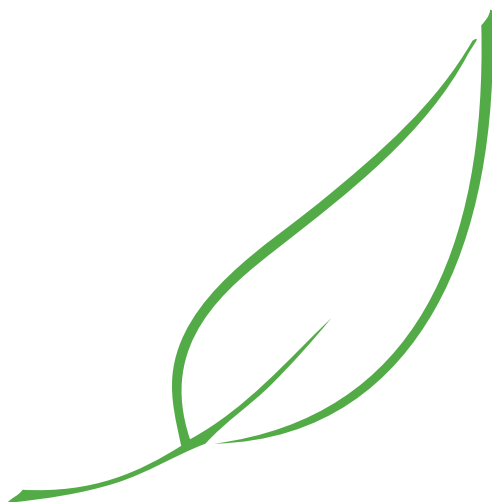


Faraway Eyes

By Ray Sheers



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FARAWAY EYES**BY RAY SHEERS**

SYNOPSIS: Living with friendly spirits Max and Lily for 13 years, Lionel and Amelia Nuthatch are experts by experience in the “living with ghosts” phenomena. When Lionel’s article on doppelgangers (a ghostly double of a living person) gets published in *Parapsychology Today*, Lionel gets fired from his job and Amelia, furious with Lionel, worries that they might lose their happily haunted home. The new spook on the block, Snooks Beacon, a dead musician who had been haunting the Titanic “until some busybody had to find the ship” tells Max and Lily that it’s time to play ghost and help the Nuthatches. In the tradition of Beetlejuice fun, ghostly chaos erupts. While Lionel and hypnotist, Mr. Pinquay, test one of Lionel’s paranormal theories on Amelia’s brother, Snooks gets caught in the middle and Lionel’s hypnosis experiment backfires. Amelia’s brother is now a Shakespeare-reciting primate and Amelia, once again, is furious with Lionel. Snooks quickly retracts his earlier statement about “playing ghost” and helping the Nuthatches, but it’s too late, Max and Lily are having the time of their afterlives meddling in the lives of their human friends. One interior set.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(7 female, 10 male, 3 either)*

- AMELIA NUTHATCH (f) Married to Professor LIONEL Nuthatch; she is an eccentric, well-meaning, somewhat confused (and confusing) woman. *(170 lines)*
- LIONEL NUTHATCH (m)..... A rather eccentric professor studying ghosts and doppelgangers. (A doppelganger is a ghostly double or spirit of a living person.) He is thoroughly convinced that spirits are among us. *(99 lines)*
- LILY KAMINSKI (f)..... A kind-hearted ghost haunting the Nuthatch residence. *(40 lines)*
- MAX KAMINSKI (m)..... AMELIA’S husband (also a ghost). *(68 lines)*
- SNOOKS BEACON (m) A ghost who went down with the Titanic. He’s a man who’s used to taking charge. He is accompanied by his troupe of performers. *(57 lines)*

	<i>lines)</i>
SLAVEETZA (f).....	A no-nonsense, crotchety maid who doesn't get around too well and can't see much either because she's lost her glasses. She's more concerned about her plants than she is about housework. (Part could be turned into a butler, if necessary.) (72 lines)
LAWRENCE (m).....	AMELIA's brother, a Shakespearean actor who believes he is characters from Shakespeare's plays. He should be dramatic. He will wear a traditional Shakespearean costume.) (26 lines)
HORATIO (m).....	(Optional character) LAWRENCE's ghostly squire (only seen by LAWRENCE and the other ghosts). This is a non-speaking role. He also wears traditional Shakespearean garb.
DR. VICTOR DEKOONING (m).....	Works for the Parapsychology Institute; a stuffy professor, very stodgy. (60 lines)
JASMINA PETROVICH (f).....	AMELIA'S sister. (103 lines)
BRUNO PETROVICH (m).....	JASMINA'S husband. (52 lines)
MR. PINQUAY (m).....	An experienced hypnotist helping MR. NUTHATCH with his research. (45 lines)
MYSTERIA (f)	WISTERIA'S doppelganger. She should be very similar in appearance to Wisteria. Identical costumes and wigs help with the illusion that they are look-alikes. (6 lines)
WISTERIA (f)	The Nuthatch's fairly normal daughter. (85 lines)
REPORTER (m/f).....	(13 lines)
PHOTOGRAPHER (m/f)	(12 lines)
ABRAHAM LINCOLN (m)	(Optional character) A ghost.
YURI (m)	WISTERIA'S hot-tempered boyfriend (5 lines)

- BAKERY CLERK (f) Female clerk at a local bakery. (6 lines)
- POLICE (m/f) (4 lines)
- EXTRAS (m/f)..... Feel free to add more ghosts. For example, the director of the original show used a tap dancing ghost since he had a student who could tap dance. She wore white makeup, gloves, and a bizarre costume (one of Snooks' troupe). If you have musicians or dancers as ghosts, use them to perform during scene changes and give the audience non-stop entertainment. Ghosts should wear bright, colorful attire in contrast to the living characters.

SNOOKS BEACONS' GHOSTLY TROUPE

(Three or more; male or female) Often musicians don't want speaking parts but are more than willing to play their instruments. If no musicians are available, the troupe can be circus performers, jugglers, dancers, etc. They should wear bright costumes in clothes from the early 1900's (they went down with Snooks on the Titanic) or costumes appropriate to their roles. If musicians, they should play something from the same period, preferably jazz. While Snooks' performers don't actually have to perform, it's a nice touch if they close the first scene. If they don't, just have them march in accompanied by appropriate music.

NOTE: All ghosts and doppelgangers are invisible to the living characters onstage. They all wear white faces and wear white gloves. They are dressed in modern, brightly colored clothes (not sheets!). You could add doppelgangers for several other parts if you have similar looking actors. **All actors need to be reminded that ghosts and doppelgangers are invisible, so they must ignore their presence at all times.**

We suggest you make a note in the program identifying ghosts and doppelgangers with an asterisk next to the characters' names with the explanation: "Ghosts and Doppelgangers: a doppelganger is a ghostly double or spirit of a living person."

PROPS

- ☐ White make-up for ghosts' faces (apply heavily for best effect)
- ☐ White gloves for ghosts
- ☐ Halloween decorations (pumpkins, ghosts, etc.; the more the better.)
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Books and magazines
- ☐ Plastic/stuffed mouse or rat
- ☐ Sandwich
- ☐ Suitcases
- ☐ Briefcase filled with papers
- ☐ Spray bottle
- ☐ Serving tray
- ☐ Plate with cookies
- ☐ Many plants (artificial and real, one needs to be large)
- ☐ Large feather dusters (the multi-colored kind used for cleaning blinds would be ideal)
- ☐ Pig mask (preferably latex)
- ☐ Coat rack
- ☐ Teapot and cups
- ☐ Eye glasses
- ☐ Doppelganger glasses (two needed; made from regular glasses with lens removed; they can be decorated with glitter and covered with bright colored cellophane)
- ☐ Handkerchief
- ☐ Flower for Pinquay's buttonhole
- ☐ Women's hats (two needed)
- ☐ Clock with movable hands (doesn't need to work)
- ☐ Bouquet of flowers
- ☐ Large heart-shaped candy box
- ☐ Several wrapped present boxes
- ☐ Wrist watch
- ☐ Camera (doesn't have to work)
- ☐ Spirit meter box (large box with holes drilled into it so large bulbs can be inserted (large Christmas lights work fine, especially if they flash)
- ☐ Scabbard (large enough for feather duster to fit into)
- ☐ Knitting needle, basket, yarn
- ☐ Bandage to wrap around Bruno's head

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- ☐ Banana
- ☐ Jewelry
- ☐ Skull
- ☐ Hypnosis wheel
- ☐ Shakespearean costumes (including a crown) for Lawrence and Horatio

HYPNOSIS WHEEL

For the hypnosis wheel, mount a large (five foot diameter) cardboard or Styrofoam circle to a motor. Attach this to a base. Paint a spiral design on the circle. As it turns, it will create a whirlpool effect. It can also be manually turned by someone behind it, if necessary. The wheel may be onstage for the entire play, or it may just be brought on during the hypnosis scenes. Since it was so large, we kept it onstage throughout the show. (You may substitute the wheel with a dangling watch, strobe light, or disco ball. You could just have the lights flicker every time someone turns the hypnosis wheel on.)

LAWRENCE'S THRONE

This could be a fancy living room chair. It might simply be a large chair draped with gold fabric. It needs to be raised so it is visible. You could sit the chair on a full box of paper, covered with fabric, to give it the needed height.

SPIRIT METER

Instead of an actual box with lights, you could just have Pinquay carry a compass and pretend it shakes every time there is a "spiritual" presence.

SUGGESTED MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

MUSIC

The following discs are suggestions only and not required for production. However, they will help you capture the mood and spirit of the play. They are all widely available at most large music stores, and most even may be obtained through public library systems. Many of the tracks from the first two CD's make particularly lively scene changes.

Essential Blues Piano, (House of Blues CD 51416 1313 2) Disc 1, Track 4 may be used during the last hypnosis scene. Fade out music when SNOOKS says to AMELIA, "Accept him as he is." It also is very poignant at the end of the play as AMELIA says good night to PINQUAY and running through the closing of curtain. (NOTE: Vocal begins at 2 minutes 51 seconds, so it

should be stopped before that point. Repeat, if necessary.)

Hot Jazz on Blue Note, (Blue Note CDP 7243 8 358112 2)

Folie Douce: Renaissance Improvisations, (Dorian DOR 90262) Track 1 for most of LAWRENCE's entrances. Starting the music before his entrance prepares the audience for his antics before the other characters realize he's on the scene.

Passage by the Empire Brass (Telarc CD 80355) Track 6 (first 35 seconds)
Use for hypnosis scene. Thunder may be substituted.

Klezematics: Jews with Horns, (Xenophile XENO 4032) Track 13 when LAWRENCE is transformed into a monkey and through chase scene in ACT THREE. Other circus-like music could also be used.

SOUND EFFECTS

Doorbell

Thunder

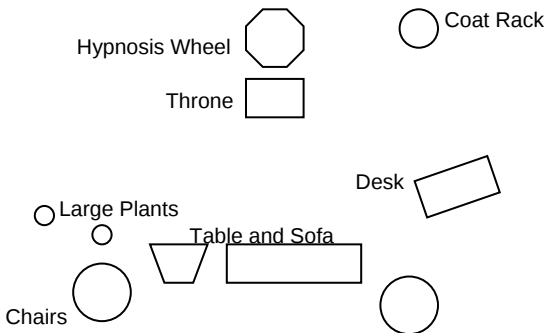
Chiming clock (twelve chimes)

Eerie music when spirit meter lights up

Phone ringing

SUGGESTED STAGE SET

All scenes take place in the living room of the Nuthatch residence.



ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: AMELIA NUTHATCH is decorating the room for Halloween. LIONEL NUTHATCH is at the desk working on some papers. He's having difficulty concentrating, and he is obviously annoyed with AMELIA'S decorating. MAX and LILY enter. They are, of course, invisible to the NUTHATCHES.

LILY: Max, the Nuthatches are still up. It's past their bedtime, isn't it, or are we early?

MAX: *(Looks at the clock.)* No, we're not early. *(Pulls a mouse from his pocket and holds it up.)* And how can the mice play if the cats aren't away?

AMELIA continues to decorate the room. LIONEL continues to work in exasperation and frustration.

LILY: Oh Max, put that thing away. *(Picks up a Halloween ghost.)* Isn't that cute?

MAX: Cute! It's insulting. Where do they come up with these ideas? Ghosts in white sheets. Ha. *(MAX moves the hands of the clock.)*

LIONEL: Amelia, do we have to have all of this Halloween nonsense all over the house?

MAX: My sentiments exactly.

AMELIA: You know I love to decorate for the holidays, Lionel.

LIONEL: It's a silly holiday.

MAX: Now I wouldn't go that far.

LIONEL: Why are you wasting your time? And money! How much did this garbage cost? *(Clock chimes twelve times.)*

AMELIA: Now you know we've had these decorations for years. Most of them came from garage sales.

LIONEL: Still costs money! My hard-earned money!

MAX: *(Swings mouse in front of LIONEL'S face, as if hypnotizing him.)* Hickory dickory dock, the mouse went up the clock. The clock struck twelve. The mouse ran down. Hickory dickory dock!

AMELIA: *(Yawns.)* Oh, it's later than I thought. I think I'll turn in, Lionel.

MAX: *(Lies on sofa; LILY sits in chair.)* It's about time.

AMELIA: Are you coming, dear?

LIONEL: In a while.

AMELIA: You really should get some rest, Lionel. I don't think you've been getting enough sleep. You've been a little nervous lately.

LIONEL: Nervous?

AMELIA: Nervous. Like a long-tailed cat under a rocking chair. You need more rest.

LIONEL: Rest? (*Throws papers down.*) How can I get any rest? Look at all this work! I may never rest again!

LILY: Oh, oh, something's the matter.

MAX: Sure looks that way.

AMELIA: What's wrong Lionel? I can tell when something is bothering you. At dinner tonight, you hardly touched your brisket of beef. That isn't like you, Lionel. You love brisket of beef.

MAX: She does make a good brisket of beef.

LIONEL: (*Rising and leading AMELIA to the sofa.*) Sit down, Amelia. I have to tell you something.

AMELIA: Tell me something? Oh, dear, it's not your rash again, is it? (*Lifts up his shirt; inspects his back.*) Your rash isn't back, is it?

LILY: Oh, no! His rash is back.

LIONEL: No, my rash isn't back!

LILY: Oh, good. (*Returns to chair.*)

AMELIA: (*Sitting on sofa; MAX jumps up just in time before she sits on him.*) Then what is it, Lionel?

LIONEL: The university is not renewing my contract.

AMELIA: What do you mean they're not renewing your contract, Lionel?

LIONEL: Just what I said. I've been fired.

AMELIA: Fired?

LIONEL: Fired, as in no job, no money, no future.

AMELIA: What?! How could this happen? (*Going over to him and comforting him.*)

MAX: (*Starts to leave.*) I wonder if they finished all the brisket of beef.

LILY: (*Pulling him back.*) Max, how can you think about food at a time like this? Lionel's been fired.

MAX: I'm hungry.

AMELIA: I don't believe it!

LILY: You're dead! You can't be hungry! You just like to eat.

MAX: So what? Is that a crime?

AMELIA: How could they do such a thing? You're such a good teacher! How could they fire you?

LIONEL: They don't approve of my research on doppelgangers.

MAX: Oh boy, I could have told him the doppelgangers were going to get him into trouble.

AMELIA: Oh, the doppelgangers! How did they find out about the doppelgangers?

LIONEL: Well, this was going to be a surprise. *(Pulls magazine out of a drawer.)* Parapsychology Today published my article on doppelgangers and the department head read it! Needless to say, she wasn't impressed.

AMELIA: *(Excited.)* Oh, let me see! "Doppelgangers: Are We Really Alone When We Think We're Alone?" by Lionel Nuthatch. *(Kisses him on the cheek.)* Oh, Lionel, I'm so proud of you. You got your article published at last. This is just so exciting! Wait until Wisteria finds out her father is a published writer!

LIONEL: *(Rising and pacing.)* A published writer who's out of a job! The head of the department called me into the office and said I was an embarrassment to the department. I'm the laughing stock at the university. All week long I've heard nothing but doppelganger jokes. "Hey Nuthatch, are you going trick-or-treating to look for doppelgangers?" Someone hung a ghost on the door to my office. People call up and yell "Boo!" into the phone.

MAX: They yell "boo!?" Ghosts don't yell "boo!"

LIONEL: One of my students even came to class wearing a white sheet.

MAX: The ghost in the white sheet again! *(MAX exits to kitchen.)*

AMELIA: So that's why you were so upset about my Halloween decorations.

LIONEL: After what I've been through this week, *(Picks up one of the Halloween decorations.)* I'm a little touchy about ghosts and goblins. *(Throws it into the air; LILY catches it.)*

MAX: Good catch!

AMELIA: Well, those people have little minds, Lionel. You pay them no mind.

LIONEL: They're going to pay me no money. Don't you understand, I won't have a job after this semester.

AMELIA: Maybe you should stop working on your doppelganger research . . . just for a little while. Maybe then the university would reconsider.

LIONEL: No, Amelia, they won't reconsider. Besides, I'm so close to a breakthrough on the doppelgangers. Now that Mr. Pinquay's working with me on my research, I feel certain we're close to proving my doppelganger theory.

AMELIA: (*Resignedly.*) I suppose this means we'll have to move again.

LIONEL: I'm afraid so. I can't afford this house if I don't have a job. And if I do get another teaching job, we'll have to move anyway, so you'd better think about packing.

AMELIA: But I love this house, Lionel. I love living here. There's just something so . . . special about this house.

MAX: (*Entering with a turkey sandwich.*) You can say that again.

AMELIA: I can't quite explain it, but this house is different. I remember you noticed it right away. Remember, you said, (*Attempting to use LIONEL'S voice.*) "Amelia, nothing bad can ever happen in a house on a street called Blue Ash." Remember that?

LIONEL: I guess I was wrong.

AMELIA: Oh, Lionel, you weren't wrong. Come on, let's call it a day. We'll just think good thoughts and sleep sweet dreams. I have a feeling everything will work out. Come to bed now. Everything will seem so much brighter in the morning. I just know it. Come.

They turn out lights and exit. MAX turns them back on as soon as they leave.

LILY: Oh, the poor Nuthatches!

MAX: No more brisket of beef. I found some leftover turkey though. She makes great turkey.

LILY: Max, the Nuthatches might have to move.

MAX: Good. Then we'll have the house to ourselves.

LILY: Not for long. A house like this so close to the university will be snapped up just like that *(Snaps her fingers.)* That means we'll have to get used to a new family . . .

MAX: *(Regretfully.)* . . . and someone else's cooking.

LILY: Is food all you can think about?

MAX: Why Lily, you're such a romantic . . . *(Puts his arm around her.)* after all these years.

LILY: *(Pushing him away.)* Oh, Max, stop! I'm going to miss the Nuthatches. They're nice people.

MAX: Nice and weird.

LILY: I wish there was something we could do to help.

MAX: Now, Lily, you know we're not supposed to interfere with the living.

LILY: Just eat their food, right? Max, what if the new people can't cook? What if they've got a pack of kids and all they eat is . . . pizza?

MAX: Pizza?!

LILY: That's right, or carry-out Chinese.

MAX: Carry-outs? Fast food?

LILY: And maybe they'll have a dog.

MAX: A dog? Oh no!

LILY: Remember when we had to haunt a house with a dog?

MAX: *(Scratching.)* Filthy, flea-infested creature kept sniffing everywhere, barking at our every move!

LILY: Eating all the leftovers . . .

MAX: Well, maybe we could give the Nuthatches a little guidance.

SNOOKS Beacon enters with suitcase, looking around.

MAX: Hey, who are you? What are you doing here?

SNOOKS: I could ask you the same question.

MAX: We live . . . well . . . reside here.

SNOOKS: Well, it looks like you've got some company. This is *(Looking at paper.)* 214 Blue Ash, ain't it? The Nuthouse residence?

LILY: It's Nuthatch!

SNOOKS: *(Examining paper.)* Oh, right.

MAX: There must be a mistake.

SNOOKS: There ain't no mistake, pal. I got orders from headquarters.

LILY: But you see, we were assigned haunting privileges to this house.

SNOOKS: That's all right. You won't be in the way. (*Looking around.*) It's a big house. (*Offering his hand.*) Name's Snooks Beacon.

MAX: (*Reluctantly shaking his hand.*) Max Kaminski. This is my wife, Lily. (*SNOOKS takes her hand.*) I don't understand. No one notified us you were coming.

SNOOKS: Well, this is kind of a special situation.

LILY: Special situation? What do you mean, Mr. Beacon?

SNOOKS: Call me Snooks. After all, we're practically family now.

MAX: Family?

LILY: What kind of special situation, Mr., uh, Snooks? (*She mispronounces it to rhyme with "hooks."*)

SNOOKS: (*Picks up the sandwich MAX has been eating and takes a bite.*) It's Snooks. Rhymes with "spooks."

MAX: Spooks. Cute. What kind of special situation, Snooks?

SNOOKS: Ever hear of the Titanic?

MAX: The ship?

SNOOKS: Of course, the ship!

LILY: What about the Titanic?

SNOOKS: I was on it the night she went down.

LILY: Oh, I'm so sorry.

SNOOKS: Yeah, well, it was a long time ago.

MAX: Let me get this straight. You went down with the Titanic.

SNOOKS: Didn't I just say that? I been down there since 1912.

LILY: What brought you up, if you don't mind my asking?

SNOOKS: What brought me up? You make it sound like I was someone's spoiled tuna. What brought me up!

LILY: Oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean it that way.

SNOOKS: Forget it. Things were fine down there until some busybody had to find the ship. Why can't people leave well enough alone?

LILY: I really don't know.

SNOOKS: We were quite content down there for years. Decades!

Then what happens? Probes and cameras and all kinds of equipment! That was the end of our peaceful afterlife. So here we are.

MAX: Here **we** are?

LILY: (*Looking around.*) I only see one of you, Mr . . . I mean . . . Snooks.

SNOOKS: (*Correcting her.*) SNOOKS!

MAX: What are you, a twin?

SNOOKS: You've got to understand I was supposed to perform on the Titanic the night she sank. (*Takes another bite.*) This isn't bad. What is it, chicken?

MAX: It's turkey. (*Grabbing it.*) My turkey.

SNOOKS: It's been a long time since I've had turkey.

LILY: You were saying . . . Snooks, that there were two of you.

SNOOKS: Two of me? Nah, I never said that. There must be an echo in here. You see, the night the ship sank, me and my performers were supposed to do a show. It was supposed to be our big break. Then bang! We hit that stupid iceberg, the ship sank, and we never got to perform. Some break, huh?

LILY: You and your performers?

SNOOKS: That's right. You see, we had a great show and we never got to perform. It's been a real disappointment to all of us, I can tell you. And so we've been down there rehearsing all these years, and now . . . we're here. That's the whole story in a nutshell.

MAX: Wait a minute, wait a minute, are you saying you've brought a whole troupe of dead performers with you?

SNOOKS: Is there any more of that turkey?

LILY: Where are these people, Mr. Snooks?

SNOOKS: Drop the mister, Lily, it's just Snooks. Snooks! OK? (*Walks over to door and with a flourish.*) Well, since you asked, allow me to introduce you . . . (*Lights dim; drum roll and spotlight on SNOOKS.*) Ladies and Gentlemen . . . boys and girls, children of all ages . . . allow me to present the one, the only Snooks Beacon's High flyin', Still Dryin', Never Dyin', All-Star Show of Shows . . . ! (*His troupe of players enter accompanied by music. His performers could be musicians, circus performers, actors, etc. If they are musicians, they could enter playing.*)

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE: *SLAVEETZA is hobbling around spraying plants. Because she has trouble seeing without her glasses, she has to put her face right next to the plants to see. She is obviously distraught. LAWRENCE as Prince Hamlet is pacing upstage, also obviously troubled about something. (If the character of HORATIO is used, he will accompany him; he is invisible to all but LAWRENCE and other ghosts. They could enter as if riding horses. See Monty Python's Holy Grail for a good example of how this can be done. The sound is produced by two-tone wood instrument, available in most primary school music departments. HORATIO would make the clip-clop sound and follow LAWRENCE.)*

AMELIA: *(Rushing in, carrying a tray of cookies.)* Slaveetza, I've just taken a batch of my latest creation out of the oven. Would you like one? The big questions is, will I win the contest?

LAWRENCE: *(Sneaking up behind her and taking one, dramatically.)*
To be or not to be, that is the question. *(AMELIA jumps.)*

AMELIA: Oh, Lawrence! You do frighten a body when you sneak up on them like that. Try not to do that. Be careful, they're hot!

SLAVEETZA: Don't you dare drop crumbs on my clean floor. I just cleaned in here.

LAWRENCE: *(To SLAVEETZA, who doesn't flinch.)* I am Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

AMELIA: *(Patting him.)* Of course, you are, dear.

SLAVEETZA: Wacko, Prince of Loonies. *(He retreats to the rear of stage to sit on his "throne" and eat his cookies.)*

AMELIA: Slaveetza, please! We must be kind to Lawrence. He's very sensitive. Won't you try a cookie while they're still warm? I really think they're best when they're still warm. *(SLAVEETZA lies on floor, examining the undersides of leaves of a large plant.)* Do you remember, I couldn't think of a name for my new cookie . . . and then one night it just came to me in a dream.

SLAVEETZA: *(Spraying.)* Mealy bugs!

AMELIA: *(Looks at the tray, picks up a cookie and examines it.)*

Mealy bugs? Well, that's a catchy name, Slaveetza, but I don't think people would want to eat something called mealy bugs. I know I wouldn't. I decided to call them Faraway Eyes.

SLAVEETZA: We've got mealy bugs!

AMELIA: *(Examining herself.)* We do? Oh dear!

SLAVEETZA: The plants are invested with mealy bugs.

AMELIA: Oh, the plants. I thought you meant we had them on us. Thank goodness.

SLAVEETZA: *(Getting up.)* It's just a matter of time.

AMELIA: Oh dear. *(Searching again for bugs on herself.)*

SLAVEETZA: They're crawling all over the foilage.

AMELIA: *(Looking at a plant.)* Foliage, dear. Leaves are called fo-li-age. *(Lifting up a leaf.)* Are you sure? I don't see any bugs.

SLAVEETZA: Don't you think I know mealy bugs when I see them? We got mealy bugs. We're invested with germin! *(Continuing to spray; AMELIA shields her cookies from the spray.)*

AMELIA: I believe you mean infested with vermin, Slaveetza. Is it really that serious? *(Eating a cookie.)*

SLAVEETZA: Serious! Serious, she asks me? What does the woman have in her noodle? Serious?! Let me tell you all the plants could be dead within weeks. I think I'd call that serious! *(Spraying furiously.)* I can even see them without my glasses. I can't find my fool glasses. Someone took them again.

AMELIA: Now, Slaveetza, I'm sure there around here somewhere. Who would take them?

SLAVEETZA: *(Indicating LAWRENCE.)* Him, for one.

AMELIA: Now, Lawrence wouldn't take them. My brother is a lot of things, but he is not a thief. I'm sure they'll turn up. Things always do. Remember, we found your false teeth when you lost them? Where did you have them last?

SLAVEETZA: *(Checking her mouth.)* They're in my mouth.

AMELIA: No, I mean your glasses.

SLAVEETZA: They were on my face. How am I supposed to know where I had them last? If I knew that, they wouldn't be lost!

AMELIA: That spray certainly does have a foul odor.

LAWRENCE: So foul and fair a day I have not seen! *(Takes another cookie.)*

AMELIA: Well, it is supposed to rain. I think I'll just save these for

later. (*LAWRENCE takes tray from her and carries it to the kitchen.*) Thank you, dear. (*To SLAVEETZA.*) I do believe my Faraway Eyes were a big hit with Lawrence.

SLAVEETZA: He'll eat anything. Probably ate my glasses. (*Picking bugs off plants, throwing them on floor and stomping on them.*)

AMELIA: Oh, did I tell you I bought a new mask?

SLAVEETZA: Mask?

AMELIA: For Halloween! I am going to dress up for all of the little hobgoblins who come trick-or-treating.

SLAVEETZA: Hooligans who come beggin', you mean! Why don't you just let Lawrence answer the door. He's always dressed for Halloween.

AMELIA: Now, Slaveetza, you know my brother isn't well. That's why Mr. Pinquay is here. Mr. Pinquay is trying to cure him with hypnosis. (*Doorbell rings.*) Oh, that must be Jasmina. I'm afraid she's had another falling out with her husband Bruno.

SLAVEETZA: What? She's left him again! What's it been, two weeks?

AMELIA: Three, I believe.

SLAVEETZA: Wait till your husband finds out she's back.

AMELIA: Lionel will just have to adjust. She's my dearest friend in the world. Where is she supposed to live? On the streets? (*Doorbell.*) Would you let her in, dear? I want to surprise her with my new mask. Maybe it will cheer her up.

SLAVEETZA: Someone else to clean up after. (*Hobbles to answer the door. DR. VICTOR DEKOONING enters carrying a briefcase.*)

SLAVEETZA: (*Getting into his face and squinting.*) Well, you're not Jasmina. This is not a boarding house you know.

VICTOR: My name is DeKooning. Dr. Victor DeKooning. I have an appointment with . . . (*SLAVEETZA is spraying a plant, ignoring him. He looks around.*) This is the Nuthatch residence, isn't it?

AMELIA: (*Making a grand entrance, wearing a pig mask.*) Helllll-ooo, Jasmina (*Makes pig grunts.*) . . . oh, you're not Jasmina.

SLAVEETZA: He knows. I already told him he wasn't Jasmina. And I don't see a suitcase, just a briefcase; that's a good sign. (*SLAVEETZA sprays him and moves to the rear of the stage, too preoccupied with her plants to notice the mask AMELIA is wearing.*)

AMELIA: Let me take your coat. *(She hangs it on coat rack.)*

VICTOR: *(Staring at the mask.)* Is this, uh, 214 Blue Ash?

AMELIA: Why, of course it is. I'm Amelia Nuthatch. And you must be...

VICTOR: Dr. Victor DeKooning.

AMELIA: *(Taking his hand and shaking it vigorously.)* Well, I'm certainly delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. DeKooning. Were we expecting you?

VICTOR: I believe so. I'm from the Institute.

AMELIA: The Institute? Oh the Institute! Of course! And so soon! I didn't think they would respond so quickly. Oh, Wisteria will be so pleased.

VICTOR: Wisteria?

AMELIA: Wisteria is our daughter. She isn't here right now, but -

SLAVEETZA: She went to get her head examined.

VICTOR: What? Well, actually, I'm here to see your . . .

AMELIA: I don't believe it was her head, Slaveetza. I believe she went to have her eyes examined. I'm certain that was it, Mr. DeKooning. She had to get her eyes examined.

SLAVEETZA: She probably took my glasses with her.

AMELIA: But Wisteria should return shortly. *(Takes SLAVEETZA aside.)* He's from the Love Institute! A gentleman caller for Wisteria! A doctor!

SLAVEETZA: Love Institute, my stinkin' left foot! *(SLAVEETZA exits.)*

AMELIA: Now, Mr. DeKooning . . . may I call you Victor?

VICTOR: Yes, but I don't think you understand . . .

AMELIA: Oh, there's a lot I don't understand about this world, Mr. DeKooning. But we can't let that stop us, can we? We must carry on.

VICTOR: Maybe I should come back later. Perhaps this is a bad time.

AMELIA: Oh, don't be silly, Mr. DeKooning. There's no such thing as a bad time around here. My husband always says, *(Using a deep voice.)* "Nothing bad can ever happen in a house on a street called Blue Ash, Amelia." Amelia is what Lionel calls me. Please sit down. *(He sits in chair next to sofa.)* Would you like some tea while you wait, Mr. DeKooning? *(She sits on sofa.)*

VICTOR: Well, some tea would be fine, if it's no trouble.

AMELIA: Why, no trouble at all, Doctor. (*Slapping his knee.*)
Slaveetza? (*Looks about.*) SLAVEETZA!

SLAVEETZA: (*Entering with her spray bottle, stops to spray a plant.*)
What?!

AMELIA: Would you be so kind as to bring us some tea?

SLAVEETZA: You got any sleeping in the kitchen?

AMELIA: Steeping, dear, not sleeping. Yes, I've got a pot steeping in the kitchen. And please bring a couple of my Faraway Eyes for Mr. DeKooning to taste. (*To VICTOR.*) They're best when they're still warm, you know. And I think they just might still be warm. (*SLAVEETZA hobbles off, grumbling.*) I'm afraid Slaveetza has a horrible outbreak of mealy bugs. It has made her very irritable. And she's lost her glasses again.

SLAVEETZA: (*Yells from offstage.*) Wisteria stole them.

AMELIA: Have you ever had mealy bugs, Mr. DeKooning?

VICTOR: (*Scratching.*) Mealy bugs? Certainly not. (*Looking around uncomfortably.*)

AMELIA: It's a good thing. They spread so fast, I'm told. Would you mind terribly sitting over here, Mr. DeKooning. You see, the last person who sat in that chair was shot. It was most unfortunate. (*He moves to sofa.*) Oh, I can see by your face that I've upset you, but you needn't worry. I don't allow weapons in the house anymore. You're not carrying any firearms, are you, Mr. DeKooning?

VICTOR: Firearms? Certainly not. (*SLAVEETZA returns with tea tray, sets it on table near sofa.*)

AMELIA: Well, I didn't think so. You don't look like the sort of man to tote a pistol. Still, you can never be too careful these days, don't you agree, Mr. DeKooning?

VICTOR: I suppose that's true.

AMELIA: Excuse me a moment, Mr. DeKooning. (*Takes SLAVEETZA aside.*) Slaveetza, did you remember to check (*Motioning VICTOR.*) for . . . ?

SLAVEETZA: Mealybugs?

AMELIA: No, no . . . weapons.

SLAVEETZA: No, I forgot. I thought he was Jasmina and so did you.

AMELIA: I know, dear. That's all right. We'll take care of it now. (*Returning to VICTOR.*) Mr. DeKooning, would you mind standing up for a moment? (*He is confused, but he complies; SLAVEETZA and AMELIA start frisking him.*)

VICTOR: (*Struggling.*) Get your hands off of me! (*Laughing because they're ticking him as they search.*)

AMELIA: I do believe you're ticklish, Mr. DeKooning. (*Tickling him deliberately now; he tries to squirm away from her as SLAVEETZA continues to check him for weapons.*) I've heard that ticklish men are the most romantic, Mr. DeKooning.

VICTOR: (*Still laughing, but furious.*) Stop this instant! What are you doing!

AMELIA: Checking for firearms, of course. I can't have any more men shot in my house. The police will start to wonder about me.

VICTOR: I'm beginning to wonder about you! If I'd known what I was getting into I would have come armed.

AMELIA: Oh, Slaveetza, you forgot the Faraway Eyes.

SLAVEETZA: (*Grudgingly.*) Get the tea, search for weapons, fetch the cookies . . .

VICTOR: Don't bother on my account.

AMELIA: Oh, but you must try them. I'll be so hurt if you don't. (*SLAVEETZA exits.*) Please sit down, Mr. DeKooning. (*He almost sits in chair, but moves to the sofa.*) Tell me, if you were going to kill someone, what would you use, if I'm not being too personal?

VICTOR: I've never given it much thought . . . until now.

AMELIA: Well, I've given it quite a bit of thought. (*Examining chair.*) There seems to be such bad luck associated with that chair, for some reason. Do you believe in luck, Mr. DeKooning?

VICTOR: Luck? No, I don't believe in luck.

AMELIA: We believe in luck in this house, Mr. DeKooning. Don't you believe that some things are just meant to happen? Like your showing up here today. Don't you believe it was fate that brought you here? Well, it was Mr. DeKooning. (*LAWRENCE enters and approaches VICTOR.*)

LAWRENCE: Be thou a spirit of good or ill? A thing of health or goblin cursed?

VICTOR: (*Rising.*) I think I'll be going now, Mrs. Nuthatch.

LAWRENCE: (*Holding him.*) Thou comest in such a questionable

shape . . .

VICTOR: I really need to go! (*Pulling away from LAWRENCE.*) I'll come back another time.

AMELIA: Oh, Wisteria will be so disappointed. I can't imagine what's keeping her. Now shoo, Prince Hamlet. Run along. (*HE does and SLAVEETZA enters with tray of cookies and tea set.*)

VICTOR: But I've been trying to tell you that I haven't come to see –

AMELIA: Oh, good, the Faraway Eyes have arrived. You can't leave without trying one of my Faraway Eyes. I would never forgive you. Now sit down, sit, sit, sit! We'll pour you some tea.

VICTOR: (*Jumping up suddenly.*) Ow!

AMELIA: (*Looking at sofa and picking up SLAVEETZA'S broken glasses.*) Oh, look, Slaveetza, Mr. DeKooning has done a good deed and found your glasses. A good deed never goes unrewarded, Mr. DeKooning. That's what my husband always says.

SLAVEETZA: (*Trying to put them on.*) They're broke! He broke my glasses!

AMELIA: Oh dear, so he has. Mr. DeKooning, you've gone and sat on Slaveetza's glasses. I'm afraid they're ruined.

VICTOR: Well, I'm sorry. I didn't see them when I sat down.

SLAVEETZA: Now what am I going to do? I can't see without my glasses.

AMELIA: We'll just have to get you another pair, won't we, Slaveetza? Sit down, Mr. DeKooning, and we'll have some nice hot tea and think good thoughts. (*SLAVEETZA stands on one side of VICTOR with the teapot. AMELIA stands on the other side with the teacup. She holds a cup and saucer for SLAVEETZA to pour, but she keeps moving the cup around as she talks.*) Don't let Lawrence frighten you. Mr. Pinquay is going to try to cure him with hypnosis. He's perfectly harmless. Lawrence, I mean, not Mr. Pinquay. You needn't worry. I have taken away his sword. It's hidden where no one will find it. Lawrence's, not Mr. Pinquay's. (*Laughing.*) Mr. Pinquay doesn't even have a sword. (*Serious.*) Not that I know of, anyway. Did I mention that I've entered my Faraway Eyes in a contest?

VICTOR: Faraway Eyes?

AMELIA: In the Pleasin' Cuisine Magazine Contest. I should find out

the results any day now. Has the mail arrived yet, Slaveetza?

SLAVEETZA: How would I know?

AMELIA: It's been two months. I think that's quite long enough to make a decision, don't you, Mr. DeKooning? (*SLAVEETZA finally pours the tea, misses his cup, and pours the tea on his lap.*)

VICTOR: (*Jumping up.*) OOOOOwww-www! (*Still jumping around.*)

AMELIA: Oh, Mr. DeKooning, I am so sorry. Here, let me help you. (*Starts wiping his trousers with her handkerchief. SLAVEETZA gets on floor and starts wiping it.*)

VICTOR: (*Grabbing the handkerchief.*) Stop it! I'll take care of it myself, if you don't mind! (*He jumps up and down, stomping on SLAVEETZA'S hand.*)

SLAVEETZA: Ow!

AMELIA: (*VICTOR is starting to leave; AMELIA grabs him by the coat.*) Now, Mr. DeKooning, you can't go out in public like that. What will people think? Here, let me get you a pair of my husband's trousers to wear. Slaveetza, why don't you get Lionel's brown corduroys. He never wears them anymore. (*Tugging on his trousers.*) What size are these, Mr. DeKooning? I think those brown corduroys will fit.

VICTOR: I do not want your husband's trousers, brown or otherwise! I just want to get out of here! Good day! (*Grabs his coat off coat rack and exits.*)

AMELIA: Oh, dear, that didn't go so well. I'm not sure he was right for Wisteria anyway. He seemed a little touchy. Good heavens! I have another batch of Faraway Eyes in the oven! (*Runs off to kitchen; doorbell rings. SLAVEETZA goes to answer it. JASMINA enters with suitcases.*)

JASMINA: Hello, Slaveetza, what is that delicious aroma? As if I could eat a thing!

SLAVEETZA: (*Sniffing.*) Mealy bug spray. We' re infested.

JASMINA: Oh, how awful! Where is Amelia? Don't tell me she's out shopping for more Halloween tomfoolery. Good grief, look at this place!

AMELIA: (*Entering.*) I thought I heard the bell. (*Goes to hug JASMINA.*)

JASMINA: I see you've been making a pig of yourself again, Amelia.

AMELIA: A pig of myself . . . ? (*JASMINA indicates the pig mask*

which AMELIA is still wearing.) Oh, dear, no wonder Mr. DeKooning was so distraught. *(Takes it off.)* He must have thought I was crazy!

JASMINA: Who's Mr. DeKooning? *(They sit.)*

AMELIA: A gentleman caller for Wisteria.

JASMINA: A gentleman caller for Wisteria? I thought she liked Yuri.

AMELIA: They broke up.

JASMINA: Poor girl. Well, where did she meet this gentleman caller?

AMELIA: Well, she never actually met him. He had to leave before they actually met.

JASMINA: Amelia, what are you talking about?

AMELIA: Can you keep a secret, Jasmina?

JASMINA: Can I keep a secret?!

SLAVEETZA: Humph!

AMELIA: Well, you can't tell anyone. You know Wisteria hasn't had much luck with men.

JASMINA: If you ask me, she's better off without a man. They're good for nothing.

AMELIA: Oh, now, you have to admit, they do have their good points.

JASMINA: I don't recall any.

AMELIA: What happened with Bruno this time, Jasmina.

JASMINA: The usual. He was chasing after another woman. *(SLAVEETZA, getting interested, stays near and listens.)*

AMELIA: Jasmina, are you sure? You know, you've been wrong before.

JASMINA: I am not wrong this time. I can tell, let me tell you. A woman knows when a man is starting to wander. There are signs. Let me tell you, Wisteria is better off without a man.

AMELIA: But Jasmina, I want to have grandchildren someday, and I'm not going to get any if Wisteria doesn't find herself a man . . . and soon. The clock is ticking, *(Clock strikes the hour.)* you know. So I took matters into my own hands.

JASMINA: You took matters into your own hands?

AMELIA: That's right. Now promise you won't tell. There's an agency that advertises in the newspaper, The Love Institute.

JASMINA: The Love Institute ?

AMELIA: It's kind of a Miss Lonely Hearts Club.

SLAVEETZA: Miss Baloney Hearts Club is more like it. (*Resumes spraying her plants.*)

AMELIA: Hush, Slaveetza. (*To JASMINA.*) It's a computer matchmaking agency. They send you a long questionnaire and you fill in your likes and dislikes, interests, and so forth, and they feed everything into a computer and voila!

JASMINA: Voila?

AMELIA: Voila! Out pops a man!

JASMINA: Out pops a man. Just like that?

AMELIA: Just like that.

JASMINA: You actually did this . . . this computer matchmaking?

AMELIA: Wisteria's not getting any younger, you know. She needs a little nudge before it's too late.

JASMINA: So Wisteria doesn't know about this?

AMELIA: Absolutely not, if I had told her, she never would have let me do it. And you mustn't tell - not Wisteria or Lionel either. Especially not Lionel!

JASMINA: How did you fill out the questionnaire if she didn't know anything about it?

AMELIA: Well, don't you think I know my daughter well enough to answer that silly questionnaire . . . even if I didn't know the answer, I just took an educated guess.

JASMINA: An educated guess.

AMELIA: Jasmina, you've gotten into the bad habit of repeating everything I say.

JASMINA: You are playing with fire, Amelia. You mark my words, you are playing with fire. (*Sniffing.*) Speaking of fire, is something burning in the kitchen?

AMELIA: (*Runs offstage.*) Oh no! My Faraway Eyes! I'll bet they're ruined! (*LIONEL NUTHATCH enters with MR. PINQUAY*) *PINQUAY carries the Spirit Meter with him.*)

LIONEL: Where does the time go, Mr. Pinquay, where does it go? Why it seems like just yesterday . . . (*Without enthusiasm.*) Oh, hello, Jasmina. (*Sees her bags.*) I see your suitcases are packed. Are you . . . (*Hopeful.*) moving?

JASMINA: If I am not welcome here, just say so, Lionel.

LIONEL: Oh, nonsense! Our home is your home. More so, even.

PINQUAY: Ahem.

LIONEL: Oh, Jasmina, I'd like you to meet Mr. Pinquay. This is Jasmina Petrovich. Mr. Pinquay's a hypnotist. I met him on the train. He was hypnotizing a woman on the train. It was the most amazing thing!

JASMINA: Is that legal?

PINQUAY: You see, I'm between offices right now. You wouldn't believe the rent they're charging these days for an office in a respectable neighborhood. So I was, uh, treating my patients on the train.

JASMINA: It's a good thing you're not a dentist!

PINQUAY: Oh, you're such a tease, Miss Petrovich.

JASMINA: You know, I read something in the newspaper just this morning about a man who was hypnotizing women on the train and robbing them.

LIONEL: Well, that's what you call a coincidence, isn't it, Pinquay?

PINQUAY: (*Obviously uncomfortable.*) Yes, that's what you'd call a real coincidence. But you can't read everything you believe in the paper, Miss Petrovich.

LIONEL: Well, actually, it's -

JASMINA: Jasmina. Jasmina Petrovich.

PINQUAY: (*Removes a flower from his lapel.*) May I present you with this flower, Miss Petrovich? It can't match your loveliness, but you certainly enhance its beauty. (*PINQUAY takes JASMINA'S hand and kisses it.*)

JASMINA: (*Flattered.*) Why, thank you. You must call me Jasmina.

PINQUAY: Jasmina! What a lovely name. You must call me Cheechee.

LIONEL: Cheechee?!

JASMINA: What a curious and delightful name. It just rolls off the tongue. Cheechee Pinquay.

PINQUAY: Thank you. It's an Indian name.

JASMINA: Really? Are you an Indian?

PINQUAY: No, I don't think so.

LIONEL: You never told me your name was Cheechee. Mr. Pinquay is staying with us. He arrived just after you left . . . two weeks ago.

JASMINA: Three.

LIONEL: Oh, who's counting?

PINQUAY: I guess we'll be seeing quite a lot of each other, Jasmina.

LIONEL: Mr. Pinquay is going to help me with my work on doppelgangers.

JASMINA: Doppelgangers?

PINQUAY: Doppelgangers.

JASMINA: What's a doppelganger, Mr., uh, Cheechee?

LIONEL: I'm glad you asked.

JASMINA: I wasn't asking you, Lionel.

SLAVEETZA: Oh great, here comes the dopeygander lecture. (*She examines some plants; starts spraying.*)

AMELIA: (*Returning.*) Why, Lionel. You're home early.

LIONEL: Hello, dear. I was just explaining doppelgangers to Jasmina.

AMELIA: Oh, the doppelgangers.

JASMINA: So what is a doppelganger, Mr. Pinquay?

LIONEL: The word "doppelganger" means a "double walker," a spirit who is a look-alike of someone who's alive.

JASMINA: Are we talking about . . . ghosts?

SLAVEETZA: Ghosts! Ha!

LIONEL: Ghosts, yes. But not just any ghosts.

PINQUAY: Doppelgangers are ghosts who look and act like someone who's still alive. We might all have doppelgangers. In fact, I'm willing to bet we do.

JASMINA: How fascinating! (*Looking around.*) And creepy.

SLAVEETZA: It's rubbish!

LIONEL: That's the theory I'm trying to prove with Mr. Pinquay, that each of us has a double in the spirit world.

LAWRENCE: (*Enters carrying a skull.*) Some are doomed . . . to walk the night.

JASMINA: (*Screams, jumps from him.*) Who-what-Lawrence!

SLAVEETZA: Prince Omelette.

AMELIA: Prince Hamlet!

LAWRENCE: There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy, Horatio.

LIONEL: This is Amelia's brother, Lawrence. He's, uh, going through a bad spell.

SLAVEETZA: Humph! A bad spell!

LAWRENCE: (*Holding up skull.*) Alas, poor Yorrick! I knew him . . .

a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times . . . *(He hands skull to JASMINA; she drops it in disgust.)* Adieu, adieu, remember me! *(LAWRENCE takes her hat and puts it on without her knowing; HE exits.)*

AMELIA: *(Applauding for LAWRENCE'S performance.)* Lawrence is an actor.

JASMINA: Oh, an actor. Well, that explains the nylons. Where's my hat?

AMELIA: Oh, I think Lawrence might have it. *(Runs to get it.)* I'll get it!

SLAVEETZA: *(To JASMINA.)* He steals things. He stole my glasses.

LIONEL: He does have a fondness for hats.

SLAVEETZA: And glasses.

AMELIA: *(Returning with the hat.)* Here you are, dear.

JASMINA: *(Putting on her hat.)* Amelia, you never told me you had a brother who . . . wore nylons.

AMELIA: Oh, you silly thing. All Shakespearean actors wear them.

LIONEL: Lawrence arrived on the scene not an hour after you left.

JASMINA: What? He's staying here? You mean, in this house?

LIONEL: You should be honored to be staying in the same house as a tragedian.

JASMINA: Is that what they're calling themselves now?

LIONEL: A tragedian is someone who acts in tragedies, Jasmina.

JASMINA: I was only gone three weeks. Whom can I expect to find in my room? Jack the Ripper?

AMELIA: Don't be ridiculous.

SLAVEETZA: He checked out yesterday.

LIONEL: But he might be back!

AMELIA: Ignore them!

PINQUAY: Lawrence is a very difficult case, most troubling.

JASMINA: What's wrong with him?

SLAVEETZA: Crazy as a loon!

AMELIA: He is not crazy! He's just an actor who forgot his identity.

JASMINA: Forgotten who he is?

PINQUAY: He suffered a breakdown and now he thinks he's characters from Shakespeare's plays. Sometimes he's Romeo,

sometimes he's Macbeth; today he thinks he's Hamlet.

JASMINA: Hamlet?

LIONEL: You know, Shakespeare.

JASMINA: Of course, I know Shakespeare! Do you think I was raised by baboons?

LIONEL laughs hysterically; JASMINA gives him a nasty look.

AMELIA: No, we don't think you were raised by baboons, do we Lionel? (*Hitting him.*) Lionel!

LIONEL: Well the thought did cross - (*AMELIA slugs him.*) - no, no, of course not.

PINQUAY: We're going to cure Lawrence with hypnosis.

SLAVEETZA: Hypnosis! Ha! You're **all** loons!

LIONEL: Maybe we could practice on you, Slaveetza.

SLAVEETZA: Over my dead body.

AMELIA: Mr. Pinquay, do you think it's possible to hypnotize somebody into thinking he's an animal?

SLAVEETZA: Like a baboon. (*Looking at JASMINA.*)

PINQUAY: It's possible, but we are scientists, we are performing research, not running a carnival sideshow!

LIONEL: We don't do baboons, pigs, or chickens. Come, Mr. Pinquay,

AMELIA starts clearing the tea things and putting them on the tray.

we have work to do.

PINQUAY: Chickens, indeed!

They begin to leave; both pretend to be chickens by flapping their arms and making chicken sounds. LIONEL stops and turns as if suddenly remembering something; PINQUAY exits.

LIONEL: Oh, by the way, Amelia, I 'm expecting Dr. DeKooning from the Parapsychology Institute. (*AMELIA drops the tray; exchanges a look with SLAVEETZA.*)

AMELIA: Clumsy me!

LIONEL: No harm done.

JASMINA: That's what you think.

LIONEL: Will you let me know when Dr. DeKooning arrives? I don't want to keep him waiting. He's a very important man.

AMELIA: Did you say Dr. DeKooning?

LIONEL: That's right, Dr. Victor DeKooning from the Parapsychology Institute.

SLAVEETZA: Parrot psychology! What will they think of next? Parrots, hah!

LIONEL: No, no, Slaveetza, not parrot psychology, parapsychology. Parapsychology is the study of psychic phenomena, such as telepathy, extra sensory perception, surely you've heard of ESP, clairvoyance -

JASMINA: What's clairvoyance?

LIONEL: Clairvoyance is the ability to perceive or see things that others can't see.

SLAVEETZA: *(Acting eerie and ghostlike toward JASMINA.)* Like spooks! *(Exits.)*

LIONEL: Like doppelgangers. Mr. Pinquay has even invented a pair of glasses especially designed to see doppelgangers. Here, let me show you. *(He goes to desk and takes out two pairs of doppelganger glasses, which he gives to AMELIA and JASMINA.)*

AMELIA: I don't see anything.

JASMINA: Neither do I.

LIONEL: Well, that's because there probably aren't any in the room with us. The Institute is very interested in my research on doppelgangers. They've seen my article

AMELIA: Oh dear!

LIONEL: They may offer me a job, then it won't matter that I lost my position at the university.

JASMINA: You've been fired again?

AMELIA: *(Realizing fully what she's done.)* Oh dear!

JASMINA: Lionel, are you telling me someone is actually going to pay you to study this doppelganger stuff?

LIONEL: It's not stuff, Jasmina. It's the Doppelganger Theory and yes, Dr. DeKooning is very interested in my research. He's highly respected in the field of parapsychology. I've never actually met the man, but I am familiar with his work. Dr. DeKooning is almost a household name.

AMELIA: Not in this household.

LIONEL: What was that?

AMELIA: I said the name does ring a bell.

LIONEL: Well, we'll see you at dinner. Oh, Amelia, dear, could you put some of this Halloween . . . paraphernalia away until Dr. DeKooning has been here. I don't want him to think we live in a pigsty. *(AMELIA and JASMINA, eyes wide open, look at each other. He exits. AMELIA sinks onto the sofa. JASMINA sits beside her.)*

JASMINA: Amelia, I thought you said Mr. DeKooning was a gentleman caller for Wisteria.

AMELIA: Well, I thought he was! I mean, I assumed he was . . . oh, how was I supposed to know he was from the Parapsychology Institute?!

JASMINA: You could have asked him.

AMELIA: When he said Institute, I just naturally assumed that he was from the Love Institute. Why didn't he say so in the first place.

JASMINA: Are you going to tell Lionel? *(LAWRENCE enters.)*

AMELIA: Certainly not! And you're sworn to secrecy too, Jasmina. Oh dear, I've gone and made a rotten muddle of things, I'm afraid.

LAWRENCE: Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

AMELIA: Things are rotten all over, I'm afraid, my Prince. Things are rotten all over.

JASMINA and LAWRENCE comfort her.

BLACKOUT



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