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The Famous Healing Waters of Groesneck, Texas

A farce in two acts

By Don Zolidis

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Cast of Characters

BUD PEPPER, 40s-50s, the proprietor and owner of the Lost Axle Saloon.

MARY PEPPER, 40s-50s, his wife.

DUSTY PEPPER, 30s, Bud's younger sister that he has been raising for some time. A tomboy that can outfight, outswear, and outspit any man in town.

CATHERINE O'MALLEY, 30s, the local schoolteacher. A former sweetheart of Bud's. Prim and proper.

TODDRICK, 20s, he works for Bud and is sweet on Dusty.

REVEREND PARIS TOOHEY, any age, the local preacher.

LULU TOOHEY, any age, his wife, a firecracker.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, 40s-50s, a famous Scottish novelist.

LILIANA DE BORGIA, 30s-40s, his ex-wife, out for revenge. Fiery. Italian.

Setting: The Lost Axle Saloon in Groesneck, Texas. A small town clinging to life in the panhandle in 1886.

The Set: The main room of the saloon. Needed on stage are a door to the outside, perhaps with a dirty window or two, and two exits inside the saloon, one upstage of the bar, and one downstage of the bar.

Dialogue: A "/" indicates when the next line of dialogue begins – in general, this play should be done fast and furious. There are many moments when multiple things are happening on stage at once. Lean into the chaos.

As the lights rise, the Lost Axle Saloon is mid-transformation, from a dirty, unlit watering hole to a slightly less dirty, slightly less unlit spa. TODDRICK, 20s, is the person doing most of the work, trying his best to get everything ready, but doing a pretty poor job of it. He is assisted by MARY, and DUSTY who are scrambling to set everything up.

BUD PEPPER steps forward to talk to the audience.

BUD

Howdy. My name's Bud Pepper. This here is the Lost Axle Saloon in Groesneck, Texas. The year is 1886. We don't got a lot of time to put on this show for y'all, so I'm gonna explain a few things before we get started for real.

MARY

Are you gonna help, or are you gonna stand there and chit-chat with the audience?

BUD

I am *explainin'* the situation! Otherwise they're gonna be lost. Look at these people! They been out carousin' all night, they don't even know what day it is.

To the audience

That's my wife, Mary. I love her. She loves me. Which is why she is trying to improve me through constant criticism.

MARY

It ain't workin.

PARIS TOOHEY, the preacher, enters the saloon with a newspaper and sits at the bar while Bud speaks to the audience.

BUD

It all started when the preacher discovered a curious fact.

PARIS

Says here Robert Louis Stevenson is comin' to town.

MARY

Wow.

BUD

You don't say.

MARY

You don't know who that is, do you?

BUD

I know he's got three names so he's gotta be fancy.

(to the audience)

Turns out Robert Louis Stevenson is a famous Scottish author. Who knew?

DUSTY

Everybody knows that.

BUD

That's my little sister, Dusty, we'll get to her.
Well, this Stevenson fellow wrote a little novel by the name of Doctor Jefferson and Mr. Hippo.

DUSTY

Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

BUD

Same thing.

DUSTY

And *Treasure Island.* And all his travel writing. He's right famous.

PARIS *(reading from the paper)*

Apparently he's lookin' for the famous healing waters of Groesneck Texas to help with his many physical ailments.

BUD

He's got the wrong place. He's gonna get off the train, take one look around, and hightail it back to Scotland I tell you what.

MARY

He must be lookin for Gruenbeck, Texas. They got those salt baths there.

BUD

Imagine him when he gets off that train. `What have I got myself into?!'
He laughs

PARIS

Then he goes home and writes about it. `Groesneck Texas is the least healing place on Earth! I acquired six new ailments including rheumatism, arthritis, vertigo, lazy nose, wandering spleen - and a second wife!'
He laughs at his own joke

BUD *(to the audience)*

Which got me thinkin.

MARY

`Second wife' got you thinking, huh?

BUD

Do you mind?

MARY

You are takin' too long. It weren't even your idea, it was my idea.

BUD

Your idea was to seduce the poor bastard and have him marry Dusty –

DUSTY

What now?

BUD

Shush.

DUSTY

Who am I marrying?

MARY

At this rate, nobody.

DUSTY

Good.

MARY *(To the audience)*

Dusty is Bud's little sister. We been raisin' her for the past nine years. And this girl can outfight, outswear, and outspit any man in town.

Dusty spits.

And it is time for her to fly the nest, if you know what I mean. But she ain't interested in takin' wing.

DUSTY

Darn right.

BUD

We are off-track.

MARY *(to the audience)*

Here's what happened y'all.

To Bud

Why don't you get the preacher a drink instead of gossipin' with the audience and messin' up the entire play?

BUD

Fine.

Bud goes back to the bar

Let it be known that this man never pays for his drinks because he's a cheat and a liar and a man of the Lord.

PARIS

Amen.

MARY

I got to thinkin, that since Robert Louis Stevenson is a famous *travel* writer as well as author, if he was to write an account of his visit here, with the healin' waters and all, it would make us famous and rich and put us on the map.

BUD

One problem, we ain't got no healin' waters.

MARY

You had your chance to exposate, shush! One problem: we ain't got no healin' waters. Which is why we are creating this elaborate deception, transforming this two-bit saloon into a spa.

TODDRICK

Am I getting paid for this?

MARY

That's Toddrick, who works for us basically for free because he's sweet on Dusty and doesn't want anyone to know about it.

TODDRICK

What?!

MARY

Everybody knows it, baby. Except Dusty.

Dusty spits.

Toddrick sighs.

Dusty turns around to look at him –

Toddrick looks somewhere else.

The last person I got to introduce is the schoolteacher, Catherine O'Malley. Dusty's best friend.

CATHERINE O'MALLEY enters, looking like a prim and proper schoolteacher.

BUD

And nothing else.

MARY

And my husband's former sweetheart.

BUD

That was a long time ago! I was young. I made mistakes. I can't even look at her anymore.

MARY

You told me the other day she was pretty!

BUD

What?! No I didn't! I said she was pretty boring!

PARIS

No you said she was pretty. You said she'd still be pretty with a burlap sack over her head. I was sitting right here.

LULU enters.

LULU

You're always sittin' right there!

PARIS

Uh oh. My wife has discovered me.

MARY

Y'all? Do you mind? I'm tryin' to explain the situation to these people.

PARIS

I swear she is half-bat. She finds me through echolocation.

LULU

It ain't hard to find you, Schmoo. You don't move none.

MARY

Y'all? Table it.

BUD

That's Lulu, by the way.

LULU *(to Paris)*

I smell you. Like a bloodhound.

MARY

Anyways, Dusty told Catherine about this whole thing –

CATHERINE

Robert Louis Stevenson is coming here?!

MARY

Which was another problem.

CATHERINE

I love him! I mean not him as a person, I don't know him as a person, but his work, the way he writes, the way he plumbs the depths of human depravity! I have to meet him.

BUD

No. He is comin' here for rest and relaxation -

CATHERINE

In your *saloon?*

BUD

It's a spa now. Right, Toddrick?

TODDRICK

Workin' on it, Mr. Pepper!

BUD

You can't come near! He's a sick man. He can't bear to be in the presence of beautiful women!

MARY

Hold on now.

BUD

You think he just makes stuff up when he writes books? No! That Mister Hippo book? That's drawn from real life! He's got a chemical concoction that he drinks that transforms him into a monster of animal passion and unrestrained libido!

CATHERINE

Ooh.

BUD

You get those ideas out of your head, Catherine!

CATHERINE

You don't tell me what to do, Bud!

BUD

I see you got thoughts now! I see you thinking things! Stop it!

CATHERINE

I might just drop by.

BUD

You will not!

CATHERINE

I might have a powerful thirst when he arrives. Maybe I'll need to check out the spa. I feel a sickness comin' on.

BUD

Don't you dare set foot in this here spa!

CATHERINE

Maybe I'll explain everything to Robert Louis Stevenson. Perhaps over a romantic candlelit dinner.

BUD

This is why it never worked out between us. Because you are an obstinate mule-headed monster.

CATHERINE

You just watch me, Bud Pepper, I'm gonna meet Robert Louis Stevenson, and we're gonna talk about literature and life and travel and love and then we're gonna fall in love and we're gonna get married and move to San Francisco and we're gonna raise chinchillas.

BUD

What do chinchillas have to do with anything?!

CATHERINE

They're adorable furry critters and I'm gonna have a whole room full of them!

BUD

That's insane! They'd poop all over the place! You are a crazy woman!

CATHERINE

I'm a crazy woman that's gonna come to your spa!

MARY

So that happened. And then this.

Catherine and Dusty move to another part of the stage.
Catherine paces while Dusty chews tobacco.

CATHERINE

This is the most exciting thing to ever happen in this town! It gets so boring here, I need adventure! If I only could live a life by my wits riding the rails!

DUSTY

Sure.

CATHERINE

But what am I gonna do? I can't talk to him!

DUSTY

Why not?

CATHERINE

You know how I get around men! I clam up, I get all panicky –

DUSTY

You don't have any problem with my brother.

CATHERINE

Real men. I get so nervous I can't even speak.

DUSTY

Here's what you do: punch `em in the throat.

CATHERINE

What?!

DUSTY

Then they can't speak neither.

CATHERINE

I'm not sure that's the way.

DUSTY

Any man, no matter how big, you punch `em in the throat, they go down.

CATHERINE

If only there was a real drink that would unleash me from my inhibitions like in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I could be a completely different person.

DUSTY

Well that's a thought. You could be a completely different person. We both could. You shoulda heard both of `em goin' on and on about how I needed to act like a lady when he was here –

MARY *(to the audience)*

That part is true.

DUSTY

And I know why they said that and I know why they don't want you here. They think Robert Louis Stevenson is gonna want to marry *me*.

MARY *(to the audience)*

That is preposterous. That is not true.

BUD *(to Mary)*

That is exactly what you said. You said it would be like killin' two birds with one stone.

MARY
The point is to get him to write a glowing review of his time here –

BUD
And, if he so happened to fall in love with Dusty –

MARY
Ain't no man fallin' in love with Dusty!

BUD
Unless he was sick and near death. That's what you said.
Toddrick raises his hand

TODDRICK
I find Dusty enchanting.

MARY
This ain't about you. Relax.

DUSTY
Well I say we give `em what they want. Let's be *ladies*. And we'll beat `em at their own game. They want him to fall in love with me, nah, let's have him fall in love with *you.*

CATHERINE
Oh! Do you think it would be possible?

DUSTY
Sure. And let me tell you what, based on them books, this Scotsman ain't interested in a *lady*. He's gonna want a vixen.

CATHERINE
Oh!

DUSTY
An uninhibited, passionate tigress.

CATHERINE
I'm not sure I can do that.

DUSTY
I'll push you into it. And at the same time we'll ruin their little game. Serves `em right for tryin' to get rid of me.
They exit.

MARY *(to the audience)*

All right then. To recap: I'm Mary. That's Bud.

BUD

Howdy.

MARY

We got a saloon we're pretending is a spa to trick a Scotsman into writing a glowing review.

BUD *(to the audience)*

That's Toddrick, he loves Dusty. That's Schmoo –

PARIS

My name is not Schmoo. It's Paris.

BUD

Who sits at my bar and does nothin' all day. That's his wife Lulu who has opinions. My little sister Dusty and a local boring schoolteacher –

MARY

Who is your ex-lover –

BUD

Are going to try to ruin things by being terrible, horrible people for no reason other than to hurt my feelings.

MARY

Got it?

If anyone objects, Mary ad-libs a reaction like, "Which part ain't you following? Are you slow?" and possibly reiterates everything again.

Good. Let's start the play then.

She claps and everyone gets in position.

Lights change.

Scene 2.

Thunder and rain.

Bud gets behind the bar and is mixing a drink.

Mary is finishing getting everything ready. Setting out flowers. Cleaning a last little bit. She puts up a sign that says Lost Axle Spa and Bathhouse.

BUD

We shouldn't say bathhouse. We ain't got the baths ready.

Mary slaps another sign under the bathhouse part that says "out of order."

MARY

Way ahead of you, Bud.

BUD
If this rain keeps up, he can take a bath in the ditch out back.

MARY
I'm sure the toads would love the company.

BUD
Here taste this.

MARY
What is it?

BUD
It's the famous healing waters of Groesneck, Texas.

MARY
That ain't a drink.

BUD
Nobody specified what it was, since there ain't none in the first place. Might as well be a drink. Try it.

Mary takes a drink.

MARY
It's all wrong, Bud. It's sweet as a cherry. What's in this?

BUD
Sugar. Among other things. Mostly sugar.

MARY
A medicinal drink is supposed to taste awful. You put wormroot in it or possum skin or gravel or something.

BUD
See, that's my genius.

MARY
Oh you're a genius now?

BUD
It tastes different than other elixirs. Because it's unique, it's special, it's got actual healing properties. That's why it's delicious. And I can use those bags of sugar that Toddrick rustled up.

MARY *(looking out the window)*
He's gonna have to swim back from the train station. You sent him with the carriage, right?

BUD

What carriage?

MARY

The carriage.

BUD

I don't believe the boy took it.

MARY

So he is taking a famous sickly writer through the driving rain on the back of that horse of his? That Scotsman's not gonna live through the week!

BUD

Well we better make sure he writes that review afore then.

MARY

Is Dusty ready?

BUD

Am I the boss of her? How do I know?
He calls out
Dusty! You ready!?

DUSTY *(off-stage)*

You're not the boss of me!

BUD

Sounds ready.
Mary spots something out the window.

MARY

There they are, get in your spot!
Bud throws a doctor's coat on over his regular attire as Mary takes a position near the end of the bar.

Toddrick, sopping wet, takes off his cowboy hat as he enters

TODDRICK

And here we are sir, the Lost Axle –

BUD

Spa and Restful Recovery Center –

TODDRICK

Spa and Restful Bathhouse place –

Skipping Forward

BUD *(confused)*

Your name is…?

DUSTY

Belulah Abernathy! Which you know since I have been staying here for some time bathing in the healing waters.

ROBERT

I thought it was a drink.

TODDRICK

You bathe in it first. Then you drink it. There's probably a chain reaction where the dirt on your body interacts with its healing properties and then that makes it double effective.

MARY

Not everyone bathes in it! Most people don't.

DUSTY

You must try it. I bathe in it without a stitch of clothing on.

Toddrick loses his balance and stumbles into something.

ROBERT

That's normally how you take a bath.

DUSTY *(pointedly)*

Yup.

MARY

But it's not a requirement to bathe in it!

ROBERT

I sure could use a bath. I'm worn out from my travels. And the bandits. And the Texas.

BUD

Of course! Toddrick, why don't you show Mr. Stevenson to his room?

TODDRICK

We have a room?

BUD

In the back. Near the closet.

TODDRICK

That room ain't fit for –

MARY

Our special guest room in the back that we reserve for special guests at special times.

Toddrick gets it.

TODDRICK

Ohhh right. That room. Well, don't worry Mr. Stevenson the roaches are just as scared of you as you are of them. I can't say the same for the mice though. They are fierce in these parts. Why one time a mouse sprang at me from inside a cabinet like a cannonball – its little mouse jaws near ripped off my nose. In fact it did. But I drank some of the healing waters of Groesneck, and my nose returned.

He winks at Bud.

ROBERT

I am a-quiver in anticipation.

Toddrick leads Robert off.

MARY

Just what do you think you're doing?

DUSTY

I am a lady. I am behavin' ladylike.

MARY

That ain't ladylike. You comin' in here like a herd of buffalo stompin' around insulting him then making innuendos and outuendos.

DUSTY

Maybe I'm seducing him. Ain't that what you want?

BUD

Nobody wants that, Dusty.

DUSTY

Uh huh.

MARY

You seduce a man by bein' nice to him.

DUSTY

Every wife I know is mean to her husband.

MARY

That's *afterwards!*

BUD

That ain't true. Mary is sweet as pie to me.

MARY

Aww, thank you Bud.

BUD

And she looks good too.

MARY

Hm.

BUD

And smells real nice.

They have a moment.

MARY

You're always so sweet when you got a posterior motive.

DUSTY

I think you mean ulterior motive.

MARY

I said what I said.

DUSTY

Ew.

MARY

Focus, darling.

BUD

Right. We gotta be nice to him. We have to show him that this spa is a healing, relaxing, calm place that –

Catherine, dressed to the nines, is entering the bar.

No! NO YOU DO NOT! NO!

CATHERINE

I can be here!

BUD

No you cannot! Git! Git out!

CATHERINE

I am checkin' in to the spa!

BUD

You are a venomous she-devil and you are banished!

Bud leaps from the bar to try to push Catherine out

DUSTY

Bud come on –

CATHERINE

I just want to see him!

TODDRICK *(off-stage)*

Of course you can return to the main room Mr. Stevenson!

Everyone moves fast -

Bud tries to get between Robert's entrance and Catherine while simultaneously shoving her out the door –

Dusty goes back to the bar -

Mary tries to look casual

BUD

And thank you for your business but we already got enough encyclopedias thank you –

Bud shoves Catherine out the door and keeps her out. She tries to look in a window. He stands between her and the window.

She moves. He moves.

As Robert returns, with Toddrick following behind.

TODDRICK

I'm telling you sir, if you fight the biggest rat first, all the other ones will back down.

ROBERT *(to Bud)*

Mr. Pepper. I am accustomed to a certain degree of luxury, being a famous Scottish writer. If I wanted fleas, I'd go back to Scotland!

BUD

My deepest apologies, sir!

ROBERT

I am stolen from, I am rained on, I am accosted by rats -

TODDRICK

I wouldn't say they were accosting you, they were just bein' friendly and saying hi –

BUD

Toddrick not helping!

MARY

Mr. Stevenson, I am so sorry your visit thus far has been –

ROBERT

A nightmare.

MARY

Right. Of course. But from this moment forward, I promise you, it will be perfect. We're gonna put you in the luxury suite.

BUD

What luxury suite?

MARY

One moment.

She rushes over to Bud – whispers

Our room.

BUD *(whispering, simultaneous)*

What?!

MARY *(hissing)*

He can't go nowhere else stop your whinin' and git in there and fix it!

TODDRICK *(to Robert, simultaneous)*

So what do you like to do for fun?

ROBERT

Travel.

TODDRICK

I hear that's nice.

ROBERT

You would be surprised.

BUD *(to Robert)*

I am goin' to make a few adjustments to the luxury suite. And it will be ready for you in two shakes of a lamb's tail. One moment.

He nods to Robert, then sprints off-stage.

MARY

Bud loves to run. He's like a wild animal. You can't fence him in. It helps keep him robust.

DUSTY

What is the nature of your ailment, Mr. Stevenson?

MARY

You can't ask him that!

DUSTY

I'm a lady and I can ask whatever I want and no one can stop me!

ROBERT

Um. Just a general sickness, lass.

DUSTY

Nice.

ROBERT

I canna bear loud noises, or stress –

TODDRICK

Oh I can't bear stress neither. One time I was trapped in a cage with three feral coyotes –

MARY

Toddrick, perhaps now is not the time for you to regale Mr. Stevenson with another one of your tales.

TODDRICK

But this is a good one.

Bud sprints back in.

BUD *(out of breath)*

Ready.

MARY

That was quick.

BUD

I am swift. Like a road runner.

MARY

Right this way, sir.

Mary and Bud escort Robert off-stage.

A moment.

TODDRICK

You look right pretty.

DUSTY

I do not. I look like a blueberry squatting on a wild boar.

**Feel free to adjust this line depending on the dress that Dusty is wearing.*

I'm so itchy.

TODDRICK

You want some scratching? I got a real sharp fingernail right here that can do some wonders.

DUSTY

Hey how come you just do whatever Bud tells you? You ride out there in the rain, you fix up the place, you got that sugar for him –

TODDRICK

I'm just bein' helpful.

DUSTY

When was the last time he paid you?

TODDRICK

Christmas. I think.

DUSTY

That was months ago!

TODDRICK

I figure if I'm nice to Bud he'll consent to me marrying… someone who might be related to –

DUSTY

I'm his sister, you don't need his permission!

TODDRICK

Well, you know, not to ruffle the family feathers –

DUSTY

If we ever get married, you gotta stand up to him, I tell you what.

TODDRICK

I can stand up to him any time I want. I just don't want to yet. But since I got all that sugar, maybe I could have a little sugar.

DUSTY

Oh you think you can handle this sugar?

TODDRICK

Only one way to find out.

Toddrick goes over to her seductively just as Paris enters, shaking water off himself. Dusty and Toddrick separate immediately.

PARIS

I want it to be known that I am only here for good Christian reasons otherwise I would never set foot in this den of sin.

DUSTY

Yer wife right behind you?

PARIS

Whatever makes you think that?

Lulu enters, right behind him.

LULU

Is the writer here?

TODDRICK

He's in the back.

LULU

Why Dusty you look like a real lady. What a change.

DUSTY

Thank you, but my name is Belulah Abernathy –

TODDRICK

We've all been healed by the healing waters. They turned Dusty into a lady.

DUSTY

And they mostly cured Toddrick's stupidity.

PARIS *(heading for the bar)*

I think I might need some healing waters myself.

LULU

You ain't gettin' no healing waters. You're here on a mission.

PARIS

I know that.

LULU

I assume this writer is as full of sin as I imagine?

TODDRICK

I don't know about that, ma'am. He didn't sin none on the ride in. Unless you count complainin' about the rain.

LULU

Complaining can be a sin.

PARIS *(to Lulu)*

Is it now?

LULU *(to Paris, cutting him off)*

Don't you say nothin.

DUSTY

My sister-in-law is hopin' he sins quite a bit, to be honest with you.

LULU

What did I tell you, Shmoo?

PARIS

I don't think, just because he happens to be a writer, that his soul is in danger –

LULU

You heard what's in those books? A man drinks a drink so he can *murder* someone? That's a sin.

TODDRICK

I reckon that's one of the biggest ones. Murder.

PARIS

Writing about it ain't a sin.

LULU

He writes from experience. And if there's one thing you need, it's to save an immortal soul.

PARIS

My dear –

LULU

How many souls have you saved?

PARIS

A few.

LULU

Name one.

PARIS

I baptized the Williams boy.

LULU

That's a baby that don't count! And in the meantime, you're in here drinking and gambling every night! Come judgement day, you might just find yourself alone in damnation while your wife ascends to heaven.

PARIS

Hm.

LULU

And I tell you what, if I go to heaven and you ain't there, I'm goin' to seek out Randy Brockermeier –

PARIS

That boy ain't in heaven –

LULU

He died as a pure innocent creature and I loved him and I will love him again if you don't make it up there –

PARIS

Woman, we are married.

LULU

Til death do us part. If I die before you or if you don't make it, I am seekin' him out – So you'd best get your act together, husband. You need something on the positive side of the ledger. It's either an eternity in heaven with me or an eternity in hellfire.

PARIS

Seems like a lose-lose proposition.

DUSTY *(to Toddrick)*

This is why I'm not too keen on getting married.

Catherine sneaks back in, she's taken off her coat and now wears a fancier dress -

CATHERINE

Is your brother around?

DUSTY

He's in the back.

Catherine zips to a spot at the bar.

LULU

Why Miss O'Malley, I wouldn't ever think to see you here. In this den of sin.

Paris has found a spot at the bar and is pouring himself a drink.

TODDRICK

We're calling it a healing den of sin these days, Ma'am.

CATHERINE

I'm just here to meet Mr. Stevenson. It's always been a dream of mine to meet/ a famous writer who –

LULU *(to Paris)*

What are you doin?

PARIS

Nothin.

LULU

You poured yourself a drink!

PARIS

That's preposterous.

He puts the drink away.

I was merely acquiring this drink for young Toddrick because I saw that the boy was in dire thirst, and, as Jesus said, those that are thirsty, come and drink.

LULU

He was not talking about a saloon you boob.

TODDRICK

Thank you, sir. Is this on your tab?

PARIS

It's on the Lord's tab.

CATHERINE *(to Dusty)*

So did you meet him? What's he like?

DUSTY

He seems sort of… Scottish?

CATHERINE

Oh I'm so nervous! What if I clam up? What if my eyes cross and my throat closes and my - ?!

DUSTY

You'll be fine. Just remember, you are not Catherine O'Malley, you have been transformed into –

Lulu looks down the hall

LULU

Here he comes!

CATHERINE

Ah!

Catherine hides.

LULU

Oh he looks like a sinner all right!

Catherine peeks up.

CATHERINE

Really?

LULU

I never seen such a sinner. He's ripe for the picking.

CATHERINE

Oh dear.

PARIS

Woman, do you mind?

LULU

Are you gonna git his soul?

PARIS

I will get his soul!

LULU

You git his soul. You git that soul for Jesus.

PARIS

Shush!

Robert returns, followed by Bud

ROBERT

Due to the unfortunate robbery, I'm afraid it will be some time before ma funds arrive.

BUD

Not a problem, sir, I'm happy to extend credit for someone of your caliber –

He stops, taking in all the new people in the room –

It seems we have some more arrivals.

CATHERINE

Yes! I require service! Ding ding!

BUD

I'm afraid that -

CATHERINE *(offering her hand to Bud)*

Jezebel Jones, wealthy heiress. Charmed.

BUD

What.

DUSTY

Jezebel Jones as I live and breathe?!

CATHERINE

Belulah Abernathy!? How long has it been?!

DUSTY

Too long!

They hug.

BUD

I see you are familiar with Miss Abernathy.

CATHERINE

We were in a cult together.

Paris spits out his drink.

Sorry. Camp. We went to camp together.

DUSTY

This one is a little firecracker I kid you not. She used to set things on fire when she got perturbed.

CATHERINE

Which was often!

They share a laugh

BUD

And what are you doing here… Miss Jones?

CATHERINE

I am here to restore my health. This is the most renowned spa and bathhouse in Texas, is it not?

TODDRICK

Oh it is, it is! I used to have two lazy eyes! Look at me now.

Toddrick shows his energetic eyes again

BUD

Not now Toddrick.

LULU *(to Paris)*

What are you waiting for? Git in there!

DUSTY

Where are my manners? Jezebel Jones, this is Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, Famous Unhealthy Scottish Novelist.

Skipping Forward

MARY

Who is –

She spots Catherine

Oh we have a new –

BUD

This is Jezebel.

MARY

Yes she is.

DUSTY

Why, when we were girls, I would watch her swimmin' all mermaid-like, gyratin', wigglin' to and fro, naked as a jaybird –

Lulu clucks in horror.

Just picture it, Mister Stevenson –

LULU

He will do no such thing!

To Paris

And don't you picture nothin' neither!

PARIS

I wouldn't!

BUD

Well I can tell her swimmin' days are long behind her, as she is dreadfully sick.

CATHERINE

I wouldn't say dreadfully. I'm feelin' much better thanks.

ROBERT

Perhaps you'll be returning to the water soon enough, lass?

Catherine looks at him.

She starts losing it again.

CATHERINE

Yes I… I… would…
Love to…
Return to the… water…

Bud splashes water in her face again.

BUD

There ya go.

MARY

Feelin' better?

CATHERINE *(seething)*

Much.

DUSTY

Mr. Pepper! That is not necessary!

BUD

I am a doctor!

DUSTY

You are not a doctor!

BUD

I am a doctor!

DUSTY

You are not a doctor!

BUD

I am a very special doctor and I have a very special treatment regimen and it's already working wonders on Miss Jones!

ROBERT

I think we better listen to him. The advances of modern medicine make many things possible. The line between madness and sanity is thin indeed.

CATHERINE

Just like in your books.

ROBERT

Sure.

MARY

I'm more interested in your travel writing, Mr. Stevenson.

PARIS

You know who also did travel writing?

MARY

No I do not.

PARIS

The Lord.

BUD

Paris, maybe you have something else you oughta be doin' right now.

PARIS

Nope.

MARY

What I was saying, is that I love your accounts of the many places you've visited.

ROBERT

Aye.

MARY

Maybe you could think about writing about this place.

TODDRICK

Don't mention the mice. Or the spiders.

BUD

How about we partake of the healing waters and not talk about vermin?

MARY

Good idea!

TODDRICK

That's right! Let me tell you what, before I drank Mr. Pepper's healing waters, I was riddled with a violent disease. I had boils and pustules all over me. Probably contagious.

Robert moves a little bit away from Toddrick

Pieces of my flesh were falling off. Lots of `em.

Toddrick demonstrates pieces of his flesh falling off.

Plop. Plop.

PARIS

I too was healed.

Bud starts pouring drinks.

LULU

Of what?

PARIS

There was a tiny nagging voice in my head all the time. Like a shrill, demanding minuscule voice. And drinking helped quiet the voice.

LULU

I see.

PARIS

But the voice always returns. Even more upset.

CATHERINE

Perhaps this will be just like your concoction, Mr. Stevenson?

ROBERT

My concoction?

CATHERINE

From your book.

ROBERT

Aye. Yes. The healing concoction in my book. We can only hope.

CATHERINE

I mean the elixir that Dr. Jekyll creates that…

She starts to lose it…

Transforms one… into a creature of… uninhibited… urges…

She dodges just out of the way as Bud's about to splash her.

BUD

See? She's getting more spry already.

DUSTY

I require this healing elixir right now! Service.

BUD

Hold your horses. Here we go.

Everyone has a glass of the drink.

They all look at it curiously.

DUSTY *(looking at it)*

It's… black.

BUD

That means it's extra healin. Besides you already bathed in it, did you not?

DUSTY

I did. In this black water. Because that makes sense.

ROBERT

Shall we?

Everyone except Catherine gingerly takes a swig of the drink.

Immediate reaction. They love it.

PARIS

This might be the best thing I ever tasted.

TODDRICK

Mmm.

ROBERT

This was not what I was expecting.

BUD *(to Mary)*

See? See!

ROBERT

What do you call this?

BUD

Doctor Recommended Healing Elixir Guaranteed to Restore Body and Mind.

CATHERINE

Might I try some?

BUD *(he's about to throw some at her)*

Sure thing.

CATHERINE

To drink, Mister Pepper!

BUD

Open your mouth. It's awful big, I'm sure I can get some in there.

DUSTY

Here, Miss Jones, you can share with me.

CATHERINE

Thank you Belulah, you always were the kindest friend.

DUSTY

And you always were the best to me. Before the incident.

CATHERINE

Yes, the incident. Such an incident.

DUSTY

You would not believe, Mister Stevenson, what this poor woman has been through.

CATHERINE

Oh dear we shouldn't trouble Mister Stevenson –

MARY

No we should not –

DUSTY

You see before you, Mister Stevenson, a woman who has only just managed to control the animal passion raging in her very soul.

LULU *(gasping)*

Oh dear!

CATHERINE

Oh yes the passion. The animal passion. Quite vixen-like, really.

DUSTY

Anything might loose her bestial, carnal nature: the sight of tweed, the sound of a Scottish brogue –

ROBERT *(in an even heavier brogue)*

Aye, lass?

DUSTY

And she would descend upon you, like a hurricane of desire – with techniques/ that would render any man paralyzed with pleasure –

LULU *(to Paris)*

There's sinnin' happening right now, ain't you gonna say something?!

PARIS

Friends!

They stop to look at him

He has no idea what to say.

There's only one way to squelch the animal passion raging in a woman's soul.
Marriage.

MARY

If you're so susceptible to stimulus, Jezebel, perhaps it's time we introduced you to a few special soothing techniques here at the Lost Axle Spa and Bathhouse. Ain't that right, Bud?

BUD

What?

MARY

I said ain't that right?

BUD

You're right about everything Mary.

MARY

Perhaps this Jezebel needs some of our patented special techniques.

BUD

I think she does.

MARY

Why, the most soothing locale here is in the crawlspace below the barn –

CATHERINE

Well –

MARY

You'll love it, Miss Jezebel. Completely dark, no danger of tweed or Scottish brogues whatsoever. Spend twenty or twenty-two hours a day down there you'll be right as rain in a month or so.

DUSTY

I'm not sure the crawlspace is the proper place for Miss Jones –

MARY

You'll love it. Why, Bud's little sister Dusty spent most of her childhood down there.

BUD

Playing with her best friends the worms and spiders.

MARY

You'll have to forgive us, Mister Stevenson, we hoped to introduce you to Bud's little sister Dusty, but she went crazy and fled into the hills to wrestle coyotes.

DUSTY

Perhaps Bud's little sister Dusty didn't want to be auctioned off like a prize heifer.

MARY

Goodness no! A heifer has value.

BUD *(trying to be the peacemaker)*

All right then all right -

DUSTY

Value?! No value?!

BUD

How `bout some more of that healing elixir?

PARIS

Right here.

LULU

Absolutely not.

DUSTY

The scuttlebutt in town is that this place would fall apart without Dusty Pepper.

MARY

I'm sure it would, who would armwrestle the vagabonds travelin' through?

TODDRICK

Now she only did that once –

DUSTY

And she won. Handily.

ROBERT

There's wrestling in this spa?

MARY

The truth is, that girl has been spongin' off her brother for *years*, resistin' all calls at civilizin' behavior –

Bud starts pouring more drinks for everyone.

BUD *(underneath)*

I think we all need a little more.

MARY

And if she ever did find a man to marry it would be a blessing on us and a curse on him.

TODDRICK

That reminds me, uh –

DUSTY

Not now, Toddrick.

A moment.

Dusty gets up from her stool.

She rolls up her sleeve, maybe removes an earring – but stops and turns.

DUSTY

Mister Stevenson.
Has Mister Pepper explained to you the true nature of this spa?

BUD

Uh… Now hold on -

DUSTY

This is no ordinary spa.

ROBERT

Is it now?

DUSTY

It is in fact the most experimental, most avant gardey spa in the whole of central Texas –

BUD *(relieved)*

It sure is!

DUSTY

They got things here you never heard of. Alternative treatments and such. You must try them.

MARY

Well they ain't *that* alternative –

DUSTY

If Mister Stevenson is gonna write an account of his stay here, he must experience the *full* regimen. Are you adventurous, sir?

ROBERT

Aye. I'll try anything.

DUSTY

Well then the mass-age is a must. You must try it.

CATHERINE

Oh yes the mass-age! I read about it in the *brochure*!

TODDRICK

There's a brochure?

CATHERINE

Of course there is!

MARY

Well the brochure makes a lot of promises but –

DUSTY

Are you saying the brochure ain't accurate?

MARY

Of course it's accurate, but –

CATHERINE

Wonderful! Then I think Mister Stevenson should try the Bud Pepper Deep Tissue Moan-Inducing Mass-age.

ROBERT

Tha sounds nice.

CATHERINE

Doesn't it? I was thinking about trying it myself.

MARY

You ain't getting' the Bud Pepper Deep Tissue Moan-Inducing Mass-age, Miss Jezebel.

CATHERINE

I already tried it once. Wasn't that great, to be honest with you.

Bud leaps around from behind the bar to get between them.

BUD

All right all right of course one world famous Bud Pepper Deep Tissue what now?

CATHERINE

Moan-inducing…

BUD

Moan-inducing mass-age. Right. Sure thing. Um…

DUSTY

He lies on the floor, right? Face down?

CATHERINE

That's what it said in the brochure.

ROBERT

Are ye sure? The floor looks dirty.

CATHERINE

That's part of the healing. Forcible encounters with grit and dust help fortify one. If I may quote the brochure.

ROBERT

All right then.

Robert lies face down on the floor.

Bud gives Catherine and Dusty a scathing look.

TODDRICK

I'd like to try this later to be honest.

MARY

No you would not.

Bud sighs and stretches.

DUSTY

Come on Bud! Put your hands on the man!

BUD

All right all right all right!

CATHERINE

Actually, the brochure said he doesn't use his hands.

BUD

Now how'm I supposed to massage the man without –

CATHERINE

He uses his feet.

DUSTY

Oh that's right! He walks on your back!

ROBERT

He walks on me back?!

CATHERINE

He kneads you with his bare toes.

DUSTY

His feet are surprisingly gentle. Almost like a baby's kiss.

Bud stares at them. Takes off his boots.

BUD

Very well, you two. But after I complete this, it is time for the next application of Miss Jones' treatment.

ROBERT

I'm waiting, sir!

LULU *(to Paris)*

So you just gonna sit there and stare and watch this abomination occur right in front of you?

PARIS

While I have a captive audience, perhaps it is time to speak of a way to mass-age the soul.

Bud steps onto Robert's back.

ROBERT

Ach! Ah!

Paris kneels down next to Robert on the ground and talks at him while Bud walks on his back.

PARIS

The Lord has mighty fingers and toes, mightier than any man -

ROBERT

Aaaacchhh!

PARIS

They can get right in there and find what troubles you -

ROBERT

Aaaachhhh!

LULU

Make sure to talk about his books, Schmoo.

PARIS *(up to Lulu)*

I got it let me do my thing!
Let's say yer writin' about depravity – drinkin' and such – the sweet release of liquor which calls to a man and says, "I am your friend. I am your best friend in the whole world. Drink me. I taste so good."

ROBERT

Aaaccchhhh!

CATHERINE

Make sure to get his buttocks, Mister Pepper!

DUSTY

Yeah you gotta get them buttocks good!

MARY *(trying to interrupt both of them)*

Don't you be tellin' my husband to -

PARIS *(continuous, lost in it)*

"You don't need family. You don't need a wife. You just need me. Drink me. I love you. I love you so much."

ROBERT

Aaaachhh!

PARIS

Yes, let it out! Call to Jesus! Call to him!

ROBERT

Aarrrghghghh!

PARIS

YAAAAASS!

BUD

All right that's enough!
Bud leaps off of Robert.

MARY

Are you all right?
Robert takes a moment.

TODDRICK

It felt the same way with me.

ROBERT

Ah feel… better.

MARY

Really?

ROBERT

Aye. Ah was holding so much tension in me buttocks. Didn't even realize it. With the bandits and the rats and the travel… Ah feel like a new man.

PARIS

Hallelujah!

LULU

Don't you Hallelujah that.

ROBERT

You do have remarkably tender feet, sir.

BUD

Thank you.

Skipping Forward

TODDRICK *(caught)*

Yup.
He's real sweet like that.
Every mornin' I open my eyes, and there's his big friendly mouth and he… phoo phoo phoo phoo right in my face – I giggle like a schoolgirl I love it so much.

ROBERT

And Mrs. Pepper doesn't mind?

TODDRICK

She's usually there cheerin' him on.
Go Bud! Do it! Pucker Puffer him! That sort of thing.

LULU *(to Paris)*

Are you gonna stand there and listen to this?!

PARIS

Woman, I don't know what to –

ROBERT

I'll try it!

BUD

I'm kinda all pucker puffered out at the moment –

CATHERINE *(from inside the sack)*

The brochure said you'd do it any time day or night, no questions asked! I might order one myself!

MARY

The heck you will –

BUD

All right all right all right. Of course I'll do the Bud Pepper Patented Puffer Pucker. Sure. Why not. Stand right there Mr. Stevenson.

Bud takes Robert by the shoulder.

DUSTY

He gives you encouragin' words first. That's one of the best parts.

Bud shoots her a look

BUD

Are ya ready?

ROBERT

Aye. Blow away.

DUSTY

Don't forget the encouraging words, Mr. Pepper –

BUD

Um…

To Robert

You're gonna be fine. And… you smell nice.

Bud blows short bursts of air in his face

Phoo phoo phoo phoo!

ROBERT *(shocked)*

Ach! Woo!

Robert breaks away from Bud.

DUSTY

Now he does that twenty or thirty more times –

LULU

All right no! We ain't standing here for this! I see what's goin' on here! This man from afar with books about unleashing the evil desires within and now we're all puckerin' and pufferin' and mass-agin' buttocks with feet! Y'all need Jesus! Come on, Schmoo!

PARIS

I am deeply offended by what is going on here.

Lulu exits.

Paris zips to the bar.

Can I get one of them healin' drinks to go?

BUD

Sure thing.

PARIS

I'll be back later.

MARY

We know.

He grabs his drink and exits.

PARIS

Comin' darling!

We hear him off-stage as he's heading down the street.

No I didn't get a drink to go that's preposterous.

Everyone exhales.

ROBERT

Ah don' think I can do twenty or thirty more minutes of tha -

Catherine approaches him, still wearing the burlap sack over her head.

CATHERINE

Oh but Mister Stevenson, you must try all of the delights of this spa!

MARY

If there's something Mister Stevenson don't wanna try, he don't have to. There are things in this particular room better left untouched.

CATHERINE

But maybe Mister Stevenson wants to touch them.

ROBERT

I am a great sampler of touchin' things.

CATHERINE

You don't say.

Catherine tries to walk with Robert away from the others, but goes the wrong direction. Dusty refocuses her.

You must tell me about your travels. I meant to mention earlier that I'm a great lover – of your work. The *feeling* in them -

ROBERT

Aye.

CATHERINE

Your insight into the human condition, the way animal passion can erupt in the most repressed person, even a… schoolteacher –

Dusty keeps turning Catherine to face Robert.

It's intoxicating.

ROBERT

Is tha so?

CATHERINE

I often hope someone would come along and whisk me away to a world of excitement – perhaps on the open seas, or riding the rails –

ROBERT

The open seas are na a place for a lass.

CATHERINE

I think you'll find I'm no lass, Mr. Stevenson. I'm a woman. With a woman's thirst.

She's facing the wrong direction again.

Dusty turns her.

And I could endure any danger with two strong arms to hold me –

She reaches out for strong arms, finds Dusty's.

Ooh.

DUSTY

That's me.

CATHERINE

Whoops.

Dusty turns Catherine's arms towards Robert.
He takes her hands.

ROBERT

Well now. Ah think ah might have an idea for the two of us -

BUD

Oop! Look at the time! It's time for your next treatment Miss Jezebel!

CATHERINE

No I'm feeling much improved now that I'm in the sack!

MARY

That's just the first part of the treatment! Unfortunately, it has side effects, like the vertigo, ain't that right, Bud?

BUD

Oh definitely.

MARY

You know the treatment for that, right?

BUD

I sure do. Un-vertigo.

CATHERINE *(inside the sack)*

Un-vertigo?

BUD

Oh yes! Works every time. If you might assist me, Toddrick.

TODDRICK

Uh –

BUD

We need to rotate Miss Jones. Forcibly.

CATHERINE

Rotate me?!

MARY

Now don't be contrary. This is for your own good, Jezebel!

CATHERINE

But –

BUD

Grab hold there, Toddrick. And we begin the rotation –

MARY

This may take some time, Mr. Stevenson, you might wish to get yourself another drink.

BUD

And… go!

Bud and Toddrick begin spinning Catherine, inside the burlap sack.

One two three four –

CATHERINE

But I –

MARY

Quiet, Jezebel! The brochure calls for seven hundred rotations on each side to properly un-vertigo you.

They keep spinning her.

CATHERINE

I'm going to be sick!

DUSTY

AAAAAH!

Everyone stops.

Catherine careens out of control – slamming into Dusty – who catches her.

I just remembered the next part of the health regimen!

BUD

Yes it's rotating Miss Jones –

DUSTY

No, for Mr. Stevenson! You must try this!

ROBERT

I'm willin' to try anything.

DUSTY

I love that spirit of adventure! You have to try the screech owl flutterpation.

ROBERT

Screech owl flutterpation?

DUSTY

It's absolutely amazing. Mr. Pepper holds the screech owl's talons in his hands, and then the owl lightly flutters you with its wings. It's like you're bein' caressed by a thousand butterflies at once.

ROBERT

Whoa.

BUD

Ha ha ha –

DUSTY

I tried it just the other day. Changed my life. I let go of all my problems –

BUD

Miss Belulah, I would certainly administer the screech owl flutterpation but we had to release the screech owl we had earlier so -

DUSTY

Oh no there's one out back.

MARY

Out back?

DUSTY

Before she fled to wrestle coyotes, your little sister Dusty trapped one. She's got it in a cage out back.

BUD

She's got a screech owl in a cage out back?

DUSTY

Ain't she something?

BUD

Yup.

DUSTY

And this owl looks perfect for the flutterpation. It's so amazing, Mr. Stevenson, you'd think the owl would rend Mr. Pepper's skin into shreds with its razor-sharp talons, but if he performs the screech owl flutterpation properly, it regards him with respect and, dare I say it, love.

ROBERT

Ah need to try this. This is the most amazing thing ah've ever heard of. Ah have to do it.

DUSTY

In fact, there's no way you could write any review of this spa without discussing the flutterpation. Right, Mr. Pepper?

Bud stares at her.

He always gets like this right before he grabs the owl. He's focusin' his mind. Look at him. You can almost see the gears turning.

BUD

…okay.

DUSTY

What?

BUD

… okay it's time for the screech owl flutterpation.

MARY

Bud –

BUD

I got this, Mary. I got this. Out back, you say?

DUSTY

Out back.

BUD *(as if he's being led off to death)*

Very well. Come along, Mr. Stevenson.

ROBERT

Woo!

Bud, Mary, and Robert exit.
Dusty rushes over to Catherine, who's still on the ground.
She pulls off the sack.

DUSTY

You okay?

CATHERINE

I think I'm in love.

DUSTY

You sure you're not just dizzy?

CATHERINE

In the sack, I didn't have any jitters. I felt like a different person! I could talk. I could listen –

DUSTY

You're gonna keep your head in the sack the entire time you're with him?

CATHERINE

Maybe.

TODDRICK

Bud found the owl!

CATHERINE

You really trapped an owl?

DUSTY

Sure did. He's a nasty piece of work too. Darn near ripped off my fingers when I tried to grab him.

BUD *(off-stage)*

All right Mr. Stevenson, hold still for one moment.

TODDRICK

Come watch!

Dusty and Catherine rush to look off-stage.

BUD *(off-stage)*

I'll just get this little fella outta his cage here and…

Screeches

AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!

ROBERT *(off-stage)*

AAAAAAH THIS IS SO PAINFUL!!!

DUSTY *(shouting off)*

Keep with it, you need to wrestle him into submission!

More screams.

He's just feelin' you out!

More screeches.

BUD *(off-stage)*

AAAAAAHHH MY FACE NOOOO!

ROBERT *(off-stage)*

THIS IS NA RELAXING AT ALL!

BUD

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!

More screeches.

Bud staggers back in, bleeding from many, many scratches.

He's in a daze.

He stares at Dusty with bewildered anger.

DUSTY *(sweetly)*

How was the owl?

Bud stares at her.

BUD

Vengeful.

CATHERINE

Where's Robert?

BUD

Who?

CATHERINE

Robert Louis Stevenson?

Bud blinks.

BUD

I believe my wife is trying to staunch the blood from his many, many wounds.

CATHERINE

I'll go check on him.

She hesitates for a moment, then takes the burlap sack with her.

TODDRICK

I'll join you.

They rush off.

BUD

That was a dirty trick, with that owl.

DUSTY

It was a dirty trick tryin' to get rid of me.

BUD

I ain't tryin' to get rid of you.

DUSTY

Marry me off to a stranger.

BUD

That was Mary's idea and it ain't never gonna work. But this guy could change our fortunes. We could be famous if you stop tryin' to seduce him for that evil harridan.

DUSTY

She's a schoolteacher and your former sweetheart!

BUD

An *evil* schoolteacher and my *evil* former sweetheart.

DUSTY

I ain't gonna rest until they are blissfully wed!

BUD

Girl, why you gotta be like this? Trappin' owls, startin' fights –

DUSTY

Why you gotta be like you are? Talkin' big, `I'm Bud Pepper I'm gonna be world famous runnin' a *saloon in the middle of nowhere!'*

BUD

I am gonna be somethin' just you wait and see! This place is gonna be world famous!

DUSTY

Ha!

LILIANA DES BORGIA, elegant and foreign, enters.

LILIANA

Forgive the interruption: Is this the Lost Axle Spa and Bathhouse?

BUD

Yes?

LILIANA

I would like to check in.

BUD

You want… you want a room here? In this place?

LILIANA

This is a world famous spa, yes? With legendary healing waters?

BUD

Why, yes it is! It is!

Bud gets up. Goes to her.

LILIANA

I have traveled a great distance to be here.

BUD

You have?!

Back to Dusty

She has!

We can find somethin! Absolutely! We'll get you fixed up right nice and you can stay as long as you like!

LILIANA

Excellent.

BUD

Hot dog! Right this way.

LILIANA

Tell me: Is the famous novelist Robert Louis Stevenson staying here?

BUD

We are nursing him back to health as we speak.

LILIANA

Finally.

DUSTY

You know him?

LILIANA

I should. I am Liliana De Borgia and he is my ex-husband. He is a pig with the head of a thousand vipers. And I love him. And he will be back with me or I will kill him and drink his blood.

She exits.

Bud makes eye contact with Dusty.

BUD and DUSTY

Uh oh.

Thunder.

Lights down.

End of Act One

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Act Two

The next day.
Birds are chirping. The sun is shining.

Toddrick is cleaning up.
Bud speaks to the audience.

BUD *(to the audience)*
Y'all make it back from the outhouse yet? Get enough drinks? Spend enough money on concessions so this place can stay in business? Good.
Mary enters, annoyed.

MARY
What are you doin?

BUD
I am re-capping.

MARY
They don't need no re-cap! Let's get into it.

BUD
Hold your horses, Mary. Cause the situation is complicated and I know some of them weren't payin' attention in act one cause they were checkin' e-mails and such. We got Millennials in the audience. Generation Z. They got an attention span like a goldfish. `Where am I? Can I put this on Tikkity Tok? Can A.I. explain this to me?'

MARY
And they really appreciate you insultin' them. Come on.

BUD
Hold on! Now, as you recall, my name's Bud Pepper –
Mary groans. Jumps in front of him.

MARY *(quickly)*
That's Bud, I'm Mary. Dusty's pretending to be a lady. Bud's ex-lover is pretending to be Jezebel. There's a preacher and his wife. A famous novelist and his ex-wife from hell just showed up. Got it?

BUD
There's one little thing that transpired during the intermission we gotta share.
Lights up on another portion of the stage.

Robert, groaning from his injuries, gingerly sits down.
He's about to relax when there's a knock.

ROBERT *(weakly)*

Leave me be, please. I canna move.
Another knock.
Go away.
Catherine enters.
She stands there.

CATHERINE *(nervous)*

I… um…

ROBERT

Wha is it, lass?
Catherine freezes.
Do you need the water to your face again?
Catherine puts the burlap sack over her head.

CATHERINE

I have come for you, Robert Louis Stevenson.
She lunges for him like a tiger.
Kind of misses.
He guides her.
They embrace passionately, as best they can.

MARY *(to Bud)*

All right all right quit watchin' that.

BUD

Maybe we should try this, Mary.
Catherine and Robert fall into something.

ROBERT *(trying to kiss her through the burlap sack)*

Ach my face this hurts my scratches from the owl -

CATHERINE

Shhhh!
She slams him against something.

MARY

All right enough! This spa is supposed to be about restful relaxation.
Lights down on Robert and Catherine.
That's our room, by the way.

BUD

I know.

MARY

They're breaking *our* room.

BUD

You're the one who wanted to put him in there.
Anyhoo – we had to come up with a plan.
Toddrick approaches them.

TODDRICK

I don't think I can do this.

MARY

Of course you can.

TODDRICK

Sir –

BUD

Toddrick, if you want my blessin' with Dusty, you gotta do it.

TODDRICK

But I ain't no good at seducin' women.

BUD

We'll help.

MARY

Besides, Liliana is divorced. She ain't gonna want a smart one the second time around - she's gonna want someone younger and dumber.

BUD

You ain't marrying her, boy, you're just gettin' her mind off Mister Stevenson. She's sweet as a kitten, I promise.

MARY

Now go get dressed.
Toddrick exits.

BUD *(to the audience)*

So that was part one -

MARY *(to the audience)*

Part two –
Dusty enters.

DUSTY

A truce? After what you did?

BUD

Girl, I am still recoverin' from that owl.

DUSTY

Serves you right.

MARY

If she catches sight of Mister Stevenson, it's gonna ruin your little game too.

BUD

I suppose that's probably fine with you. But you heard what Liliana said last night, she's a cold-blooded killer.

MARY

Italian.

BUD

That too.
Just picture it: your pretty little schoolteacher friend, all flush from her love affair with the writer –

MARY

Why'd you call her pretty?

BUD

I was just describin' her, Mary!

MARY

Every time you describe her, you call her pretty. How `bout less describing her?

BUD

Fine. Your little schoolteacher friend –

MARY *(underneath)*

`Little.' Hmph.

BUD *(continuous)*

Strung up by her toes by that beautiful Italian she-devil –

MARY

Oh so she's beautiful too then?

DUSTY

Fine. What do you want me to do?

MARY

Do what you do best: make this place really unpleasant.

DUSTY

I'll go get the preacher.

BUD

Don't bother. It's Wednesday, he'll be here presently. You just keep that Scotsman from seeing his ex-wife.

DUSTY

Fine.

BUD

And after she's gone, we can go back to fightin' fair and square.

DUSTY

Deal.

Dusty spits in her palm to shake on it.
Bud shakes and she exits.

MARY *(to the audience)*

So let's get started with act two.

She claps her hands and the lights change.

Scene 2.
Bud and Mary take their positions.
They've had a rough night.
There might be a little bit of hay stuck to them.

BUD

I don't think I slept a wink in that barn.

MARY

That's funny, cause you sure were snorin' loud enough.

BUD

I was snorin' to keep away varmints. I was doing us a service.

MARY

Uh huh.

BUD

When this is all over, Mary, we're gonna sleep like kings. Pillows. Blankets. You name it.

MARY

I love it when you talk all dreamy-like. Tell me more.

BUD

Ice in the summertime.

MARY

Mm-hm.

BUD

And just us, canoodlin' all day long.

MARY

Oh really?

BUD

Mm-hm.

MARY

Hm.

Bud growls like a tiger just as Liliana bursts in.

LILIANA

I have had the worst sleep imaginable in this so-called spa.

BUD

Mornin', Ma'am.

LILIANA

Where is my husband.

MARY

Ex-husband.

Liliana shoots her a look.

Just clarifyin, that's all.

LILIANA

Where is he?

BUD

Well, Mister Stevenson is currently engaged in our premium spa service, which requires complete isolation from outside disturbances including ex-wives.

LILIANA

He will not wish to be isolated from me.

She calls out

Robbie! Robbie it is your love, Liliana! I have come for you my wolf dove!

MARY

Nope nope nope we can't bother him right now. He's in complete sensory deprivation. No sound. No light. We don't even know where he is, to be honest.

LILIANA

You don't know where he is?

BUD

We know where he is, but he is… buried in a… mud casement, which is restoring his …

MARY

Pores

BUD

With –

MARY

Mud.

BUD

It's revolutionary.

MARY

So why don't you just relax a spell and –

LILIANA

I do not relax.

MARY

I see that, I see that –

BUD

Maybe they'll be some other guests along presently with whom you may chat.

LILIANA

Why would I *chat* with anyone?

BUD

MAYBE THEY'LL BE SOME GUESTS ALONG PRESENTLY –

MARY

Skipping Forward

He told me I was beautiful, he kissed my fingers, he brought me flowers, he said, Liliana, I will make you the happiest woman alive. You know what I said?

TODDRICK

…no?

LILIANA

I said, it would make me happiest if you took two porcupines, one in each hand, and you clutched them tight to your naked body, until their quills pierce your tender parts in a thousand places.

Short pause

TODDRICK

Good story.
I'm gonna need some more of that healing elixir, Mr. Pepper.

MARY

So um… did your husband do the thing with the porcupines?

LILIANA

Of course not. My Robert is a genius. Our love was an inferno that consumed us both. There was no courtship, only… recognition. Two mad souls locked in battle and love. To be apart is agony. To be together… delicious agony.

TODDRICK

Yeah… marriage is like that.
So I've been told.

LILIANA

And now he has left me and fled to this wasteland!
Why?!
WHY DOES HE RUN FROM ME?!

BUD

I can't imagine.

LILIANA

Did he speak of me?!

BUD

Um… no… but –

MARY

He did say he wanted a fresh start.

LILIANA

What?!

MARY

You know, just to move on.

LILIANA

Never!

MARY

Well, you know, feelings change over time and –

LILIANA

Impossible! That is not my Robbie! We will love together or we will burn together!

BUD

Right, well, y'know, maybe you just need to call it a day and find a new man. Like this guy here.

TODDRICK

Howdy.

LILIANA

This?! This is not a man! This is a little bunny.

MARY

Not true, not true, why just the other day I saw him swimmin,' naked as a mole rat, gyratin' and splashin'. Gleaming in the sun.

Toddrick mimes swimming, still afraid.

Little smile on his face.
Can you picture it?

Maybe she does – a little – but it's not pleasant

BUD

My wife was just tellin' me that she'd trade me in for someone younger and dumber. Well… here he is.

LILIANA

You do not understand my Robbie – he is two souls intertwined. One, peaceful and kind, a butterfly, and the other, a devil – consumed by jealous rage – a killer – a rival for my love would drive him to such fits of violence and passion that… he would… fight… to win me back.

Liliana thinks about it.

What did you say your name was again?

TODDRICK *(scared)*

Um… Mortimer Wothingsham.

BUD

-ton.

TODDRICK

-ton.

LILIANA

I see. Let me look at you.
Liliana looks him over.
Okay. Fine.

TODDRICK

Fine?

LILIANA

You may woo me.
Do it.

TODDRICK

Um… Great. Uh…
Dusty enters, still dressed like a lady.
Well – you sure are pretty.

LILIANA

I need more than that. Come on. Do it better.
Dusty watches what's going on.

TODDRICK

Right. Uh… your skin is like… like a sheet and…
Your…
Bosoms… are like…

LILIANA

Yes. What are they like?

TODDRICK

They are like – friends –

DUSTY

Good morning!
Toddrick leaps away from Liliana.
Once again, it is me, a lady, Belulah Abernathy.

BUD

Why Miss Abernathy, what brings you `round this morning? I thought we talked earlier about you doing a special treatment and keeping certain things in certain places and not letting them leave.

DUSTY

Certain things have not woken up, so I am here to –

She takes a good look at Toddrick

Figure out – what – is – goin' – on.

To Toddrick

I do not believe we have had the pleasure, sir.
I am Belulah Abernathy. A lady.

TODDRICK

I am Mortimer Worthing… ton. A gentleman.

DUSTY

And just what are you doin' here, Mortimer Worthing… ton?

TODDRICK

Nothin'.

DUSTY

Oh really then why were you describin' bosoms?

LILIANA

He was wooing me.

DUSTY

You don't say.

LILIANA

Yes. He is scared like bunny but wants to bunny hop. He is very bad at it, but already I feel a spark is kindling between us –

TODDRICK

It is?

DUSTY

Oh it is, is it?

LILIANA

AT ANY MOMENT WE WILL RAVAGE EACH OTHER -

Quickly, to Bud

Are you sure my ex-husband cannot see or hear anything in the mud?

BUD

I'm gonna go make sure actually –

Bud hustles off -

DUSTY
I don't think ravagin' is gonna be good for Mister Worthington's future health.

TODDRICK
Nobody is ravagin' nothin!

MARY *(coming over)*
Miss Belulah, personally I think it's commendable that this spa and bathhouse is bringing folks together –

DUSTY
That's funny, because it was my understanding we needed to keep folks apart -

MARY
Yes, but if certain folks was to run off together before seein' certain other folks, then it all works out.

DUSTY
But some of those certain folks are attached to certain other folks who might take offense at certain folks bein' *used* as toys in certain folks plans.

TODDRICK *(underneath)*
I am so lost right now –

MARY
Well if certain other folks hadn't brought out a certain SCREECH OWL then maybe certain folks would care more about certain folks' feelings about certain folks being used to keep certain folks away from other certain folks!

DUSTY
Can I talk to you for a minute?

MARY
We're talking right now!

DUSTY
In the other room.

MARY
Sure.

LILIANA *(to Toddrick)*
This will give us more time together alone.

DUSTY
Come along, Mister Worthington there's a treatment you need in the other room!

Dusty grabs Toddrick's hand and yanks him off-stage with Mary.

Liliana has a moment alone.
She goes back to the bar and examines the elixir.

Catherine enters, wearing the same clothes she wore the day before.
She's had quite a night.
She still has the burlap sack.

CATHERINE *(announcing to the world)*

I am – IN LOVE.
She sees Liliana.
Oh. Hello.

LILIANA

Hello.

CATHERINE

There's nobody here.

LILIANA

I am here.

CATHERINE

I see that. We haven't met.

LILIANA

No.
You are in love?

CATHERINE

I suppose I can tell you. I met the most amazing man yesterday. Intelligent. Thoughtful. Passionate. Willing to take risks with someone wearing a burlap sack over their head. Oh it's so boring here, you can't imagine! To meet a man from afar with ideas and artistry and *skills*, it's intoxicating. Almost like…
She looks at the elixir.
Transformational.

LILIANA

I too have had a love like that.

CATHERINE

Really?

LILIANA

He turns me into a devil. I cannot think straight when I am around him, I want only to devour him – and if there was another woman who even so much as looked at him, I would kill her without a second thought.

They make eye contact

CATHERINE

Wow.

LILIANA

This man you fell in love with last night – he is staying here?

CATHERINE

Yes.

LILIANA

Describe him for me.

CATHERINE

About this tall -

LILIANA

Yes?

CATHERINE

Piercing blue* eyes -

*(*Please change all of the physical descriptors to match the actor playing Robert)*

LILIANA

Yes?

CATHERINE

Sandy blonde hair -

LILIANA

Yes?

CATHERINE

A dimple right here on his chin –

LILIANA

Yes?

CATHERINE

And a tiny scar… right… here.

She touches her collarbone.

Can you picture him?

A moment

Dusty bursts back in, followed by Toddrick.

DUSTY
Oh look it's Miss Jezebel Jones! Good morning, Miss Jones!

TODDRICK
Howdy!

CATHERINE
Good morning Miss Abernathy! I was just speaking with –

DUSTY *(interrupting)*
Liliana De Borgia, the ex-wife of Robert Louis Stevenson, famous unhealthy Scottish novelist?
Catherine freezes, a deer in headlights.

LILIANA
Nice to meet you.

TODDRICK
You may not remember me from yesterday. I'm Mortimer Worthing… sham.
No response.
A gentleman.
Catherine is still completely frozen.

LILIANA
Are you all right, miss?
Toddrick tosses a glass of water in Catherine's face.
She sputters

DUSTY
What are you doing?!

TODDRICK
That helped yesterday.

CATHERINE
I am… um…

LILIANA
Is there a knife behind the bar?
Dusty hides all the knives

DUSTY
Nope nope nope – no knives here –

LILIANA *(referring to her dress)*
I have a loose thread in my…
We hear Bud and Mary before we see them.

MARY *(off-stage)*
How'm I s'posed to keep track of him?!

BUD *(off-stage)*
Well maybe if you hadn't put him in our room we'd –
They both enter.

MARY
Oh look it's Miss Jezebel Jones! Back again this morning!

CATHERINE *(sunnily)*
You can't get rid of me!

BUD
You sure?
Have you meet Miss De Borgia?

MARY
You shoulda seen this Jezebel last night Miss De Borgia. Why I never seen a woman so hot to trot in my whole life –

BUD
Me neither.
`Cept you of course, Mary.
At the proper times.
Which are frequent because we remain madly in love.

DUSTY
Please! Miss De Borgia don't wanna hear about this!

LILIANA
I do not. I am looking for my husband.

BUD
Well, funny story, cause the man miss Jezebel was chattin' up last night was –

CATHERINE
Mister Worthingsham - ton!
She seizes Toddrick.

TODDRICK

Me?

CATHERINE

Yes. We are madly in love.

TODDRICK

Um…

DUSTY

Not that madly.

LILIANA

Didn't this man just ask if you remembered him?

CATHERINE

A little game we play! `Who are you? What is your name? Have I ever met you before? ha ha ha.'

TODDRICK

Ha ha ha.

LILIANA

And yet this morning this man was wooing me.

CATHERINE

What?! Darling?! How dare you?!

TODDRICK

Um… she's pretty so I couldn't help myself…

CATHERINE

It's over!

She throws a glass of water in his face.

TODDRICK

Oh thank goodness.

LILIANA

Men are disgusting pig creatures.

CATHERINE

They are!

LILIANA

Which reminds me, I must find my husband.

CATHERINE

Are you sure you even want to, because –

DUSTY

Ain't he just a viper with the head of a thousand pigs?

LILIANA

He is a pig with the head of a thousand vipers.

DUSTY

Either one.

LILIANA

But he is *my* pig with the head of a thousand vipers. And I will have him back or I will bathe in his blood. Come, Miss Jezebel. We will look for him together.

CATHERINE

Actually, I feel a sickness coming on. I must return to my room at once and lock the door.

MARY

For your health, you shouldn't go to *your* room, Miss Jezebel –

CATHERINE

Nonsense! I cannot heal properly out here and –

LILIANA

I do not care about any of this! I need someone to show me around! Mister Worthingshamton, come!

TODDRICK

Sure.

DUSTY

Nope!

LILIANA

Why not!?

DUSTY

He can't be alone with beautiful women!

TODDRICK

I have problems. I just woo everything I see.

LILIANA

Perfect. We shall make my husband jealous and he will –

DUSTY

I'll go with you! I know everything about this place! I'll help you find him!

Dusty pulls Liliana off-stage.

CATHERINE

This has been lovely, but I must retire to my room –

MARY

That's our room!

BUD

You get out of here! Git! I'll tell that woman everything! She will skin you alive! Have you looked in her eyes? She is a pit of evil!

TODDRICK

I can't do this anymore! I don't even know who I'm s'posed to be wooin!

CATHERINE

Robert and I are going to run away together! We're in love!

MARY

The heck you are! He's in love with Jezebel Jones, wealthy heiress and vixenous she-cat! He ain't gonna like Catherine O'Malley, boring schoolteacher!

CATHERINE

Maybe I'll take on a new identity, be a new person!

BUD

Woman, you can't even talk to him without a sack on your head! You think he's gonna spend the rest of his life with a woman in a burlap sack?! Get outta here! Git!

He goes to put his hands on her.

CATHERINE

You'd put your hands on a woman?!

MARY

He won't, but I will.

Mary grabs Catherine and pushes her out the front door.
She throws the burlap sack after her.
Then locks the door.
A moment before –

Robert enters

ROBERT *(to everyone)*

Ah am in LOVE.
And ah don' care who knows it!

BUD

Good mornin' Mister Stevenson!
Mary rushes to him –

MARY

So glad you've been enjoying your stay!

ROBERT

Ah'd like more a tha elixir please!
He sidles up to the bar.

BUD

Sure sure sure of course of course of course but the bar right now is a dangerous place to be
Robert notices Toddrick for the first time.

ROBERT

Hello, sir. Aren't you - ?

TODDRICK

The elixir has changed me.

ROBERT

It fixed your lazy eyes?

TODDRICK

And it has added a mustache.

ROBERT

Incredible.

BUD

Mister Stevenson, I am delighted you have been enjoying your time here but for your health it's best to stay in your room -

ROBERT

That owl. That was an experience ah have never had! The wings.

BUD

Yes yes –

ROBERT

Lovely. After the bleedin' stopped. Ah must try it again.

BUD

Well I think that owl flew off –

ROBERT

Pity. And it brought me to ma beautiful love. Where is the bonny lass?

MARY

Who, sir?

ROBERT

Miss Jezebel Jones, the love of ma life!

MARY

She had to leave because she is a danger to society.

BUD

Said she wanted to become a lusty pirate or something –
Robert perks up –

MARY

Or nun –

BUD

Pirate nun, you know, start a trend -

ROBERT

It canna be!

MARY

Sorry, she uh… but you didn't want to be with her/, she was a menace –

BUD

I been there, let me tell ya. Fun for a minute/ but then -

MARY

You know what Bud, now's not the time for that.

ROBERT

I canna go on without her.

MARY

Sure you can, we'll get a new treatment lined up –

ROBERT

I need my Jezebel!

Skipping Forward

Liliana grabs his hand and is about to yank him off-stage with her -

DUSTY

WAIT!
There's something they ain't tellin' you!

LILIANA

What.

DUSTY

I spoke with him earlier.

LILIANA

You did?!

DUSTY

Yes, and… he declared his love for me. Belulah Abernathy, a lady.
Liliana turns towards Dusty.

LILIANA

You are my rival then.

DUSTY

Yup. He specifically said that um… he was super glad that he wasn't married cause I was so pretty -
Liliana seethes
And also there's no way he would ever go back to his scary ex-wife –
Liliana seethes more
And I was super great. Cause of my –

TODDRICK

Bosoms.

DUSTY

Sure.
Liliana advances on her.

LILIANA

I will kill you with my bare hands.

DUSTY

BUT – he did say there was ONE way his ex-wife could win him back –

LILIANA

By killing his rival –

DUSTY

Nope nope nope he added that if his ex-wife killed me he would never forgive her and instead would go off with an even prettier girl in the next town over. BUT – if his ex-wife arrived and she agreed to a healing cleanse at this here avant gardey spa, THEN he could see it in his heart to give her another chance.

LILIANA

You lie.

MARY

No I was there I heard the same thing.

TODDRICK

Me too. He was very clear about it.

LILIANA

A healing cleanse?

DUSTY

Yup. If she could be properly cleansed then he would toss me aside like a bag of sugar –

TODDRICK

Sweet sugar –

DUSTY

Thank you, and he would go back to her.

MARY

It sounds logical.

TODDRICK

Sure does.

LILIANA

I would do anything to get him back. What must I do?

DUSTY

It starts with the mass-age.

MARY

Oh yes the mass-age!

TODDRICK

That's a nice one.

DUSTY

Bud ain't here but –

MARY

I reckon he's put his hands on enough women in his life, I'll do it. Right this way, Miss De Borgia! Lie down.

LILIANA

Right here/ on the floor?

MARY

The dirt and grit fortify one.

DUSTY

That what it says in the brochure.

TODDRICK

Sure does.

LILIANA

But I –

DUSTY

No complainin' do it!

Reluctantly Liliana gets down on the floor as Mary takes off her shoes.

LILIANA *(as she gets down)*

I have traveled across the entire wasteland of Texas to be here I will not be stopped by – OW – OWWW – why are you using your feet?!

MARY *(stepping on Liliana's back)*

That's the best way to –

Robert enters

Head down!

The others try to crowd out what is happening –

ROBERT

How long must I wait for mah love?!

Dusty rushes to intercept him.

DUSTY

Whoa whoah whoa whoah quiet sir! There's a treatment happening right now!

TODDRICK *(shouting over him)*

OMMMMMMMMM! OMMMMM!

LILIANA

Who is that?! What is happening?!
Bud enters during the middle of this

BUD *(as he enters)*
I couldn't find that woman anywhere –
He sees what's going on –
What is –

MARY
It's the mass-age, Bud! From the brochure!

TODDRICK
OMMMMM! OMMMMM!

LILIANA
OWWWWWWW! OWWWWW!

BUD
OHHHH! Oh um!
He spots Robert

ROBERT
Where is she?! Where is mah Jezebel!?

BUD
Right this way!

LILIANA
I thought I heard something!

MARY
NOPE NOPE stay still! No moving during the mass-age!
Bud grabs Robert and takes him off through the downstage exit.

Just as they leave –
Paris enters.

PARIS
Let it be known I am just entering this den of sin only in hopes of finding redeemable sinners!

DUSTY
Your wife ain't here, Reverend.

PARIS
Hallelujah! Free at last!
He's heading to the bar and spots what's happening with the massage.

LILIANA

Aarrrrhghgh!

Paris pauses, considers saying something.

PARIS

Well all right then.

He continues to the bar.
Liliana throws Mary off of her

LILIANA *(dusting herself off)*

Enough!

DUSTY

Just in time, Reverend! This lady here was complainin' about bein' a lost sheep needin' a shepherd.

PARIS

Well this shepherd has worked up a mighty thirst tending his flock – oh lookee here, deliverance.

He pours himself a drink.

LILIANA *(to Mary)*

You are supposed to be a professional?!

MARY

Oh that was just the beginning. A true floor mass-age takes several hours of grinding footwork. If you're not able to endure it then I'll have to inform Mister Stevenson of your failure –

Toddrick approaches Paris.

TODDRICK

Hello. I am Mortimer Worthingham. A gentleman.

He sticks out his hand.

PARIS

You don't say.

TODDRICK

I have developed a mustache.

PARIS

Yup.

Liliana breaks away from Mary and goes to the bar
Dusty intercepts her.

DUSTY

Reverend Toohey, may I introduce you to Liliana De Borgia, vengeful ex-wife of one Robert Louis Stevenson who cannot be reunited with her ex-husband until she has completed the extensive, exhausting, and dare I say it painful treatments of this here spa?

It takes Paris a moment to process that.

PARIS

Howdy.

LILIANA

You are also in treatment at this spa?

PARIS

Indeed. I am *afflicted*. And I require the ministrations of these healin' waters.

Bud bursts in, out of breath.

BUD

Did you see where he went?!

LILIANA

Who?

BUD

Nobody.

LILIANA

My husband?!

BUD

Nope nope not at all nope.

He looks around frantically.

A chinchilla got loose and –

DUSTY

How did it get loose?!

BUD

It's a feisty bugger and it gave me the slip!

DUSTY

You're supposed to hold on to the chinchilla, Bud!

BUD

I'd do that, Miss Abernathy, but this particular chinchilla is slick like an eel and –

He spots Catherine sneaking back into the bar, still with her burlap sack.

Oh look who it is, Miss Jezebel Jones!

MARY

Miss Jezebel Jones?!

CATHERINE

You can't stop me, Bud Pepper! I am a free woman!

BUD

Of course you are! We wouldn't dream of stopping you!

MARY

We love you!

Mary goes to escort her to the bar –

PARIS

Why hello there –

TODDRICK *(loudly, to Paris)*

Look it's Miss Jezebel Jones, the lady I was wooing earlier before I started wooing this lady here because I am Mortimer Worthington –

BUD

-sham –

TODDRICK

A gentleman, who enjoys wooing many different ladies although his heart still belongs to the one lady who he has not been wooing in front of other people!

DUSTY

It better.

MARY

Can I get you anything? A drink?

CATHERINE *(suspicious)*

I'll have… water?

She ducks as Bud pours the water, expecting to get splashed in the face.

BUD

There ya go.

Catherine takes it as if she's picking up a live grenade.

CATHERINE

Thank – you.

LILIANA

Enough of this doodling! I have completed your treatment even though it felt like a brain-dead/ rhinoceros was stamping on my back!

DUSTY *(continuous)*

Oh no no no the treatment just started –

LILIANA
You are trying to keep me from my husband! All of you!

MARY *(overlapping)*
What?!

BUD *(overlapping)*
Of all the unfounded accusations –

DUSTY *(overlapping)*
Us?

PARIS
I just got here.

LILIANA
I will burn this entire miserable rat-infested hole to the ground if I don't see him right now!

DUSTY
Meditation! Meditation is the next part of the treatment!

MARY
Oh that's right!

DUSTY
To soothe the nerves and calm violent tendencies!

CATHERINE
It's in the brochure!

BUD
It is indeed!

LILIANA
No! No meditation! No mass-age! No -

BUD
Nope nope nope everybody needs to meditate now! Circle up!

DUSTY
Robert specifically said that anyone wanting to see him must meditate first!

MARY
Circle circle circle!
Something WHUMPS from off-stage
We hear a Scottish curse –

LILIANA

What was that?!

Bud leaps up –

BUD

Oh I forgot for new people it's important to have sensory deprivation so –

He grabs the burlap sack from Catherine and puts it over Liliana's head.

There you go.

LILIANA

I can't see anything!

BUD

All part of the treatment!

Liliana struggles but Mary starts stroking the outside of the burlap sack.

MARY

There there Miss De Borgia let your mind go –
Unclench your fists…
There there – calming down now…

Liliana is clearly seething in rage inside the sack
Toddrick attempts to help.
They all stroke the burlap sack.

TODDRICK

Ommmm

EVERYONE

OMMMMMM…

They stop. Will she try to kill them?
Nope? Okay, then.

End of Excerpt.
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