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RICHLY POISONED

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

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RICHLY POISONED - A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

written by

Thomas Nelson

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Synopsis

Lewyn von Ludwig has planned an extravagant dinner party for the wealthy, aristocratic, and especially pretentious. However, after the unexpected death of Uncle Lester, it is up to Peony the maid and Oliver the butler to figure out who is responsible. Could it be the Otto family, Otis, Ottie, or Olanda? Or perhaps oddly emotionless Yorik, Lewyn's brother? A murder mystery turned farce with unexpected (or expected) twists, turns, poisons, and fires.

Cast of Characters

LEWYN VON LUDWIG	a pompous, self-obsessed aristocrat looking for a wife
OLIVER	the butler of Lewyn's estate. Trusting and courteous
PEONY ADAMOS	the maid of Lewyn's estate. A clever maverick
DIANE	an official investigator with skeptical tendencies
YORIK VON LUDWIG	a family member, Lewyn's brother
ANNETTE VON LUDWIG	a family member, Lewyn's sister
LESTER VON LUDWIG	a family member, Lewyn's uncle
TATIANA	a suitor
PRISCILLA	a suitor
MARGARITA	a suitor
OFFICER BUMBLE	a watchman
OFFICER FUMBLE	a watchman
STUMBLE	a watchman
GENE STRINDBERG	
JULIA STRINDBERG	
OTIS OSBOURN	
OTTIE OSBOURN	
OLANDA OSBOURN	

Time

Evening. Summer.

Place

The Von Ludwig mansion. Early 1950s.

Director Notes

This play is written for entertainment and educational purposes only. All characters are original for this story, and it is of the author's request that they remain strictly for it and its franchise. Any similarities to real-life figures otherwise are coincidental, and in no way intentional.

Richly Poisoned pokes fun not only at the absurdity of aristocratic society, but at the nature of witch-hunts and McCarthyism. Those who do nothing wrong are accused by those who have, and what follows is a confusing cycle of forgiveness or punishment alongside more accusations. Only when the humor is found in these cases can there truly be repose.

STAGE DIRECTION NOTE

All directions are from the view of the stage, facing the audience.

ACT I

Scene 1

Setting: At center stage is the Von Ludwig mansion's dining hall; to one side is a broom closet, and to the other is the kitchen. Lights fade in on the dining hall, which is ined with decorated tables, exquisite sculptures, tasteful bouquets, and even more tasteful culinary platters. The broom closet and kitchen remain dark.

At Rise: OLIVER is furnishing one of the final tables with some additional decorations as LESTER patrols neuoritically.

LESTER

Is this truly the best you can do? Tonight is not a regular dinner party, you know. The elite are, as one may say, quite… elite. And they must be treated as such.

OLIVER

I am aware, sir. I have been serving the elite for my entire life.

LESTER

Then why do you have posies of primroses and petunias by poppies? And why are the nosegays by the nemesias and nepetas?! I will not even mention the asters nor the azaleas, which are quite out of season and obviously so.

OLIVER

It is a marvel that we have so many types of flowers at all, Sir Lester. And the arrangements were not my doing-

(PEONY enters, carrying some more flowers.)

PEONY

They were mine. Good evening, sir.

LESTER

Peony. I should have known. Your floral arrangements have really done it this time! I feel quite upset at this inset! Disturbed at this disposition! In dismay at this… array! I need some chlorpromazine.

(LESTER exits in a huff.)

PEONY

Chloro-what now?

OLIVER

He brought it back from Paris. Some new medication for his meltdowns, but clearly it doesn't do much. For the record, I like your arrangements.

PEONY

At least someone appreciates my hard work. If this is how he reacts to the flowers, I shudder to think of his reaction to the appetizers.

OLIVER

Lester can react however he wants. That just means there'll be more for us!

(OLIVER uncovers some baskets of baked goodies.)

Breadsticks, bread rolls, bread pudding… I made sure to hit the three bread food groups. Here, these need more seasoning.

(OLIVER takes out a bag and sprinkles powder onto the bread rolls. LEWYN enters, followed by YORIK and ANNETTE.)

LEWYN

Butler! No sneaking snacks before dinnertime. Bad! Bad butler!

(LEWYN sprays OLIVER with a little spray bottle. OLIVER holds up his hands in defeat.)

LEWYN

Bad!

OLIVER

I wasn't even going to eat anything!

LEWYN

Lies! We cannot afford to be acting like peasants. Tonight must be revolutionary! Civil! French! We have spent nearly two full days cooking, cleaning, and decorating. I have even prepared special party glasses for each of our guests! My body aches, and yet I, Lewyn von Ludwig, would never dream of stealing a crumb to eat before the dinner bell chimes! That is the difference between you and me, Butler. I respect myself.

PEONY

Somebody has to.

LEWYN

My world will change starting tonight! This party is the beginning of the end of my beginning to end my bachelor era! No longer will my bed be painfully cold and lonely! No longer will my lips desire unobtainable kisses from people outside of my bloodline! No longer will I be an untamable spinster! My nuptial night will soon be upon me. And I could not be happier that my beloved brother and sister are by my side for this momentous occasion.

ANNETTE

I'm very happy for you, Lewyn.

YORIK

Anything to get you out of the house.

LEWYN

Undoubtedly! But first comes the wooing. Butler! Maid! Do you know what the word 'suitor' means?

OLIVER AND PEONY

Yes.

LEWYN

I didn't think so! There's the problem with butlers and maids, dear sister. They are rather uneducated. And stupid. Ha! 'Suitor' is another word for 'husband'. Three beautiful suitresses will soon arrive on my suited doorstep, and it is my job as suitor to suit myself for suiting. And none will suit like me. None! I must now go and wash my hands.

(LEWYN excitedly goes off to wash his hands.)

ANNETTE

Yorik, would you go help him wash his hands? Last time he nearly drowned.

YORIK

I wish he would drown.

ANNETTE

What was that?

YORIK

I said I wish he would drown.

ANNETTE

Oh, Yorik. You don't mean that.

YORIK

I do mean that. I really do.

(YORIK exits.)

ANNETTE

Ah, family. We love to hate but hate to love. "What affection yonder falls upon my heart, but from yon's sweet musings?" Are you a fan of poetry, Oliver?

OLIVER

"Humble yearnings from humbler origins, what beats me but my own heart?"

(pause)

Yes.

ANNETTE

What fun! I only hope one day my husband loves poems as much as you, Oliver.

OLIVER

And I hope my wife loves poems as much as you.

ANNETTE

Ohoho! You slay me. Until tonight!

(ANNETTE exits.)

PEONY

You sure know how to pick'em.

OLIVER

There's nothing wrong with flirting. It's not like Annette would ever marry her butler.

PEONY

Why would you want to marry one of them, anyway? All people like her want is fame and fortune. When they already have plenty of it. We need another revolution. Heads on sticks, the whole shebang.

OLIVER

Keep talking like that and you'll be another name on McCarthy's list. Tell me, Peony: do you prefer freedom or communism?

PEONY

Don't joke about that. And I am serious.

OLIVER

Don't be mad. I'm kidding. I'd defend you in communist court.

PEONY

I'm not a communist!

(LESTER enters, holding an empty box.)

LESTER

Who is a communist?! They've stolen my chlorpromazine! Get Hoover on the phone!

OLIVER

Steady, sir. I said 'commonist', not 'communist'. Peony and I were discussing how we are merely the commonist of people while you and your nephews and nieces are the un-commonist.

LESTER

A fine statement. I've been told my face is quite uncommon. But if there are no communists, who stole my overseas opioids?! I had a whole box, but now my box is just a whole!

(showing the empty box)

Lot of nothing!

PEONY

I didn't touch your drugs, Lester.

LESTER

Medication! Drugs are for common folk. And I am uncommon, remember? Remember. What was I remembering? Do you remember? What's this box? There's a party tonight!

(LESTER runs off.)

OLIVER

Something tells me chlorpromazine has some undiscovered side effects.

PEONY

Not my monkey, not my circus. Come on, it's already ten to!

(OLIVER and PEONY run off while Scene 1 transitions into Scene 2.)

Scene 2

Setting: same as Scene 1

At Rise: Party time! The dining hall is overtaken with delightful mood lighting as PARTYGOERS begin to surge in. Being a party exclusively for high nobility, each PARTYGOER revels in this fact by acting their paycheck [instead of their age]. With the assorted PARTYGOERS, OTIS, OTTIE, and OLANDA make their entrance. OLIVER enters later on, helping welcome the many aristocrats. The PARTYGOERS, OTIS, OTTIE, and OLANDA are sipping punch.

OTIS

What a fine room for dining. Nothing like the Sylvester's. Their theme of beige and blah made me feel quite neurotic.

OTTIE

Speak for yourself, darling. To me, this is just another dinner party lacking refinement. And I quite enjoyed the Sylvester's brave choice of beige and blah.

OLANDA

Mother, might I have a meal today? I have not eaten in half a fortnight.

OTTIE

Oh, no, dear. Malnourishment is the key to success. When the body is starved, it begins to operate at higher levels of performance in an effort to stay alive! I read that somewhere. I don't remember where. For now sustain yourself off of punch. You will have your nightly breadcrumb later tonight.

OLANDA

Yippie!

OTIS

Manners, Olanda. A gentlewoman does not say ‘yippie’. She stays quiet, and bottles up her emotions until marriage. Much like your mother and I.

OLANDA

But what if I cannot bottle my emotions any longer, and feel as though I must hit something?

OTIS

That is why we have butlers and maids, my sugarplum. Watch this.

(OTIS catches OLIVER, who is walking by with some bread rolls.)

OTIS

My dear sir! Those bread rolls look quite spectacular!

OLIVER

Thank you, Sir Otis. I find that allowing the dough to sit before baking allows for-

OTIS

Yes, yes, baking. I know nothing of it. I make it a point not to do anything related to manual labor, as I find sweating quite tiresome. But I don’t mind eating. May I have a bread roll?

OLIVER

Of course. Please.

(OTIS obnoxiously takes a bite of a bread roll.)

OTIS

Delicious. Much like this glass of punch. Butler, I am now going to slap you in the face.

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ACT II

Scene 1

Setting: Nightfall. Twenty minutes after the events of Act 1.

At Rise: Fade in on the dining room. Nobody has moved, and nothing has changed. An awkward amount of time passes. Finally, BUMBLE walks in.

BUMBLE

Thank you all for not moving. I am happy to report that my phone call went well, and a new officer has been assigned to this situation. Stumble, here's a shiny new badge for you. You're now a police officer!

(STUMBLE excitedly walks over to BUMBLE, trips, then takes his badge.)

PEONY

He wasn't a police officer before?!

BUMBLE

Of course he wasn't! He was just my cousin. He wanted to go on a police-official ride-along.

OLIVER

Is that legal?

BUMBLE

Real big talk from the murderer, asking me what's legal. You're not legal! Now, listen up. I am going to tell all of you how the rest of tonight is going to go. This situation is what's called 'less-than-usual'. One death? Cake. Two deaths? Fruitcake. A little harder, but still enjoyable. More than five? That's not a cake anymore. That's a brick. Which a murderer used to murder people with.

DIANE

What are we supposed to do, then?

BUMBLE

Nothing. I've locked the doors and sealed the windows. Nobody leaves this house until the rest of my precinct shows up.

DIANE

How long is that going to take?

BUMBLE

That's a tough question. Tonight is Joel's birthday, and he's turning twenty-three. Let's just say every cop in the city is off-patrol tonight.

OLIVER

Is that legal?

BUMBLE

If it's not, are you gonna murder him? So everyone, get comfortable. It's gonna be a long night.

(Everyone groans.)

BUMBLE

I don't make the rules! I just enforce them.

LEWYN

Are there any rules against suiting suitresses while waiting?

TATIANA

Ew. You haven't given up yet?

LEWYN

Of course I haven't! My party may be ruined, my heart may be broken, and I guess my brother is dead now. But I, Lewyn von Ludwig, still have time to woo my way to victory and marriage! I simply need a moment to prepare! Brace yourselves for humble and honest love, my three turtledoves!

PRISCILLA

Don't call us that.

LEWYN

Turtle pigeons?

TATIANA

The dove wasn't the problem.

LEWYN

Dove pigeon bird turtles!

MARGARITA

Leave.

LEWYN

And leave I will! Kisses!

(LEWYN leaves, throwing kisses to TATIANA, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA, who swat them away. ANNETTE stands.)

ANNETTE

If my brother is allowed to woo during this time, I wish to waive!

BUMBLE

Wave? Wave what? Who are you waving at?

ANNETTE

Waive an offense! Waive Oliver's offense!

PEONY

Why are you waving at Oliver?

ANNETTE

I want to prove he's innocent! Let me find out who really poisoned everybody! And what the poison is!

GENE

That's true, we never established what actually was poisoned.

DIANE

Are you an idiot? It was the punch.

BUMBLE

Do you have evidence?

DIANE

Twenty minutes ago, half of us drank punch. That half of us is dead now.

BUMBLE

Evidence has to be either physical or in writing.

DIANE

I don't think you know what 'evidence' means!

PEONY

I'm with Lady Annette. Let us investigate until the police arrive.

DIANE

If those two can investigate, then I want to investigate, too! Let me find my communist threat!

GENE

I would like to investigate as well! Investigate the broom closet with Lady Julia!

JULIA

I agree, I, too, would like to investigate the broom closet with my servant- with Lord Gene.

(Everyone begins arguing loudly about investigating. Finally, BUMBLE waves his hands.)

BUMBLE

Alright, alright! Those of you who wish to investigate, investigate! I couldn't care less! As long as each and every one of you are back in this room by dawn, do what you want!

DIANE

By dawn?! How long is that police officer's birthday party?

BUMBLE

Clearly you've never been to one of Joel's parties. Now get out of here!

(ANNETTE goes to OLIVER, taking his hands.)

ANNETTE

Don't worry, Oliver. I'll fix this. I know you aren't a killer. "I never stood to face the night 'til you began to lose your fight."

(ANNETTE runs off.)

PEONY

I'm not saying a poem.

(PEONY runs off after ANNETTE. DIANE, GENE, and JULIA all begin to make their exits.)

BUMBLE

You have some good friends, murderer.

OLIVER

I do. I only wish there was something I could do to help from here. Y'know, to prove my innocence.

(STUMBLE trips, spilling a pack of playing cards.)

STUMBLE

Oh,no.

BUMBLE

Great idea, Stumble! I could go for some Poker. What say you, murderer? We can gamble with baby carrots from the buffet.

(STUMBLE begins collecting the cards.)

OLIVER

Actually, Officer Bumble, I have another wager I'd rather make. If I win at Poker, you drop all of my charges and let me go.

BUMBLE

Is that legal?

OLIVER

Who's the murderer now?

BUMBLE

Still you. And what happens if you lose?

OLIVER

Double or nothing?

BUMBLE

Seeing as how you're facing life, I don't see that as a fair agreement.

OLIVER

I'll give you my recipe for those bread rolls?

BUMBLE

Stumble does love to cook. Deal the cards, Stumble.

(STUMBLE deals the cards as the focus shifts to the broom closet. GENE and JULIA look around the room, checking for cameras.)

GENE

Don't worry, Lady Julia. It's just us.

JULIA

Are you certain? We have not searched the floorboards.

GENE

Lady Julia, I have been thinking. Tonight I have walked alongside you, brushed my hand against your hand purposefully, and even looked in your eyes once or twice. It has been a dream come true.

JULIA

Over five people have died.

GENE

And amidst the tragedy, our love burns as bright as a very bright candle. I do not wish to return to being simply your servant, my Lady. I want more.

JULIA

As do I, Gene! You think I enjoy watching you wash my dishes and iron my dresses? But you are poor, Gene. Very poor. You have almost no money to your name. I could never marry a common man.

GENE

But what if I am not a common man?

JULIA

But you are.

GENE

Perhaps not.

JULIA

You are perhaps the most common a man can be.

GENE

But am I me?

JULIA

Are you?

GENE

Am I?

JULIA

You've lost me.

GENE

I have hatched a plot, Julia. A plot to save our love and ensure our future together!

JULIA

Why must you call this a ‘plot’, Gene? Why not a ‘plan’? A ‘plot’ sounds devious.

GENE

I call it a plot because it is devious, Julia.

JULIA

Oh, heavens.

GENE

I will impersonate the Lord Lewyn von Ludwig. Steal his personality, his fame, his fortune- and then, I will marry you, my sweet.

JULIA

What a plot! You wouldn’t be a common man if you were Lord von Ludwig! But what will happen to the real Lord von Ludwig?

GENE

We’ll kill him.

JULIA

Oh, goodness.

GENE

One more murder tonight wouldn’t be the end of the world.

JULIA

I suppose not. And it is for true love.

GENE

And Lord von Ludwig is a bit of a peacock.

JULIA

I daresay even a rooster.

GENE

Chicken.

JULIA

Goose.

GENE

And I do enjoy a good roast goose.

JULIA

We shall have one at our wedding.

GENE

And perhaps cranberry wine!

JULIA

Potatoes as well.

GENE

Shall we go find some of Lord von Ludwig's clothes to steal?

JULIA

Indeed. And what are your thoughts on the music?

GENE

Classical. No brass. Maybe a trumpet.

(GENE and JULIA exit as attention shifts to the kitchen, where PEONY and ANNETTE are searching for clues. Finally, ANNETTE throws her hands up.)

ANNETTE

Nothing! There's nothing!

PEONY

What were we even looking for?

ANNETTE

Something! Not nothing! But that's all there is! And now my butler is doomed to waste away in a prison for a crime I am quite certain he did not commit!

PEONY

Yeah, it's unfair. Maybe you want some punch to sip on?

(PEONY offers ANNETTE a glass.)

ANNETTE

And I know Oliver sprinkled Uncle Lester's chlorpromazine on our bread rolls, but all he wanted was for us to calm down and not be so mean to him! And while that's no excuse for sprinkling chlorpromazine on anyone's meal, he didn't mean to kill anyone!

PEONY

Tell me about it. Seriously, you should try the punch.

ANNETTE

And besides, we've already figured out the poison wasn't in the bread rolls! So how can they arrest Oliver when it wasn't the bread rolls that were killing everyone, it was the-

PEONY

Punch? Want some? It's nice and fruity.

ANNETTE

Why do you keep offering me punch? The punch is poisoned. You know the punch is poisoned.

PEONY

Oh, right. I forgot. This is different punch, though. I filled it from the other bowl.

ANNETTE

There is no other bowl!

(ANNETTE gasps.)

You're trying to poison me!

PEONY

What? No, I'm not.

ANNETTE

Yes, you are! It was you! You poisoned the punch bowl! You've responsible for all of this! And now you're trying to kill me so I'll stop investigating!

PEONY

You're overthinking. Have a sip.

ANNETTE

I don't want punch! You were going to let Oliver take the fall for you. I need to tell Officer Bumble and Stumble.

(ANNETTE begins to run off.)

PEONY

Wait! Fine! You caught me. Just hear me out.

ANNETTE

Hear you out?! You poisoned the punch! You're killing people!

PEONY

Rich people! People that treat Oliver and I like garbage! And you know exactly what these dinner parties always turn

PEONY (CONT)

into. Oliver and I are the jokes, and we've been jokes our entire lives! I figured a little cyanide in the punch would level the playing field.

ANNETTE

By killing us?!

PEONY

You've never had to work a day in your life, Annette! Don't pretend like you aren't part of the problem. Everybody saw what you did to Oliver during the party.

ANNETTE

It wasn't the time or place. He was saying those things to me in front of my family!

PEONY

That doesn't justify what happened to him after! But fine, I'm done. I'll turn myself in. Look.

(PEONY pulls out a piece of paper and a pen.)

A written confession. You can even watch me write it. "I, Peony Adamos, admit to the wrongful murder of Lester von Ludwig, Otis, Ottie, and Olanda Osbourn, Officer Fumble, among many more." Wait. Did I spell 'Osbourn' right?

ANNETTE

I don't know. It doesn't matter.

PEONY

Yes, it does. Written confessions can't have spelling errors, there's some law about it. O-S-B… is there an 'e' at the end? Look at this, does it look wrong?

ANNETTE *(looking)*

Kinda? O-S-B-O-U-R-N… no, that looks right to me. There isn't an 'e' at the end-

(PEONY hits ANNETTE in the nose, knocking her out. PEONY then stands and rips up the paper.)

PEONY

Looks like I have to work fast. Here we go.

(PEONY exits. The scene returns to OLIVER playing Poker with BUMBLE and STUMBLE.)

OLIVER

I'll call.

BUMBLE

Fold.

OLIVER

I really think you can see my cards.

BUMBLE

You're holding them at an angle.

OLIVER

I'm handcuffed.

BUMBLE

Sounds like an excuse to me.

(LEWYN enters, following TATIANA, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA.)

LEWYN

It is I! Lewyn von Ludwig! And I am no longer asking, but begging you, my suitresses! Give me a chance! I gave you a wonderful gift, why still do you shun me?!

TATIANA

You gave us a box of dry spaghetti.

MARGARITA

And a sheet of paper labeled 'garlic bread'.

LEWYN

It's the dinner I will make you once we are engaged! Within that dry spaghetti and garlic bread paper is a promise of security and fine dining!

TATIANA, PRISCILLA AND MARGARITA

TRY HARDER.

(TATIANA, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA exit. LEWYN falls to his knees.)

LEWYN

I don't understand what I'm doing wrong!

(LEWYN chases after his suitresses as PEONY enters, holding a handful of glasses.)

PEONY

Hey, Officer Bumble. Stumble. Oliver. Annette and I are still investigating, but we found out the punch isn't poisoned and is actually very safe to drink. So drink it. Bye.

(PEONY exits.)

BUMBLE

Really! How lucky is that, I was just starting to feel parched. Stumble, pour me some punch.

(STUMBLE trips walking over to the punch bowl as GENE enters, dressed as Lewyn von Ludwig.)

GENE

It is I! Lewyn von Ludwig! I am on my way to suit some suitresses! Do any of you know where my suitresses could be?

OLIVER

You just missed them. That way.

GENE

Many thanks, butler! Away I go!

(GENE exits, passing by DIANE. STUMBLE hands BUMBLE his glass of punch.)

DIANE

I can't find anything! I refuse to believe not one of you is a communist! Hey, what are you doing with that punch?!

BUMBLE

Drinking it.

DIANE

What are you talking about?! The punch is poisoned! We've been over this! Put that away!

(DIANE exits as BUMBLE hands STUMBLE back the punch.)

BUMBLE

Stumble! Get rid of that poisoned punch!

(STUMBLE trips over himself on his way to return the punch. JULIA enters, looking around.)

JULIA

Have any of you seen Gene- I mean, Lord von Ludwig?

(LEWYN enters.)

LEWYN

It is I! Lewyn von Ludwig! My suitresses all hid in the dumbwaiter and refused to come out until I left! I now feel terribly alone!

OLIVER

There he is.

JULIA *(fooled)*

Lord von Ludwig! Shall we continue discussing our plot?

LEWYN

A plot! Oh, my. That sounds devious!

(LEWYN escorts JULIA off as PEONY enters.)

PEONY

Gee, those doors really are locked, aren't they?

BUMBLE

And the windows, too. Yep, there's no way out of this mansion until dawn.

PEONY

Right. Where do we keep the hammers again, Oliver?

OLIVER

Second floor, third bedroom closet.

PEONY

Of course! I'll be right back. Hey, why aren't you enjoying the punch?

BUMBLE

It's safe?

PEONY

Of course it's safe! Now drink the punch!

(PEONY exits.)

BUMBLE

Stumble!

(STUMBLE trips back to the punch bowl, refilling his glass as TATIANA, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA enter from one side of the room and GENE enters from the other.)

TATIANA

I think we lost him.

GENE

It is I! Lewyn von Ludwig!

(TATIANA, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA groan.)

GENE

Ah! My suitresses! Where are you three headed?

PRISCILLA

Back to the dumbwaiter, so we can hide from you.

GENE

I see! Perhaps I can help you climb into the dumbwaiter safely? I do not want any of you to hit your shins or tear your dresses!

PRISCILLA

That's-! …Actually very considerate of you, Lord von Ludwig.

GENE

Come along! While the night is young!

(GENE escorts TATIANA, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA off as DIANE enters, carrying a handful of papers.)

DIANE

I've found it! The exact same name on this Communist Newsletter is signed here on all of these documents! Who would know the signer of these documents?!

OLIVER

I'm not allowed near those types of contracts. Maybe Lewyn would? Call.

BUMBLE

Fold.

OLIVER

You are cheating!

BUMBLE

I am not!

(STUMBLE finally hands BUMBLE his punch.)

BUMBLE

Finally. I needed a drink.

(DIANE takes the punch away and dumps it out.)

DIANE

Stop trying to drink that! It's poison! Lewyn, where are you?!

(DIANE exits, passing PEONY, who now has a large hammer.)

PEONY

I'm seeing a lot of thinking and not enough drinking. Drink.

(PEONY exits.)

BUMBLE

Punch me, Stumble.

(STUMBLE punches BUMBLE.)

BUMBLE

NO! The drink, you idiot!

(STUMBLE stumbles over to the punch bowl again as JULIA passes through the room, looking around.)

JULIA

He's lost again. This house is like a maze. Have any of you seen Gene- I mean, Lord von Ludwig?

(OLIVER and BUMBLE point in opposite directions.)

OLIVER AND BUMBLE

That way.

JULIA

Oh, dear.

(JULIA exits as DIANE enters again.)

DIANE

LEWYN! LORD VON LUDWIG!

(DIANE exits right as LEWYN and GENE both enter, all passing by each other, oblivious.)

LEWYN

I thought I heard my name.

GENE

How odd, I thought I did as well.

LEWYN

Peculiar.

GENE

Puzzling.

LEWYN AND GENE

Perhaps this way.

(LEWYN and GENE exit in opposite directions.)

BUMBLE

Call.

OLIVER

Call.

BUMBLE

Call.

OLIVER

Call!

BUMBLE

Fold.

OLIVER

COME ON!

(STUMBLE falls over himself to hand BUMBLE his drink.)

BUMBLE

Took you long enough, Stumble.

(DIANE enters.)

STUMBLE

My legs don't work.

DIANE

Clearly your BRAIN doesn't work because this is the third time I've told you THIS PUNCH IS POISONED!

(DIANE takes the drink and throws it offstage, exiting in a huff. PEONY enters from where the drink was just thrown, having caught the glass.)

PEONY

Hey, you dropped this.

(PEONY hands BUMBLE the glass and exits as TATIANA, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA enter.)

TATIANA

I don't know, but I'm telling you. I was actually attracted to him.

PRISCILLA

Thank goodness it wasn't just me.

MARGARITA

For once it seemed as though he actually respected women!

(LEWYN enters.)

LEWYN

Ah! My suitresses! It must have been one of you three calling my name! And here I thought you all hated me. Fear not, your future boo-boo is here!

TATIANA, PRISCILLA AND MARGARITA

We were mistaken.

(TATIANA takes BUMBLE's punch.)

TATIANA

I need this more than you.

(TATIANA drinks the punch as her, PRISCILLA, and MARGARITA begin to exit.)

LEWYN

Wait! I thought the three of you were finally starting to warm up to me!

(TATIANA collapses, dead. LEWYN pauses.)

LEWYN

I thought the two of you were finally starting to warm up to me! Come back!

(LEWYN exits as OLIVER stares at TATIANA.)

OLIVER

I think that's proof the punch really is poisoned.

BUMBLE

Stop trying to distract me. Call.

OLIVER

Call.

BUMBLE

I meant fold before. Now I call. No, fold.

OLIVER

Do you even know how to play Poker?!

(PEONY enters with another glass of punch.)

PEONY

Officer, I've brought you more punch.

(STUMBLE trips over himself, trying to take the punch.)

OLIVER

That's poison!

(pointing at TATIANA)

She died!

PEONY

She's sleeping. Where is the most breakable window?

OLIVER

None of the windows are breakable. Lewyn wanted bulletproof glass.

PEONY

Why?!

(LEWYN enters, passing through the room.)

LEWYN

Because, for some reason, many people have threatened to shoot me. Where are my sweethearts?! My cuddle muffins?! My pumpkin pies?!

(LEWYN passes by GENE, who enters at the same time as JULIA. PEONY angrily exits.)

GENE

Ah! Sugarplum!

JULIA

Not so loud!

GENE

I think the plan is working! They've been fooled!

JULIA

I believe so too! It is time to move onto the next stage of the plot!

GENE AND JULIA

Murder.

(DIANE enters, spotting GENE.)

DIANE

Lord von Ludwig! There you are! I've been looking for you!

GENE

Yes! It is I! Lord Lewyn von-

DIANE

Yeah, yeah, I know who you are. I have a question for you only you would know.

GENE

I can probably answer it.

DIANE

Do you see this handwriting?

GENE

I do.

DIANE

I believe it is your handwriting.

GENE

I see.

DIANE

This handwriting matches the handwriting on this communist newsletter.

GENE

Interesting.

DIANE

Which means you are the one who subscribed to Communist Weekly.

GENE

I understand.

DIANE

Making you a communist.

GENE

I’m following

DIANE

Meaning, of course, that you are betraying your country.

GENE

It would appear so.

DIANE

So, is this your handwriting?

GENE

The handwriting you found on that contract that matches that newsletter which implies that I am, in fact, a communist supporter and a traitor to our country?

DIANE

Correct.

GENE

No.

DIANE

No?

GENE

Yes.

DIANE

Yes?

GENE

Yes, I mean no. That is not my handwriting. That is not my document. I must leave. Good day.

(GENE pulls JULIA away and exits. DIANE stares after him.)

DIANE

Yes! No! Get back here!

(DIANE stomps off as PRISCILLA and MARGARITA enter.)

MARGARITA

I don't understand this feeling. At first I was repulsed by him, but when he helped me into that dumbwaiter I felt… a bit less repulsed. But then, when we ran into him just now, he was just as repulsive. What is this back-and-forth repulsion?! Priscilla, help me!

PRISCILLA

I'm just as confused. Hey, is Tatiana dead?

(PRISCILLA and MARGARITA stare at TATIANA. MARGARITA lightly nudges her.)

MARGARITA

I think she's dead.

PRISCILLA

How did she die?

(LEWYN enters.)

PRISCILLA

Oh, no.

LEWYN

Priscilla! Margarita! My sweets!

(PRISCILLA and MARGARITA turn to leave.)

LEWYN

Wait! Before you abandon me once again… might I speak my mind?

PRISCILLA

Fine. Go ahead.

LEWYN

I grew up pampered and spoiled. I never knew what it was like to face rejection until today, and while it stings, I know I am becoming a better man because of it. I may not have the looks, the brains, nor the words to express how I feel… but what I feel for you, Priscilla, is more than I have felt for anybody, ever. I would not say this if I did not mean it, so please, give me a chance…

(LEWYN goes down to one knee, offering PRISCILLA a ring.)

And become my Mrs. Von Ludwig?

(LEWYN holds out a sheet of paper.)

I also found my most recent paycheck, if that changes anything.

(PRISCILLA looks at the paycheck, then reacts accordingly.)

PRISCILLA

Oh, my god. You know what? You've really changed in the last hour, Lewyn. And because you were kind enough to even help me and Margarita into the dumbwaiter earlier-

LEWYN

I did?

PRISCILLA

I will marry you.

LEWYN

…Is that a yes? Do you mean it?

PRISCILLA

Yes! Yes, I mean it!

LEWYN

Oh happy day! I have never experienced such joy! We must celebrate!

BUMBLE

Congratulations! Would you like my punch?

(PRISCILLA takes BUMBLE's punch.)

PRISCILLA

A toast! To the new, humbled Lewyn von Ludwig!

(PRISCILLA downs the punch, then collapses, dead.)

LEWYN

And now,I will carry my new bride-to-be to the clerk's office down the street for our official marriage license!

(LEWYN tries to pick up PRISCILLA by her arm.)

LEWYN

Sweetheart? Can you help me here? Oh? Oh. Oh… she's dead. Sad day.

(LEWYN picks up the fallen ring sadly. He then turns to MARGARITA, kneeling over PRISCILLA's body.)

Margarita! May I just say, you are looking awfully beautiful and understanding today?

(MARGARITA lets out a huff and exits.)

LEWYN

Wait! My one and only final shot at marriage! Come back!

(LEWYN chases MARGARITA off as PEONY enters, frustrated.)

PEONY

I can't even crack the windows! How is anyone supposed to get out of here?!

OLIVER

I don't think you're supposed to, Peony. We're stuck in here, remember?

BUMBLE

Yeah, until dawn- at earliest. Call.

OLIVER

Call.

BUMBLE

Raise.

OLIVER

…Raise?

BUMBLE

Raise.

OLIVER

Check.

BUMBLE

Check.

(OLIVER and BUMBLE check their cards. OLIVER stands up.)

OLIVER

I won. I won!

BUMBLE

Are you sure about that?

OLIVER

I have two pairs. You have a six, two, seven, five, and queen.

BUMBLE

You haven’t checked my second hand, yet!

OLIVER

This is Poker. You only get one hand.

BUMBLE

Blast. Yeah, you won.

OLIVER

I’m free! Did you hear, Peony! I’m not going to jail!

BUMBLE

I suppose this means we’ll have to investigate that suspicious poisonous punch. I had my doubts, but I suppose these last couple of deaths are enough evidence. But who poisoned the punch?

PEONY

I dunno. It could have been anybody. You, me, Oliver… wait! I think it was Lewyn!

BUMBLE

Lewyn?!

OLIVER

Yeah! Lewyn!

(The PARTYGOERS, who have remained fairly compliant the last few pages, start to whisper to each other "Lewyn?" "Lewyn!")

OLIVER

Wait. Why Lewyn?

PEONY

I dunno. He's rich, he's an idiot, do we really need to explain why he does the things he does? All I'm saying is Lewyn did it and I am innocent. End of story.

(The PARTYGOERS agree.)

OLIVER

Peony, this isn't how we do things. You're just blaming Lewyn for everything that went wrong! That's a Lewyn move!

PEONY

Exactly. What's the big deal? He's a noble, just like the rest of them.

BUMBLE

Makes sense to me. Stumble, I am issuing a notice for Lewyn's arrest.

OLIVER

This is wrong! There's no need for a witch hunt!

BUMBLE

On the contrary. I find witch hunts to be very effective. It's time to form an angry mob and drag Lewyn von Ludwig back here for punishment!

(The PARTYGOERS unite as an angry mob and begin chanting "Lewyn". A few of them hold up torches and pitchforks.)

BUMBLE

Follow me, my angry mob! First we check the broom closet!

(PEONY and BUMBLE lead the angry PARTYGOERS mob off. STUMBLE stumbles after them. OLIVER looks around nervously.)

OLIVER

Oh, no, oh, no… oh, no.

(OLIVER runs off in the opposite direction. Attention shifts to the kitchen, where DIANE has begun to search for more evidence.)

DIANE

There has to be something I'm missing. A grocery store receipt from Russia, or a personal recipe from Stalin's kitchen… agh, who am I kidding. There's nothing here.

(ANNETTE sits up, groggy.)

ANNETTE

Ah, my head…what happened?

DIANE

I'm about to lose my job. That's what happened. Man, my boss is gonna kill me…

ANNETTE

Kill? Kill! Diane! I know who killed everyone! And who poisoned the punch!

DIANE

Yeah, it was Oliver or something.

ANNETTE

No! It wasn't Oliver! It was Peony!

DIANE

Peony?! Why would she kill anybody? She's just a disgruntled maid that hates rich people- oh.

ANNETTE

And if she can't escape, she's just going to kill the other witnesses! We have to stop her!

DIANE

Look, I'd love to help, but I really need to figure out who signed these communist documents. I have my yearly bonus around the corner, and I can't afford to call it quits when my job is on the line.

ANNETTE

Give me that.

(ANNETTE takes the issue of Communist Weekly.)

This signature? Yeah, it's Lewyn's. That's how he signs his name. We never taught him how to write.

DIANE

I knew it! That punk lied to me!

ANNETTE

He probably thought it was some aristocratic fashion tabloid or something. There, I helped you out, so now you help me.

DIANE

Fair enough. Let's go stop that murderous maid!

(DIANE and ANNETTE run off. GENE and JULIA peek out from behind the kitchen counter.)

JULIA

Interesting. Did you hear that, Gene?

GENE

I did. The maid that we originally thought was the killer only for us to think wasn't the killer turned out to be the killer all along.

JULIA

No, no, I saw that coming. What I'm talking about is how she killed everybody. The maid poisoned the punch.

GENE

See, that's what I saw coming. But how is that helpful?

JULIA

We've already tricked everyone into thinking you're Lord von Ludwig. Now we need to get rid of the real Lord von Ludwig so you can replace him.

GENE

And how do we do that?

JULIA

Easy.

(JULIA holds up a glass of punch.)

We offer him a drink, dispose of the body, and enjoy our new life together as Mr. and Mrs. Von Ludwig.

GENE

You're brilliant, Julia. Or should I say: Mrs. Von Ludwig?

(GENE and JULIA laugh evilly and exit as attention shifts to the broom closet. LEWYN and MARGARITA stand, facing each other in a moment of true humility (but mostly desperation)).

LEWYN

Margarita, I don't know if you've noticed, but my choices for suitresses have been greatly limited in the last ten to twenty minutes.

MARGARITA

Yeah, my sisters died. I noticed.

LEWYN

Right. And while I like to say I have confidence in myself to find another suitress at another time, I really have no confidence in anything at all anymore after tonight.

MARGARITA

I appreciate your honesty.

LEWYN

Perfect. So, if I were to be completely and totally vulnerable with you right now and tell you that I am just desperate to find a wife as soon as possible and that I am willing to do pretty much anything to get you to marry me, does that change your mind at all?

MARGARITA

I really don’t think so.

LEWYN

I will beg if I need to.

MARGARITA

That will make it worse.

LEWYN *(begging)*

Please? Just five dates? We can go from there!

MARGARITA

No. No dates.

LEWYN

Three dates?

MARGARITA

Ugh. Fine. But not three dates. Two dates.

LEWYN

One date, final offer!

MARGARITA

…Sure. One date. Now please stop begging.

(LEWYN is victorious.)

LEWYN

At long last! After a harrowing dinner party, I, Lewyn von Ludwig, have survived my trials and tribulations and been granted a date that could lead into the possibility of marriage?

MARGARITA

Not likely.

LEWYN

With the third most beautiful suitress of the night!

MARGARITA

If you act like this during our date, I'm gonna beat you up.

LEWYN

Now that I have found the love of my life, nothing else could possibly go wrong tonight!

(BUMBLE, PEONY, STUMBLE, and the PARTYGOERS enter the now-cramped broom closet.)

PEONY

There he is!

LEWYN

Ah! My lovely Partygoers! I have wonderful news! I am now engaged! For a singular date! However, that singular date may be the first of many dates?

MARGARITA

It won't be.

LEWYN

I will be hosting another dinner party to celebrate! You know, since tonight's dinner party was such a success. I hope you all had fun, don't forget to try the little finger sandwiches and boiled potatoes before you go.

PEONY

The only thing we're going to be boiling tonight is you, Lewyn. Alive. In a pot.

(The PARTYGOERS cheer.)

LEWYN

I am confused. Why am I feeling threatened? And why have you brought pointy sticks that you have also set on fire?

BUMBLE

We found out you poisoned the punch and killed everyone, Lewyn. So we formed this angry mob and we're going to drag you upstairs to tear you apart, limb by limb.

LEWYN

Ah. But I didn't poison the punch.

BUMBLE

We don't believe you.

LEWYN

Can I at least get a lawyer?

BUMBLE

You're not gonna live that long.

LEWYN

I accept my fate.

PEONY

GRAB HIM!

(PEONY and STUMBLE lead the mob to restrain LEWYN and drag him away. MARGARITA walks up to BUMBLE, putting her hand on his shoulder.)

MARGARITA

Thank you.

BUMBLE

Just doing my civic duty, ma'am. Dibs on setting him on fire!

(The angry mob of PARTYGOERS, who have started to chant "Fire!" drag LEWYN into the dining room, followed by PEONY, BUMBLE, STUMBLE, and MARGARITA.)

LEWYN

Watch the pants. They wrinkle easily.

(The PARTYGOERS restrain LEWYN to some furniture [or maybe a pillar, section of wall, etc.] and step back, still chanting "Fire!" BUMBLE steps forward.)

BUMBLE

My fellow Partygoers, I would like to thank you for a wonderful evening and an even more wonderful witch hunt. Now that we have successfully restrained this murderer and chosen to become his judge, jury, and executioner, I am going to light him on fire with this box of matches.

(BUMBLE holds up a box of matches.)

Does anyone oppose?

PEONY

And know that if you do, we'll burn you next.

(None oppose.)

BUMBLE

Then let the burning begin!

(BUMBLE lights a match and throws it at LEWYN. Nothing happens. BUMBLE tries again.)

It's not working.

PEONY

We need some tinder, first.

BUMBLE

Does anybody have tinder? Maybe some little sticks or old newspapers?

(ANNETTE and DIANE run in.)

DIANE

Everybody, listen up! We know who the murderer is!

ANNETTE

What on earth are you doing with Lewyn?!

LEWYN

Sister! I'm being executed! I'm glad you could make it!

BUMBLE

Lewyn is the murderer! So we're going to burn him at the stake!

(The PARTYGOERS begin cheering and chanting "Fire!")

BUMBLE

Do either of you two have sticks or newspapers?

ANNETTE

Lewyn didn’t poison the punch! Peony did!

PEONY

I did not!

ANNETTE

Yes, you did! You admitted to it!

PEONY

To who?

ANNETTE

Me!

PEONY

I don’t remember that.

ANNETTE

I do!

PEONY

I don’t. What do you think, Officer?

BUMBLE

I don’t know. After tonight, I’ve decided evidence doesn’t really matter.

STUMBLE

Let’s just burn all of them.

DIANE

What?!

BUMBLE

Great idea! Partygoers! Restrain them!

(The PARTYGOERS restrain PEONY, ANNETTE, and DIANE, who all are tied up by LEWYN.)

PEONY

This is not how I thought tonight would turn out.

ANNETTE

What did you think would happen when you poisoned the punch?!

LEWYN

At least we can all be set on fire together. I've heard being burned alive is the least painful way to die.

PEONY

Where did you hear that?!

DIANE

If I survive this, I'm moving to Canada.

(OLIVER runs in, carrying a box of newspapers.)

OLIVER

WAIT! STOP! I have something you all need to see!

BUMBLE

Get on with it, butler. We have people to burn.

OLIVER

I may have won my freedom in a Poker game, but that doesn't mean I should go free while an innocent man dies. So I tried to find something, anything to convince you that Lewyn was innocent… and I found this stash of papers in Peony's room.

PEONY

That's private! Don't look at that!

OLIVER

I'm sorry, Peony, but I have to. I thought I was responsible for killing everyone with my laced bread rolls, but it was actually the punch that was poisoned!

ALL

WE KNOW!

OLIVER

Oh, sorry. I'll bet you didn't know this is only one of hundreds of murder schemes Peony has cooked up! Look at what she's written in these old newspapers!

(reading)

"Cyanide in the bathtub", "Lead pipes falling from the third floor windows"… Peony has been scheming to kill the Von Ludwig family for years! She just never succeeded… until tonight. All of the evidence you need is written in these papers. Peony, I've worked here with you for as long as I can remember. You've always been a good friend. But I can't stand by and ignore this. I'm sorry.

BUMBLE

Oliver, you've truly saved the day. May I take this?

(BUMBLE takes OLIVER's box of newspapers, turning back to the PARTYGOERS.)

Look at what Oliver has brought us! Old newspapers!

(The PARTYGOERS cheer and begin to chant "Fire!" as BUMBLE litters the ground near LEWYN, PEONY,

ANNETTE, and DIANE with crumpled newspapers. Right as BUMBLE lights a match, GENE and JULIA run in.)

GENE

WAIT! STOP!

(The PARTYGOERS groan.)

GENE

What is going on here?

BUMBLE

We're in the middle of an execution, Lewyn. Once we burn Lewyn, we'll explain everything.

(BUMBLE and the PARTYGOERS go back to the fire, only for everyone to pause and double-take.)

BUMBLE

Lord Lewyn? What are you doing over there? And here?

PEONY

There are two of you?!

LEWYN

I have a twin brother?!

JULIA

No! This is the real Lord Lewyn! That man there is an imposter!

(JULIA points to LEWYN. The PARTYGOERS gasp.)

LEWYN

I had no clue I was an imposter! What has become of me?!

STUMBLE

What should we do, Bumble?

BUMBLE

This has gotten complicated, Stumble. Too complicated. Perhaps it would be best to go back to doing things the legal way. Everybody! Free them!

(The PARTYGOERS protest.)

BUMBLE

Yeah, yeah, I'm sad too! But we can't burn all of them! Publicly executing one person was ok. Publicly executing four was pushing it. But four plus an identical twin? Do you know how rare identical twins are?! I'm pretty sure identical twins are endangered! I couldn't go to bed at night with two identical twins on my conscience.

STUMBLE

But sir! You've already lit the match!

BUMBLE

You're right, Stumble. We need to extinguish this match. Go throw it away for me, would you?

(STUMBLE begins to walk by LEWYN, PEONY, ANNETTE, and DIANE with the lit match, only to trip and drop the match at their feet. The newspapers start on fire, and the PARTYGOERS step back.)

STUMBLE

Uh oh.

BUMBLE

Change of plans! Flee before the police arrive!

STUMBLE

I thought we were the police.

BUMBLE

The real police. RUN!

(BUMBLE, MARGARITA, and the PARTYGOERS flee. STUMBLE trips one last time before running after them. The fire begins to spread to the entire house. JULIA begins to exit.)

JULIA

Gene! What are you doing?! Come on!

GENE

Go on without me! I have something to do, first! Go!

(JULIA runs off stage.)

DIANE

OLIVER! Do something!

OLIVER

I will! I will! What should I do?!

LEWYN, PEONY, ANNETTE AND DIANE

PUT OUT THE FIRE!

(OLIVER grabs the punch bowl.)

OLIVER

Right! Here! I'll put it out with the poisoned punch!

ANNETTE

Good idea!

DIANE

Kind of ironic if you think about it.

OLIVER

Here I go!

(OLIVER tries to pour the punch bowl, but is held back by GENE.)

OLIVER

Hey! What are you doing?!

GENE

I can't let you do that, butler. Lewyn has to die, right here, right now. For true love.

LEWYN

Oh, no! I have an evil twin! And I think he's in love with me!

OLIVER

Let go!

(OLIVER and GENE fight over the punch bowl as the fire continues to expand. LEWYN, PEONY, ANNETTE, and DIANE let out concerned ad-libs ["Getting kinda hot over here!" "Can you two hurry it up?" "Help!" etc., until finally, GENE grabs the punch bowl and starts drinking all of the punch.)

OLIVER

NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

(GENE throws the bowl aside.)

GENE

There! Now the punch is all gone, and you'll never save Lord von Ludwig from that fire!

OLIVER

That punch was poisoned, you idiot! You're gonna die!

GENE

No, I'm not. I feel fine.

(GENE collapses, dead. The fire crackles menacingly.)

OLIVER

What do I do now?!

LEWYN

The only thing you can do, Oliver. Watch us melt like popsicles.

DIANE

Lewyn, while we're waiting to die, I just need to ask you something. Did you subscribe to a communist propaganda newsletter?

LEWYN

I did! I like their comic pages!

DIANE

Are you aware that is illegal?

LEWYN

Does that really matter anymore?

PEONY

Oliver, I'm sorry I went behind your back all of these years and tried to kill our bosses. I should have told you what I was doing.

OLIVER

It's alright, Peony. I forgive you.

LEWYN

I don't!

ANNETTE

Oliver, you should get out of here before you die, too.

OLIVER

No, Annette. If I can't leave here with you, I won't leave here without you. "The flames that burn and tear us apart will never burn brighter than the flames of my heart."

ANNETTE

That's cute. Oliver, you're cute.

DIANE

This is it, everyone. I'll see you all on the other side.

(LEWYN, OLIVER, PEONY, ANNETTE, and DIANE, all take a deep breath as the fire engulfs them. The lights begin to fade as the fire's crackles grow louder and louder… until the fire sprinkler system goes off, extinguishing the flames. Pause.)

LEWYN

Ah! The sprinkler system! I was wondering when that would go off!

DIANE

You had a sprinkler system the WHOLE TIME?!

ANNETTE

When did we install that?!

LEWYN

I forget. A few years ago?

PEONY

And you just didn't mention that?!

OLIVER

I thought I was going to die!

LEWYN

I forgot! What a happy surprise that is! If only I could have told my evil twin about this.

(OLIVER begins untying PEONY, ANNETTE, and DIANE.)

LEWYN

Oh, good job, butler! Untie me too!

(OLIVER, PEONY, ANNETTE, and DIANE all glare at LEWYN, beginning to exit.)

LEWYN

Butler! You forgot to untie me! Maid! Sister! How are none of you hearing me?!

(OLIVER, PEONY, and ANNETTE exit.)

DIANE

I'll be back to arrest you for being a communist.

(DIANE exits.)

LEWYN

And I never even found true love. What a fickle life I lead.

(JULIA enters, looking around.)

JULIA

Gene? Where are you?! Gene!

LEWYN

Ah! Lady Julia! You've come back to save me!

JULIA

Gene! Is that you?

LEWYN

I am not Gene! I am Lewyn von Ludwig!

JULIA

Gene! I'm so glad you're alive!

(JULIA unties LEWYN.)

My sweet, when you didn't come out I grew frightened! But now I see you have killed Lord von Ludwig and officially taken his place!

(JULIA gestures to the fallen GENE.)

LEWYN

What? No. That's my evil twin. I am Lord Lewyn von Ludwig.

JULIA

Ah. I see, you are still in character! I can play along, my love. But first, shall we go and find a nice place for breakfast?

LEWYN

Breakfast! Just you and I? Like a date?

JULIA

Of course, my love! Seeing as how we will now be wedded by this coming month! Come along, my darling.

(JULIA kisses LEWYN's cheek and then exits. LEWYN takes a second to silently thank whatever force of nature finally took pity on him, then runs off. Fade out.)

(The End)



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