

Carm Yes.

Jean Complimentary stationery and pens?

Carm Yes. You ask me all this before.

Jean You can't be too careful.

Carm I think you can. I think you make yourself crazy.

Jean Don't be cheeky. (*Barry enters in a clean apron*)

Barry Will I do Modom?

Jean (*Tidying him up*) Don't be flippant, first appearances are very important.

Barry Why do I have to wear this stuff anyway? Why can't I wear my ordinary clothes?

Jean Because you are kitchen and I am management.

Carm What am I?

Jean You are the staff.

Carm So, I everything else.

Jean Exactly. You are my Girl Friday.

Carm I am girl every day.

Barry I wouldn't go into it if I were you Carmen. Look, I should be introduced as co-owner of the place.

Jean Don't be pedantic Barry. We know who we are don't we?

Barry I'm not sure I do any more.

Jean Now to more important matters. Where is that dog? (*Jean goes to look in the book*)

Barry (*Gesticulating to Carmen and handing her the dog lead surreptitiously*) I think he's sleeping on the porch.

Carm I go see. (*She exits*)

Jean Now we've got Mr & Mrs Charlesworth – Errol and April – I understand he's a banker. (*Barry holds his fingers up in the sign of the cross*) Stop

doing that Barry. These are the sort of customers we want to attract. They're from England and they're coming from Las Vegas for three nights. What's this? I can't read your terrible writing?

Barry Oh yeah. Some Americans – nice bloke rang up – they want to stay for three nights too.

Jean Well what does this say? (*Barry looks over her shoulder*)

Barry Mr and Mrs Bean. Laverne and Bubba.

Jean Bubba? Bubba Bean? What sort of a name is that?

Barry I don't know. It's American and I know it's right because I got him to spell it out. They're exploring Route 66.

Jean Oh my God – not bikers!

Barry I don't know – I didn't ask.

Jean Of course they are – who else explores Route 66? We'll have to keep a close eye on them. I don't want anything going missing. Make sure you check their room before they leave.

Barry Jean you have to trust people more.

Jean Not those called Bubba and Laverne. Now this morning I took another booking for a Mr. Yara Kofner. He's a naturalist – he's coming to study the wildlife. I think he said he was Polish. He sounded charming, but he won't be arriving until later this evening.

Barry Well that's a bloody nuisance. I was hoping we could go for dinner to that new restaurant that's opened in the town. The bloke that runs it gave me a voucher. Perhaps Carmen could book him in when he arrives.

Jean Well I suppose so, but I really should be here to greet guests.

Barry I hope this is not going to be a regular thing – people rolling up at all times of the night. Check in is between 4.00 and 6.00 p.m.

Jean Barry – we are now in the service industry. We are on call 24 hours a day. We cannot call our lives our own any more.

Barry We never could.

Jean What was that?

Barry Nothing. (*Carmen enters*) Did you find him?

Carm Yes – he on the patio eating. I tie him up.

Jean What's he eating?

Carm *(shrugging)* Something. *(Jean exits)*

Barry What's he eating Carmen?

Carm Is animal.

Barry An animal? *(Jean enters)*

Jean Barry – there's a dead chipmunk on the patio. Actually there is half a dead chipmunk on the patio.

Barry Oh Carmen. Why didn't you let him finish eating?

Jean Barry don't be so disgusting – go and move it! *(Barry exits)*
Now Carmen where is the hat I gave you?

Carm Is 'ere! *(She turns round to show a small white hat screwed up and gripped to the back of her head like a bow).*

Jean Oh for goodness' sake – that's no good. You are supposed to wear it on your head to cover your hair and keep it out of the food.

Carm My hair not dirty – I wash every day.

Jean That's not the point, *(she unfastens the hat)* people don't want any sort of hair in their food, clean or not. *(She jams the hat on Carmen's head – it covers down to just above the eyes. There is the sound of barking and growling)*
There! That's better! What on earth is that racket? *(Barry enters looking dishevelled)*

Barry He won't let me have it.

Jean What?

Barry Caesar! You know what he's like – if he decides he wants something....

Jean Oh for goodness' sake – if you want something doing.....*(she exits – Barry turns and catches sight of Carmen – he jumps)*

Barry Aagh! My God Carmen – what's happened to you?

Carm She says I must wear the 'at like this.

Barry It looks terrible – you'll frighten all the customers away. *(He falls about laughing.)*

Carm You think I look scary?

Barry I think you won't be able to see where you're going.

Carm *(Getting an idea)* This is true. I cannot see dust.

Barry That's it – look at it in a positive light . At least you won't get any sexual harassment.

Carm What is this? I do not understand.

Barry You know – men – *(he nudges her)* fancying you.

Carm Ah – yes – always I have the men – a-winking...

Barry Pardon?

Carm With the eye *(she demonstrates)*

Barry Yes well with that hat on like that you won't have any more problems. *(Jean enters wearing marigolds and holding a small pink, furry strip)*

Jean This is all that was left of that poor creature. *(Barry takes it from her)*

Barry No love, that was your bedroom slipper.

Jean My pink mules with the diamantes? Where are they?

Barry That's the only bit left – he ate the rest – but not the fur – he didn't seem to like that. I think it was artificial.

Jean Oh I'm sorry, next time I'll make sure it all real fur! Carmen – go and mop the patio with some disinfectant – it covered in stains.

Carm I go. *(She mutters as she leaves)* I wear 'at, I mop, I dust.....

Barry Can I get back to my eggs now? *(He starts to exit)* Oh – by the way – how much chilli powder do you put in scrambled eggs?

Jean What?

Barry Carmen said about a teaspoonful. Is that enough?

Jean Take no notice of Carmen! Her cooking skills are positively – er – Mexican! They put chilli in everything. We don't put it in anything.

Barry Not even a little bit? It would spice 'em up a bit.

Jean Barry, trust me, our clientele would not like chilli flavoured scrambled eggs with their bacon.

Barry Oh well – Caesar likes them.

Jean Oh I see – so we are to base our cuisine on an animal that eats anything from my diamante slippers to a chipmunk! No chilli! Ever!

Barry Just thought I'd ask.

Jean I'd better go and check the room before Mr. & Mrs Charlesworth arrive this afternoon. Oh I'm so excited – our first customers – are you excited Barry? *(She exits)*

Barry I'm wetting myself in anticipation. I'd better go and find that bloody dog before he catches sight of Mr. & Mrs Charlesworth. He'll probably eat their luggage. *(He exits)*.

Scene 3

Jean enters with Mr Charlesworth. Mrs Charlesworth is following behind. He is very smart and smarmy. She is dolled up to the nines in totally inappropriate attire for sightseeing in Arizona. As they cross the stage she nicks a small flower vase and puts it in her capacious bag.

Jean Mr & Mrs Charlesworth - you are our first guests at "The Pines" and how appropriate that you're from the old country. How are things back home?

Mr. C Well of course, as one of those involved in the higher echelons of the financial world, we haven't been popular with the unwashed masses of late. But as I always say, they should wake up and smell the coffee, I mean you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs.

Jean Well – quite

Mr. C One has to escape from the cut and thrust of the City and recharge the batteries. Isn't that right dear? *(Mrs C goes to answer but he cuts in immediately)* Of course we soldier on manfully – don't we dear? *(She goes to speak again)* It's always easier with the little woman by your side giving support – isn't that so darling? *(He pauses for her to speak and she is so surprised she doesn't know what to say)* What's the matter darling – cat got your tongue? Ha ha ha. She's probably still traumatised by that wolf we saw as we came in.

Jean Wolf? You saw a wolf?

Mr. C Pretty certain, I've seen these things before you know. Great brute of a thing on your veranda, prowling about with some unfortunate creature hanging out of its mouth.

Jean Oh – er – I think that's just one of the local dogs that wanders around here – it's quite harmless – don't let it worry you. *(Mrs C is wandering around looking for something else to pinch)*

Mr. C Lucky for it I didn't have the old twelve bore with me. *(Pause)* BANG! *(Jean jumps a mile)* Ha ha ha – sorry to scare you old thing. *(Barry rushes in)*

Barry What's going on?

Jean Nothing dear – Mr. Charlesworth was just showing me something.

Barry Really? *(Barry glares at Mr. C suspiciously)*

Jean This is my husband – Barrington.

Barry But everyone calls me Barry.

Mr. C How do you do Barry, nice little place you've got here – isn't that right dear?
(Mrs C – in the process of putting a silver framed photo in her bag – turns round guiltily.)

Mrs C What was that dear?

Mr. C I was just saying – nice place they've got here.

Mrs C Oh yes – lovely.

Jean This will be your table for breakfast tomorrow – table number eight. We thought you'd prefer to be more private.

Mrs C Oh yes – lovely.

Mr. C *(To Barry)* Just saying to your lovely wife – we saw a wolf on the way in – great brute of a thing wandering about on your veranda with something hanging out of its mouth.

Barry Oh that wasn't a wolf that was

Jean ...just one of the local dogs – as I said. Barry will shoo it away won't you Barry?

Barry Eh?

Jean Now let me show you to your room. I do hope you'll find it comfortable. I've tried to make it a home from home here – all mod cons – but with an emphasis on quaint, English bonhomie.....*(she exits and they follow – Mrs C backs off staring intently at Barry as she goes. Carmen enters)*

Carm Is gone?

Barry Yes Jean's taken them to their room.

Carm I no like 'im.

Barry No – can't say I was struck either.

Carm 'E is - pressing me.

Barry Pressing you? Where?

Carm In the reception.

Barry No where did he press *you*

Carm *(She points to her bottom)* ‘Ere.

Barry Mucky bugger!

Carm What is “mucky”.

Barry It means dirty.

Carm What is “bugger”

Barry Well it’s er – no I don’t think we’ll go into that. Just keep out of his way that’s all.

Carm Caesar is eating more chipmunk.

Barry Yes – so I heard. Surely we give him enough to eat don’t we?

Carm Yes but before – he wild – he live on the mountain – he catch food to eat. I think he like chipmunk very much.

Barry Well he can bloody well eat them somewhere else. He keeps getting me into trouble.

Carm He big, strong dog. I tell my uncle he can have him?

Barry No! Your uncle can’t have him. My uncle left him to me and I like him.

Carm I just tell him about Caesar?

Barry No you won’t! Has Jean been putting you up to this? She’s never liked Caesar.

Carm Missy Harlowe say she wish ‘e was dead. Better my uncle have him than he dead.

(Jean enters – all of a fluster)

Jean I cannot believe it – really – the ungratefulness of some people!

Barry What’s the matter now?

Jean Mr Charlesworth has found fault with just about everything in his room.

Barry Like what?

Jean It’s too small. His wife is allergic to lavender, so could I remove all my little preparations? The bed is too low. He doesn’t drink coffee – could they have camomile tea? The room has no clock and there’s no bath, only a shower, he doesn’t like showers!

Barry Oh is that all? So apart from that he was quite impressed. What did his wife say?

Jean Nothing. She didn't get a chance – poor thing.

Barry She's a bit weird.

Jean No she isn't – she's just downtrodden. It must be awful to be in a relationship with such a bully.

Barry *(looking meaningfully at her)* Yes

Jean Carmen? Why are you standing about doing nothing? There's plenty to get on with.

Carm We talk about dog.

Jean Ah yes – that reminds me – go and take him to the woodshed and tie him up.

Barry Oh – he doesn't like it there. The mere mention of the word "shed" and he goes berserk.

Jean Well don't mention the word then – spell it – but please get him out of the way. I don't want any more "wolf sightings" from Mr. Charlesworth thank you.

Barry I thought you said they were the sort of people we wanted here.

Jean Just get on with it Barry. Carmen go and help him and then get on with the dusting. *(They exit)*

Carm *(muttering)* Catch dog, do dusting, I talk to my uncle....

Barry You will not talk to your uncle at all – I told you that.

Scene 4

(Barry enters pulling on a lead with something very strong pulling him off again)

Barry Caesar! Ceasar! Behave yourself! *(He is dragged offstage completely.)*
You're not allowed in there! *(He re-enters pulling on the lead)* That's better now do as you're told! *(He shoots off again)* Now I'm getting cross with you now. *(He drags him on again)* There's a good boy. *(He is pulled off again)* Alright! Alright! We'll go that way. *(Jean enters)*

Jean Barry! Barry! I told you he's not allowed in there. *(Barry enters minus the dog)*

Barry You know he's not allowed in there, I know he's not allowed in there – Caesar doesn't! *(Mrs C enters)*

Mrs C There's a wolf in the dining room!

Jean It's not a wolf – I told you – it's just one of the local dogs. Barry!

Barry I'm gone, I'm gone *(He exits)*

Mrs C It's not hygienic you know.

Jean I know, I know *(she exits. Mrs C immediately looks around and nicks a small portrait in a silver frame which she shoves into her capacious bag. She exits. Carmen enters with a dustpan and brush)*

Carm Hello? Missy 'arlowe? Hello? Where she gone? *(Barry enters)* Ah Mr Barry I get chipmunk from patio.

Barry Oh God – is there another one?

Carm No – it in 'ere *(she waves the dustpan at him)* I sweep – now I show Missy 'arlowe. She be happy.

Barry No she won't! She doesn't want it in the dining room.

Carm I put it back on patio?

Barry No – go and throw it in the bin.

Carm Is difficult to please. *(She goes off muttering)* Get the chipmunk, don't get the chipmunk, put chipmunk in bin.... *(Jean enters)*

Jean He's gone!

Barry Who's gone?

Jean The dog.

Barry Well I thought that would please you.

Jean Well it doesn't. There's no telling where he might be – I like to know where he is.

Barry He'll just go for a little walk in the woods and then he'll come back. Either that or his lead will get caught on something and we'll hear him howling.

Jean *(Looking at the space on the wall)* It's gone!

Barry He'll be back – I told you.

Jean Not the dog – granny's picture.

Barry What?

Jean It was there on the table – now it's gone!

Barry Well you can't blame the dog for that.

Jean I'm not. Carmen? CARMEN!CARMEN! *(Carmen rushes in.)*

Carmen Alright. I put bit of chipmunk in bin. I dust. What you want now?

Jean A little respect if you please. Granny's picture.

Carmen Que?

Jean My granny's picture. It was on that table. Where has it gone?

Carmen Er! Ceaser?

Jean That brute is responsible for most of the problems around here but I can't see him running off with granny's portrait. Can you?

Barry Of course not. Carmen did you move it?

Carmen I never touch old bat. Mister Barry say leave old bat alone, don't touch. Missy Jean very particular about it. Say real, pure, silver frame around old bat.

Jean Stop calling my grandmother an old bat.

Carmen Mister Barry call her old bat.

Jean Yes I'm sure he does. The point is what has happened to the old bat...
I mean dear grandmamma

Barry Well there's only us three I'm pretty sure it wasn't Caesar. Of course
there are the Charlesworths

Jean Barry how can you even think such a thing?

Carmen Missy Charlesworth a rum bugger Mister Barry say.

Jean Barry you must moderate your language in front of the staff. I must
admit
she is a little odd.

Carmen Rum bugger Mister Barry say.

Barry Yes thank you Carmen. The point is what do we do about it? Just
ignore it
and put it down to experience?

Jean Certainly not. We want my grandmamma back don't we Barry?

Barry What? Oh yes of course we do. We shall have to confront them.

Jean No I've got a better idea. They'll no doubt be going out for dinner into
the town. When they do you will search their room and see if
Grandmamma's picture is there.

Barry Why do I have to do it? I'm kitchen staff. Why can't Carmen do it?
She's domestic.

Carm I no domestic. I put domestic down the toilet. Kill 99 germs.

Jean No dear - that's Domestos.

Barry I don't know why you bother Jean.

Jean No - it has to be you Barry. As co-owner you have the gravitas with
which to confront them if you get the evidence. You must find my
picture.

Carm Yes also look for small vase with painted roseprim, and my signed
photograph of the Pope.

Jean I don't think anyone would steal that.

Carm It gone!

Jean (*looking guilty*) I'm sure it will turn up.

Carm I put it facing door so is first thing visitors see when they come 'ere.

Jean Exactly, yes - er - I haven't seen it for some days. Perhaps the wind blew it off the wall and Caesar - well - you know what he's like.....

Carm Caesar eat the Pope? Bad dog! (*Blackout*)