesgrace!

Rootie: Now, Baby, I told you not to worry and get upset. You'll make yourself sick to death like that!

Melatonia: Ach, yes: Death! Zere are far vorse zings.

Rootie: Worse than death? There are such things?

Melatonia: Uff gorse, Rootie mine luff. Undt eet ees ze veemen who bear zat in bloody agony.

Rootie: Uufff...

Melatonia: Bloodt... ees a kind of horror. Veemen are born veeth such horror een zere very bloodtstream. Eet ees...(pauses) biologieecal theeng...

Rootie: Sheeesh! How horrible!

Melatonia: Yes, mine Luffer. But eet ees ze veemen who love horror... Gloat over eet. Feed on eet. Are nourished by eet. Shudder undt cling undt cry out- undt come back for more.

Rootie: Really, Dollface- you gotta cool it. This kind of thinking isn't good for you. You gotta chill out.

Melatonia: Cheel! Cheel! But how can I cheel, Dahlink? I signed ze papers. Vhat can I do now? Go eento ze used coffin beezness veeth mine fazer? Ach... Better death... zan a life like thees!

Rootie: You worry too much, Melatonia! (*coyote howls*) It doesn't have to come to that!

Melatonia: Vee're all dead here. Eet ees place of ze dead.

Rootie: You let your Rootie worry about all that dead stuff. I'm handling Donny's estate, you know.

Melatonia: Uff gourse, Dahlink. But vhat has zis to do mit me?

Rootie: Everything if I can swing it.

Melatonia: Dahlink, you zpeag zo meesteereeous! Tell me, vhat you are swinggink? Do not keep me in ze soospenders, mine Dahlink. Tell everyzing to your poor Melatonia. (*coyote howls*) Ach! Do you hear zem? Cheeldren uff ze night! Vhat museek zey make!

Rootie: Right. Well, as you know, as of now, your husband has no will.

Melatonia: Zat's vhat you zink! For five years I haff tried effreezingk een mine powers to gondroll heem, undt all uff eet- ze spells, ze potions, ze charms, ze heepnoseeses- goes een von ear undt out ze ozer! Can you belief eet? I- an honor graduate of Transeelvahnia Gummunity Gollege- haff no gondroll over heem! Don't tell me he has no veel!

Rootie: I'm talking about his last will and testament- the disbursement of his assets when he passes. That kind of will. And so far, because he has no will, he has named no beneficiaries.

Melatonia: Ach! Zat veel!

Rootie: Exactly. And so far, because he has no will, he has named no beneficiaries. He could die intestate.

Melatonia: Ah! Yes, yes: he ees untesteecl. Zees I know. Zo vhat, Dahlink?

Rootie: It's been taking a long time to write this will. I can't see how I can finish it before you turn thirty... in the meantime, you are his wife, and if I remember the pre-nup correctly, nothing in it prevents you from inheriting everything in case he... let's say, meets with an unfortunate happenstance.

Melatonia: Unfortunate habbenzdance? Vhat you mean, Dahlink?

Rootie: You know- an unanticipated twist of fate...

Melatonina: A tveest uff ze fates?

Rootie: Yes- a quirky fluke.

Melatonina: A queergy floug?

Rootie: You know- an untimely accident... they happen all the time.

Melatonina: Ach, yes! I zee! You mean eef he should die!

Rootie: Just so. But only if he dies without signing a will first.

Melatonina: Ach! To die! To really be dead! Zat must be... glorious!

Rootie: Perhaps a happenstance that might prove glorious... for you...

Melatonina: Beople, chained by monotonies, afraid to zink, glinging to zere certainties... Zey live like ants! Thees ees not for us, Rootie Tootie, mine Luff.

Rootie: Not for us. No. Not for us... (*aside nervously*): Every lawyer is mad, or else he'd be a plumber, a bookkeeper, or a salesman.

Melatonina: For vone who has not leaved even a seengle lifetime, you're a vise man, Rootie Tootiani!

Rootie: I wish I were that confident. You know, Sweetlips, sometimes I look into the mirror and ask myself: Is this the same man who argued 7 cases before the Supreme Court?

Melatonina: Ach, mine luff! How I envy you! Eet must be vonderfool to zee yourself een ze mirror! How hard eet ees to apply ze make-ups vhen you can't.

Rootie: Yeah? You got problems? Well, what about me and my problems? What have I been reduced to? Bankruptcies. Wills. Non-disclosure agreements. Pre-nups. The cruelty I've suffered is inhuman.

Melatonina: Maybe zat pre-nup eet ees not zo gruel! For ze both uff us, mine Dahlink.

Rootie: It does certify you as his wife, ergo his primary legal beneficiary... just in case something happens. With a man his age, you never know what can go wrong. His daily intake of diet Coke, cheeseburgers and fries doesn't help his health. Then there's that huge pot belly. His belligerent and disagreeable temperament. He could go at any time... poof! (*Snaps fingers*) Just like that... especially with a bit of nudging...

Melatonina: Yes, yes, mine Luff, erckle chust like zat (*Snaps fingers clumsily. Her nails are very long, blood-colored talons. She struggles to snap them.*) mit zer beet uff noudghing.

Rootie (*snapping fingers*): Just like that! And poof! Farewell, Donny!

Melatonia: Yes, yes. But be cheerful, mine Dahlink: Zere are far vorse theengs avateengk heem zan ze habbenzdance zat may befall heem... especially eef eet gomes before mine byirthday... next veek! *Tries to snap fingers and fails again.*

Rootie: That's the idea. As long as the snap (*snaps fingers*) happens while the estate remains intestate. But don't worry: you can be sure that there won't be any will to prevent you from inheriting his fortune. I'll see to that.

Melatonia: Undt ze habbenzdance, mine Dahlink? (*snaps fingers unsuccessfully*) Vhat about zat? (*tries to snap them again and fails.*) *Aside:* Ach! I can't do a zing mit zeese nails!

Rootie (*cowering*): That's the problem, Baby. I... I don't think I can do it.

Melatonia: Ach, mine senseeteef leetle dahlink! How gute you are vhen you wheemper like zat! Zo sveet you are- like hungry volf cub gallingk for hees mother's meelk! Vhy you vorry undt be zo upset over leetle nothzing like zat? You chust leaf ze habbenzdance to your Melatonia. (*Coyote howls; she grins.*) She knows exactly vhat to do...

Rootie (*cowering*): You're scaring me, Melatonia! (*chorus of coyotes howling; Rootie trembles*)

Melatonia (*pleased with herself*): Ach! Steel you vorry, mine luff. I haff ozer vays uff seguringk hees gooperation.

Rootie: That's what I'm worried about...

Melatonia: Hees bloodt ees pyperfect... undt ze love bite... zat hopefool begeeneeng, eet ees alzo ze fatal ending. But now, I must be goink... Already ze dawn draws near... undt ze cock grows (*a rooster crows*)...

Rootie: Speaking of cocks growing, must you really be going? So soon?

Melatonia: Already ze shade of night flees before ze shadows of ze day. Zoon ze morning sun veel rise, undt I must find mine rest.

Rootie: But Sweetie- there's a nice, discreet hotel just up the road. Surely, we could spend a few hours together... I was hoping...

Melatonia: Achhh... how I veeesh! But zadly no, mine dahlink. Prezently I shall azzume a sdate uff trance een wheech ze mind merges veeth ze astral portion uff ze human ego...

Rootie: I guess we all need to get a few hours of sleep.

Melatonia: To sleep! Yes- to leaf zis mortal plane undt rest een pieces. Who knows vhat dreams may gome...

Rootie: Shattered dreams- and the martyrdom that is the price of love postponed.

Melatonia: Yes, mine Dahlink... ze ashes uf luff are bitter... undt death, eet ees ze final, triumphant luffer...

Rootie: Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Melatonia: You can haff ze head: I'll zettle for ze neck. *(Exits, floating. A bat, with fangs, appears, fluttering above him.)*

Rootie: Woof! Now that's what I call a real woman!

Act Two; Scene Three

Same setting as in Act One/Scene Three: Jarhead's living room. Jarhead and Uncle Noodles are sitting opposite each other. Evilanka is hiding behind a curtain/panel, listening. Her head is visible only to the audience.

Jarhead: So you see, Uncle Noodles, the will's not been finished yet and here's why: that bitch he's married 'sgot somethin' up her floozy sleeve that's holdin' everything up! Who else could be responsible? She's got the most to gain. You know her birthday's coming up next week- and guess what kind of present she has to look forward to. Her term-limit marriage contract expires and any connection to Donny and his estate is annulled. She's disinherited, disenfranchised and discharged! Some birthday present, huh? - just like what happened to the other three Melatonias that came before her. Do you remember how they ended up?

Uncle Noodles: I hoid one of dem was retired. Poiminent.

Jarhead: Permanent is right, Unk. Number One had a little incident on the Grand Ballroom staircase- seems to have tripped on a high-heel some careless person left on a step- and now she's resting toes up by the third hole in Bedminster.

U.N.: Heh, heh. Soives her right. Dem heels ain't so healthy for da feet. I ain't never understood why they wear 'em in da foist place.

Jarhead: The two others ain't exactly in the chips either. Number Two's scrapin' barnacles at the ferry dock.

U.N.: Scrapin' barnacles? So what? Someone's gotta do it.

Jarhead: With her teeth? Then there's Number Three. She's become a popular hostess at our favorite oceanside bar, the Seamen's Inn. A very popular hostess. When she answers the phone, it's always *(imitates her voice)* "Thanks for calling *(long pause)* ...the Seeeeamen's Inn!"

U.N.: Heh, heh. You bet it is. It's always upliftin' tuh hear a success story like dat.

Jarhead: Yeah, yeah- so you can see what's making Number Four nervous: she'll be thirty next week and won't have any claim on the estate once the marriage is annulled. And once that happens, it's back to rinsin' empties at the Transylvania Blood Bank. But until then, she's got first dibs on everything because there's no will yet. Can you imagine what would happen if the old man croaked...

U.N.: ... or got croaked...

Jarhead: ... before it was signed and she pulled the plug on us? And you know she would.

U.N.: Dat's coitenly somethin' we need tuh think about...

Jarhead: I mean, why else did she marry him? Because he's handsome?

U.N.: His chin looks like a used condom.

Jarhead: Because he's a great lover?

U.N.: Not wit little hands like dat. You know what dey say about little hands. And I've been in enough shower rooms tuh know it's true.

Jarhead: So why did she marry the old turd? Out of affection and love?

U.N. (*philosophically*): Affection an' love ain't for dat mug. Yuh can't get dem things unless you can give 'em foist, an' da funny thing is dat de more ya give, da more ya get an' vicey vercy- which is why he ain't got none. Love's like a bank you can stick up every day, over and over. Dat's one of da deepest mysteries about love, Kid. It don't make no sense, but somehow it woiks out in da end anyhoo.

Jarhead: I don't know nothin' about that, Unk, but I do know I shoulda took care of this problem long ago. Now the time's runnin' out and that witch's gettin' desperate. We gotta do somethin', and fast before we end up with bupkis.

U.N.: See da kinda messes ya can get into by bein' a nice guy? I hope ya loined ya lesson, 'cause dis ain't gonna be so easy tuh fix.

Jarhead: That's what's worrying me! Who knows what kind of crazy Transylvanian stunt she'll try an' pull? I'm turnin' to you, Unk, because you're the only one with the necessary skillset that I can trust to solve this problem for us.

U.N.: Yeah- unfoichunary, I was indisposed wit udder commitments oilier. But now I'm free as a boidie an' ready tuh get my favorite nephew Jarhead out of anudder jam.

Jarhead: It hasn't been easy getting along without you, Unkie. But we've been lucky so far. That Transylvanian tramp hasn't been able to knock off the old man and collect- yet. But with only a week left and the will still not drawn up, I'm positive she'll do whatever she can to get his dough and avoid ending up like the other three that came before her. We can't let her get away with it.

U.N.: An' dat's why you got your Uncle Noodles sprung when I was havin' such a good time in da slammer what wit da booze an' cigarettes an' da drugs an' broads me an' da boys was bringin' in. Just protectin' some of da more effluviant among da udder guests was woith more dan 20 grand a week. It was like I was still livin' at home, rollin' in da gravy an' scarfin' down da free lunch.

Jarhead: Sorry if I inconvenienced you, Unkie, but this is a job that requires your unique talents. And, of course, we'll make it worth your while. Do you have any suggestions?

U.N.: Coitenly. We got both kinds-a suggestions: da lethal an' da not-so-lethal. Whacchoo prefer? Same price either way.

Jarhead: I leave the details to you, Unkie. It makes no difference to me. Whatever you're comfortable with will be fine- just so long as that Transylvanian twat won't be able to touch a cent of our dough.

U.N.: When I get through wit' her, she's won't be touchin' nuttin'. Youse can bet on dat.

Jarhead: Evilanka will be greatly relieved. You know how sensitive she is, always worrying about everything.

Enter Evilanka

Evilanka: Did I hear someone mention my name?

Jarhead: Hey Baby- you remember my Uncle Noodles? He just got an early release from Rahway for good behavior.

U.N.: Onna counta I am a good boy.

Evilanka: It's like I always say: good manners always pay off. It's wonderful to see you, Uncle Noodles! You're looking fit, and handsome as ever!

U.N.: Da pleasure is all mine, Little Eva. Maybe I ain't so handscum, but youse as pretty as a pichure inna magazine.

Evilanka: Why thank you, kind sir! You say the sweetest things! And what might be the nature of the discussion you two gentlemen were having? I hope you don't mind poor little me asking.

Jarhead: Not at all, Honey, not at all. As a matter of fact, I was just consulting Uncle Noodles about that little problem we've got with Melatonia, and we were about to call you to ask for your advice from the lady's point of view.

Evilanka: Well, I'm ready to help however I can. But Jarhead- what happened to your manners? It's a long way from Rahway, and Uncle Noodles must be famished after his trip. What do you say, Uncle Noodles? How about some coffee and maybe some nosh?

U.N.: Well, uh, uh, uh... I don't know 'bout no nosh, but maybe a bite tuh eat would be nice. I ain't wanna make ya any inconvenient.

Evilanka: Now, now, Unkie! It's no trouble at all for our favorite uncle! (*Calls Lottie*) Lottie! Oh Lott- teeee! (*to U.N. & Jarhead*) She's probably got her feet up somewhere, taking another nap! I swear there's no appreciation for all we've done for her! (*enter Lottie*)

Lottie: Here I am, Ms. Eve-lanka! I'm just finishing changin' the kids' sheets. They really shouldn't be drinkin' all that sody pop, especially before they go to bed.

Evilanka: I'll thank you for keeping your parenting suggestions to yourself, Lottie- you just keep changing the sheets and button your lip about it. I won't have my children's illnesses bandied about in public. Now bring us the coffee and cakes- and be sure you wash your smelly hands first. (*to U.N. and Jarhead*) I swear that woman has no sense of proper sanitary practices! I've got to tell her everything!

Lottie, Yes'm, Ms. Eve-lanka. Coffee and cakes comin' right up!

Evilanka: And don't forget to wash your stinky pooh-pooh hands first!

Lottie: Yes'm. (*aside*): Yeah, I'll wash 'em. In your coffee water. (*exit Lottie, fuming*)

Evilanka: Impertinence is a cultural thing with those people. It starts with their mothers never teaching their children to be thankful for their many blessings. And what's more important than being grateful for all the good things that we are so lucky to be blessed with?

Uncle Noodles: Yeah- dat's a beautiful thought and good for da digestion.

Evilanka: The first thing I do every morning when I wake up and the last thing I do every night when I go to sleep is to offer a prayer of gratitude for everything I am so fortunate to be blessed with.

Uncle Noodles: Yeah- dat's what I do after I count da loot.

Evilanka: That's because you're conscientious. But how can you expect people who take their own blessings for granted to teach their kids to be gracious? Bad parenting is how ingratitude is passed on from generation to generation. And as the horrid culture of those

people becomes progressively more degraded, decent folks have to clean up the messes they leave behind and deliver the social services that they refuse to earn for themselves. Sometimes I wonder if they even love their own children.

Uncle Noodles: Ain't dat da truth. It's disgustin' how many of 'em live offa da state.

Evilanka: That's it exactly- sponging off the burdensome taxes we working people pay. And as social workers and the Welfare politicians continue to provide them benefits that they never earned, their sense of entitlement is normalized, and any sense of personal responsibility is replaced by a peevish, thankless surliness. Think about the free food stamps, abortions on demand, Obama phones, subsidized housing that they get on a silver platter- no wonder they sit around all day long doing drugs, getting fat and making babies. And then they complain that they're the only ones who ever suffered. Have you ever seen so many ingrates feeling sorry for themselves and feeling cheated by the civilized world at the same time?

Uncle Noodles: Gee- I never thought about it dat way before.

Evilanka: Oh yes indeed. Look at school lunches, for example. My sources inform me that the trash bins in the cafeterias are full of perfectly good apples we provide for them that they decline to eat. Now if we had the compassion to cut off the funding for those free lunches, and they had to earn the money to buy those apples or starve the way the rest of us do, you bet they wouldn't be wasting nutritious food like that.

Jarhead: And stuffing their faces with Cheetos until their skins turn orange.

Evilanka: If I caught my kids throwing even one perfectly good Strawberry Arnaud or a Krispy Kreme Luxe or even a La Madeline Au Truffle into the trash, I'd remind them how fortunate they are not to be starving like most of the world's children. Then I'd make them retrieve the treat and give it to a less fortunate child. Just like that!

Uncle Noodles: Jeez you're strict!

Evilanka: But don't you agree that that's the way to develop proper moral hygiene in kids? It starts in the home with adults who care enough to set the genteel example for them to emulate. But enough about my troubles! I won't bore you with them any longer. How about you two? What advice can a poor, petite, overworked mother offer such strong and very masculine men?

Jarhead: Well, we don't want to add to your worries, Baby- but it's that Melatonia again.

Evilanka: Ah yes! That Melatonia creature again! The conniving Transylvanian trollop! What is it this time? A contribution to the blood drive? Another bat rescue project she wants us to fund?

Jarhead: I only wish it was that simple. She'll be turnin' thirty next week, and you know what that means- your father's gonna turn 'er loose like he did the other three.

Evilanka: As he did, Darling, as he did the other three. You have to watch your prepositions!

Lottie (*unseen, from the background*): Your conjunctions! Your conjunctions! You have to watch your goddamn conjunctions!

Evilanka: Did you hear something? I thought I heard something.

Jarhead: Not I!

U.N.: Not me eeder. I didn't hear nothin'.

Evilanka: It must have been my imagination- I've been so on edge lately with all this talk about Daddy's will still not finished, and now with this Melatonia business that you are so concerned about. Do you think the hussy will try something desperate?

Jarhead: Whether she will or won't, we can't take no chances what with no named beneficiary. She's still his wife- at least for the next two weeks. If we don't do nothin', she can end up with the whole bundle, and you'll be left with gournish. We gotta think about the kids' future. We gotta think about ourselves. That's the reason I'm... uh... consulting Uncle Noodles. He's an expert in these matters.

Evilanka: Of course, you're right, Darling. You're always right. And I'm eternally grateful to you, Uncle Noodles, for taking an interest in our troubles. I do hope that we can settle this affair amicably. You know how I detest making anyone uncomfortable, even that awful Melatonia, despite her greedy appetite to take over the family business after Daddy is gone (*sniffles woefully*), drive us all into poverty and destroy the family. After all, it's the children's future that we must protect. But I don't think she'll just pack up her bags and go back to Transylvania without trying some couthless measure first.

Uncle Noodles (*thoughtfully*): It's a shame. What ever happened tuh common decency? Sometimes I wonder.

Evilanka: Who knows what misguided tricks she has up her cheesy sleeve? She's capable of any deviant expedient. And that puts us in the unpleasant position of having to do whatever needs to be done, even if it might turn out to be distasteful.

Uncle Noodles: Yeah- it's tough. Ya wanna be nice, but ya gotta fight fire wit fire.

Evilanka: Exactly, though it makes me so sad to admit it.

Jarhead: She'd take the last crust of bread outta our mouths without any bit of regret.
Doodley squats is the consideration we owe that slut. (*enter Lottie*)

Lottie: Your coffee and cakes, Ms. Eve-lanka.

Evilanka: Thank you, Lottie. Just leave them on the table and I'll serve. (*to the men*) She'd spill the coffee and stick her greasy thumbs into the cakes if I didn't. Still another thing I have to do around here as if I wasn't busy enough already.

Lottie: Yes'm. You're welcome, Ma'am. (*aside*) I hope she gets the piece with the nose hair.

Evilanka (*serving*): Black for both gentlemen and no sugar? Lottie does make an excellent cup of coffee, and her cakes are delicious. I've often asked her how she does it, but she's very secretive about the recipes and the ingredients she uses. Aren't you, Lottie?

Lottie (*aside*): Yes'm, Ms. Eve-lanka. (*aside*) You gotta use the right kind of hair for people like that.

Evilanka: Are you still following old traditional recipes and using the native seasonings that give your cakes their distinctive, haunting flavor, Lottie?

Lottie: Oh yes, Ma'am. (*aside*) Nothing beats our "native" goofer dust and magnetic sand, black cat bone and Van Van oil if you wanna do some serious haunting. I always keep some fresh in my mojo bag, just in case.

Evilanka: I never experienced this cuisine before you came to work for us. Are these specialties of your culture, Lottie?

Lottie: Yes, they are, Ma'am. (*aside*) Bat nuts and Devil pods, graveyard dirt and dragon's blood resin. Where I come from, we poison vampires with the stuff.

Evilanka: Well, they certainly are scrumptious! And the kids savor them, too. You definitely got that right.

Lottie: Thank you kindly, Ms. Eve-lanka. You surely are sweet to me. (*Aside*) Yeah- and I like gargling with Drano.

Evilanka: Of course I'm sweet to you. It's in my nature to be sweet to everyone regardless. You can go now- I think I hear the children crying. (*Lottie exits but hides behind the panel Evilanka had been hiding behind earlier, listening. Only the audience can see her face.*) Now, how else can I help you gentlemen? Sorry for the interruption, but I believe that it's only kind to say something nice to servants, especially while disciplining them. We don't want to dampen their spirits. It can be so discouraging for us.

Jarhead: You sure know how to handle ‘em. That’s why they love and respect you. But tell us how it’s going with Steppen. Has he made any progress with the will?

Evilanka (*serving*): Oh Jarhead, Jarhead! Not only has he gotten nowhere with the will, he tells me that Daddy hasn’t even made me a beneficiary! Me! Evilanka! His own daughter. Can you believe it? My father, who I worshipped, is cutting me out like a hot potato and leaving me penniless! I never imagined he’d do this to me! And after everything I did for him. Oh- how my heart aches! It’s unimaginable- abandoned by my own parent! How can I go on after this? (*sniveling pathetically*)

Jarhead: That confirms our greatest fears and makes things more complicated.

Uncle Noodles: Yeah. Yuh got more dan Mela... Mela... Melaphonia tuh tink about. Your brothers-in-law for instance.

Evilanka: My own brothers! Them too! I don’t want to believe it! I can’t believe it!

Jarhead: You’re a good sister, but this is no time to get sentimental. We gotta do what we gotta do... we gotta be realistic. Remember what we’re up against.

Evilanka: But, oh Jarhead, Jarhead! It hurts so badly! *Rushes to Jarhead.*

Jarhead (*embracing her*): I know, Baby. I know.

Evilanka (*weepy; they separate, holding both hands*): I was hoping it wouldn’t come to that...

Jarhead: Yeah- but we gotta think about the kids. Now dry those tears. This isn’t the time to play nice-nice, especially if they’re not going to. You want ‘em to take all the dough for themselves? An’ leave us out? Wouldn’t that make Liara happy? And Junior’s girlfriend Bathead too?

Evilanka: Ughh. That Bathead is so nasty!

Jarhead: And greedy. We’re surrounded on all sides by selfish, eager opportunists like that. You want her to get the scratch? Huh? Do ya?

Evilanka: No, of course not. I detest her. But what about my conscience? You know how upsetting it can be sometimes. *She sings “The Song of the Distressed Conscience” to the music of “Give a Little Whistle.” The shoulder shrugs the three will make are of the “don’t blame me- what can anyone do about it?” variety. Their hands should be held palm up, expressing the same helplessness.*

The Song of the Distressed Conscience

Evilanka (*singing*): When you're distressed by your conscience, and you're making much ado,
 Give a little shrug. *She shrugs her shoulders. Jarhead shrugs his shoulders.*
 Give a little shrug. *She shrugs her shoulders. Uncle Noodles shrugs his shoulders.*
 When you're struggling with your scruples, and a prayer just won't do.
 Give a little shrug. *She shrugs her shoulders. Jarhead shrugs his shoulders.*
 Give a little shrug. *She shrugs her shoulders. Uncle Noodles shrugs his shoulders.*
 Repentance is quite useless,
 It's all tilting at windmills.
 Woeful penitence is pointless and it doesn't pay the bills.
 Just give a little shrug. *She shrugs. Jarhead shrugs*
 Give a little shrug. *She shrugs. Uncle Noodles shrugs.*
 All three sing: And never let your conscience be your guide.
 Evilanka: There's no need to feel repentance.
 Why impede your grand ascendance?
 Give a little shrug. *She shrugs. Jarhead shrugs.*
 Give a little shrug. *She shrugs. Uncle Noodles shrugs.*
 All three sing: And never let your conscience be your guide.
 Jarhead (*sings*):
 Why be burdened by contriteness and unnecessary niceness?

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Uncle Noodles shrugs.*

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Evilanka shrugs.*

We're all given to temptation as we try to scrape along.

There's no finding many pleasures on the wrong side of the lawn.

So give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Uncle Noodles shrugs.*

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Evilanka shrugs.*

Just emancipate temptation,

Repentance is but a show.

Forget about salvation; there's no Hell but worms below.

Atonement's vastly overrated.

Integrity's the pride of fools.

So give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Uncle Noodles shrugs.*

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Evilanka shrugs.*

All three sing: And never let your conscience overrule.

Uncle Noodles (*sings*):

When you're soivin' time in prison, an' reflectin' 'bout your soul,

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Jarhead shrugs.*

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Evilanka shrugs.*

Don't deny your inclinations; you might someday be paroled,

Your remorse won't buy salvation with da money dat you stole.

So give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Jarhead shrugs.*

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Evilanka shrugs.*

Don't you shed a single tear;

Never ever cry.

Since you are facing many years, blame da other guy.

Remember dat you gotta eat,

A fact we must abide.

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Jarhead shrugs.*

Give a little shrug. *He shrugs. Evilanka shrugs.*

All three sing: And never let your conscience be your guide.

All three sing: Remember that you got to eat,

A fact we must abide.

So give a little shrug. *He shrugs. The other two shrug.*

Give a little shrug. *All three shrug.*

All three sing: And never let your conscience be your guide!

And never let your conscience be your guide!

And never let your conscience be your guide!

Evilanka: Well, I sure feel much relieved after that! The conscience sure can be a pesky nuisance, especially when people find out what you did. You know how verklempt I get when even my most innocent secret goes public. It's so unfair! But here you were, asking me for my advice, where I was the one who needed it all along! Isn't that ironic? I'll definitely be taking your suggestions seriously.

Jarhead: That's the spirit! – and you just let us boys handle this. Your conscience can't bother you if you're not involved in what we're gonna do.

Uncle Noodles: Da trouble with da conscience is dat it ain't got no common sense. What's done is done. Now if ya ain't done it, why take the rap?

Jarhead: That's right, Unkie. A wise man once said, "Ignorance is bliss." By which he meant that bliss is ignorance. So don't worry, Honey. Be happy.

Uncle Noodles: Dat's what makes young love go 'round an' 'round...

Jarhead: ...and old love end in divorce.

Uncle Noodles: An' dat's what makes it smart not tuh know too much.

Jarhead: That's right. Now Honey, don't you think about this business anymore. Just put the details outta your mind. Leave it to the men. Uncle Noodles and I'll take care of everything. The less you know, the better. Just don't think about it. Focus on us and the kids and forget about what we guys gotta do. Can you do that?

Evilanka: I, I think I can- but what about Steppen?

Jarhead: Well, what about him? His usefulness will be over soon- not that he ever had any in the first place- and you'll forget about that punk!

Uncle Noodles (*aside, rubbing his hands and grinning maliciously*): But I won't!

Evilanka: Well, that'll certainly be a relief, anyway. Oh Jarhead, Jarhead- how he makes my flesh crawl with his creepy demands. Ilk!

Jarhead: I don't wanna know about that.

Evilanka: When he reaches to touch my hand, I can feel my flesh crawl. When he stares at me with those beady, horny eyes of his...I feel so vulnerable...so helpless...

Jarhead: I get it. I get it.

Evilanka: Oh Jarhead! Jarhead! When he ogles me like that I imagine him taking my clothes off slowly, so slowly, starting at the top and working his way to the bottom, button by button, strap by strap, until I'm standing helplessly before him, mesmerized and naked- except sometimes in the thong you like so much. (*Jarhead groans*) His long, quivering tongue twists in and out of his mouth, licking his greasy lizardy lips in shameless anticipation...

Jarhead: No more. I don't wanna hear no more.

Evilanka: He flicks my brassiere on the floor and his shining eyes focus on my bare perky breasts and taut nipples. Oh Jarhead! How I want to call out to you- but my body goes limp and I can't move my arms or legs to resist his advances. He whispers in my ear how much he wants me... how much he loves me... how beautiful I am... how excited I make him... Oh Jarhead! I do try to struggle; I do. And then...

Jarhead: Please, Evilanka: no more. I can't take it!

Evilanka: ...in a soft voice, he tells me just what he's going to do... Oh Jarhead, Jarhead! ...and as his slimy lips brush against my quivering cheek and his breathing grows hotter and heavier...

Jarhead: Stop it! You gotta stop it!

Evilanka: ...I can feel his foot rubbing, rubbing, softly rubbing against my stockinged calf under the table...

Jarhead: You're killing me! Killing me!

Evilanka: ...while his sweaty, grubby palm explores my knee and slowly, oh so slowly, like a big hairy spider, reaches under my skirt and up my firm, silky thighs, lightly stroking, caressing, probing...

Jarhead: Oh God! Oh my God!

Evilanka: I can feel the throbbing rhythm of his engorged passion. (*Jarhead choking*) Soon I am powerless to resist the savage pounding tom-tom of his licentious ardor. My nipples swell like quivering Hershey kisses. (*Jarhead groaning*) The torrid heat of his nearness spreads steadily, compulsively. His wanton lechery is like a swollen dam that must have its release. (*Jarhead groaning; tearing out his hair, etc.*) Oh Jarhead! Jarhead! His very essence is consumed with unquenchable and relentless desire. At last, when he's ready to burst, he has his bestial way with me... (*Jarhead shaking uncontrollably and crying*) I lose control... Oh Jarhead! Jarhead!... (*Jarhead weeping and whimpering*) and explode in spasmodic, pulsating submission to shameless carnal degradation.

Jarhead howls the primal scream. Uncle Noodles is captivated. He can't take his eyes off the stiff nipples that are clearly visible through her blouse.

Evilanka (*oblivious of Jarhead's reaction*): No, Dearest- I won't burden you with my sacrifices. Let me spare you from the excruciating pain of all the horrendous misery that I must endure for you. Complaining about my agonizing would be selfish of me- after all, I'm not the kind of girl who would want others to suffer just because I'm suffering. But I've taken up enough of your time, Gentlemen. I'm sure you'd like to share a little private talk amongst yourselves, so I will head off now to attend to my maternal duties and look after the kids, the hearth and the home. Bye-bye Uncle Noodles! What a joy it was to share a word and a bite with you! (*kisses Uncle Noodles on the cheek*) Bye-bye Jarhead honey- I'll tell the kids you love them! (*kisses Jarhead, who is seething with helpless jealousy and rage, on his forehead and exits*)

Uncle Noodles: Youse a lucky guy, Kid. She's as pretty as lacy underpants.

Jarhead (*devastated*): Nuh, nuh, nuh, nuh, nuh... no more. Please. No more...

Uncle Noodles: Maybe I shouldn't have said nothin'... heh, heh...

Jarhead (*recovering bravely, trying valiantly to appear normal*): So whaddaya say? Do we have a plan? (*Uncle Noodles shrugs suggestively. Winks. Jarhead shrugs in response. Curtain drops.*)

Act Three

Scene One: *The setting is the same as in Act 1; Scene 1: Donny Bonespur's lavish but tacky office. Rootie and Steppen are awaiting Donny, who, as usual, is late. Above and unseen by them, the same bat with fangs is hovering, flapping its wings.*

Steppen: Well Rootie, isn't it just like the boss to call a meeting at the last moment with no consideration whatsoever to our schedules? Here I was, getting ready to go to bed after busting my rump for him all day what with those 530 lawsuits we're facing, and out of nowhere get the summons to appear before His Majesty.

Rootie: Yeah. Don't I know it. You'd think we could put the meeting off until tomorrow morning, but no. It's gotta be in the middle of the night. You gotta wonder when the boss sleeps.

Steppen: At least he gets some rest during the day.

Rootie: Sure he does, Steppen- drifting off while delivering a speech...

Steppen: Or listening to one...

Rootie: Or while eating.

Steppen: Remember last month when he fell asleep and almost drowned in a bowl of alphabet soup that he was trying to read?

Rootie: Oh yeah! But he always falls asleep when he's trying to read. Did you hear that ever since that drowning incident, he's been after me to sue the manufacturer of the soup bowl? He claims it has an unsafe design flaw that almost killed him. He's bullying the soup company as well. He claims that alphabet soup should carry a warning label since it's already got letters. The spoon maker already settled out of court.

Steppen: Yeah. He threatened to sic the IRS on 'em if they didn't.

Rootie: He can fall dead asleep at any moment. You never know when. Thank goodness he hasn't driven a car in over ten years.

Steppen: No, not since he ran over the old lady in the parking lot. He claimed it wasn't his fault because he was acting on government business in his official capacity.

Rootie: That's right- I've been appealing the last three judgments against him for the past five years. He insists on taking the case to the Supreme Court if we have to- and suing her for damages to his car plus legal expenses. He says that old people shouldn't be allowed in parking lots anyway, the way they're always waddling and dawdling, impeding the free flow of traffic. The elderly aren't simply public nuisances, he argues, but accidents waiting to pile up, and as such, hazardous to the national health.

Steppen: It's thinking like that that's gotten him to where he is today. But we're still nowhere close to finishing the will. Being called in to work wouldn't be so bad if at least we were getting something accomplished.

Rootie: How can he expect us to get anything done if he keeps changing his mind every time we get together? Not that we're given any guidance in the first place.

Steppen: He doesn't know what he wants. I thought we could use his ambivalence to our own advantage, but he kills everything we present to him and we end up starting all over again.

Rootie: It's like trying to reason with a 7-year-old brat. *Aside: But Melatonia must be pleased by all these delays. The bat flaps its wings excitedly. Enter Donny Jr., swaggering.*

Donny Jr.: Well, well, what have we here at this late hour? Our favorite ex-mayor and mouthpiece, Rootie Tootiani and the boy wonder, Steppen Mierdeaux! Greetings gentlemen! I dropped in to see my father, but I'm not at all surprised to find you two loyal drudges here instead, burning the midnight oil!

Rootie: Hello, Junior. How's the Boss's eldest scion?

Donny Jr.: Rollin' in it. Rollin' in it, Baby.

Steppen: What's up, Donny?

Donny Jr.: My portfolio, Pal! That's what's up! How's yours?

Steppen: Well, you know, times are tough...

Donny Jr.: Tough? You've gotta be kidding, Bud! Don't you know we own the Market? Dude- we've tapped the mother lode! We got it in the bag! And it's so simple: When Dad says "Yes'" they buy. When he says "No," they sell. That's it! Nothin' else to it! We don't even gotta leak nothin' anymore. So we're rollin' Baby, and the Market's boomin'! Boomin'! Rollin' an' boomin'! (*pauses*) Excuse me for a second... *Removes large bag of cocaine from his*

pocket, spreads a thick line of it on Donny's desk, and snorts a huge hit that creates a dust cloud. Powder spreads all over his face and clothes. Ahhh! So much better! Now where were we?

Rootie: Tough times. We were talking about tough times.

Donny Jr.: Say Rootie, speaking of tough times, are you still driving that hoopty Saab? I mean, when it starts.

Rootie: Yeah. It will be eligible for antique plates this year. So will I.

Donny Jr.: Well, that sucks! A regular sob story! Ha ha! Get it? Sob story! Ha ha! *Rootie groans.* Why don't you dump it, Pal, and get yourself a new one? How're you gonna impress all those chicks drivin' a turd on wheels like that? What are you? Emotionally attached to it or what?

Rootie: Not exactly, Junior. It's just convenient to keep it at this time.

Donny Jr.: Convenient? Don't bullshit me- I happen to know that it spends more time being towed than driven.

Rootie: I can't hide anything from you, can I?

Donny Jr.: Bet your ass you can't! For instance, I happen to know that you're scrapin' the bottom of the cracker barrel. Look at you! That natty jacket is right off the rack at Goodwill. Your tie has more stains on it than those not-so-tidy whities you've been sportin' this week. And your shoes! They got more cracks than my stepmother's face. No, Buddy- you can't hide a thing from me.

Steppen: Then you must also be aware, Junior, that the simple explanation is that we haven't been paid for months.

Donny Jr.: Yeah- that must be tough on poor slobs like you. Yeah- real tough. Be it doesn't have to be like that.

Steppen: Can you take it up at Payroll?

Donny Jr.: Not a chance- you know how tight Weaselburger is with Dad's dough. I'd never get past him. But there are other opportunities. Very lucrative opportunities.

Rootie and Steppen: Yeah?

Donny Jr.: Certainly. Certainly. You two downtrodden shit heels are valuable assets to me, and I believe that you should be paid what you're worth. And I'm not kidding this time.

Rootie: You got something in mind, Junior? Other than paying us what we're already owed?

Donny Jr.: I always got something in mind. As Dad's oldest and most favorite son, you can bet I do. And right now, the thing I'm thinkin' about is my father's will that you two have been workin' on. Your efforts open up possibilities that involve my interests. I gotta protect my investment in the family businesses after all. You two are in a position that can be very valuable to me. Very valuable for you two as well, if you catch my meaning.

Steppen: You're talkin' to the right guys, Junior. We're always happy to cooperate helpfully with the good guys. It's our sworn duty to deliver justice to the deserving parties.

Donny Jr. Deserving party, Pal. Get it right. Deserving party.

Steppen: Of course, of course. Deserving party. That's exactly what I meant.

Donny Jr.: And who deserves it more than me?

Rootie: Certainly. Certainly. I can't imagine anyone more worthy than you.

Donny Jr.: First of all, I am of the masculine denomination.

Steppen: Unquestionably.

Rootie: Assuredly.

Donny Jr.: As well as his oldest child.

Steppen: Indubitably.

Rootie: Inarguably.

Donny Jr.: Not to mention that I'm the best-looking and smartest.

Steppen: And hardest-working.

Rootie: And most loyal. Let's not forget that.

Steppen: And it's only your modesty that prevents you from listing your many outstanding accolades.

Donny Jr.: Yeah! Alchoholades! I have lots of 'em! One hundred percent proof! Now you're talkin'! All these things am I. And more. Much more. All of which makes me the rightful and exclusive heir.

Rootie: I can't argue with that!

Steppen: You've convinced me!

Rootie: So where do we fit in?

Steppen: How can we help?

Donny Jr.: Fellas, with your cooperation, justice can be served. And I'm talkin' about justice for all three of us- not only me. I mean- take a good look at your sad asses. Isn't it time you got what you got comin' to ya?

Rootie: Justice is a beautiful thing when they get it right.

Donny Jr.: And all you gotta do is look out for my interests while you're writing the will. How hard can that be for a brilliant lawyer and a dead-eye fixer with experience like yours? We're not gonna reinvent the wheel here, you know.

Steppen: So what do you have in mind, Junior? Who do we have to kill?

Rootie: Tell us! We'll kill 'im now!

Donny Jr.: Naw! Come on, guys! Be serious. It ain't nothin' like that! Look. This is like pizza. When it's time to slice it, I just wanna be sure my slices have all the toppings. Matter of fact, I wanna be sure that I get all of the slices and all the toppings. Not 'cause I'm greedy, mind you- and you all know what a generous guy I am- but because I deserve to get my fair share.

Steppen: Justice demands it. You're obviously the authoritative heir.

Rootie: Of course you are. But what about the thundering herd of claimants who are certain to challenge your legitimacy? Don't they represent a serious threat to your claim? What are you gonna do about them?

Donny Jr.: Sure, other people will try to mooch my pie- but tough cookies to them: They need to find their own. And unless I want whatever pie they find, it can be theirs to keep. But they gotta leave my pie alone. That's only non-negotiable common sense and standard operating procedure. So here's the deal: You two take care of my pie and I'll take care of yours. Trust me. Trust me and we'll make out like bandits. And I'm not talkin' about no damn Hamburglar or friggin' Frito Bandito either. I'm bein' serious. Like legitimate bandits. You can count on that.

Rootie: Let me get this straight, Junior: You want us to work for you? And we won't have to kill anybody?

Donny Jr.: That's the idea: I want you to hook me up- if you know what's good for all three of us.

Steppen: But what about Evilanka and Jarhead? How about their children?

Donny Jr.: I'm deeply touched. Really. But they already got a pie.

Rootie: And Melatonia? *(coyote howls; the bat flutters its wings excitedly)*

Donny Jr.: She'll be history in a few days. Squats for her. *(the bat, squeaking, flies back and forth angrily)*

Steppen: And Herrlick and Liara? Won't they have something to say about it?

Donny Jr.: Well, what about those hard-up losers? So toss 'em some crusts outta your share if you're feeling generous. That should satisfy those leeches. It's more than they deserve.

Steppen: But don't you care about what happens to them? They're your family, after all.

Donny Jr.: What happens to them? Are you serious? You think grifters like that can't find their own pie? Say- you're not concerned about a little inconvenience for a bunch of scum like them are you? Come on! Use your brains!

Steppen: But won't they feel cheated? Won't they complain?

Donny Jr.: So let 'em whine! What can they do when the deal is sealed all legal-like and proper? Huh? Sue me? Ha! Didn't they learn nothin' from Dad? Let 'em try. They won't be the first an' they won't be the last.

Steppen: Well, that's reassuring.

Donny Jr. *(ominously)*: Besides, whose side are you on anyway? Theirs? Or mine? I hope I don't have to start wondering about you two, especially after I take over the operation.

Rootie *(nervously)*: It's always smartest to be on the winning side.

Steppen: Which in this case means yours.

Donny Jr.: Now you two are usin' your noggins. Stick with me and you can be sure that you'll be rollin' in the scratch.

Rootie: Ah, yes! The scratch! How I love it!

Steppen: Let it roll; let it roll; let it roll!

Donny Jr.: And remember this: As long as you're workin' for me, any legal costs you might incur will be paid for. You're covered 100%. So waddaya say? We gotta deal or what?

Rootie: A deal! A deal! We gotta deal!

Steppen: A deal! A deal! A most palpable deal!

Donny Jr.: Then we have a deal! How about a line to seal it and celebrate? *Takes out his bag of cocaine and spreads out a fat line.*

Steppen: Not just now, thank you.

Rootie: Thanks- maybe later.

Donny Jr.: No sense letting this good shit go to waste. Here's to us! *Snorts it all up, getting it over his face and clothes. A dust cloud envelops all three of them and leaves them gasping and choking.* Wow! That was fun! You sure you don't wanna hit? I got lots an' lots of the stuff. Them Russians get the real good shit.

Rootie: I think I've had enough, but thank you anyway.

Steppen: Thanks- me too. I'm not used to the stuff.

Donny Jr.: You stick with me an' you'll be usin' it to powder your shorts. Keeps you dry an' beats Viagra. You'll like that a lot. But it's getting' late an' I got other business to take care of. I gotta go. Good deal, guys. An' stay in touch. *Exit Donny Jr.*

Rootie: Now what are we going to do?

Steppen: I don't know. I just don't know.

Act Three; Scene Two

Same setting. Enter Donny Bonespurs. The fanged bat can be seen fluttering above their heads.

Donny Bonespurs: So you finally got here! It took you long enough! No wonder nothin' ever gets done around this place! What's your lame excuse this time? And you'd better make it good.

Steppen: I got here as quickly as I could, Sir. I was getting ready to go to bed, wearing my pajamas when I got the call to come in.

Rootie: It was past my bedtime, Sir. I had to get dressed. I know how strict you are about wearing formal attire when we're on the job.

Donny: So, you're saying that it's my fault that you're late? You're blaming me because you run around your house all day long in your jammies? Are you a grown man or a child?

Rootie: Not at all, Sir. I'm not blaming you. It's just that I don't ordinarily wear my dress suit to bed, so I had to change before leaving.

Donny (*to Steppen*): And I suppose you don't wear your dress suit to bed either, do you, wise guy?

Steppen: No Sir, but I do wear my formal pajamas at bedtime.

Donny: You know, I'm sick of the dopey excuses you two dopes make for your incompetence. That's all I seem to hear around here- dopey excuses. When are you going to stop making dopey excuses and get to work on time? Don't you two idiots understand what being on call means?

Steppen: I promise to get here sooner next time, Sir.

Rootie: Me too, Sir- you have my word on it.

Donny: You promise? Promise? All I get is promises from you two wise asses. And excuses. Your promises are worthless, and your word is a pile of crap. Is this how you show your loyalty to your employer?

Steppen: I'm sorry, Sir.

Donny: "Sorry, Sir"? "Sorry, Sir?" Is that the best you can do? Promises to do better that you'll never keep, the same old excuses for your many failures, and the best you can do is say you're sorry? Sorry? You're sorry? I'm the one who's sorry. I'm sorry I ever met you two shmuck bottom scrapers. You and your excuses and promises and apologies make me sick. But mostly you two low-class imbeciles make me sick.

Rootie: We rushed right over when we got the call, Sir. We got here as soon as we could.

Donny: Yeah? But why don't you tell me you're sorry too, like that dummy standing next to you? He may be a dummy, but at least he's a sorry dummy. You don't sound sorry to me. I don't think you're sorry at all.

Rootie: But I am sorry, Sir- just as sorry as Steppen is.

Donny: Don't lie to me! You don't look very sorry. You don't look sorry at all. Neither one of you whack jobs look sorry.

Steppen: We're sorry that we don't look sorry, Sir.

Donny: So which is it? Are you sorry 'cause you screwed up? Or are you sorry that you look stupid instead a sorry? Which one are you? Let me clue you slobs in- you're gonna be sorry for both.

Rootie: Speaking for myself, Sir, I'm sorry about the whole thing.

Steppen: Me too, Sir. I'm sorry that we couldn't get here earlier, and I'm sorry that I don't look sorry, though I am trying my best.

Donny: Amateurs! This is what I get for hiring amateurs! "Trying my best"! Could you be any lamer? You morons should be sorry, but you don't even know how to look sorry.

Steppen: But I do know how to look sorry, Sir! Look! *Attempts several facial expressions to make himself look sorry.*

Rootie: Me too, Sir. *Also tries a variety of facial expressions to make himself appear sorrowful.*

Donny: Sorry? You call that lookin' sorry? You two look more like a pair of flaming hemorrhoids than somebody who's feeling sorry.

Steppen: I'm sure that with some practice, Sir, we can look sorry. Very sorry, if you'd prefer.

Rootie: That's right, Sir. Please give us a chance to practice. We won't disappoint you next time we're feeling sorry.

Donny: Bet your ass you won't, like the way you disappointed all the uglies that dumped you after the first date. A beautiful woman would never look at you twice. Why should she? Not for all the walls in Chiiiina. *(Rootie and Steppen are getting nervous, suspecting that Donny might have discovered their secret liaisons with wife and daughter)* Have you ever taken a serious look at yourselves? What woman worth a 9 or 10 would bother with losers like you two? No wonder you're still single at your age. What gorgeous doll would want to waste her time with losers like you? *Notices the cocaine dust on his desk.* Hey! What's this white stuff. *Licks finger and tastes it.* Sugar! You slobs been eatin' cupcakes at my desk again? Didn't I warn yas about that?

Rootie: But that's the way the desk was when we got here, Sir!

Steppen: We had nothing to do with this mess, Sir!

Donny: Yeah, yeah. Sure. You two are always trying to save your own skins! But you can't fool me!

Rootie: We wouldn't dream of it, Sir.

Steppen: You're too smart to be fooled by anyone, Sir!

Donny: Smart? Just smart? Is that what I am? Lemme tell you, lots of people, very, very intelligent people, are always telling me that I'm a genius. "You're a genius, Sir!" "That was a genius idea, Sir!" they always tell me. An' a genius like me isn't just smart- he's the smartest of the smart. In fact, he's the smartest of the smartest. And that's me!

Rootie/Steppen: Yes, Sir!

Donny: And now that you've wasted my time, why don't you tell me what progress you've made since we talked last?

Rootie (*recovering*): Well, Sir, we have agreed that we are writing a will with certain terms and limitations which we have yet to specify.

Donny: Oh yeah? When did I agree to that?

Steppen: Last three times we met, Sir. We had not made much progress up to then, but we did finally agree that the will should contain terms and conditions, limitations and exclusions.

Donny: Terms and conditions? Limitations and exclusions? What's that? More legal bullshit?

Rootie: Stipulations, Sir, that define the parameters of your bequest.

Donny: Stimulations and parametrals? We gotta have them too? Are you a wise ass or what?

Rootie: No Sir- we just want to be certain that your intentions are clear so that they can be fully implemented by law. We don't want to leave any room for an appeal.

Donny: I don't know- it seems like a whole lotta hoopla over nothin'. They might not even be necessary. Did you ever think about that? Besides, I don't need no more legal expenses.

Rootie: Well, we could eliminate them if you'd like, Sir. I mean the terms and conditions- but only if we can include some provisos. However, it might be wise to retain the limitations and exclusions. You never know...

Donny: But what about those stimulations and parametrals you were talking about? Could we forget about them and just work with the provisos?

Steppen: That's a great idea, Sir. It would be a simple matter to obviate, and any such transference would add much needed clarity to the process. Thank you for the suggestion. But as you know, it will work only if we can name the fiduciaries. We'd have to do that first.

Donny: Name 'em? Don't they got names already? You mean we've been paying out for doochiaries and they don't even got names? What did their mothers call them? Why can't we use those instead buying them new ones? And they better show us their birth certificates before we start naming them. We don't wanna get any illegal doochiaries.

Steppen: I don't know what their mothers called them, Sir, but we could name them at practically no cost to you. You see, Sir, once the fiduciaries are named and we specify them, we can stipulate what terms and conditions will not apply to them in the corpus legalis. And that, of course, would delineate the applicable exclusions and limitations of the context ex parte.

Donny: Ah! Finally! Contests and parties are something I am the best at, better than any of them doochiaries. I am a champion contest winner of all kinds of contests and all kinds of parties- and not just on the senior level. I win 'em all! I never lose! The doochiaries won't stand a chance! I'll destroy 'em! Now we're getting somewhere!

Rootie: Just so, Sir. We could certainly handle the exclusions and limitations later, when we have more concepts.

Donny: Yeah- concepts! That's a good word! We gotta get the concepts first- then the ideas will be simple. But you gotta start with the concepts first.

Steppen: Precisely, Sir. And when we can name your beneficiaries, we can skip right to the terms and conditions, limitations and exclusions. At that point, we won't need any concepts for ideas at all.

Rootie: Which will result in appreciable savings in legal costs, Sir.

Donny: Yeah, yeah- all that sounds good, but what's the beneficiaries got to do with it? I mean, why do they gotta stick their clammy mitts into all this?

Steppen: The beneficiaries are those who would benefit from your generosity, Sir. We must name them. It's required.

Donny: Yeah- right. Everyone's always puttin' the squeeze on me. Tell you what- why don't I name the beneficiaries later? Let's keep 'em guessin'.

Rootie: Great idea Sir; they won't be able to take advantage of your kindness if we do that- and until then we can endeavor to persevere. That's the way all successful businesses handle legal issues of this magnitude.

Donny: Yeah- magnets are good. An' let's try that endeavoring stuff. It sounds like what they do on Wall Street and won't cost us nothin'- plus we've already got some concepts that will put us much farther ahead in the game. And if we focus on the endeavoring, we can skip over the persevering part, especially since it costs 1200% more which is twice the going rate. You know, we should think about adding it to the crypto business before some deep state smart ass tries to regulate it. Ya gotta think ahead if you wanna succeed in business 'cause there's lotsa sharks out there. Some even wear ray-guns on their heads. Bing bing, bing; boom, boom, boom, and you're sunk. Make a note of that.

Steppen: As you wish, Sir. And if I may add on a personal note, it's always a learning experience for me to witness your uncanny leadership acumen. Thank you, Sir, for the many insights you've given us into the broader compass of business procedure and management.

Donny: Yeah, yeah, you huge suck-up. Just don't forget we'd better pick up some more of those compasses if they're cheap. And don't forget the magnets. I don't know how many we got left an' we can always write 'em off as a business expense. No point skimping on compasses now that we've come so far. Without them, we could get lost. And then we wouldn't have so many good ideas, though we might have plenty of bad ones.

Rootie: And we don't want that, Sir. Let's continue to stick to the good ones that have a track record of established success. I'll check into the compasses.

Donny (*yawning*): Well, you two hammer out the details. Be sure to have it ready in two days.

Steppen (*shocked*): Two days, Sir? Isn't that rushing things?

Rootie: I don't know how we can get all that done in just two days, Sir, even if we do exclude the terms and conditions.

Donny: I'm getting' tired of listenin' to your pathetic excuses. You got two days- get a move on and do it. I don't care how- just get it done.

Rootie: But why two days, Sir? Wouldn't it be more prudent to approach this cautiously while proceeding expeditiously?

Donny: That's the problem around here- too many whining prudes holding up the show and not enough manly expeditions. Just get on the stick you two nudniks, and do what you're told. The One Big Beautiful Conference has been scheduled already and it's too late to change it.

Steppen (*surprised*): The One Big Beautiful Conference, Sir?

Rootie: What's that, Sir?

Donny: A large, attractive meeting, dummy.

Rootie: Ah! I see, Sir. And what will be the purpose of the One Big Beautiful Conference, Sir?

Donny: I'm gonna announce the bene.... benef... benefi... beneficiaroonie... th goddamn winners of my will of course. Don't you guys know nothin'? Why do I gotta explain everything to you?

Rootie: But I thought...

Donny (*interrupting*): Well don't think.

Steppen: But I don't think...

Donny (*interrupting*): Well think. That's the problem around here: nobody thinks.

Rootie: We'll do our best, Sir.

Donny: Are you back to that "do our best" crap again? Get your finger outta your nose and listen carefully, you pathetic loser: don't give me that "do our best" crap never again! Never! You flops are always using that same stupidified excuse for your incompetence. I'm sick of it and I'm sick of you. Act like a man and get your end done or else.

Rootie/Steppen: Yes, Sir! Certainly, Sir! You can count on us! We'll get it done!

Donny: You'd better- everyone is gonna be there for the One, Big, Beautiful Announcement so stop your squawking and get it done. Don't disappoint me if you two bums know what's good for you!

Rootie/Steppen: Yes, Sir! We won't, Sir!

Donny: That's much better. Now get outta here, you slobs. (*yawns*) You two give me the vapors. *Exeunt Rootie and Steppen, walking backwards slavishly.* See what I gotta work with? It's a miracle that anything gets done around here. *Notices the bat fluttering above him.* Well how about that! I wonder how the little birdie got in here. *The bat flits about showily and flies away.*

Act Three; Scene Two

Enter Melatonina, floating.

Melatonina: Ach, mine Dahlink! Zere you are! I haff been looking all over for you, and at last you are foundt!

Donny: Melatonina! (*coyote howls*) Baby! What are you doing up so late?

Melatonina: Chust vinging eet, mine beluffed. Ze night called... undt I must dance veeth ze shadows.

Donny: Shouldn't you be in your bedroom by now, waiting for me? We can dance under the sheets where there's lots of shadows.

Melatonina: I chust got up to find you, mine Luff, undt to get a bite to... dreenk. Do not vorry about your Melatonina (*coyote howls*): She vas made for ze night... undt ze night vas made for her...

Donny: But it's so dark out tonight! How could you see anything out there?

Melatonia: Ze darkness hass a thouzand eyes, Dahlink- undt vone uff zem ees mine.

Donny: But don't you get scared being out all alone? This place gives me the creeps.

Melatonia: I am never alone! Ze shadows uff ze night cling to me as luffers do. Zey wheespyer secrets no dawn can reveal.

Donny: I have the best secrets, Doll. I know 'em all, especially the anonymous ones. The shadows might know some, but they never tell us their best. But it's still too dark even with all them shadows because of that night light savings time scam the deep state gave us. That's why we need the global warming.

Melatonia: Achh, mine beluffed... ze darkness, I belongk to eet. Eet ees zere zat I find ze gomfort zat I zeek.

Donny: Whatever. So, did you really miss me, Baby?

Melatonia: As ze moon ees mine sun, undt ze stars are mine guide, weethout you I do not leeve- I endure! Een your heartbeat I hear eternity... fading... fading... like ze vaneesheeng ashes uff luff...

Donny: But do you really love me, Baby?

Melatonia: Your pulse, eet ees like a lullaby, undt your leeps taste like eterneety. Your kees ees sveeter zen death eetself... undt your eyes burn like meednight flames. I haff crossed oceans uff time to vorsheep like a seenner at your altar, mine dahlink, for mine luff for you, like hunger, eet burns eternal.

Donny: Yeah, yeah. Ok. Don't overexaggerate, Baby, though I guess that's better than underexaggerating.

Melatonia: But vhat, Dahlink, breengs you out zo late tonight, looking zo delicious?

Donny: Just a little unfinished business, Baby- nothing that concerns you.

Melatonia: But Dahlnk, everythingk about you ees mine gonzern. Your heartbeat is the drum zat I follow. I live in ze echo of your beeznesses. Surely there must be some vay Melatonia (*coyote howls*) can help her husbandt. Do not be shy, mine luff. Dog to me.

Donny: Yeah? Ya really wanna help me? Now? In the middle of the night?

Melatonia: Ze night remembers vhat ze day forgets, undt zo I am yours to gommand.

Donny: But I still say it's too damn dark. Why it gotta be so dim? They don't make light bulbs like they used to.

Melatonina: Do not fear ze night, mine luff. Darkness does not weaken me- it fuels me.

Donny: That's because of the new lightbulbs. Remember how it all started with those useless flowerescents that looked like white curled-up dumps? I'd turn them on and nothing happened. Now we got those IUD lights- no wonder it's so dark!

Melatonina: Ach yes, mine Luffer, ze darkness surrounds us- but zen your screams are zo moosh sweeter in ze glooms uff meednight.

Donny: Ya really like 'em, huh? You ain't heard nothin' yet. I've been practicing on my own.

Melatonina: Vhen I hear your call uff luff, mine Doughnny, I rush to dance veet ze shadows unteel I feel ze hot bloodt uff your embrace.

Donny (*becoming sexually aroused*): Well if you wanna save that last dance for me, I can guarantee you'll be hearin' a lot more screamin'... lots more...

Melatonina: But bevare ze kees zat beckons luff, for, like ze bloodt-red rose, eet ees sweet, but eets thorns bite deep veeth ze hunger uff eternity.

Donny (*very excited*): Bite me! Bite me! Bring on the romance!

Melatonina: Achh, but you do look zo tasty tonight, mine mouthwatereenk appeetizer! I haff saved ze best luff bite for you, undt vonce you are beetten, your veins will run for time weethout end.

Donny (*clearly aroused*): Bite me then! Hurry those veins up and bite me!

Melatonina: Your soul ees mine favorite feast, but hold ze garlic, please.

Donny (*at the end of his patience*): Forget the soul. It's overrated. Just bite me! What are ya waitin' for?

Melatonina: But remember, mine luffer: chust von bite changes everythink. Zink carefully for vhat you ask: No reflection- no regrets.

Donny (*excited, aroused and getting frustrated*): I've never had no regrets and I never needed none. I don't know nothin' about 'em. So what do ya say? Are we gonna stand here all night an' bullshit or are we gonna go to bed an' have some fun?

Melatonina: Ze eternal night wheespers your name, undt reminds me zat your bloodt ees mine desteeny. *She embraces him and exposes his neck to bite. She smiles hungrily, exposing her fangs, but as she bends over to bite him, Donny abruptly bumps her head with his, breaking one of them.*

Melatonina (*spitting out a tooth*): Vhat da fug! You broke mine fang... tooth! *Exit Melatonina, holding her hand over her mouth.*

Donny (*holding his head where it made contact, wincing in pain*): Owwww! Jesus, Melatonina! (*coyote yelping painfully*) That hurt! That really hurt! *Exit Donny, still holding his head. The bat can be seen overhead, flapping its wings, missing one fang.*

Act Three; Scene Three

The day of the One Big Beautiful Conference. Donny, with bandage on head, back in his office, alone.

Donny: So they all thought they'd get the better of me. They thought they were so smart, but I showed them. Yeah- I showed 'em. *Looks up toward Heaven and points his finger upward, addressing God.* Even you. You thought you had me that time, didn't you, Big Guy? *Awaits reply from above. Cups his ear with his hand, but there's only silence.* What's the matter? Too humiliated to say anything? Not used to being Number Two? Let me tell you, Pal, Number Two's not called shit for nothing. But don't feel too stupid, because when you lose to me, you lose to the best, like the rest of them suckers who thought they were such bigshots and found out what punk-ass nobodies they really are. Yeah- if I knew how it feels to be embarrassed, I'd be embarrassed too if I was you. All that hype people made over you, but you never made Time's Man of the Year did you? You never even made the back cover. And why is that? Because you disappointed them; that's why. How's that make you feel? *Enter Herrlick and Liara.*

Herrlick: Hey Dad! Are you almost ready?

Liara: We're all in the conference room now, Sir.

Donny: I'll be ready when I'm ready. Get your asses over there an' tell 'em that. *Exeunt Herrlick and Liara. Donny resumes his posture, looking up to Heaven.*

Donny: Yeah. You really sent your reputation down the shitter this time, Pal. They built all those churches and temples and mouseques and expected so much from you. But what did they get from their investment? Zilch. Nada. Not even a lousy magic lamp to rub. And that's why I never built you nothing- because I only make smart deals. And that's why I never sent you no women either, not even a six or seven, or sacrificed children or sheep or whatever it is you like so much. I mean, why waste them on you? You're a huge failure. And I got my own mojo I need to take care of. What would you do with women or sheep anyway? You probably wouldn't know what, with all that goody-goody crap you're always preaching about. What a pile of bullshit! *Enter Evilanka and Jarhead.*

Evilanka: Hi Daddy! How's my favorite father? I brought everyone a plateful of your favorite cookies that Lottie baked. You're gonna love them!

Jarhead: Hello, Sir. The meeting you called is all set. Is there anything you'd like me to do? Shall I announce anything to the attendees?

Donny: Nah- just tell 'em to keep their pants on and I'll get there when I get there.

Jarhead: Thank you, Sir. We will. *Exeunt Evilanka and Jarhead. Donny, looking up to Heaven, resumes his "prayer."*

Donny: And how about all that dough that they collected for you? All that dough, week after week, for thousands or even millions of years? How 'bout that? Did you ever get a penny of it? Huh? Billions and billions sitting on a plate that has your name on it and you never got none of it! Be realistic: What kind of sucker lets his agents steal all his dough? What the hell's wrong with you? Sometimes I gotta wonder if you got any sense at all. Well, let me tell you, Buddy- that's all gonna change now. No more Mr. Nice Guy. I'm taking over your racket and I'm gonna run it like a business instead of some kinda half-ass non-profit. Because that's what I am: a successful billionaire businessman with the best ideas, not some kind of whacked-out woke extremist radical liberal terrorist who wears a white sheet during the day instead of a suit and tie. Don't you know that we wear white sheets only at night? And when are you gonna shave and get a normal haircut? You're a mess. You should see yourself. You look like a friggin' hippy who could use a long bath. With a public image like that, it's no wonder I gotta sell your Bibles for you. *Enter Melatonia, floating in air.*

Melatonia: Zere you are Dahlink! Ach, does your head still ache from zat nasty bump we had in ze night? I hope you did not bleed- for your blood ees ze poetry uf time without end!

Donny: Much better, thank you. How's the tooth?

Melatonia: Ze fang... ze tooth, I mean, eet ees cheeped, but do not despair- ze bite, eet ees forever!

Donny: Glad to hear it. I'll set you up with my dentist. Now get along to the conference room- I gotta finish up here and I'll see you in a minute. *Exit Melatonia. Donny, looking up toward Heaven, resumes his monologue.*

Donny: Weren't you the guy who was supposed to save the world? That's what you said you'd do- so don't try to get outta it now. You made a promise which cost you nothing, built an organization, and the dough came rolling in. But the joke was on the suckers who were paying for all that woke peace and love and brotherhood crap you preached about and didn't deliver. Before I came along, that was the biggest scam in history, bigger than Crypto, bigger even than non-fungible tokens and digital trading cards. You did good for a long time,

but your problem is you never understood people. You thought that most of them would follow your example and be kind to each other. Kind to each other! That's a good one! Even the few dopes who still attend your churches are screwing each other! You created a brotherhood of brothers who hate each other. You even told them that they were branded in your image! Well, look around you, Pal. What people do you see who look like you? Face the facts: the world you made is a racket where you trended and got paid while the big bad dogs ate the little dogs who fell for your fake Heaven. That was smart- for a while. Your organization kept preaching the holy holy crap and the dummies' dough piled up, but then you made your second fatal mistake: You expected people to be patient with you after you didn't deliver the miracles that were supposed to save them. So, I come along with a better thing to make everyone great again and you and your businesses tanked. You couldn't even sell a candle. I hadda market your Bibles because your numbers got so bad. I made a fortune selling Donny's Certified Holy Spring Water. You were flushing toilets with your stuff because you couldn't give it away. I made the deals and got way better numbers than you ever had. Way better. Because I understand people. So you can sit around and pout, but you better face it, Bud! You're on the way out. Your people are tired of always losing. They're all coming to my side. They're fed up with your hoaxes. A lot of smart people tell me that. A whole lot because I'm a tv star with the best ratings and that means I've got the best hoaxes. Way better than yours. That's why they're turning to me to make them great again. And stop whining and complaining that you were treated unfairly. You had your chance, Pal, but you blew it. And who can blame them for not watching your boring show after the way you been lousing up everything for the last two hundred years? I could do that in just under ten or eleven. So you gotta ask yourself who the hell needs you. *Enter Donny Jr. and girlfriend Bathead.*

Donny Jr.: Hey Dad- what's holdin' you up?

Donny: Nothin's holdin' me up, wise ass. Who's the piece you brought along?

Bathead: Hello, Sir. I'm Bathead. So nice to muh... muh... meet you. Sorry, Sir! It's just that I'm so nervous in your awesome presence.

Donny: Bathead, huh?

Bathead: Yes, Sir. Bathead. And I feel as though I'm standing before Kubla Khan or Alexander the Great.

Donny Jr.: She's interviewed them all on Fox News, Dad. That's where I met her.

Donny (*to himself*): Donny J. Bonespurs... the Great! I been thinking about having it legally added to my name...

Donny Jr.: Nice, eh Pop?

Donny (*tuning them out*): Donny J. Bonespurs the Great...

Donny Jr.: Don't you think she's nice, Dad?

Donny: Or maybe just Bonespurs the Great...

Donny Jr.: Isn't she cute, Dad?

Donny: Or maybe D.J. Bonespurs the Great...

Donny Jr.: Dad! I asked you if you thought she's cute! Dad! Are you listening to me?

Donny: Donny the Great sounds good too.

Donny Jr.: Earth to Dad! Earth to Dad!

Donny: Or even the Great Bonespurs...

Donny Jr.: DAAAAAAD!

Donny (*snapping out of his reverie*): Huh? Whazzat? Cute? Who?

Donny Jr.: Bathead. The chick I just introduced you to. Isn't she nice?

Donny: Bathead? Maybe a six or seven on her better days. Send her home now and get over to the conference room. Go on and tell 'em I'm on my way. Beat it. Make it snappy.

Bathead: So h... h... happy to meet you, Sir.

Donny: Yeah, yeah. They all are. *Exeunt Donny Jr. and Bathead. Donny, as before, looks up and concludes his monologue.*

Donny: So if you wanna get a real lesson in how the big boys operate, you just tune in now to my One Big, Beautiful Conference and watch the master. And don't interrupt or say I never did nothing for you. I don't wanna hear a peep outta you. Just keep your mouth shut and watch me and maybe you'll learn something. Try to show some gratitude for once. *Exit Donny.*

Act Four

Act Four; Scene One

A hallway. Enter the messenger, bent over and tired, carrying a bagload of messages.

Messenger: How many pairs of shoes have I worn out deliverin' messages to these rich V.I.P's who have never given me a tip or even thanked me? I can count my lifespan out in broken shoelaces, worn-out heels and lost soles. *Enter Uncle Noodles.*

Uncle Noodles (*politely and respectfully*): Dere ya are! I been lookin' all over da joint for ya, Pops, an' finally here ya are! Listen Pal- I got dis top-priority message for da Boss from his Chief Financial Officer dat's gotta get to him as soon as ya can do it. How's about it, Ol' Timer? Can ya help a fella out? Ya see, it's oigent. Very oigent.

Messenger (*still stooped over*): You're looking at the fastest messenger in the service, Son. I ran track for U.C.L.A. before the First War, an' you betcha I been runnin' ever since. Ol' Fleetfoot O'Toole they call me an' I leave 'em all suckin' my wind- and that includes Speedy Gonzalez and the Roadrunner, too. I got wings on my feet, Son, and jets in my heels. I got three racehorses named after me, an' two rocket ships. Sure, I can help a guy out. Just hand over your message, Big Fella, and watch the dust fly.

Uncle Noodles: Now dat's what I call soivice, Pops! You're all right. Tanks a lot and here's a little somethin' for ya trouble. (*Hands the Messenger a \$50 bill.*)

Messenger (*Examining the bill in amazement, he slowly straightens out until his posture is youthful and athletic*): Why, it's no trouble, Sonny! No trouble at all! ...And thankee kindly- you treated me square, mighty square. (*Sprints off like an Olympian.*)

Uncle Noodles (*addresses audience*): Now how 'bout dat guy? Who woulda expected it? He must be 100 years old and I'd lay ya two tuh one he could beat Speedy an' da Roadrunner too! Say what ya will about dis crummy play, ya coitenly do meet some oddball characters! (*Exit Uncle Noodles*)

Scene Two

The conference room. Same expensive bad taste. Everyone is sitting around a massive conference table: Evilanka and Jarhead; Herrlick and Liara; Donny Jr.; Melatonia. Rootie and Steppen opposite each other flanking Donny's vacant seat at the head. Lottie enters with a platter of cookies that she puts on the table. The people are nervous, murmuring, wondering what Donny will do and whom he will pick to inherit his fortune. Enter Donny.

Donny: So you finally got here! You don't even know how sick and tired I'm getting of waiting for you all the time! But that's what I get for expecting any kind of loyalty or gratitude from a bunch of degenerate losers like you. You outta be ashamed of yourselves. But, of course you're not. You parasites got no feelings. You just think about yourselves all the time, and that's why you don't care about me at all. You're a disgrace, all of you. *Everybody protests: No, Sir!; We love you, Sir!; You're the best, Sir! etc.*

Donny: Yeah, yeah. What else could you say? But I know how you really feel and what you're really thinking deep inside. You think I'm stupid or something? You think I don't know what's going on here? *More protests: Oh no, Sir!; You're a genius, Sir! Of course you know, Sir! etc.*

Donny: You think I'm made outta money so you can just stretch out your mitts and say "put it here"? Is that what you think? Because lemme tell you something- in this world there's givers- also known as the losers- and there's takers- also known as the winners- and with an attitude like yours, you won't be getting squats. Nothing. How do you like that? *Everybody protests: But Sir! I'm not like that!; We love you Sir, not your money!; I'd like you even if you were poor, Sir! etc.*

Donny: Yeah, yeah, sure you would! You expect me to believe you? Why the hell are you here if it's not for the dough? Tell me that!

Melatonia: Ach, Dahlink, I for vone am here for zeese beauteefool googies! Zey zmall like za freshly dug grave on a cold undt damp, moonlit night- undt I moust haff vone, I really moust! *(She reaches for the plate and selects a cookie. She examines it carefully.)*

Evilanka: Go ahead and try it, Melatonia. *(coyote howls)* Lottie bakes the best cookies. The children just love them. *(Melatonia takes a bite).*

Melatonia: Ach, yes, dahlink Evilanka! Zeese googie ees sveerter zan za varm bloodt of a dark night's bassions! *(As she chews, her facial expression changes from delight to horror.)*

Melatonia *(melting)*: But Dahlink- I zought zey vere Nabisco's! Yaaaaaaaah.... *(She disappears in a puff of smoke, a pile of ashes remaining where she had been sitting.)*

Donny *(unmoved)*: Well, one down. That makes things easier. *(Pandemonium breaks out. The others panic, screaming, etc.)*

Donny: Calm yourselves and set your asses down. What the hell is wrong with you phonies? Didn't you ever see a little smoke before? Why are you working yourselves up over nothing? *(Attendees still panicking)* Shut your faces and listen to me. Her pre-nup was up in two days anyways. So it's no biggee. And don't even try and pretend you liked her, because we all know you didn't. So let's not waste any more time and get on with the show. *(Enter Lottie with a dustpan and brush.)*

Lottie: Would you like me to sweep up, Sir?

Donny: What the hell else are you gonna do with that dustpan and brush? Bake more cookies? Go on and clean it up.

Lottie: Yessir. *(Sweeping dust into pan.)* Shall I place the ashes in an urn, Sir?

Donny: Are you nuts? Urns cost money. Just toss her inna paper bag until we figure out where we're gonna dump her. And toss them cookies in there with 'er.

Lottie: Of course, Sir. *She finishes cleaning up. Aside:* I think I'll just put what's left of her into my mojo bag. No tellin' if I might need the ingredients later. *(Exits carrying brush, dustpan, and bag.)*

Donny: So if there aren't any more interruptions, let's get this thing going. I don't want to be hanging around here all day with a buncha disgusting parasites like you. What's next on the agender?

Rootie: Perhaps the reading of the will, Sir?

Donny: I know that. Why are you holding things up?

Rootie: Sorry, Sir. If you'd like, I'm ready to start as soon as you give me the word.

Donny: Yeah? And what word would that be? It's not like some kinda mystery word like "abracadabra" is it? Or do you need a password like my kids' names or something? Because I'm always forgetting them.

Rootie: Any word at all will do, Sir. Just tell me to begin and I will begin.

Donny: Are you sure? How about "porkchop"? Will that work?

Rootie: Absolutely, Sir. Whatever word you'd like.

Donny: Then what are you waiting for? "Porkchop." Ok? Now let's get goin'. Let's not drag this out more than we got to.

Rootie: Right, Sir. Porkchop. *Addressing the assembly.* Good evening! As you all know, we are gathered here today for the reading of the will and final testament of our friend, parent and benefactor, Donny J. Bonespurs.

Donny *(interrupting)*: Listen, Dummy- we all know why we're here. Do you think everybody's as stupid as you are? Just get on with it and stop wasting more time. If each minute you're wasting was a penny, you'd be a millionaire in an hour.

Rootie: Sorry, Sir.

Donny *(interrupting)*: And what did I tell you about saying you're sorry? Do we have to go over that again? When are you gonna learn to stop making lame excuses for your incompetence? And your mug still doesn't look sorry when you say you're sorry.

Rootie: I'll move along then, Sir.

Donny (*interrupting*): You don't hafta say you'll move along. Just do it and stop procrastinate... procrastinate... stop stalling already.

Rootie: "I, Donny J. Bonespurs, resident of Park Bonespurs, Manhattan; Bonespurs Towers, Manhattan; Mierda-a-Lot-Oh, Florida; The White House, Washington D.C.; and Jamaica Estates...

Donny (*interrupting*): There you go again! They already know who I am- you don't need no telephone book! Move!

Rootie: ...without any pressure from any person, (*coyote howls*) and being of sound and disposing mind, (*a second coyote howls*) memory, (*another coyote joins in*) and understanding (*a fourth coyote joins in, all 4 howling*) do hereby make publish and declare this to be my Last Will and Testament...

Donny (*interrupting*): We all know that already! Jesus! Can't you just get to it?

Rootie: ...hereby revoking all wills and codicils at any time heretofore made by me, to avoid any dispute or difference regarding my moveable and immovable properties after my death. For information purposes at the time of this will I am the husband of Melatonia the 4th...

Donny: We're gonna have to change that part.

Rootie: ...divorced from Melatonia the 1st, divorced from Melatonia the 2nd and divorced from Melatonia the 3rd.

Donny: Why do you gotta bring all that up? Just speed it up, willya?

Rootie: I am blessed with three children: Donny Jr., Herrlick and Evilanka, all well-settled in their respective lives and they have looked after me very well.

Donny: Blessed? They looked after me? You gotta be kiddin'!

Rootie: Life is uncertain, and I do not know when I will leave this bountiful world and be called to eternal paradise, (*4 coyotes howl*) therefore I want to make the settlement of all my worldly estate so as to avoid any difference or dispute over sharing my properties among my legal heirs.

Donny (*aside*): Yeah- that's a good one! Wait 'til they hear who gets the dough! Ha!

Rootie: Therefore, I am making this present will. So long as I am alive, I will continue to be owner of my properties. However, after my death...

Donny (*triumphantly interrupting*): I'll still have it! Because I've decided that I'm going to be my own heir- and I'm leaving it all to me! To me! Did you hear that? To me! (*The attendees are confused and puzzled, not understanding what Donny meant. "What did he say?" "Did you hear that?" "Is he kidding?" "It's gotta be a joke!" etc.*) Ha! I bet you dummies thought you could play me for a sucker! As if I was gonna leave it all to you! I bet you're for real sorry now!

Enter Messenger rushing in, breathing heavily.

Messenger (*wheezing, but standing tall*): Wheeew! Gotta catch my breath. I'm not getting any younger! But here I am at last! I been huntin' all over for you, Mr. Bonespurs, an' they finally tol' me you're here and I guess they weren't kiddin' 'cause here ya are! *Looks around and realizes that he has interrupted an important conference.* Jeez! I'm so sorry for interruptin' you big wigs, but it can't be helped. This here message I got for Mr. Bonespurs is labeled "Top Priority," an' it's from his chief financial officer, Mr. Weaselburger. I gotta deliver it pronto or boy oh boy will the boss be mad!

Donny (*ecstatically, triumphantly*): Give it here, Boy, and make it snappy. Come on; come on! Let's have it. Bing bing bing! Bang, bang, bang! Boom, boom, boom! Let's go- while we're young. We don't have all day. Look at you! Shouldn't you have been retired to the glue factory by now?

Messenger: Here you be, Mr. Bonespurs- and best of luck to you!

Donny: Yeah, yeah. Brains. It's brains. Luck has nothing to do with it. You can shove luck up your ass for all the good it'll do you. Now beat it- you're fouling the air. (*exit Messenger, smiling beatifically*)

Donny: Now let's see what good news Weaselburger has for me! The market's been good-real good. I can't wait to see how much richer I am today than I was yesterday. Ha! It's great to be rich! But you bums'll never know what it feels like, will you? (*Unseal the envelope and passes the message to Steppen*) Here: You read it.

Steppen: Thank you, Sir. "This letter is to inform you... 'Oh my God! Oh my God!'... that due to the collapse of the Crypto market and your recent conversion of your entire portfolio of assets to this speculative area..." 'Oh my God! Oh my God'... (*drops letter laughing hysterically*) Ha ha ha! I'm heading for Canada... if they'll take me... (*exits, still laughing hysterically*)

Donny: Huh? Are you some kind of smart aleck joker or what?

Rootie (*retrieving message and reading*): "... your current worth of ninety-two cents... 'Oh my God! Oh my God!'... cannot cover your outstanding obligations..." 'Nooooooo! Noooooo!

Nooooo!.... *(drops message and exits running)* Bankruptcies! Bankruptcies! More fucking bankruptcies!

Donny: What's he talkin' about? What bankruptcies?

Donny Jr. *(retrieving message and reading)*: "...Please be advised that your debtors are taking legal measures to seize any and all moveable and immoveable holdings you may have remaining..." *(drops the message; removes a huge bag of cocaine from his pocket; sticks his face into it and takes a huge hit, dust flying in all directions, his face powdered white)* That settles it. I'm movin' to Russia. Northern Russia. As far away as I can get. *(exits yelling "Hey Vlad!! Hey Vlad! It's me! It's me!!")*

Donny: Uhhh- is there something goin' on here I should know about?

Jarhead *(retrieves the message; reads)*: "... including, but not limited to, your vehicles- including ships and aircraft- your domiciles and all their furnishings, and your personal wardrobe..."

Evilanka *(furious)*: Oh Daddy, Daddy- how could you? *(exits devastated, repeating "Oh Daddy, oh Daddy...")*

Jarhead: I shoulda listened to my old man when he warned me about these people. *(drops the message and follows Evilanka offstage, disgusted)*

Donny *(scratching head)*: Something tells me we might have a problem...

Liara *(picks up the message and continues reading it)*: "...We strongly urge you to contact your legal counsel to institute immediate bankruptcy filing and debt consolidation."

Herrlick *(interrupting Liara)*: Does this mean we don't get the golf course?

Liara: Shut up, you idiot!

Herrlick: Not even the miniature golf course?

Liara: Oh, the fool! The fool!

Herrlick: Not even the sammich I left in the fridge?

Liara: I'm surrounded by idiots! *(drops the message; exeunt Liara with Herrlick chasing after her)*

Herrlick *(unseen; only his voice)*: Hey Liara! Wait for me! Wait for me!

Donny *(picks up the message; rotates it a few times)*: Well, I guess I'll have to read it myself. *(reads, mumbling to himself, growing increasingly disturbed)*: "...inform you... 'blah, blah'..."

colla... collap... collapse... 'Collapse? That's bad!'... Cry... Cry... 'Oh! Crypto!'... net worth... ninety-two cents... 'What? Ninety-two cents? Ninety-two fucking cents?'... *(trembling)* can... can... cannot co... co... cov... cover... 'blah, blah, blah'... ob... ob... obli... ob-li-ga-.... ob-li-ga-tions..." *(begins to cry, then laughs maniacally)*: Obligations! Ha ha! I got obligations! Bing, bing bing! Bang bang bang! Boom boom boooooom! Ha ha ha! I got obligations! That's right! Me! I got 'em! I got the best obligations! Ha ha ha! And ninety-two cents! Ha ha ha! *(begins to cry)* Bing bing bing! Bing bing bing! Bang bang! Boom boom boooooom! Ha ha ha! And ninety-two cents! Ha Ha! Bing bing! *(pulls off his wig and swings it like a lasso, etc.)* Ha ha ha!... I still got my hair! He he heeeeeee! Bing bing! Hee hee! Bing bing bing! They forgot to take my hair!! Ha ha! And ninety-two cents! Ha ha ha! Hee hee hee! Bing bing bing!!! I showed them! Ha ha! Boom boom boom!!! Hee hee hee!!! I showed them! *(continues in this fashion, laughing, crying, tossing his wig and catching it repeatedly, drooling etc. The actors can improvise more madness.)*

Enter Two Guards, dressed in white coats. They place Donny, who is still ranting, babbling, drooling, laughing, and sobbing maniacally, in a strait jacket and lead him away. The wig drops to the floor and is left behind. Enter Uncle Noodles. He sees the wig and kicks it aside.

Uncle Noodles *(philosophically addressing the audience from the center of the stage.)*: Tsk. Tsk. But don't you good folks fret none- you gotta know dat dis was all just one big, beautiful gag on Donny- not dat he'll find it funny if he ever understands it. Yeah. It's a shame how he's never laughed... until now, dat is- but I'm sure a good laugh will help him get over da shaky fantoids eventually. Yeah, yeah. I find it very therapeutic. Yeah- and you guys had it figured right all along: I did forge dat letter, an' I gotta hand it to myself: It came out pretty good for a guy wit' only a turd-grade education. So don't worry about Donny losing all dat dough. It might not seem fair right now, but in da big scheme of tings, guys like him always wind up wit' plenty. An' don't worry about him poisonally. I'm sure dat Donny will do just fine at da Institute Psychiatrique where he's being sent as I speak, dough it might take him a few years before he can feed himself and maybe pull up his own trousers. I'm a poisonal pal an' client of Dr. Bergerac- you mighta hoid of him; he's da head honcho what runs da joint- an' lemme tell ya, if he can't cure da boss, nobody can. Trust me. I know. Just look at how I toined out! Not totally awful. Right? As for da udders- da kids, da lackies, da hangers- on an' moochers- oh well: Let 'em think it's for real; let 'em believe dat Donny's really busted. I ain't tellin' 'em any different- namely dat I faked da letter an' dat it was all just another hoax. Especially dat ditzy Evilanka and my selfish nephew who shoulda had me sprung months ago but instead kept me locked up in da cooler at Rahway until dey needed my soivices. Eventually dey'll figure out my one big, beautiful joke on deir own, but until den, while da courts straighten out dis nutty mess, dey can fend for demselves regardless

of where dey've relocated to. Ha ha on dem. But I'm sure- an' dis is da main point I wanna leave yas wit'- I'm positive dat sooner or later dey'll all get deirs. I mean, if dere's any justice left in dis woild- an' you can see by my example dat dere's plenty- dey gotta get what's comin' to 'em. Don't youse tink so too? (*Curtain falls, "Give a Little Whistle" playing.*)

Gene Burshuliak

January, 2026

