

Restorantè
A comedy in one-act
by
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CHARACTERS

MICAELLA	A somewhat crazed, Italian waiter, or so he says.
BARNACLE	A young, penny-pinching musical producer.
VINCENT	Barnacle's friend. A playboy and heir to a large fortune.
RUPERT	Barnacle and Vincent's friend. Secretly one of the gods of the Internet.
NICHOLAI	Originally from Soviet Russia. Owner of the restaurant. Fervently American.
KAREN/ANASTASTIA	Nicholai's wife. As Karen she is an attractive, former tour-guide from Denmark. Her english is flawless and speaks with an affected, though not really foreign, accent. Anastasia is Karen's alter-ego, from Soviet Russia, and speaks with a Russian accent.
INSPECTOR BIZÉT	An English detective.
OLD MAN	An insane old man.

TIME

Around the present.

SETTING

A decent Italian restaurant.

Scene 1

(An Italian restaurant. An old man, dressed strangely, sits slumped over at a bar, upstage. Micaella, dressed in his waiter uniform, walks across the stage carrying a dish. Noticing something infinitesimally wrong with one of the tables, he goes over and fixes it in a terribly overdramatic way. Satisfied, he exits. Barnacle, Vincent & Rupert, walk into the restaurant. They are dressed in nice clothes.)

VINCENT

And that is what is so amazing about the Lexus.

(Micaella suddenly appears.)

MICAELLA

(in a heavy Italian accent)

Ah...table for two, no three?

BARNACLE

Yes, we had a reservation.

MICAELLA

Yes, of course. Very good, very good, my name is
(pauses)

Micaella. Yes, a please follow me, I will show you wonderful people to our best table. This table is the best. Better than any table we have. Very good, very good. You,

(to Rupert)

sit here, it is our best seat. You

(to Vincent)

over here next to la signor importante. And you

(rudely, to Barnacle)

you sit where ever you want.

(to all three)

I get you your menus now, our very best menus.

VINCENT

Thanks.

MICAELLA

Please make yourselves comfortable.

(Micaella goes to get menus.)

RUPERT

Isn't this guy acting a bit strange?

VINCENT

No, he's just being nice, that's what they're like in Italy.

BARNACLE

No, I think he's completely insane.

(Micaella returns)

MICAELLA

For you signor.

(gives a menu to Rupert)

This menu has never been used before, it is the last, new menu. It is our greatest menu.
For you.

BARNACLE

(clearing his throat)

Um hum.

MICAELLA

So sorry,

(speaking to Vincent)

you, menu is very good, take.

(to Barnacle, again rude)

You, here. I give you a couple minutes to decide. We also have all you can eat buffet,
14.95, very cheap, very good.

(Micaella leaves.)

RUPERT

Okay, that one is definitely a nut.

VINCENT

Relax, this is a celebration isn't it. This is just part of the fun, right.

BARNACLE

Shall we order...this stuff is kinda expensive. \$24.95 for fish. \$27.95 for fish. Rupert and I have only come here for lunch, the prices are twice as much. Who do these people think they are?

VINCENT

Yeah, don't you hate that, when dinner is sooo much more expensive then lunch, woooooee.

RUPERT

The fetticani alfrado ala morata potati looks good to me. Delicate pasta tubes filled with fresh from the sea trout cubes, dashed with fine mozzarella cheese, fresh herbs and spices with delicious home grown potatoes in a secret for generations passed down garlic sauce.

BARNACLE

I think I'm going for the buffet.

VINCENT

Well that fecusin afado moroit potatataitai sounds great. I'll get that.

RUPERT

Me too.

BARNACLE

No one wants to join me in the buffet? It's a feast for the senses.

(Micaella returns.)

MICAELLA

I can tell, you are ready to feast in our delicacies.

RUPERT

Oh, I'll have the...

MICAELLA

No, I can tell you what you want. You,
(to Rupert)

you are a man of fine tastes. A genius. You can see true beauty. You have the
(said very slowly and sensuously)

fetituni afafdo alnota potanti. You,
(to Vincent)

you are very smart, very wealthy. You stay in magnificent hotels, with big chandeliers, and long marble floors. You have much money and you love it. You have our most expensive dish. Fisapaool de porton da king.

(moving to Barnacle)

And you, you, you, you are very cheap. You are a miser and you don't leave me any tip. You are a evil man, you hate small children, you are a disgrace. You get the buffet. All you can eat. You make me a sick. You two, I bring you your dishes. You, go to the buffet. I be a right back. Eh, maybe something to drink. No wine though, my stupid boss lost the liquor license. He too is a fool.

(aside)

All I need is a chance to make it myself. Some money, I do anything.

RUPERT

(pretending to agree)

Oh yeah, yeah, uh huh...

(Micaella leaves.)

RUPERT

I wanna go, that guy is scaring me.

BARNACLE

I'm gonna go to the buffet.

(Barnacle goes to the buffet and helps himself.)

VINCENT

Rupert, you have to pretend as if you're in their country. That's the way they act. They're very open.

(Micaella returns and walks by the old man. The old man distracts Micaella and then furtively pours poison on the dish, unbeknownst to Micaella.)

MICAELLA

(to Rupert)

Here signor, your dish is of course a ready.

(Micaella places the dish on table and gives Rupert a mock eating demonstration)

Forkee...Kniffee...eattee....Yes, yes, yes.

(to Vincent)

You sir, couple more minutes.

(Micaella leaves)

(Barnacle walks back with a plate of food and sits down.)

BARNACLE

What'd I miss?

VINCENT

Rupert got his dish. We should get started, before everything gets cold.

RUPERT

Looks okay, where's the pasta?

VINCENT

Just try it, you'll love it.

RUPERT

Okay, I'm open, I'm having fun, I'm having new dishes, trying new things...Mmmm, this is good, but there's no garlic on these potatoes, and there isn't any pasta,

(poking through the dish)

this is yours Vincent.

VINCENT

Oh, pass it over.

(As Rupert is passing the pasta he drops the dish - and slumps down to the table, as having just died.)

BARNACLE

Rupert, Rupert, are you okay?

VINCENT

He's such a kidder.

BARNACLE

Vincent, I think the collapse into a plate of food joke when out of style a little while ago.

VINCENT

He's fine, maybe the wine got to him?

BARNACLE
He didn't have any wine.

VINCENT
That's a good point. Rupert, games over, ha ha.

BARNACLE
Check his pulse.

VINCENT
(said in a jubilant George from *Seinfeld* way)
No pulse!

BARNACLE
What do you mean "no pulse"?

VINCENT
I mean, I think Rupert's dead.

BARNACLE
That's a shame.

VINCENT
Yeah, he was a really good guy.

BARNACLE
Sure, but uhh, why don't you check his wallet.

VINCENT
What?

BARNACLE
We can at least have him pay for the meal. It'd be a nice final gesture.

VINCENT
You think they'll make us pay for a poisoned meal? I guess it could of just been bad fish.

BARNACLE
Oh yeah, the kind of bad fish that kills you within seconds.

VINCENT

Shouldn't we call an ambulance, and where is everybody?

BARNACLE

Yeah, good idea. You call, I'll see if anybody is around.

(They get up, Vincent goes to the phone, Barnacle searches.)

VINCENT

Phone doesn't work.

BARNACLE

(calls out)

Micaella, Micaella.

(Barnacle notices the old man for the first time)

Who are you?

OLD MAN

Poda Puda. Campus to vinta zuba, dono, iz onde copa.

VINCENT

I said the phone's dead.

(pause)

Hello.

BARNACLE

You better come over here.

VINCENT

Okay.

BARNACLE

There's no one here, but him.

VINCENT

Who's him, who's he, or it whom's he, or whom his, or to is whom...

BARNACLE

I don't know, he's just rambling on, much like you.

OLD MAN
Buasta ca di who u burno Micaella.

BARNACLE
Did he just say Micaella?

VINCENT
I don't know, I wasn't listening.

BARNACLE
What do you mean you weren't listening?

VINCENT
I don't know, I faded out.

BARNACLE
The one witness to this whole thing, the one clue, and you decide to take a nap.

VINCENT
I see, we're the Surgeon General all of a sudden.

BARNACLE
You mean Attorney General, and shut-up. We have to get help for God's sake. I'll stay here, you run for help.

VINCENT
Why don't you go? I'd rather not perspire, this is Armani you know.

(Barnacle just stares at Vincent)

VINCENT
Okay, okay.

(Vincent walks to the door and finds it's locked)

VINCENT
It's locked.

BARNACLE
We have to get out of here.

VINCENT

What do you suggest?

BARNACLE

There has to be a back exit, through the kitchen maybe, try it.

(Vincent goes over to the other exit and finds it's also locked.)

VINCENT

It's locked.

BARNACLE

Alright, we have to break the window.

VINCENT

What, break the window? The suit? I not Charles Bronson you know, maybe more of a Charlie Sheen, Wesley Snipes.

BARNACLE

Uh-huh, well personally I'm not Charles Bronson either, or Omar Sharif for that matter, but we have to do this, it's our only shot.

VINCENT

Okay, on the count of three we'll run and smash through the window
(getting excited)
using our fertile bodies as shields against shattering glass and mayhem. Alright, one,
two..

BARNACLE

Why don't we just use chairs?

VINCENT

Good idea.

BARNACLE

Yeah, I know.

(They both take chairs.)

VINCENT

On the count of three, with manly energy, one, two, three.

(They throw chairs, chairs don't break glass, an alarm sounds)

BARNACLE

Great idea.

VINCENT

It was your idea.

BARNACLE

You're the one who was going to be the human pinball.

VINCENT

True, but, oh who cares? The buffet still looks hot, want to get a bite?

BARNACLE

Sure, might as well, who knows, maybe someone will come.

(Barnacle and Vincent go to the buffet.)

BARNACLE

Looks good, try it.

VINCENT

My pleasure, mmmn, excellent.

(Micaella returns.)

MICAELLA

Ah, I miss a'you. Food is very good, no. Ah, I see your friend very tired, take nap.

VINCENT

No, we think he's probably dead, especially by now.

MICAELLA

You, very funny man, yes, yes, you the Joke-Man, tell joke, ha-ha.

BARNACLE

Could you call an ambulance, we really think he's dead.

MICAELLA

It was not the food, we do a nothing, I know a nothing, your friend call his own ambulance.

BARNACLE

You can't be serious.

VINCENT

(to Barnacle)

I don't understand, the Italians aren't usually like this. Could be he's just tired.

MICAELLA

You must excuse me, I gotta run.

(Micaella leaves.)

BARNACLE

Wait, call an ambulance, or the police.

(pauses)

We have to get out of here, that guy is driving me crazy.

(Micaella returns.)

MICAELLA

I bring you check now, that's a funny line right. I not bring you check to take money out of bank, you give us money. What's the word for list of charges at meal, not check eh?

VINCENT

Bill.

MICAELLA

Yes, yes, Bill, not a Bill Clinton though. He started the bans on the terrorist groups, not so good, I hate this Bill Clinton, and this Hillary, ah, first of all she is ugly, her face make me a sick in my stomach! I hate her. I bring you a bill.

(Micaella leaves.)

BARNACLE

Wait Micaella...God, there's something off with that guy.

VINCENT

Well, he is Italian, they're very emotional people. In fact, all the Italians are very emotional. I remember from my many trips to the country how all the people were

always so enraged, or impassioned. You know, it's from the wine. They drink wine constantly.

BARNACLE

(doubting)

Oh really?

VINCENT

Sure, absolutely, that's why they're all drunks, because of the wine. There's nothing wrong with Micaella, he's just Italian. Anyway, how's the job going?

BARNACLE

Well right now I'm working on putting together a show that's a takeoff of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*.

VINCENT

I never can get enough of him.

BARNACLE

Tell me about it, but anyway, my version is going to be called *Cat*, and instead of using people, the actors are going to be real cats. That way you don't have to pay them anything. I'm still in the midst of writing the songs, but it's going to be something.

VINCENT

Oh ah, of course, that sounds great.

(Micaella returns.)

MICAELLA

I have the bill, the bill, for you, the bill, bill bill, it's a good word, say bill.

VINCENT

Bill.

BARNACLE

I'm not saying bill.

MICAELLA

Ah funny, you say I no say a bill, but you say a bill. Anyway, here the bill, not so much money, but service very good eh. I come back real soon.

OLD MAN

Naw, comma, overto hera, speka, you speaku, comma.

(Micaella walks over to Old Man.)

MICAELLA

You shut up. Nobody interested in your meaningless banter, you're a nut, a crazy old fool, let these people alone, they are nice people.

OLD MAN

Maimana, go sey kima, ta poki.

MICAELLA

If you don't shut up, I take care of you right now, introduce you to my gun, eh?

(There's a knock at the front door. Bizét is standing outside the restaurant.)

BIZÉT

Hello, any one there, oh hello, would you care to open the door. I'm detective Bizét, I've come to investigate the, eh, alarm sounding.

MICAELLA

What he say, my hearing not so good.

VINCENT

(loudly)

He said open the door.

MICAELLA

Oh, I no have key, too bad.

BARNACLE

Well go and get it, I'm sure there's somebody around here with a key.

MICAELLA

I look, be back.

(Micaella leaves)

BIZÉT

Oh hello, hello, can you open the door. Is it a bother?

VINCENT
We don't have the key.

BIZÉT
I see, can you get it?

VINCENT
We're working on it.

BIZÉT
Okay, I'll be in the pornography store across the street in the meanwhile.

VINCENT
Okay.

Scene 2

(This scene takes place in a tiny office. The restaurant should still be in full view, though unlit. Barnacle and Vincent eat. Nicholai is dressed in a jacket without a tie and with several buttons of his button-down shirt left undone. He sits at a table or desk. Anastasia is standing by his side dressed in all black. Fiongata, a businessman, is sitting across from Nicholai.)

NICHOLAI

(in his heavy Russian accent)

Our society, it is a joke. These people, they throw their parties, they were this t-shirt and jeans, they eat this fried chicken and this pizza, and they love the grease. They take the buckets of grease and they slobber it over their faces and they ask for more. They are like whores, selling themselves for the grease. When I first came to this country, the children ate fruit and they loved it. They ate baked chicken and turkey and they grew up strong to fight the Russians. But now, the Cold War is over, and Russia is like dust in American eyes, they buy Dustbuster and forget about it. And so they become fat, and obese, because they no Russians to fight. And the workers, why should they care if they do anything. They play bridge and read paper, because without the Russians their work is meaningless. But, if the American people believed that the evil empire was once again in power, America would be a paradise. If we could only make the tanks again and our bomber jets and our big guns we would all be happy. And so now, I call on you to help the cause.

FIONGATA

You want me to give you money to recreate the communist empire?

NICHOLAI

Precisely. Look at England, they once had a beautiful monarchy. If they would only go back it would be absolutely magnificent. You would have order and productivity. Instead of the rancid smell that spreads throughout the world from it. Here too in the United States, if we just put back our cold war system, everyone would be happy.

FIONGATA

So what do you plan to do with my money?

NICHOLAI

We, the Progressive Front for the Liberation of Mind, PFLM, or Piflum, hope to restore the United States to its former greatness by eliminating certain key figures that are helping to destroy any chance Russia has for renewed communism, and therefore US happiness. With your money we will be able to take out high ranking officials and businessmen, and especially those involved with this Internet. We must stop all information and interaction between the former USSR and the US. This will finally lead us to peace and happiness in our country.

FIONGATA

I don't know, how will the assassinations restore communism throughout Russia?

NICHOLAI

Please Fiongata, do not bother me with petty details. Come, give us your bank cards and codes.

FIONGATA

I think I better leave.

NICHOLAI

Ah, I find that very hard to believe. Anastasia, take care of Mr. Fiongata.

ANASTASIA

(bows head)

Da.

(Anastasia, Nicholai, and Fiongata disappear, as does the entire office.)

Scene 3

(Back to the restaurant. Micaella is looking around the stage for the key, Barnacle sits, Vincent has gone to the bathroom offstage.)

BARNACLE

Any luck with that key?

MICAELLA

Not a yet, but soon. Ehh, you must excuse me for a minute, I gotta make a phone call.

BARNACLE

Where? The phones dead. If the phone wasn't dead we would call an ambulance.

MICAELLA

You getting smart with me, I know the phones a dead,
(takes his cellular phone out)
but not my cell.

BARNACLE

You had that the whole time?

MICAELLA

Of course, very useful, you might never know when you gotta phone home. Eee, tttee, get it, ha-ha.

BARNACLE

The thought of calling an ambulance didn't even cross your mind, did it?

MICAELLA

You quite down, cellular phone bills are not eaten by this cookie monster, they don't disappear, very expensive. Anyway your friend's a dead, and the inspector is here, everything's OK.

BARNACLE

Okay, whatever.

(While Micaella makes his call, Barnacle begins to sing a song from *Cat*, "Cat's Aren't Bitches, Bitches Are Dogs.")

Cats, we got attitude,

Cats, we got fortitude,
 If your walking down the street,
 and a cat in your way,
 then that is were he or she will surely stay,
 and if you dare to call it a bitch,
 then it will yell back in it's secret cat language,
 Chorus: Cats aren't bitches, bitches are dogs.

(Barnacle repeats the chorus several times as Micaella finishes his phone call. Micaella then joins Barnacle and the two sing and dance several refrains of the chorus, after which Micaella exits. Vincent then returns from the bathroom. Barnacle is still singing.)

VINCENT

Hey, what you doing?

BARNACLE

Oh just humming a little something from *Cat*.

(Micaella returns.)

MICAELLA

A lookee here, guess what I have?

BARNACLE

The key.

MICAELLA

Ah yes, lucky guess eh?

BARNACLE

Well actuall...

VINCENT

Barnacle, please, the Italians don't like to argue with foreigners.

(Bizét knocks.)

MICAELLA

(to Bizét)

Okay I gotta key.

(Micaella goes and opens the door. Bizét walks in carrying a shopping bag from the pornography store.)

MICAELLA

Ah welcome inspector, did you find anything at the store?

BIZÉT

Truthfully the selection was not spectacular, not like, let's say jolly ole' London's shops, but...

MICAELLA

So what's in the bag?

BIZÉT

Oh nothing, nothing at all.

(pointing at Rupert)

Anyway, is that person dead?

MICAELLA

Absolutely.

BIZÉT

Good, good, it always makes everything much easier when it's plain old murder. A lot less paper work if you know what I mean. Anyway, let me get a lock on the situation. This guy's dead, you're the waiter, you're the guys friends, that's the old man, and the place was locked before I got here.

VINCENT

How'd you figure all that out?

BIZÉT

Oh, intuition, you must have intuition to be a detective haven't you?

MICAELLA

Ah, I must commend you on your rug inspector, it is a beautiful rug. You must have had it hand crafted from the real sheeps and goats, in the finest shop in all of Eurasia. It is much a delight.

BIZÉT

I am not wearing a toupee. This
(points to head)
like all my body parts, is the real thing.

MICAELLA

No, no, no, I know a piece when I see one. That, is a piece. I know that if I was to say, mush my hands around in your hair like a brazen animal, I could confirm it is indeed a piece.

BIZÉT

Are you challenging me?

MICAELLA

Are you afraid?

BIZÉT

Certainly not, I come from one of the most honorable families in all of London. Was it not great-great-grandfather Bizét himself that fought the ten last, silent years of the 110 year war literally by himself. I accept your challenge.

(Micaella puts his hands in Bizét's hair and begins to work his hands around. At this time Nicholai and Anastasia walk in. Nicholai is wearing the same thing as in the previous scene, Anastasia has now disguised herself as Karen, a cheerful Dane with a slight accent, wearing leather pants.)

NICHOLAI

The door wasn't even locked, magnificent.

(Micaella continues working his hands around in Bizét's hair, and then forcefully rips out a moderately sized clump of hair.)

BIZÉT

You just pulled out my hair.

MICAELLA

I know, I found a piece.

BIZÉT

That was a piece all right, a piece of my real hair.

MICAELLA

Ah, it did seem a little bit too well attached. Anyway sorry. My boo-boo. But it sure looked like a piece.

BIZÉT

The nerve of you. Well at least the finest family in all of the greater London area's honor is still as tall as an English Scottish terrier in New South Wales during hunting season. Oh, now where was I?

NICHOLAI

What the hell is going on here? It is I, Nicholai owner and proprietor of this fine establishment. This is my beautiful and seductive wife Karen, I demand an explanation.

BIZÉT

Allow me to explain Professor Nicholai.

NICHOLAI

But I am not a professor?

BIZÉT

I see, anyway, to continue, this man is dead.

(points to Rupert)

The cause of death is not yet known, but will shortly be determined. These two gentleman were dining in the establishment at the time of death. There is a waiter, and that elderly, though rather deranged looking man who appears to be foaming a the mouth is a bit of a mystery, perhaps you can explain?

NICHOLAI

Who the fuck are you?

BIZÉT

Ah yes, of course. I am Detective Jean Luke Bizét. I responded to an alarm set off at your restaurant and I am in the process of investigating as we speak. You see, I have one of the foremost minds in all the world. My powers of deduction and conclusion are unmatched in all the world of criminology. In fact, I have now deduced the cause of death of our kindly departed comrade. Anyway...

NICHOLAI

You are full of crap and you bore me. Get out of my restaurant.

BIZÉT

I guess it's safe to assume you're not a descendant of the royal family, eh?

NICHOLAI

What, do you mock me?

BIZÉT

All in good time. Now allow me to continue. The motive for the murder was simple, your friend was wanted by an international syndicate. A group so powerful and with power so far reaching that I hesitate to even mention their name. But, I will - The Piflum. The Progressive , and I might add aggressive, Front for the Liberation of Mind. An organization devoted to re-establishing the Soviet communist empire in hopes of a renewed Cold War and henceforth, a rejuvenated United States of America. Their means the assassination of key officials, and specifically Internet big shots.

BARNACLE

So why would they kill Rupert?

BIZÉT

Enough, it is time you know the truth. I am indeed Detective Jean Luke Bizét, mind unparalleled in all the word, etc. But your friend Rupert is no Rupert. Rupert's real name is Dr. Heimund Von, known to the world as one of the twelve gods of the Internet. A man so powerful and with power so far reaching that I hesitate to even mention his name on the account that he could electronically wipe me off the face of the earth in seconds. Now that he's dead, no big deal. Anyway, Heimund, or Rupert, held the key to every domain, every inch of the Internet. He was the vast system's ruler, its king, and what he said went. Now he was a kind hearted soul and wanted to spread the Internet to all the world. His dream was e-mail for the homeless, but now I'm afraid it may never happen. Anyway, back at Interpol we got word that the Piflum was after Rupert, they wanted him dead. So I was assigned to follow Rupert around. But as it happens I was at this really happening club last night and this one fox was particularly captivating and before I knew it, it was late afternoon. And so Rupert slipped out of my hands. What a pity.

VINCENT

I can't believe this, how come Rupert never mentioned anything?

BIZÉT

Well the gods are quite secretive, don't really like to reveal themselves to mere mortals.

NICHOLAI

May I ask a question, why did you have your hair in my waiters hands when I entered?
Karen, sit.

(to Bizét)

You answer.

(Karen sits down.)

BIZÉT

Well...

MICAELLA

You see boss, I thought the detective had a rug on, and he said it wasn't, so I challenged him, and so I put my hands in his hair to check.

NICHOLAI

But that is a rug.

MICAELLA

That's what I said.

NICHOLAI

You're telling me that's not a hairpiece. Lies, all lies.

BIZÉT

I am not wearing any fake hair, or do you doubt me?

BARNACLE

Please detective, what's the cause of death?

BIZÉT

Ah yes, I believe, some sort of foul play was the cause of death.

BARNACLE

Well obviously there was some foul play, that's your big deduction?

BIZÉT

No, I meant that I think that the chicken was poisoned.

(waits)

Cute eh, fowl play. Anyway, now I will start my real investigation. If I could speak to each of one of you individually that would be most helpful. We'll start with the waiter.

(Micaella leaves.)

BIZÉT

Where's the waiter?

NICHOLAI

Ah, start with me. I am the most important anyway.

BIZÉT

Very well, Professor Nicholai.

NICHOLAI

Drop the professor.

BIZÉT

Very well, could we sit down over there.

(Bizét and Nicholai go off to the side and sit and talk. At this point Karen walks over to Barnacle and Vincent.)

KAREN

And hello.

(Karen holds out her hand for them to kiss it)

BARNACLE

Oh hello.

(kisses Karen's hand)

KAREN

(to Vincent)

And who are you?

VINCENT

My name is Vincent, ummm, this is Barnacle, you're Karen right.

KAREN

May I ask, what kind of car do you drive?

VINCENT

Me, I drive a Lexus.

KAREN

I thought so. I saw the Lexus parked outside, and oh I love the Lexus. It is so sleek and stealthy, with beautiful smooth curves - not like the boxy Mercedes which is what my pitiful husband drives. The Lexus is a true car. One day I would like to buy a Lexus.

VINCENT

Sure, it's a nice car.

KAREN

(to Barnacle)

You like the Lexus too, don't you?

BARNACLE

Oh yeah, I like it a lot.

(pauses)

So Vincent work's going well for you?

KAREN

Ah, I see that we will have some time on our hands, let me tell you about myself. I was born in Denmark, but until last year I was a tour guide in Italy. I would lead tours from Rome to places like Florence, Venice, Vaspochine, and many others. I lived outside of Rome. Now, housing inside of Rome is exorbitantly expensive. So many people put up houses, without the necessary permits, outside of Rome. And then sold these illegal homes for huge profits, as housing anywhere in the greater Rome metropolitan area is extremely desirable. Now I lived in a wonderful home that was completely legal. It had all the permits. But if you didn't have a water permit the water company wouldn't send water to your house. Of course the people without water permits needed to bath and clean themselves, so they would connect their water pipes to the homes that did have permits. Anyway, to get to the story. I was living in my house, enjoying myself, eating grapes and the like, when one day I get my water bill in the mail. It's 600,000 Lira, which is about 350 dollars. I know I like to take long showers, but not that long. Anyway, I take a day off work to go to the water company's office to clear up the mess. I speak to one of the clerks, I show him the bill, he checks their records and he tells me, 'no everything on the bill is right.' I'm not one to argue so I pay the 600,000 Lira and go home. I forget about it and go on. Now in Italy I was friendly with an Italian woman about my age that lived three houses down. And so we would often speak on the phone. A couple of days after I went to the water company I was on the phone with her, Lucia, and I invited her to have breakfast the next day. So she comes for breakfast and we sit down and were eating when I casually mention that last month my water bill was 600,000 Lira. And you know those times when you look at somebody, and they look at you, and you know they know what you want to know, well, she's looking at me and she says 'don't you know, your house is the only house on the block with a water permit. Everyone has their water hooked up to yours.' And I said oh my goodness and we laughed, and I worked out an arrangement with everybody on my block and everything was fine. It was quite a surprise.

BARNACLE

(sarcastically)

Wow, that's some story.

VINCENT

Yeah, you seem like you've had a fascinating life.

KAREN

Well, there was this other time I was guiding a tour in France. Now of course I like wine and while in France I thought I would sample some of the fine wines. In Italy I was used to drinking a bottle of wine a day. It went down smoothly and never upset my stomach. So when in France, I thought I would drink a bottle, as it was my daily routine. Well, when I finished that bottle I felt terrible, my stomach was aching.

OLD MAN

Stomach, a acha, ehh,ehh.

KAREN

Now you settle down. Where was I? Oh yes. Now shortly after the tour ended I returned to Italy. I forgot about my bad experience and continued on with my daily activities. But, several months later I had another tour to lead. And as luck would have it, it was a group of

(pause)

Canadian Wine Exporters. And so, I asked them, why did the wine of France upset my tummy. And they told me that Italians drink a large amount of wine. So they go through much of it quickly, and so it does not have to keep very long. But in France the people don't drink as much wine. So it is kept around longer and has to last for quite a while. Now sulfur is used as a preservative, and in Italy they just use a tiny bit to preserve the wine a short while. But in French wine they add quite a bit to preserve it longer. So the sulfur upsets my stomach. How amusing. Please excuse me while I use the rest room to perfect my make-up.

(Karen goes to the bathroom)

VINCENT

Wow, what a woman.

BARNACLE

Doesn't she seem a little odd to you?

VINCENT

Look at her, she's a goddess.

BARNACLE

Goddess might be a little overdoing it.

VINCENT

I'm going to ask her out.

BARNACLE

She's married to the Russian guy and for God's-sake, don't you think that's a little inappropriate to do considering the circumstances?

VINCENT

Just because Rupert died doesn't mean the parties over. I feel a congo-line coming on.

(Barnacle stares at Vincent.)

VINCENT

OK, just kidding. Oh here she comes. Wow Karen, those are great pants, are they leather?

KAREN

Why yes they are. I've had these pants for 17 years. I do housework in them, gardening, everything, they're wonderful. I got these pants at a terrific store in Florence. The Lorisa leather store. Now, it is a small shop, run by a small church on Plazubo Street. Their wonderful leather goods are half the price of the other Florentine leather stores and they make everything by hand. And 17 years ago I got these pants there. I've taken tours there many times. People love it, they have all types of leather goods. Leather gloves, leather hats, leather shirts, leather belts, leather shoes, leather socks. They even have leather waste paper baskets. They make wonderful presents. Some people buy 26 and pile them up in their suitcases as gifts. Now I'll give you the address and when you go, make sure to mention my name.

VINCENT

They're wonderful pants, don't you think Barnacle?

BARNACLE

Yeah, there great. Absolutely wonderful.

KAREN

Now if it's jewelry you're into, the best place for jewelry in all of Florence is the ICU jewelers. Here,

(takes map out of purse)

I have a map of Florence.

BARNACLE

Oh, the map is from the ICU jewelers, I see.

KAREN

Oh yes, what a coincidence. Anyway, the ICU jewelers is a wholesaler, so their prices are the best around. Now they sell for a couple of hours a day to the public from their offices. They offer the most beautiful gold jewelry in all the world. They use 20 Billion tons of gold a year. Now when you pay they will charge you the value added tax. Now if you spend more then 300,000 Lira, you can get back the tax. When you pay you get a form. Fill out this form and when you are leaving Italy and you get to the airport there will be a door, and if you knock on the door and take a step back, make sure to take a step back, behind the white line, and you wait a few minutes, a man will come out, and if you give him your form, and show him your passport, he will sign the form and give it back. Then drop it in the box next to the door. In 2 or 3 weeks you will get a check for the amount of the VAT delivered to you in the mail. Isn't that fabulous?

(Bizét gets up, comes to foreground)

BIZÉT

Okay, I've finished my heated interrogation of the Professor. He was intimidated by my great intellect, but unfortunately revealed little. Now let's see, who wants to be next?

VINCENT

Oh, I think the old guy said something about wanting to be next.

(At this point Nicholai motions over to Karen to come to him, and she walks over and sits down.)

BIZÉT

Very well, the old man shall be my next meal, ha-ha. Old man, come over here.

(The old man does not respond.)

BIZÉT

Very well, if it's bare knuckle cricket you want, you got it. I, Detective Jean Luke Bizét will come over to you.

(Bizét walks over to the old man)

BIZÉT

Sir what is your name?

OLD MAN

Lappa, down, kittan, deatha.

BIZÉT

This man obviously doesn't speak a word of English. Hmmm?

(Bizét ponders for a second, then Micaella pops back into the room.)

MICAELLA

May I be of some assistance? Allow me to translate.

BIZÉT

Very well. Ask him what his name is?

MICAELLA

Lola, de namo?

OLD MAN

De namo, Cosa Van Jesso.

MICAELLA

He says he has no name. He says he is a crazy old man and a fool.

(Old man does an exaggerated re-enactment of Rupert's death)

BIZÉT

Ask him what he is doing.

MICAELLA

No madda?

OLD MAN

To ta ku sa choke, choke.

MICAELLA

He says he has a piece of food caught in his throat, but don't worry, it's not serious. He's not gonna die, yet.

OLD MAN

Da re

(The Old Man points at Micaella and then re-enacts the death scene again pointing at Micaella and Nicholai.)

BIZÉT

Now what is he saying?

MICAELLA

He says he likes Nicholai and my shirts.

BIZÉT

What?

MICAELLA

Yes, this gesture

(does a choking gesture)

is a old Venician custom. It is like saying, I love your shirt so much, I could die. I tell you he's crazy.

BIZÉT

Ask him what he knows about Rupert's death?

MICAELLA

Rupert, no node deatha?

OLD MAN

Rupert, Rupert, di machi mode de vasto empiroe, Rupert,

(does death scene again, points to himself)

da mano.

MICAELLA

Ah, he says that the food here is wonderful. And I am a great waiter.

BIZÉT

So why did he keep on saying Rupert?

MICAELLA

Well because, he says, that, you know, that guy, you know the one, the one, the one we were talking about, he never heard of him.

BIZÉT

Well that's too bad, maybe I should bring him down to headquarters, get a real translator.

MICAELLA

Them the breaks, he doesn't know a thing, eh Pancho Villa, ha-ha.

BIZÉT

How dare you call me Pancho Villa, born Porotao Arango, then became known as Fransica Villa, a man who on March 9th, 1916 crossed the border from Mexico into Columbus New Mexico and killed none other than my great-uncle, Jean Van-Bizét the II, who happened to be vacationing there at the time. How dare you.

MICAELLA

I did not mean any harm, it was a joke, haha.

(Bizét rips two swords off the wall, throws one to Micaella)

BIZÉT

I challenge you to the death. On guard.

(Bizét swings his sword a couple times, not touching Micaella. Then Micaella, extremely scared, tries to flee.)

KAREN

(in a seductive tone)

Oh isn't there someone else you would like to question, perhaps me?

BIZÉT

Okay.

(Bizét gets rid of his sword and goes to Karen, shoing Nicholai away from her. They sit.)

BIZÉT

Now, tell me everything you know about what took place here today.

KAREN

Let me tell you a story. It is a bit of Tuscaninian humor. Oh the Tuskinianians. Their humor is so wonderful. Now, there was a woman whose closet door opened every time the bus went by her house. This was starting to annoy her, so she called a handyman to

fix it. So, the handyman is looking at the door, and he can't figure out what's wrong. The woman suggests that the handyman try to see what happens when the bus comes by from the inside, and so the man gets into the closet, closes the door, and waits for the bus to come by. Now, just right before the handyman gets into the closet the woman's husband comes back home on the last bus until the next day. And so the woman forgets about the man waiting in the closet. Now, the next morning the husband goes to get his new shoes from the closet. He opens the door and inside he finds the handyman standing there. And so the husband asks the handyman, 'what are you doing here' and the man says, 'I'm waiting for the bus.' Ha, ha , ha, what a wonderful story.

BIZÉT

You don't know anything about this case do you?

KAREN

No.

BIZÉT

And if you did you wouldn't tell me.

KAREN

That's correct.

BIZÉT

Alright then, where's the waiter?

(Micaella starts to exit.)

BIZÉT

He must know something. You, come here. I want to talk to you.

MICAELLA

Ah, ready to order?

BIZÉT

No, I am not ready to order, I...

MICAELLA

I'll give you a couple more minutes then.

BIZÉT

No, no, no, I want to ask you a few questions.

MICAELLA

Oh, okay.

(Bizét motions for Micaella to come over to him. Micaella resists, a bit of high-jinks ensue, and Bizét finally gets Micaella to settle down.)

BIZÉT

Where are you from?

MICAELLA

Me, I'm from Italy.

BIZÉT

(sarcastically)

Really, where in Italy?

MICAELLA

A small town in the north,

(pauses)

Inspencione.

BIZÉT

Is it near any cities? I've traveled throughout Italy.

MICAELLA

No, it is not near one city.

BIZÉT

Mmmnn...

MICAELLA

Eh, which cities have you been in?

BIZÉT

Well, Milan, Rome, Florence.

MICAELLA

Ah Florence, Americans call it Florenceia, but in Italian it's Florence. Anyway it is a beautiful city. What are some of your favorite sites in Italy?

BIZÉT

Well of course the Vatican, the Sistine Chapel.

MICAELLA

Ah yes, the Vatican in Florence, beautiful.

BIZÉT

The Vatican is in Rome. There's just one Vatican and it's in Rome.

MICAELLA

No, no, you confused. There are two, one in Rome and one in Florence.

BIZÉT

No, I'm sure, anyone knows that the Vatican is in Rome.

MICAELLA

Oh yeah, you're right, and what other sites did you like?

BIZÉT

Well, the Coliseum is fascinating.

MICAELLA

What?

BIZÉT

The Coliseum, you've never heard of it?

MICAELLA

Which one is it?

BIZÉT

You know the huge arena, the really famous one.

MICAELLA

Ah yes, in Florence. It is a beautiful church, I have been there many times myself.

BIZÉT

No, it's also in Rome.

MICAELLA

Very good, very good. Anyway, I have some dishes to check on.

BIZÉT

I don't think anyone has ordered anything for quite some time.

MICAELLA

Ha, ha, very good.

(Micaella leaves)

BIZÉT

This is so frustrating, investigations usually go so well, but, oh, this time everything's going the wrong way. Nobody will tell me anything. I should just give up.

VINCENT

Come on, you're a great detective. Just come over here, we'll tell you everything we know, it's our pleasure to cooperate.

(Bizét comes and sits with Vincent, Barnacle and Karen.)

BARNACLE

Now we made reservations at the restaurant...

BIZÉT

Excuse me, but who is the great detective. I will ask the questions, you will answer.

(Bizét takes out a little pad and questions Vincent)

Now what is your name?

VINCENT

Vincent Brazil.

BIZÉT

Oh, and what do you do?

VINCENT

Well technically I'm an investment banker, but basically I'm just a heir to a huge fortune.

KAREN

Really, and you drive the Lexus, you must do very well.

VINCENT

Oh I do well. And would you be interested in a spin in my Lexus, how about tomorrow night. I'll pick you up about 7:30, we'll go out to dinner, maybe dancing?

KAREN

That sounds wonderful, but I'll have to ask my husband first.

VINCENT

Oh sure.

BIZÉT

Madam, would you mind leaving us alone before the footsie Olympiad begins. I must question these two gentlemen, and your presence, while pleasant, is none the less raining in on my parade, so to speak.

KAREN

I see, why I have never been treated so basely in my twenty eight, alright thirty...two years.

(Karen storms off to Nicholai)

BIZÉT

Now who are you?

(The lights dim, and Bizét, Barnacle, and Vincent go through a heated interrogation. They mime the interrogation using exaggerated movements. When the lights come up, the characters become audible and continue the interrogation normally. This sequence, as indicated, is repeated several times through the remainder of the scene.)

VINCENT

A restaurant is a canvas, and our waiter is a gifted painter, a genius. May I ask, does the Louvre let people paint on the Mona Lisa?

BIZÉT

Oh, aha, well...

(Lights dim, mimed interrogation ensues, lights come up)

BIZÉT

Was that your only motive Barnacle, pure friendship?

BARNACLE

What are you implying?

BIZÉT

Isn't it true that you wanted Rupert to invest in your show, because he didn't have a job, but always picked up the tab, and so you just assumed he had the bucks?

BARNACLE

Look, sure I wouldn't have minded in Rupert dropped a couple c-notes my way, but I wouldn't want to kill him because of that.

BIZÉT

Oh I know, I was just playing with your mind a bit...

(Lights dim, more mimed interrogation, lights come up)

BIZÉT

Wonderful! Don't you think it's so fitting that the poison tasted good. I love it when crime is so poetic, I'm almost on the verge of tears.

VINCENT

You're completely right. It's almost worth it for the irony itself.

BARNACLE

Detective, don't you think this is a little off topic?

BIZÉT

(upset)

I see, so everything I say is completely wrong, and you, you're just perfect?

BARNACLE

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

BIZÉT

(sullen tone)

It's okay.

VINCENT

(takes out tissue)

Tissue?

BIZÉT

(almost sobbing)

Thank you Vincent.

(Lights dim, more mimed gestures, lights go up)

BIZÉT

"stupid detective" eh, but your right Vincent, it's not much, but it's enough. You three, come out here.

(Micaella returns, Karen and Nicholai come to Bizét.)

BIZÉT

Everyone gather together, I want to speak to you.

(waits for them to get settled)

I have solved the murder. Let me recreate the story for you if that's not too big a waste of your time.

(the group nods)

Wonderful! The restaurant knows the group is coming because Barnacle makes reservations - although from the look of this place it's hard to say why - and they also order a cake, happy birthday Rupert. Now the day arrives, Rupert, Vincent, and Barnacle come into the restaurant, and they meet Micaella their waiter, who knows who Rupert is because he's come to the restaurant for lunch several times before. Then Micaella orders for everyone and a little while later brings Rupert his food. Rupert tries it and dies. Elementary.

NICHOLAI

You are wasting my time. Now these 1980's Lakers, they were beautiful, this passing, this Earvin "Magic" Johnson, like a fresh joy, I love it. Absolutely magnificent.

BIZÉT

If I could continue. Okay, so sometime before Rupert died, it is obvious that Micaella poisoned Rupert, Micaella is the murderer. The guy's got it written all over his face. He'll do anything for money. No big deal, we'll find the evidence later. But where my genius comes in is on the more important topic, who else is involved. If you will remember when Nicholai walked in he remarked "ha the door's not even locked." I caught this with my hyper-acute hearing. So he knew that the door was supposed to be locked, but how? The mystery was solved and the incrimination was revealed by Vincent's eavesdropping on Micaella's phone call. Micaella told the person on the other end that 'the door is locked, the guy is dead, and that I did everything you told me to do.' So it is you Professor Nicholai, the leader of the Piflum, don't think I didn't recognize you from you Piflum publicity pictures, who ordered this terrible execution. Can you deny it?

NICHOLAI

Yes. But I tell you, I wanted to murder him, I plotted for months to kill that man. I wanted to come and rip his heart out with my bare hands, to watch him die, to see the beauty of killing that obstruction to peace and tranquillity in our great country. But I don't know what the hell is going on. Somebody else killed him before I got the chance. Did you do it Micaella?

MICAELLA

No, I did everything you say, seat them, make them feel at home, give them delicious and tasty food. Then I was gonna serve them the cake with the eh, knock-out pills, and then call boss, to come and kill em. But I don't know, the guy died.

BIZÉT

If you didn't do it, who did?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

I know who did it. It was the crazy old man. He poisoned the food when he bothered Micaella.

BIZÉT

Okay, let's put that into the equation. It was the old man.

(points at the Old Man)

Can you deny it?

OLD MAN

Ha, ha, ha, la killa you alla.

BIZÉT

Get me the police on the phone, we have a murderer to prosecute. I thank you all for your time,

(speaking to Karen, Micaella, and Nicholai)

and I look forward to catching you three for future murders.

NICHOLAI

Magnificent work detective. But first a toast. Micaella, bring a bottle of our best wine.

(Micaella goes over to the bar. The Old Man hands Micaella a bottle of wine, and Micaella gets glasses. He hands the bottle to Nicholai, who begins to pour and distribute the wine.)

KAREN

No thank you, it's French.

VINCENT

I don't want any either then.

NICHOLAI

(toasting)

To the crazy Old Man!

(All but Karen and Vincent toast and drink, and soon start to make odd noises.)

BARNACLE

(experiencing pain)

Let me ask you a question, where did you get this wine from?

MICAELLA

From the old man.

NICHOLAI

We are all going to die aren't we?

BIZÉT

At least experience great pain. Quick all of us to the hospital, it's right across the street.

(They all leave except for Karen and Vincent. Bizét immediately returns to get his pornography bag.)

BIZÉT

My goodies!

(Bizét grabs the bag and runs out. Vincent takes out his car keys and dangles them in front of Karen.)

KAREN

Ahh, the Lexus.

(Blackout)

The End