

SHOOTING STAR AT STUDIO 66

by Kimberlee Mendoza



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Shooting Star at Studio 66

A mystery dinner theatre

by Kimberlee Mendoza

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Rupert Mahoney — TV director. He's short-tempered but a softie. Though he won't admit it, he adores Mary and loves giving her a hard time. His favorite moments are when they are bantering, and he couldn't do without her. (Think James Stewart.)

Mary Barlow — Director's assistant. She's not afraid to speak her mind, but is still feminine. She loves working with Rupert, but doesn't know what to do with her feelings for him. (Think Grace Farrell's character in the *Annie* movie.)

Kit Mahoney — Director's mother. Sassy, rude, melodramatic, and very needy. Most people can't stand her, even her own son — though he just can't seem to say no to her for long. (Think Agnes Moorehead from *Bewitched* or Joan Collins from *Dynasty*.)

Nelly Reynolds — Star actress who has grown up in Beverly Hills. A Valley girl used to getting her own way. (Like Tracy Nelson from *Square Pegs*.)

Steven Bordeaux — Arrogant, robust, and sometimes rude leading man, though on screen he comes off totally the opposite. He is completely into himself, but secretly still loves Nelly. (Think Josh Duhamel from *Win a Date with Tad Hamilton*.)

Toby Lemur — Goofy co-star The comic relief of the movie and class clown. Loves a good one-liner. He is an extremely nice guy, and if those of the opposite sex would stop looking at him as merely a jokester, maybe they'd see he is the real catch. (Think Ralph Malph on *Happy Days*.)

Jackson Browning — Screenplay writer. Very nervous, fidgety, eccentric, and protective of his work. He's having a really hard time with the status quo, because it is anything but. How can he work under these conditions? (Think Nathan Lane in *The Producers*.)

Brian Morris — Technical assistant/grip. Laid-back techie guy. When he isn't filming movies, he's at home on his Atari.

Diane Archer — Production Assistant. A mod/punker, she is bitter and cynical, but also cool and well-liked. She went to film school, yet can't seem to get ahead in the business. (Think Janeane Garofalo in *Reality Bites*)

George (Or Jean) — Crazy rent-a-cop. A cheesy security guard who is a bit over the top; he thinks he's in a spy movie. He is melodramatic, as if auditioning for a part in a police movie. (Think *Mall Cop*.)

Lisa — Hippie wife of Jackson Browning, full of peace and love.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

TIME and LOCATION

A TV studio in the 1980s.

SETTING

It is a stage filled with wires, lights, and a big sign that says, “Studio 66” on the wall. Black and yellow stripes run around the edges. The walls are metal like a warehouse. There is a table, a few director’s chairs, and a few metal chairs at Stage Right. At Stage Left is what looks like a living room with a backdrop or possibly a green screen along with a movie camera. There are lights, equipment, and wires everywhere. There is a phone on the table.

PROPS

Act One: Scene 1 — Files and a purse for Kit

Scene 2 — Notepad, pen, trays, compact, papers, box of props (fish, newspaper, gun, bottles, etc.), and watch for Mary

Scene 3 — Donuts, coffees, compact, gun, pages, and TV remote

Scene 4 — Script

Scene 7 — Apple, pages, and gun

Act Two: Scene 2 — Boxes and a sling for Nelly

COSTUMES

Rupert Mahoney: ’80s suits (colored/four buttons) and skinny ties.

Mary Barlow: ’80s suits and dresses (with shoulder pads).

Kit Mahoney: Dresses a woman would wear in the ’60s and a fur.

Nelly Reynolds: ’80s trendy, preppy clothes.

Steven Bordeaux: Polo shirts, Dockers, and sweaters tied around his shoulders, plus a ghetto outfit for his TV costume.

Toby Lemur: Trendy ’80s clothes, less preppy.

Jackson Browning: Cardigan, button-down shirts, bowtie, and slacks.

Brian Morris: T-shirts and jeans, all ’80s style.

Diane Archer: “Mod” clothing, black and retro, purple or pink streak in her hair, uneven earrings, lots of jewelry.

George (Jean) Waits: Security guard shirt and pants.

Lisa Browning: Flowing hippie clothes.

SOUND EFFECTS

Act One: Scene 1 — Phone Ring (at rise)
 Scene 2 — Jeopardy theme or ticking sound
 Scene 4 and 5 — Phone Ring
 Scene 6 — Gunshot
 Act Two: Scene 2 — Phone Ring

*Note: Phone ring should be an old '80s ring. Gunshot is a pistol.

THE EVENING

The characters or a waitstaff should serve beverages as the guests arrive. If you have live entertainment, serve the main course during the pre-show. The dessert may be served at intermission.

MEAL SUGGESTIONS

Appetizer: chips and salsa
 Entrée: enchiladas, tacos, or burritos
 Side dishes: rice, refried beans
 Kids: rolled tacos
 Dessert: pie

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Guests arrive
 Cast mingles with audience
 Beverages, chips and salsa are on tables
 Optional “musical” entertainment (possible mariachi band)
 Main course served
 Act One, Scenes 1-6
 Intermission/dessert served (ten minutes)
 Act One, Scene 7
 Act Two
 Guests depart

PLAY RUN TIME

Script: Approximately 50 minutes
 Play, pre-show, and full meal: Approximately two hours

ACT I
Scene 11
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(Stage is empty, lights are dim. Phone is ringing. MARY enters frantic, ignoring the ringing phone.)

MARY: Oh, he's going to kill me. Kill me! *(She rummages around desk.)* I'm an unemployed woman. A dead woman. *(Phone stops ringing.)*

RUPERT: *(Off-stage)* Mary! Where are you?

MARY: Ooooh! I'm so dead. Dead! *(She ducks behind desk and RUPERT enters.)*

RUPERT: Mary, where are you? *(She peeks over desktop and he spots her.)*

MARY: Oh, good morning, sir.

RUPERT: What are you doing down there? I thought I sent you to get the scripts.

MARY: You did.

RUPERT: Well, do we keep scripts on the floor?

MARY: No, sir. *(She stands and speaks timidly.)* I'm afraid ...

RUPERT: Speak up! You know I'm deaf in my left ear.

MARY: Yes, sir. It seems the scripts are missing.

RUPERT: The right ear, Mary. It sounded like you said the scripts were missing. *(Walks so his right ear faces MARY.)*

MARY: I did.

RUPERT: *(Stares at MARY.)* Missing? How is that possible?

MARY: I don't know. They were here yesterday morning during the screen test, but they seem to have vanished. Poof! Gone.

RUPERT: Vanished, poof?

MARY: Gone. Yes, sir.

RUPERT: I don't like the sound of that.

MARY: Sorry, sir.

RUPERT: No worries. You made copies, right?

MARY: No, sir. I had planned to do that now.

RUPERT: Just call Jackson Browning.

MARY: He gave us his original.

RUPERT: His original?

MARY: Yes. He refuses to use a computer because he read somewhere that it is ushering in the end of time. Thinks the world will end before the nineties.

RUPERT: That can't be.

MARY: I'm afraid it is, sir. He hasn't used a computer his entire ...

RUPERT: No, no. I was talking about the script.

MARY: Of course.

- 1 RUPERT: (*Angry*) I'm ruined. The money, the cast, everything is
2 ready. What do we do without a screenplay? The network
3 is expecting the pilot by the end of the week.
- 4 MARY: (*Cutting in*) If I may be so bold?
- 5 RUPERT: Hasn't stopped you before. Why hesitate now?
- 6 MARY: The script wasn't really that good.
- 7 RUPERT: It had Tony written all over it.
- 8 MARY: It screamed straight to VHS.
- 9 RUPERT: Absurd. (*He paces, then stops and stares at her.*) Well, why
10 didn't you say something earlier?
- 11 MARY: I beg your pardon, sir, but I did.
- 12 RUPERT: You know I'm deaf in my left ear. Next time say it into
13 my right. (*He screams. She jumps back, afraid.*) Wow, that felt
14 good.
- 15 MARY: Yeah ... I'm sure it did. But if you could warn me next
16 time, it might prevent me from a possible cardiac arrest.
- 17 RUPERT: So sorry, but then it wouldn't feel as good. It needs to
18 be spontaneous.
- 19 MARY: Of course, sir.
- 20 RUPERT: (*Sighs.*) What do you suggest we do?
- 21 MARY: Not yell again.
- 22 RUPERT: No, no. About the script.
- 23 MARY: Call Jackson Browning. Surely he can remember his
24 own words. If not, maybe he can write something better
25 this time. Something without monsters living in
26 dumpsters. I'm not sure the executives would have fallen
27 head over heels over a pilot called "Evil Oscar."
- 28 RUPERT: The show was about monsters found in every part of
29 the ... (*MARY raises an eyebrow.*) You're right. I knew there
30 was a reason I kept you around, Ms. Barlow. Call him at
31 once.
- 32 MARY: Yes, sir. (*She crosses to desk and dials.*) Hello, Mr.
33 Browning, please. (*KIT enters. MARY turns her back a bit and
34 pretends to talk on the phone.*)
- 35 KIT: Rupert James Mahoney!
- 36 RUPERT: Oh, dear.
- 37 KIT: I've been calling you for hours! Why haven't you called me
38 back?
- 39 RUPERT: I'm sorry, Mother. (*Taps left ear.*) I couldn't hear you.
- 40 KIT: Oh no, you heard me just fine. But just in case ... (*She steps
41 to his right ear and shouts.*) Why haven't you called your poor
42 mother?
- 43 RUPERT: Not now. I'm right in the middle of a crisis.
- 44 KIT: It's a crisis when a man who says he loves his mother
45 avoids her at all costs. (*Beat*) Now, listen. Tonight I'm

- 1 having dinner with the lovely Miss Applegate from that
2 marriage show. Though I don't approve of her behavior on
3 that show of hers, I like her as a woman. Don't be late.
- 4 RUPERT: Mother, I have other plans.
- 5 KIT: Not anymore.
- 6 RUPERT: I don't need you playing matchmaker. If I had time
7 for a relationship, I'd find my own woman. *(Beat)* Besides,
8 she's much too young for me and hardly my type. *(NELLY*
9 *saunters in.)*
- 10 NELLY: *(Kisses RUPERT on the cheek.)* Like, sorry I'm late. No
11 idea why they call it rush hour. Trust me, like, no one
12 rushes anywhere! They just, like, sit there, ya know?
- 13 KIT: Oh, now I understand why you haven't called me back. Too
14 young, huh? Barbie here couldn't be over fourteen.
- 15 RUPERT: Mother, this is Nelly Reynolds, our leading lady. And
16 she's twenty-two. *(Beat)* Nelly, my mother, Kit Mahoney.
- 17 NELLY: Like, how do you do?
- 18 KIT: I'd be better if my son would call me more often.
- 19 NELLY: That is, like, so majorly adorable. I never would have,
20 like, taken Mr. Mahoney to be a mama's boy.
- 21 KIT: I would hardly call him that.
- 22 NELLY: Like, what would you call him then? We all call him Mr.
23 Mahoney. But I guess that, like, would be kind of weird
24 coming from his mother, since that was, like, probably his
25 father, huh?
- 26 KIT: Looks and no brains. Is that what sells these days? Why
27 couldn't you at least get Winona Ryder? Of course, if she
28 has to be blonde, I prefer Kathleen Turner myself.
- 29 RUPERT: OK, mother. I think it's time you let me work. I'll see
30 you tonight.
- 31 KIT: Fine. Eight sharp. Don't be late.
- 32 RUPERT: Of course not. *(He kisses her cheek. KIT exits. MARY*
33 *hangs up.)*
- 34 NELLY: So is this the studio where we'll be taping? Like, I don't
35 see a set.
- 36 RUPERT: Soon. Yes. It hasn't arrived. For now, we'll shoot on
37 the blue screen and fill it in later.
- 38 NELLY: Tubular. Well, I've moved into my trailer. Like, it's a bit
39 smaller than I imagined, but it'll do. Now if I could just
40 obscure my script for the pilot, like, that would be
41 awesome.
- 42 RUPERT: Mary will help you. *(Turns away to desk.)*
- 43 MARY: I will? *(RUPERT gives her a look.)* Of course I will. Um ...
44 they're not ready yet, Miss Reynolds. But we should have
45 something by tomorrow. Can you stop by then?

1 NELLY: But my agent said, like, we start taping tomorrow. I
2 don't think we're clicking here. We can't film tomorrow if I
3 have nothing to say. I mean, I don't really have anything to
4 say on my own. Or am I to just stare into the camera and,
5 like, look pretty? I did that once. It was the easiest gig ever.
6 Is that it? I don't mind, really. Like, memorization has
7 never been my strong suite.

8 MARY: Suit.

9 NELLY: Excuse me?

10 MARY: It's suit.

11 NELLY: I have to wear a suit?

12 MARY: No, it's not suite. It's su — *(NELLY has a blank look.)*
13 Forget it. Look, we have to postpone shooting a few days as
14 well.

15 RUPERT: Postpone! *(Flips back around.)* What? No. That is never
16 an option. Time is money, dear — you know that. We have
17 deadlines, a studio we're currently renting, at one
18 thousand dollars a day, I might add ... No, postponement is
19 never an option.

20 MARY: *(Gritting teeth)* Yes, but the script will take a few days.

21 RUPERT: No it won't.

22 MARY: Yes, it will. I just talked to Mr. Browning and he said —
23 RUPERT: That we're right on schedule. *(Whispers through teeth to*
24 *MARY.)* We'll talk about this in a moment. *(Reaches out to*
25 *NELLY.)* Nelly, dear, come back in the morning and we'll
26 have the dailies.

27 NELLY: Like, I don't know. It's so hard for me to memorize on
28 the stain, like, that.

29 MARY: On the stain, huh? I'm sure it is.

30 RUPERT: I have faith in you. Now get home and get plenty of
31 beauty sleep. We want you to look amazing in the morning.
32 *(She gives him a look.)* As if you could look any more
33 amazing. But you know what I mean.

34 NELLY: Well, I guess I'm going to, like, jet. T-T-F-N.

35 RUPERT: Toodles. *(He holds cheesy smile until NELLY exits.)*

36 MARY: Toodles?

37 RUPERT: Hey, it is taking everything in me not to fire you. We
38 have to start filming in the morning and you've lost the
39 scripts. *(Paces.)* Can't he write us at least one page?

40 MARY: He said it would take him at least a month to come up
41 with another genius script. I told him we need it in a week
42 and he freaked. I told him we'd pay double.

43 RUPERT: *(Grabs his chest and sways.)* Double? Oh my ... That's
44 what I'm seeing. Double. Mary, dear, you're going to ruin
45 me.

- 1 MARY: I'll call him back and see if he can meet with us tonight.
 2 Maybe we can get him to give us a page at a time.
 3 RUPERT: Consider making the show as we go. It's been done
 4 before. If we put our heads together, maybe, just maybe,
 5 we can save my behind.
 6 MARY: I'll call him.
 7 RUPERT: Good.
 8 MARY: Good.
 9 RUPERT: Call him, then.
 10 MARY: I will.
 11 RUPERT: Then do it.
 12 MARY: I am.
 13 RUPERT: Still not dialing.
 14 MARY: Dialing. *(She picks up the phone and dials.)* And by the way,
 15 stop flirting with Ms. Reynolds. She's making a fool out of
 16 you.
 17 RUPERT: Don't be impertinent. You're on shaky ground as it is.
 18 Flirt? Ha! Just keeping her happy and not suspicious. That
 19 one has a big mouth. What if she blurted something to the
 20 media? Or worse, her father! *(Beat)* No script. We'd all be
 21 dead. Unemployed. I'm saving our skin, not flirting.
 22 MARY: *(Shaking head, talking into phone)* Yes, it's me, Ms. Barlow.
 23 Do you think Mr. Browning can make an appointment with
 24 us this afternoon? Yes, it's quite urgent. We have a mess to
 25 clean up, and only he can help. *(Pause)* Thank you. *(Hangs*
 26 *up.)* He'll be here in an hour. *(RUPERT screams again. MARY*
 27 *jumps.)* You may not be, though. *(Lights out.)*

30 Scene 2

- 31
 32 *(RUPERT paces, frantic. Finally JACKSON enters.)*
 33 RUPERT: Ah, Jackson. *(Puts out hand.)* So glad you could come
 34 down. How's your wife, Lisa?
 35 JACKSON: Liza.
 36 RUPERT: Liza. Of course. That's what I said.
 37 JACKSON: I'm not happy, Mahoney. I am a genius ... *(Dramatic*
 38 *pause)* And to have you just toss my words away like
 39 leftovers, well, I'm — *(Theatrically)* I'm not happy.
 40 RUPERT: Yes, yes, I know, Jackson. I'm so sorry. We were on
 41 our way to make copies when it disappeared. *(Beat)* You
 42 know, they have a new computer called the Apple 2E. It's
 43 really fast and much easier to use. I could get you one.
 44 JACKSON: Of course the *man* just makes it easier and easier.
 45 Sucks us all in. The day I touch a computer ...

- 1 RUPERT: I know it concerns you, but if you'd just start using
2 one, maybe losing a script wouldn't be an issue.
- 3 JACKSON: So now this is my fault?
- 4 RUPERT: Of course not. How can I make it up to you?
- 5 JACKSON: I don't know that you can. But to be honest, I'm not
6 sure how I can make it up to you either. Ms. Barlow
7 mentioned needing the screenplay right away.
- 8 RUPERT: Tomorrow, actually.
- 9 JACKSON: (*Noticeably stressed*) How could ... you can't
10 possibly ... oh, dear.
- 11 RUPERT: I know it's short notice, but like you said, you're a
12 genius. I have all manner of faith in your ability. (*JACKSON*
13 *is pacing, wringing his hands.*)
- 14 JACKSON: Oh, dear. Oh, dear. (*MARY enters.*)
- 15 MARY: Hello, Mr. Browning. So glad you could make it.
- 16 JACKSON: Ms. Barlow. (*He nods.*) Not sure I'm inclined to agree.
17 I'm washed up, you know. Finished.
- 18 MARY: (*Whispers to RUPERT.*) He looks stressed.
- 19 RUPERT: Jackson, come on. How can you be finished when I'm
20 asking you to start a new script? It's a beginning, not an
21 end.
- 22 JACKSON: Good point. OK. What should the pilot be about?
- 23 RUPERT: Hmmmm ... Well, the last one was about monsters in
24 the city. Maybe we could try something new.
- 25 JACKSON: You didn't like it. (*Melodramatic, possibly into the fetal*
26 *position in a chair.*) I knew there was a reason you lost it. I'm
27 not a genius. I'm stupid. A stupid, stupid writer. I should
28 have stuck to theatre. Better yet, I should break my
29 typewriter and jump on a ship to Singapore. I hear they
30 have great fish. Maybe I could be a fisherman.
- 31 RUPERT: Oh, brother. Stop being so dramatic. We just need to
32 put our heads together.
- 33 JACKSON: Right. (*They all sit. A ticking sound or Jeopardy theme*
34 *could play in the background. Every once in a while, one of them*
35 *jumps up like they have an idea, then shakes head and goes back to*
36 *thinking. NELLY and DIANE enter audience with cafeteria trays.*)
- 37 RUPERT: I've got it! Let's do a show about two cops in Miami.
38 They could have some kind of vice that makes them unique.
- 39 JACKSON: Cop shows are tired.
- 40 RUPERT: Right.
- 41 MARY: What about a sitcom about a bunch of ladies in their
42 golden years?
- 43 RUPERT: No one would watch that.
- 44 MARY: Right.
- 45 JACKSON: How about a show about a courtroom at night?

1 RUPERT: A night court? Are we that desperate? People hate
2 lawyers.

3 JACKSON: It could be funny.

4 RUPERT: There is nothing funny about court.

5 MARY: He's a little sensitive ever since the incident last summer
6 that landed him in front of the judge. We try not to talk
7 about it.

8 JACKSON: Oh, you mean when —

9 MARY: Yeah ... shhhh. *(They both giggle.)*

10 RUPERT: I'm right here, you know — hearing every word. Now
11 be quiet and think before I fire both of you.

12 MARY: OK, this may sound dumb, but we're obviously out of
13 fresh ideas. There's a group of extras on the lot today,
14 waiting to film a Spielberg movie. *(She checks her watch.)*
15 Right now they should be on their dinner break.

16 JACKSON: Ooooh, I hear they're serving Mexican.

17 RUPERT: It's L.A. They're always serving Mexican.

18 JACKSON: That's because it's the best in the world. I went to
19 Arizona last week. They actually served enchiladas with
20 tomato sauce out of a can.

21 RUPERT: Nasty.

22 JACKSON: Now I'm hungry.

23 MARY: Off your stomachs, boys, and back to our problem. *(Beat)*
24 Like I was saying, maybe some of them might have some
25 ideas about a script.

26 RUPERT: I like the way you think, Ms. Barlow. *(He turns to*
27 *audience.)* Excuse me. I'm sorry to disrupt your mealtime,
28 but I'm a bit desperate. We are looking for some fresh ideas
29 for a TV show. Time is money. I need them quickly. On the
30 count of three, would you all mind yelling out some ideas.
31 OK, here we go. One, two —

32 JACKSON: I've got it! How about a show that shows the growing
33 pains kids go through?

34 RUPERT: *(Shakes head.)* One, two —

35 JACKSON: I know it's crazy, but how about a show about an
36 alien? We could call him ... Ralph.

37 RUPERT: Jackson!

38 JACKSON: Alf?

39 RUPERT: Zip it! We agreed to talk to the extras.

40 JACKSON: Of course. Sorry. Go ahead.

41 RUPERT: One, two, three. *(If the audience doesn't yell out anything,*
42 *his response is ...)* Come on, you know I can't hear in my left
43 ear. I need you to be louder. How will we ever make a movie
44 without more ideas? Let's try again. Just yell out any theme
45 you can think of. *(You could also consider polling people.)*

1 Consider having a plant in the audience. If they yell out a bunch,
2 his response is ...) Heaven. I heard someone say heaven.
3 Heaven it shall be.

4 **JACKSON:** You want to make a TV show about heaven?
5 **RUPERT:** Why not?
6 **JACKSON:** It's been done. *Highway to Heaven* is shooting right
7 now at NBC.

8 **NELLY:** Yeah, totally. And, like, *Seventh Heaven* and *Charlie's*
9 *Angels*. That idea is, like, so used up. (*MARY looks at NELLY,*
10 *annoyed.*)

11 **DIANE:** *Charlie's Angels* is not about heaven.
12 **NELLY:** Like, you're so totally dumb. Angels, heaven, duh.
13 **DIANE:** Nell, your epidermis is showing.
14 **NELLY:** It is? (*She is frantic and pulls out a mirror.*) Like, where?
15 **DIANE:** Everywhere. (*NELLY runs out. DIANE exits, satisfied with*
16 *herself.*)

17 **RUPERT:** Nothing new is under the sun, my good man. But a
18 creative genius like yourself can take an idea and surely
19 make it appear new.

20 **JACKSON:** I feel pretty tapped dry. We may have to call on the
21 extras some more.

22 **RUPERT:** Of course. Of course! So you'll be here in the morning?
23 **JACKSON:** A TV show on heaven?
24 **RUPERT:** Precisely.

25 **MARY:** You know, the other day this guy pitched me a comedy
26 idea about six close-knit, twentysomething friends who
27 hang out in their New York apartment doing silly stuff.

28 **JACKSON:** A story about six friends? Doesn't sound that
29 exciting.

30 **RUPERT:** A show about friends? How boring. That idea will be
31 dead before it hits primetime. No way. (*He looks at*
32 *JACKSON.*) So, I'll see you in the morning with the dailies?
33 **JACKSON:** Fine. I'll see you in the morning.

34 **RUPERT:** Marvelous.
35 **JACKSON:** Good day, Ms. Barlow.
36 **MARY:** Good-bye, Mr. Browning.
37 **RUPERT:** Well, that went well.
38 **MARY:** You realize the entire cast will be here in the a.m. and we
39 don't have page one to give them.
40 **RUPERT:** Don't you worry your head, Ms. Barlow. All will work
41 out fine. (*Pause*) And if it doesn't, I hear Denny's is hiring.
42 (*Lights out.*)
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(DIANE and TOBY are sitting on the set, talking.)

DIANE: Get real, Toby. I'm sick of getting coffee and picking up dry cleaning. It's not why I went to film school, and certainly not why I get up in the morning. I *could* be an amazing actress if someone would give me a chance.

TOBY: Maybe your "could be" and "should be" are all mixed up.

DIANE: Are you saying I shouldn't? Why? Because I'm not hot like all the other chicks around here?

TOBY: Nah. I'm just saying you are as God intended you to be. I see you and all that you do around here. You're amazing.

DIANE: And you're sweet. *(She kisses his cheek.)*

TOBY: Oh, did I tell you how gorgeous you were, too? *(Puts his other cheek out for a kiss.)*

DIANE: *(Laughs and kisses his other cheek.)* Funny. *(NELLY enters dramatically, as if she's had a bad night and pushes TOBY out of the chair.)*

NELLY: I was, like, up all night, stressing it big time. Look, *(Points under eyes)* dark rings. Totally grody. Like, the camera will hate me major.

DIANE: *(Under breath)* No more than the rest of us. *(STEVEN enters.)*

STEVEN: Good morning, everyone. The talent has arrived. *(Notices donuts.)* Ooooh, breakfast.

NELLY: And it will, like, all go to your gut, so go easy. I don't want a porker for a costar. What would the tabloids say?

STEVEN: My metabolism is fast as Flash. I don't get fat like some actresses I know.

NELLY: *(Huffs, then sees DIANE.)* Black, one sugar, no cream.

STEVEN: While you're up ... I take mine black. *(DIANE rolls eyes and gets up. BRIAN pokes head in.)*

BRIAN: Diane, can you help me a moment out front?

DIANE: *(Mocking)* Yeah, as soon I get the queen bee's caffeine fix. *(BRIAN nods and exits.)*

NELLY: Ooooh, I like that. Like, I'm totally the queen bee. Though I prefer ladybugs. They're much more fashionable with red and black rather than gold and yellow, ya know?

DIANE: Sure. *(DIANE hands out the coffees.)*

NELLY: Totally juvenile, I know, but can I be, like, the queen ladybug?

STEVEN: You, my dear, are the queen of anything you want. *(He kisses NELLY's hand.)*

DIANE: You only say that because her daddy writes your check.

NELLY: Someone like totally woke up on the wrong side of the couch.

- 1 DIANE: That's bed.
- 2 NELLY: Big deal.
- 3 DIANE: (*Imitating NELLY*) And you totally realize I was, like,
4 totally having a conversation with Toby when you pushed
5 him out of the chair?
- 6 NELLY: Not cool, I'm sure. Are you, like, majorly bummed with
7 me, Toby?
- 8 TOBY: Leave me out of it. I'm fine. (*Sighs.*) There is a reason I
9 don't date.
- 10 NELLY: Speaking of dating ... Did I tell you that I'm, like, so
11 totally engaged?
- 12 STEVEN: What? Since when?
- 13 NELLY: Since last Monday. (*Beat*) Uh-oh. Did I let the cat out of
14 the box? You're probably, like, so freaking out right now.
15 I'm so sorry. He's your best friend and all. He should have
16 told you. I'm so sorry, Steven.
- 17 STEVEN: It's fine. (*He tries to hide his disappointment with a smile.*)
18 Obviously you guys are happy together.
- 19 TOBY: Nothing like finding someone you want to annoy for the
20 rest of your life.
- 21 DIANE: (*Sarcastic*) You're such a romantic, Toby.
- 22 NELLY: (*Checks self in mirror.*) Beautiful. Of course, that was a
23 given. Like, right?
- 24 DIANE: You still need to stop by makeup. (*Beat*) Toby, I got one
25 for you. How many producers' daughters does it take to
26 change a lightbulb?
- 27 TOBY: How many?
- 28 DIANE: One. She holds it and the world revolves around her.
- 29 NELLY: Funny. T-T-F-N. (*NELLY giggles and exits.*)
- 30 DIANE: What does that even mean?
- 31 TOBY: Ta-Ta For Now. Didn't you ever watch Winnie the Pooh
32 as a kid?
- 33 STEVEN: Diane was never a kid. Were you? (*Pause*) You don't
34 have to be so blatantly rude to her.
- 35 DIANE: To whom?
- 36 STEVEN: Nelly.
- 37 DIANE: Like she even notices. Besides, I only say what the rest
38 of you are thinking.
- 39 STEVEN: I don't hate her. Neither does Toby. Right, Toby?
- 40 TOBY: As always, leave me out of it.
- 41 DIANE: (*To STEVEN*) Right. And the fact she started dating your
42 best friend only a week after you broke up didn't bother
43 you? Don't tell me that doesn't set sour in your stomach.
44 (*Beat*) Besides, what you ever saw in her is beyond me.
- 45 STEVEN: (*Raises eyebrow.*) What I *saw* in her? Are you kidding?

- 1 She's gorgeous.
- 2 **DIANE:** You really are shallow, aren't you?
- 3 **STEVEN:** I'm an actor — so sue me. *(Beat)* Why are you so down
- 4 on her, anyway?
- 5 **DIANE:** Besides she uses up precious oxygen with her helium
- 6 tank for a brain? Gee, not much.
- 7 **STEVEN:** Yeah, well, go easy on her.
- 8 **TOBY:** What do you call a blonde who dyes her hair brown?
- 9 **DIANE:** I give up. Do tell.
- 10 **TOBY:** Artificial Intelligence. *(DIANE laughs.)*
- 11 **STEVEN:** Well, I should probably go get my makeup done too.
- 12 **TOBY:** You wear makeup out in public. What's to do there?
- 13 **STEVEN:** Think anyone notices?
- 14 **DIANE:** Yeah, I noticed.
- 15 **STEVEN:** Really? You don't tell people, do you?
- 16 **DIANE:** Who am I going to tell?
- 17 **STEVEN:** You're a doll. *(He kisses her cheek and she giggles.)* Well,
- 18 I hate to remove greatness from your presence, but I need
- 19 to get to wardrobe.
- 20 **TOBY:** I thought you were going to makeup.
- 21 **STEVEN:** Yeah, that too. *(He waves and exits. DIANE stares where*
- 22 *he was standing.)*
- 23 **TOBY:** Are you ever going to tell him?
- 24 **DIANE:** Huh? What? *(Blinks.)* Tell whom what? That Steven
- 25 wears makeup? I just said I wouldn't.
- 26 **TOBY:** No, that you're secretly, madly in love with him.
- 27 **DIANE:** What? Don't be absurd. Steven is just a nice —
- 28 **TOBY:** Save your lies for your dad. I know better. It's why you
- 29 can't stand Nelly. Right? She has your dream job and the
- 30 heart of the man you care about. You want her life.
- 31 **DIANE:** I think you've been sniffing the wet props again.
- 32 **TOBY:** I'm pretty good at pegging people. And I've got your
- 33 number, my friend.
- 34 **DIANE:** Well, dial again, because I kind of have my eye on
- 35 someone else now.
- 36 **TOBY:** Who? Inquiring minds want to know.
- 37 **DIANE:** So you can torture me about him, too? Not a chance.
- 38 *(She stuffs something in her bag and a TV remote falls on the*
- 39 *floor.)*
- 40 **TOBY:** Do you always bring your TV remote to work?
- 41 **DIANE:** My dad was hassling me about moving out again, and it
- 42 was the only revenge I could think of.
- 43 **TOBY:** You're cruel.
- 44 **DIANE:** *(Proud)* Yeah, I know. You ready?
- 45 **TOBY:** Yeah. *(They start going to door.)* Did you hear that Milli

- 1 Vanilli had to give back their Grammy because they didn't
2 really sing on their album?
- 3 DIANE: Yeah, I heard that. So lame.
- 4 TOBY: Well, I was wondering. If Milli Vanilli fell in the woods,
5 would you hear a sound? *(She laughs. TOBY and DIANE exit.*
6 *RUPERT and MARY enter.)*
- 7 RUPERT: Have you seen him?
- 8 MARY: Not yet.
- 9 RUPERT: The natives are getting restless.
- 10 MARY: The only one restless is you.
- 11 RUPERT: What does it say when the director is the most
12 nervous person on the set?
- 13 MARY: That he's doing his job. *(JACKSON comes stumbling in.)*
- 14 JACKSON: Sorry I'm late. I woke up with inspiration, and it
15 came down to letting it flow or getting ready. Since I don't
16 believe in stunting creative expression, I chose the former.
- 17 RUPERT: So you were able to write us some pages then?
- 18 JACKSON: Sorry, maybe I should be more specific. No. I
19 thought of a TV show idea for Aaron Spelling.
- 20 RUPERT: And why can't I have *that* script?
- 21 JACKSON: The world would never believe it was written for
22 you. *(Beat)* Oh, dear ... did I say that out loud? My therapist
23 keeps telling me to be more vocal about my feelings, but I
24 find it just gets me into trouble. I only see him because my
25 wife makes me. I hope I didn't offend you. It really wasn't
26 my intent. You're a wonderful man. You make great TV
27 shows, really. What was your last pilot idea? *Melancholy*
28 *Days.*
- 29 RUPERT: Not to burden you, Jackson, but do you have some
30 pages for us or not?
- 31 JACKSON: Oh, yes. Here. *(He hands them out.)* Promise me that
32 copies will be made. Any more losses of my work, and I'll
33 have nothing left. My brain can only produce so much
34 creative energy. It's not like I can just plug my head into
35 an outlet. I need time to re-energize.
- 36 RUPERT: Mary. *(He puts out papers.)* See that these get copied
37 right away.
- 38 MARY: *(Takes them.)* Of course, sir. *(MARY exits and LISA enters.)*
- 39 JACKSON: Sweetheart, what are you doing? I told you to stay
40 in the car.
- 41 LISA: I know, but I never get to see you play.
- 42 JACKSON: Rupert, you remember my wife?
- 43 RUPERT: Liza.
- 44 LISA: Lisa.
- 45 RUPERT: Of course. *(Coughs.)* Hairball. That's what I meant to

- 1 say. *(Pause)* So, what do you think of our boy Jackson? See
 2 inspiration flowing?
- 3 LISA: Jackson will change the world, one typewritten page at a
 4 time. He's so full of love.
- 5 RUPERT: Don't think you could get him to try one word
 6 processing page at a time, could you? So much faster and
 7 easier to lose.
- 8 JACKSON: Forget it. *(Walks away.)*
- 9 LISA: If it means saving a tree? I'm all for it. But I'm afraid he's
 10 stubborn. Too frightened of the Man.
- 11 RUPERT: What man is that exactly? Steve Jobs?
- 12 LISA: No, *the* Man. *(Points up.)* God. The future. Apocalypse now.
 13 Ushering in the end times. All that.
- 14 RUPERT: And my Apple 2E helps do all that, does it?
- 15 LISA: Haven't you read the book *Eighty-eight Reasons Christ*
 16 *will return on September 12, 1988?*
- 17 RUPERT: No, but I believe that is the very year he *won't* return.
- 18 LISA: Why do you say that?
- 19 RUPERT: The Bible clearly says we won't know the day or
 20 hour. I doubt Edgar Whisenant has the upper hand.
- 21 LISA: I completely agree.
- 22 JACKSON: Oh yes, and you think saving a tree will keep us
 23 from destroying ourselves.
- 24 RUPERT: So, onto lighter topics. I hear you are adopting a
 25 baby.
- 26 LISA: And having one. We'll have a full house.
- 27 RUPERT: Jackson, a daddy. Hard to picture.
- 28 JACKSON: I'll make a great dad.
- 29 LISA: So full of love. Of course you will, my angel.
- 30 RUPERT: Are you two planning to stay and watch rehearsal?
- 31 LISA: Oh, can we? I never get to see —
- 32 JACKSON: You know that just makes me nervous, dear. No,
 33 we'll be in the lunch area eating, assuming we can find you
 34 some sprouts and tofu. *(Back to RUPERT.)* Maybe we'll poll
 35 the extras, look for more ideas. *(BRIAN enters with a box of*
 36 *props.)*
- 37 RUPERT: Sounds like a plan.
- 38 LISA: It was so nice to see you again, Rupert. You have kind
 39 eyes. Doesn't he dear?
- 40 JACKSON: *(Flat)* The kindest.
- 41 RUPERT: Um, thank you. *(Pause)* It was good to see you too.
 42 Keep our boy here inspired, will you?
- 43 LISA: Absolutely. *(To JACKSON.)* Come on, dear. *(BRIAN steps*
 44 *forward. RUPERT and LISA exit.)*
- 45 BRIAN: Sir, a grip just dropped these off. I didn't have the heart

- 1 to tell him that most of these wouldn't work for the current
2 shooting.
- 3 **RUPERT:** (*Looks in box.*) **What do we have here?** (*He pulls out a*
4 *fish, old bottles, newspaper, a gun, etc.*) **Well, the gun may come**
5 **in handy. I still don't know how the heroine makes it to**
6 **heaven.** (*He waves it around.*)
- 7 **BRIAN:** **Be careful, sir. I think that's a real weapon.**
- 8 **RUPERT:** **Real? Why on earth would they give us a real gun?**
- 9 **BRIAN:** **When Juan dropped them off, he said something about**
10 **it being the only gun not checked out that would work for**
11 **our show.**
- 12 **RUPERT:** **I don't know where he got his information. We don't**
13 **even have a story.** (*Handles gun.*) **It's not loaded, right?**
- 14 **BRIAN:** **No, I don't believe so, but we have blanks in the back.**
- 15 **RUPERT:** **Good.** (*Passes box back to BRIAN.*) **See that this gun gets**
16 **held for Ms. Barlow in back, and then the rest of this can**
17 **find its way back to storage. We're not doing garbage and**
18 **monster scenes any longer.**
- 19 **BRIAN:** **Yes, sir.** (*BRIAN exits out the door with box. MARY enters.*)
- 20 **MARY:** **The entire cast has their scripts. We should be ready to**
21 **shoot within the hour.**
- 22 **RUPERT:** **An hour?** (*He checks his watch.*) **I've never been so far**
23 **behind schedule.** (*NELLY, STEVEN, TOBY, DIANE, and*
24 *BRIAN filter in. Actors have on costumes. NELLY is running lines*
25 *and at the same time STEVEN is doing vocal exercises. TOBY is*
26 *trying to make DIANE laugh.*)
- 27 **NELLY:** **Oh, Tyler. Don't shoot me. Promise me you won't**
28 **shoot —** (*STEVEN starts his vocal warm-ups before NELLY*
29 *finishes her line. She is visibly upset.*)
- 30 **STEVEN:** **Me mo me mo me. Go home to Rome you Romans, and**
31 **roam these moors no more. Ha ha ha ha ha ha —** (*NELLY*
32 *interrupts before he is finished, cutting him off.*)
- 33 **NELLY:** **Steven!**
- 34 **STEVEN:** **What?** (*They face off, then turn their backs on each other.*)
- 35 **TOBY:** **They're at it again. So irritating.**
- 36 **DIANE:** **Lighten the mood. Tell a joke.**
- 37 **TOBY:** **A joke ... hmmm ... Do I have any of those?** (*DIANE rolls*
38 *eyes.*) **Oh, OK. Why did Santa spell Christmas N-O-E?**
- 39 **DIANE:** **Why?**
- 40 **TOBY:** **Because the angel said, "No L."** (*DIANE smiles.*)
- 41 **STEVEN:** **Picky people pick Peter Pan peanut —**
- 42 **NELLY:** **You're, like, kidding me, right?** (*They start arguing,*
43 *RUPERT enters.*)
- 44 **STEVEN:** **Why can't you just —** (*Improv fight*)
- 45 **NELLY:** **You are so —** (*Improv fight*)

- 1 RUPERT: OK, everyone. Settle down. *(Pause.)* You all got your
2 scripts? *(EVERYONE lifts them or responds.)* Great. Let's do a
3 read-through, shall we? *(MARY hands STEVEN a gun.)*
- 4 STEVEN: I feel so funny dressed as a street thug. When we
5 talked about me being on this TV show, I was supposed to
6 be an action star.
- 7 RUPERT: And you shall. You start as a thug, but redemption
8 brings you into sainthood. Eventually you'll be her love
9 interest, respected by all.
- 10 STEVEN: Well, I like the sound of that.
- 11 RUPERT: *(Whispers to MARY.)* Make sure redemption brings him
12 into sainthood, respected by all.
- 13 MARY: I'm on it. *(She crosses to phone, dials, and pretends to talk.)*
14 Mr. Browning ...
- 15 RUPERT: OK. *(He quickly studies script.)* Yes, of course. I see you,
16 Steven, having just had a fight with your girl; you turn the
17 gun on her ...
- 18 NELLY: Are you sure he has to, like, shoot me?
- 19 RUPERT: You are supposed to go to heaven.
- 20 NELLY: Yes, but blood is, like, so totally gross.
- 21 DIANE: Would you rather he throws you off a building? I'm
22 kind of partial to that myself.
- 23 NELLY: I'd rather not die at all.
- 24 STEVEN: What if I drop the gun and it misfires?
- 25 NELLY: No one would believe that. You're supposed to be a
26 super hero.
- 27 STEVEN: No, I'm not.
- 28 NELLY: My script totally says you are. Line ten.
- 29 STEVEN: *(Leans over and reads.)* Let's see ... "Myers finds a secret
30 layer of wood under the counter." *(He shrugs.)* Why does
31 that make me a superhero?
- 32 NELLY: All superheroes have a secret lair. Like, duh. *(STEVEN*
33 *still looks confused.)*
- 34 DIANE: That's lair, not layer.
- 35 NELLY: You're totally saying the same thing.
- 36 DIANE: I give up. *(Pause)* Face it, Steven. You're a superhero.
- 37 TOBY: Superman and an intelligent blonde woman duke it out.
38 Who wins?
- 39 DIANE: No one. Neither exists.
- 40 TOBY: Hey, you stole my punch line.
- 41 DIANE: Nelly inspires me. What can I say?
- 42 NELLY: Look who's talking! You're, like, calling the kettle
43 black.
- 44 DIANE: The kettle *is* black.
- 45 RUPERT: Any time now, people. Time is money. Run the scene.

- 1 STEVEN: So, I'm shooting her?
- 2 RUPERT: For now.
- 3 DIANE: Steven, I envy you. (*JACKSON runs in, out of breath.*)
- 4 JACKSON: Hold everything. I was listening, and I think they're
5 right. This isn't any good. We have to change it all. We can't
6 have her murdered.
- 7 RUPERT: Jackson, you're going to *kill* me.
- 8 JACKSON: Perfection doesn't come wrapped in a neat package,
9 Rupert. It must be formulated. You rush me, you get junk.
10 Now hand over those pages at once.
- 11 RUPERT: Take ten, people. Jackson and I need to discuss a few
12 things. (*To JACKSON*) Outside. (*RUPERT and JACKSON exit.*)
- 13 NELLY: (*To STEVEN*) You're such a dork. I knew I didn't want to
14 work with you. This is totally not cool. If only Rupert had
15 listened to me.
- 16 STEVEN: So it was *you* causing waves with the studio. My agent
17 thought it might be you.
- 18 NELLY: And how did he swing it? Like a big payoff. Murder.
19 Blackmail.
- 20 STEVEN: No, that would be your way of dealing with things,
21 Nelly.
- 22 NELLY: You're so totally juvenile.
- 23 STEVEN: And you're so totally clueless. I can't believe we ever
24 dated.
- 25 NELLY: Ditto. You're so totally boring.
- 26 STEVEN: Sometimes I just want to —
- 27 NELLY: Want to what? Hurt me? Don't forget. I, like, totally
28 know what you did to my pet rat.
- 29 STEVEN: It wasn't a pet.
- 30 NELLY: If I am feeding an animal, it's a pet. Duh.
- 31 STEVEN: You were feeding it? It came out of the dumpster.
- 32 NELLY: So what? That gives you the right to, like, try and kill
33 it? If you came out of a dumpster, should I have tried to
34 poison you? Get real. What did he, like, ever do to you?
- 35 STEVEN: All that peroxide has finally gone to your brain.
- 36 NELLY: My hair is natural, thank you.
- 37 STEVEN: Oh, brother. You're two births short of a clue.
- 38 NELLY: Don't call me dumb.
- 39 STEVEN: Did I? Because I don't think you'd know it if I did.
- 40 NELLY: You just called me dumb.
- 41 STEVEN: No. I said you were clueless.
- 42 NELLY: And you're — you're —
- 43 STEVEN: Handsome. Intelligent. Funny.
- 44 NELLY: Ugly, stupid, and a horrible actor.
- 45 STEVEN: (*Gasps.*) Horrible actor? (*They square off, holding death*

- 1 *stares.*)
- 2 **MARY:** OK, you two need to chill out. This isn't going to be a
- 3 pleasant working environment as is.
- 4 **STEVEN:** You know the only reason Rupert hired her onto the
- 5 set was because of who her Daddy is.
- 6 **NELLY:** That's so totally not true.
- 7 **DIANE:** Oh no?
- 8 **MARY:** Rupert wouldn't do that.
- 9 **DIANE:** Just like he wouldn't take her out for coffee last night
- 10 for the same reason.
- 11 **MARY:** Coffee?
- 12 **NELLY:** And pie. *(She smiles.)* Well, of course I didn't order any,
- 13 ya know? But he, like, let me have a few bites of his. I think
- 14 it was lemon meringue. *(Thinking)* Or was it strawberry
- 15 rhubarb? *(Thoughtful)* Whatever kind, it was major.
- 16 **DIANE:** Because those two pies are so similar. *(They all look at*
- 17 *her, upset. Tension runs high. RUPERT walks back into the room.)*
- 18 **RUPERT:** OK, let's read. *(Uncomfortable pause. Notices hostility.)* Is
- 19 there a problem?
- 20 **MARY:** We need to talk. *(RUPERT stares at MARY a moment, then*
- 21 *looks around.)*
- 22 **RUPERT:** Now? *(MARY leads RUPERT out and they exit.)*
- 23 **TOBY:** Well, this promises to be a long day. *(Big sigh)* Knock,
- 24 knock.
- 25 **DIANE:** Who's there? *(Lights fade.)*
- 26
- 27

Scene 4

- 30 *(STEVEN and TOBY sit on the stage looking really bored. NELLY*
- 31 *enters, then exits, then enters again.)*
- 32 **NELLY:** Any word?
- 33 **STEVEN:** You just asked a few minutes ago. The answer is still
- 34 no. As it was the last four times you asked. *(NELLY exits.)*
- 35 **TOBY:** Once upon a time there were two muffins in the oven.
- 36 Suddenly, one of the muffins says: "Man it's hot in here!"
- 37 The other muffin exclaims, "Look, a talking muffin!"
- 38 *(STEVEN chuckles. NELLY enters again.)*
- 39 **NELLY:** Still no word? It's been, like, two hours.
- 40 **STEVEN:** Oh my goodness, woman! You're making me nervous.
- 41 Stop coming in here every few seconds. *(NELLY exits.)*
- 42 **TOBY:** Don't worry. She'll be back.
- 43 **STEVEN:** Yeah, I know. *(He swings his body away from the door or*
- 44 *buries his head in his lap, so that he doesn't see DIANE enter.)* No,
- 45 the pages aren't in. Just sit down, would you?

- 1 DIANE: Wow, fine! You don't have to yell at me. (*STEVEN looks*
2 *up, startled.*)
- 3 STEVEN: Oh, Diane. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to snap at you.
4 It's Nell. She's ...
- 5 DIANE: No explanation necessary. The mention of her name is
6 enough. (*NELLY enters and opens her mouth.*)
- 7 STEVEN: No!
- 8 NELLY: Like, I don't know how you can just sit there. You
9 totally have the patience of job. (*Pronounced jahb, like*
10 *employment.*)
- 11 DIANE: That's Job, moron. (*Long o — like the biblical character.*)
- 12 NELLY: I could have you fired for insulting me.
- 13 DIANE: Is that a threat?
- 14 TOBY: OK, ladies, enough. What we need is a little humor.
15 Laugh, laugh, laugh until you're in a coffin. That's what I
16 always say.
- 17 STEVEN: Well, that's a pretty bleak idea of humor.
- 18 TOBY: I'm just trying to keep the women from killing each
19 other, OK?
- 20 NELLY: A chain is only as strong as its links, so we're, like,
21 pretty weak.
- 22 TOBY: Whoa, Nelly. I think she's making sense.
- 23 NELLY: Well, don't sound so totally shocked, Toby. I'm sure.
24 (*Looks around.*) It doesn't take a Rockefeller to know that
25 you all think I'm stupid.
- 26 DIANE: I don't think that.
- 27 NELLY: You don't?
- 28 DIANE: No, I'm pretty sold on the idea.
- 29 NELLY: I'm going to my trailer.
- 30 DIANE: Don't you mean your daddy?
- 31 NELLY: I hate to pinch your bubble, but I don't go to my father
32 every time I don't like something. (*NELLY exits.*)
- 33 TOBY: OK, that girl has got to stop trying to use clichés.
- 34 DIANE: (*Mocking*) She, like, totally is a cliché, ya know? (*Beat*)
35 When is Mahoney going to return?
- 36 STEVEN: Not you too.
- 37 DIANE: Sorry. I just have another job this afternoon.
- 38 STEVEN: Really? Doing what?
- 39 DIANE: You'll think it's stupid.
- 40 STEVEN: No I won't. I'm not as shallow as people say I am.
- 41 DIANE: I fix hair and makeup for the elderly at a convalescent
42 home on Sunset Boulevard. Makes them feel pretty when
43 their loved ones come to visit.
- 44 STEVEN: I'm impressed. Maybe I *am* shallow.
- 45 DIANE: So, you do think it's dumb?

1 STEVEN: No, just the opposite. I just wish I had the energy to
2 be a better guy and do something noble like that in life.
3 DIANE: So why don't you?
4 STEVEN: I don't know. Maybe I'm too focused on being the next
5 big thing.
6 TOBY: Well, if this sitcom or drama or whatever it is to be
7 tanks, you just might have time to give acting lessons to
8 the old ladies.
9 STEVEN: It's not going to tank, because face it — I've signed on,
10 and I'm one remarkable actor.
11 DIANE: A modest one, too.
12 STEVEN: Well, modesty isn't part of the job requirement.
13 Self-confidence, however, can be. *(Beat)* Besides, Mahoney
14 is a good guy.
15 DIANE: A good guy who hasn't been able to get a show off the
16 ground in over four years. The only reason he has the
17 chance now is because he cast the producer's daughter as
18 the lead.
19 STEVEN: You don't believe that. I mean, I know you've all been
20 saying that, but surely you don't believe it.
21 DIANE: I believe it.
22 STEVEN: No, you *want* to believe it. There's a difference.
23 *(RUPERT enters.)*
24 RUPERT: Where's Nelly? We're ready to start.
25 TOBY: In her trailer. *(Beat)* Are we going with what's written?
26 RUPERT: Um, for now. We need to rehearse. I want something
27 in the can by the end of the day.
28 DIANE: I need to take off for a few hours. Is that cool, Mr.
29 Mahoney? May I go for awhile?
30 RUPERT: That's fine. Just send Nell in on your way out.
31 DIANE: Sure. *(DIANE waves and exits.)*
32 RUPERT: You all ready?
33 TOBY: Is Hollywood seedy?
34 RUPERT: I'll take that as a yes. *(NELLY, BRIAN, and MARY enter.)*
35 NELLY: Finally. All this waiting made me break a nail.
36 MARY: I'm afraid to ask. *(She hands the script to RUPERT.)*
37 Browning approved this for now.
38 RUPERT: Bless that man. Places, everyone. Let's do a
39 run-through. Hit your marks. *(CAST gets into position.)*
40 NELLY: Please, Tyler. We can work this out.
41 STEVEN: Are you kidding? You're a cold woman, Melissa. You
42 left me with nothing. Not even you.
43 NELLY: I can change. Give me a chance!
44 STEVEN: Your day will come. I just hope I'm not within a mile
45 of you when it all comes crashing in. *(Phone rings.)*

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1 RUPERT: Don't answer it.

2 MARY: Why?

3 RUPERT: It could be my mother.

4 MARY: And what if it's not? (*MARY answers it and RUPERT*
5 *cringes. ACTORS keep pretending to run lines, but focus is on*
6 *MARY.*) Mr. Reynolds, hello, sir. Yes. They're doing a
7 read-through right now. Different script. Um, yes. (*Beat*) I
8 don't think that's necessary, sir. We've got it under control.
9 (*Beat*) You heard the extras were writing the show? (*She*
10 *catches RUPERT's eye. He walks to her side.*) No, sir. That's just
11 how Jackson Browning works.

12 RUPERT: Should I talk to him?

13 MARY: (*Waves him off.*) It'll be good, and your daughter, Nelly,
14 will be amazing. (*NELLY stops running lines and looks over.*)

15 NELLY: I already am.

16 MARY: I understand, and I'll let him know. (*Beat*) Yes, sir. Of
17 course. We have an entire team lined up for shooting. By
18 the end of the week. You bet. Good-bye, sir. (*She hangs up.*)

19 RUPERT: So, what's the verdict? (*MARY leans in to whisper. The*
20 *CAST all leans in to listen, too. RUPERT looks at them and then*
21 *they all lean back.*)

22 MARY: Bottom line?

23 RUPERT: Yeah.

24 MARY: It better be good or else.

25 RUPERT: I'm dead. (*Lights out.*)

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Scene 5

29

30 (*Phone rings several times. MARY enters, but doesn't answer it.*
31 *Exits. Phone still rings. RUPERT enters. Doesn't answer it. Rushes*
32 *out. It still rings. BRIAN enters but doesn't answer it. Exits. Phone*
33 *stops ringing. KIT enters and walks to phone, picks it up, then*
34 *slams it down as RUPERT enters. He is a bit distracted with a file*
35 *in his hand and barely gives her attention as he talks.*)

36 KIT: (*Yells.*) **Rupert James Mahoney!** (*RUPERT throws his files in*
37 *the air, startled.*)

38 RUPERT: Mother, I don't really have time for much. We're
39 behind. (*KIT picks up the phone, listens, then sets it back.*)

40 KIT: I see your phone has a dial tone.

41 RUPERT: Yes, of course. What would be its purpose otherwise?

42 KIT: Which means if I dialed it, it just might ring.

43 RUPERT: Most likely.

44 KIT: And you've been here all day?

45 RUPERT: Yes, Mother.

- 1 **KIT:** I see. *(She picks up the receiver and hits him with it.)*
2 **RUPERT:** Ouch! *(He finally looks at her.)* What did you do that for?
3 **KIT:** Because you deserved it.
4 **RUPERT:** I hardly think that's true.
5 **KIT:** Where were you at nine last night?
6 **RUPERT:** I told you, I had plans.
7 **KIT:** You were supposed to have dinner with me and my guest.
8 I was embarrassed.
9 **RUPERT:** I'm sorry, but I never really agreed to that.
10 **KIT:** What took more precedence over your mother this time?
11 *(NELLY enters.)*
12 **NELLY:** Hello, Mahoney. Like, thanks for the pie last night. It
13 was totally awesome.
14 **RUPERT:** I had coffee with Nelly. *(KIT narrows her eyes at the*
15 *woman.)*
16 **KIT:** Really. Sounds like you had pie.
17 **RUPERT:** Mother, I'm swamped. If you'll excuse me. *(RUPERT*
18 *exits.)*
19 **KIT:** So you like my son, do you?
20 **NELLY:** Like, sure, I guess. *(She starts putting on lipstick, not giving*
21 *KIT her full attention.)* He's totally a director. It's always
22 good to schmooze them, ya know? That's what my agent
23 says.
24 **KIT:** *(Coughs.)* So you're schmoozing my son?
25 **NELLY:** Yeah, so? There's, like, nothing wrong with that. I'm
26 totally not hurting him. Just being nice.
27 **KIT:** You're not too bright, are you, missy?
28 **NELLY:** It's Nelly, actually. And my father is, like, the producer.
29 **KIT:** Ah, I see. Ever occur to you that maybe my son is
30 *schmoozing* you?
31 **NELLY:** As in using me? *(She giggles.)* I hope not, Mrs. Mahoney.
32 Because it would be a total bummer to have Daddy fire
33 him. *(She shrugs like it is no big thing and turns her back. KIT*
34 *comes behind her as if to strangle her, but backs off when RUPERT*
35 *enters.)*
36 **RUPERT:** Mother, are you still here?
37 **KIT:** Promise me you'll stop by this weekend, and I'll go.
38 **RUPERT:** I promise. *(She kisses his cheek, then gives one last nasty*
39 *glance at NELLY before exiting.)*
40 **RUPERT:** What were you talking about with my mother? She
41 wasn't trying to set us up, was she? Because you know I
42 don't have time for —
43 **NELLY:** So her point was totally valid. You were using me.
44 **RUPERT:** Using you? How?
45 **NELLY:** Take out the producer's daughter for pie. Then she'll,

1 like, tell her daddy how awesome he is.

2 RUPERT: It wasn't like that. (*MARY enters.*)

3 NELLY: I should totally have you fired.

4 RUPERT: Over pie?

5 MARY: Um, Jackson is here. (*He looks away, upset.*)

6 RUPERT: Fine. (*He storms out.*)

7 MARY: So, you had coffee with Rupert last night?

8 NELLY: Yeah, so? Why is everyone so enameled of that fact?

9 MARY: Enamored?

10 NELLY: Like, that's what I said. Don't mimic me. You're not

11 five.

12 MARY: Look, Ms. Reynolds, it is my job to make sure that

13 Mahoney doesn't make any wrong decisions.

14 NELLY: Oh, and I thought this was totally about the fact that

15 you're jealous.

16 MARY: What? Don't be ridiculous. He's my boss.

17 NELLY: Totally mine too. (*They stare at each other a moment.*)

18 MARY: You don't have to do this, you know.

19 NELLY: Do what?

20 MARY: Throw yourself at the director. You have the role no

21 matter what.

22 NELLY: Fair and squared, I'm sure. Yes, well, the rumor is I

23 totally got it because of my daddy.

24 MARY: If you knew Rupert like I do, then you'd know that

25 isn't —

26 NELLY: Rupert, is it?

27 MARY: Mr. Mahoney is a good man.

28 NELLY: You know, I look around and all I see is K-sauce. (*MARY*

29 *bites her smile.*) Like, we don't even have a script. Everyone

30 thinks I'm here because of my dad. I didn't even get my

31 script ahead of time. I'm, like, totally not impressed with

32 your boss, and I have a mind to go tell my father, ya know?

33 MARY: And tell him what?

34 NELLY: That he should pop the cork on this project.

35 MARY: Don't you mean pull the plug? (*NELLY looks blank.*)

36 Because popping a cork usually means to start something,

37 but I assume you mean to stop it?

38 NELLY: Yes, and, like, don't try to change the subject.

39 MARY: Please don't do that, Nelly. I promise everything will

40 work out. Just give Mahoney time. Why don't you go to the

41 dressing room? I'll meet you there in a moment.

42 NELLY: OK, so I'd better be, like, totally happy by the end of the

43 day, or this bird is going to drop the frijoles. (*NELLY exits.*)

44 MARY: Something has got to be done about that girl. (*Lights off.*)

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(RUPERT is toying with a camera shot while MARY tries to talk to him.)

MARY: I need you to be honest with me.

RUPERT: As if I have been anything else.

MARY: Why did you hire Nelly?

RUPERT: She's a good actress.

MARY: There are thousands more out-of-work actresses with less attitude and more brains.

RUPERT: Not with her specific ... well, let's just say, not at her price.

MARY: So this is about her father. (RUPERT finally stops and looks at her.)

RUPERT: Welcome to Hollywood, Miss Barlow. You know how things are. Sometimes stuff has to be done to ensure a green light.

MARY: That doesn't sound like the man I lo- (Catches herself.) The man I've come to respect and work for all these years.

RUPERT: The man you think so highly of is two hours away from being a dishwasher at Denny's.

MARY: Please tell me you're not another sellout. I don't think I can bear it.

RUPERT: There is selling, and then there is renting. I'm on borrowed time.

MARY: You're playing with fire, Mahoney, and you don't even know it. (Beat) She's threatened to have you fired. You've toyed with her emotions, and it's going to get uglier than it already is.

RUPERT: It was just pie.

MARY: She's a working actress. She doesn't eat pie unless — unless it means something. It was more than pie to her. (To herself) And to me.

RUPERT: Why couldn't you have just protected the scripts?

MARY: Maybe because destiny knew better. I don't know. But what I do know is you need to stop blaming me. New show or not, this is your mess. (They stare off. BRIAN enters.)

BRIAN: Sorry, but the lighting guys need to get in here. Unless you want to continue your conversation in the dark, you may want to wait on the lot.

RUPERT: Thanks. (BRIAN nods and exits.) We'd better go.

MARY: Fine. (She starts to walk out, but RUPERT grabs her arm.)

RUPERT: You really think Nelly would try to have me fired?

MARY: Can ladybugs fly?

RUPERT: I know I'm often passive and impossible to work

1 **GEORGE:** And I'm very touchy about people being hauled out
2 of here in an ambulance! The cops will be here soon
3 enough, and I plan to detain all of you until they do. (*To*
4 *himself*) Then maybe they'll finally accept me into the
5 Academy. (*STEVEN enters.*)

6 **STEVEN:** Did someone say Academy? (*Makes a pose like he's*
7 *accepting an Oscar.*) I'd just like to thank the Academy and
8 all the little human-types I squashed like cockroaches to
9 get here. (*Throaty chuckle.*)

10 **RUPERT:** Ambulance? What are you talking about, George?
11 (*BRIAN and DIANE run in.*)

12 **BRIAN:** Excuse me, sir, but they just took Nelly Reynolds to the
13 hospital. Apparently she's been shot. I'm so sorry. I should
14 have checked that gun.

15 **RUPERT:** What? I'm sorry. Speak into my right ear. It sounded
16 like you said Nelly's been shot!

17 **BRIAN:** I did.

18 **DIANE:** Toby found her in the dressing room and called 9-1-1.
19 (*TOBY enters in time to cut DIANE off.*)

20 **RUPERT:** Is it true, Toby? Has Nelly been shot?

21 **BRIAN:** I'm afraid so, but she'll be OK. The EMT said it wasn't
22 serious.

23 **TOBY:** But I'd like to know why. Better yet, who? (*They all look*
24 *around at each other. TOBY points at DIANE.*) It was you, huh?
25 You just couldn't stand the idea of Nelly going out with
26 Steven.

27 **DIANE:** (*Embarrassed*) What? Don't be silly. You know me better
28 than that, Toby.

29 **TOBY:** Is it absurd? You know that you have the hots for him.

30 **DIANE:** I don't like him *that* much.

31 **STEVEN:** You like me?

32 **DIANE:** You're OK. (*She looks at TOBY.*) But I like someone else
33 much more. (*TOBY locks eyes with her.*)

34 **TOBY:** You do?

35 **DIANE:** Ask me out and we'll see.

36 **GEORGE:** This is fascinating. Sit. It's going to take awhile to
37 figure this one out.

38 **DIANE:** Look, rent-a-ham, you can't keep us from going —

39 **GEORGE:** Did you get lost from the circus? Shush.

40 **TOBY:** Why did the lion not eat the clown?

41 **DIANE:** Why?

42 **TOBY:** Because the clown tasted funny.

43 **GEORGE:** Hush, you. And you sit. (*GEORGE waves a gun in*
44 *DIANE's face and she sits.*) Like I was saying, no one is going
45 anywhere until we figure this out. Now, who had motive?

- 1 *(They look around at each other, then point all at once, yelling and*
 2 *ad libbing.)* **Quiet!** *(They all shut up fast. There is movement*
 3 *behind the curtain. GEORGE walks to it and pulls it back. KIT is*
 4 *there.)* **Hello, there. Join the party.**
- 5 **RUPERT:** **Mother! What are you doing here?**
- 6 **MARY:** **I'll give you two guesses.**
- 7 **RUPERT:** **Oh, no. Don't try to pin a murder on my mother.**
- 8 **STEVEN:** *(Melodramatic)* **Murder? But I thought Nelly was just**
 9 **shot.** *(To BRIAN)* **You said she'd be OK.**
- 10 **TOBY:** **That was a bit over the top, Steven. Did you fire the gun?**
- 11 **STEVEN:** **Don't be absurd. I care about Nelly probably more**
 12 **than anyone here. Why would I want to shoot her?**
- 13 **TOBY:** **Oh, gee — maybe because she's dating your best friend.**
 14 *(Beat)* **Excuse me, she's *engaged* to your best friend.**
- 15 **KIT:** **I thought she was dating my son.**
- 16 **MARY:** **Did you now?** *(She eyes RUPERT.)*
- 17 **RUPERT:** **We just went for coffee and pie. No harm, no foul.**
- 18 **GEORGE:** **You don't seem too happy with Ms. Reynolds dating**
 19 **your son. Should I arrest you, Mommy dearest?**
- 20 **KIT:** **I'd like to see you try.**
- 21 **RUPERT:** **Come on, George. Have some compassion. What**
 22 **would you do if it was *your* mother you had to arrest?**
- 23 **GEORGE:** **Call for backup.** *(He goes around the room, staring at each*
 24 *of them.)* **Surely you all have something to hide.** *(He flips*
 25 *around and points at BRIAN in the face. He jumps back.)* **What do**
 26 **you have to hide, hotshot?**
- 27 **BRIAN:** **Nothing. I just run errands and cameras. Why would I**
 28 **care about Ms. Reynolds?**
- 29 **GEORGE:** **Time will tell, mister. Time will tell.** *(He walks around*
 30 *them again and looks over MARY's shoulder, startling her.)* **And**
 31 **you, sweet cheeks? You didn't like Nelly dating your boss?**
- 32 **MARY:** **Maybe ... but not enough to shoot her.**
- 33 **GEORGE:** **And why didn't you like her dating your boss?** *(She*
 34 *doesn't answer.)* **Cat got your tongue?**
- 35 **TOBY:** **Because she's totally in love with him.**
- 36 **MARY:** **Toby!** *(RUPERT raises an eyebrow.)* **We are ... You're my**
 37 **boss! Toby's just, well ...** *(RUPERT comes close to her.)* **You**
 38 **know his imagination ...**
- 39 **RUPERT:** **It would be OK if you did.**
- 40 **MARY:** *(Weak)* **Seriously?**
- 41 **RUPERT:** **Yeah.**
- 42 **KIT:** **I'll be the judge of that.** *(They move in for a kiss when GEORGE*
 43 *comes between them.)*
- 44 **GEORGE:** **It's like *Beverly Hills 90120* in here. Remind me not to**
 45 **drink the water.** *(He pushes them apart.)* **Tell me, big cheese,**

- 1 what did you have on Nelly? Is it because she's the
2 producer's daughter and you feared losing your job?
- 3 **MARY:** You know an awful lot about us, George. Are you spying
4 on us?
- 5 **GEORGE:** *(Coughs.)* It is my job to keep an eye on things. I sit
6 behind monitors. I can't help it if I hear a thing or two.
- 7 **TOBY:** Then you must know who shot Nelly. You would have
8 seen it, right?
- 9 **GEORGE:** No cameras in the trailers.
- 10 **TOBY:** Convenient place to shoot someone. And who knew that?
11 *(Looks around.)*
- 12 **GEORGE:** I'll do the investigating if you don't mind, Barnaby
13 Jones. *(Pause)* So, who wants to come forward and tell me
14 the truth? Who shot Nelly Reynolds? *(No one says anything.)*
15 Tough bunch, huh? Who wants to rat on their colleague so
16 we can get out of here? *(No one says anything.)* OK, fine.
17 *(Looks at audience.)* You know, I've been thinking.
- 18 **DIANE:** Does it hurt?
- 19 **GEORGE:** Quiet, Clarabelle. *(Beat)* Now, there are probably
20 witnesses on the lot. I think I might just have to interview
21 a few. You all sit tight while I open the studio doors. *(Moves*
22 *out into audience.)* Hello there, ladies and gentlemen. I'm
23 assuming you've spent lots of time watching the comings
24 and goings of the Studio 66 cast. Would any of you know
25 anything that might shed some light on things? Have some
26 questions to ask? Don't be shy. I won't bite. Well, if you
27 don't help me, I might. Anyone have a question for Mr.
28 Mahoney? *(See questions in the appendix to give to the audience.)*
- 29 **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Mr. Mahoney, you just heard that Nelly
30 is out to fire you. Did you shoot her?
- 31 **RUPERT:** Oh, yeah, because shooting the producer's daughter
32 is so much better than dating and dumping her.
- 33 **MARY:** So it *was* a date.
- 34 **RUPERT:** It was just pie. How about a question for Mary?
- 35 **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Mary, you're obviously jealous of Nelly
36 and want to protect your boss. Did you shoot her?
- 37 **MARY:** I've never picked up a gun in my life. Besides, I care
38 about Mahoney's reputation, and I don't think shooting his
39 main star on his first day of filming is going to help him.
40 It's my job to look out for him.
- 41 **KIT:** No, by definition, that is my job until he gets married.
42 Everyone is out to help my son. What he needs is his
43 mother.
- 44 **RUPERT:** Who has a question for my mother? *(To self)* Anything
45 to get her to be quiet for a moment.

- 1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You're obviously protective of your son
2 and who he dates. Did you shoot Nelly after you found out
3 she went out with your son for pie?
- 4 RUPERT: Finally someone gets it. You need a job?
- 5 KIT: It's my question. Let me talk. *(To audience member)* That's an
6 impertinent thing to say, young man. *(Or lady)* I'm not
7 going to dignify that question with a response.
- 8 RUPERT: Oh, brother. Just answer the question, Mother.
- 9 GEORGE: Unless you have something to hide, Cruella.
- 10 KIT: No, I didn't shoot her — though I'm not crying buckets,
11 either.
- 12 RUPERT: Real nice, Mother. Are you sure I'm not adopted?
- 13 GEORGE: How about a question for Steven Bordeaux?
- 14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Steven, several times someone has
15 mentioned that your best friend is now dating Nelly. Did
16 you take your revenge?
- 17 STEVEN: Honestly, I couldn't be happier for Seth and her.
18 They're way more compatible than we ever were. And
19 there are other fish in the sea. *(He looks at DIANE, who looks*
20 *away, blushing.)* Speaking of other fish, how about a
21 question for Diane?
- 22 GEORGE: Yes, did you go all *Carrie* on Nelly, Ms. Archer?
- 23 DIANE: No.
- 24 GEORGE: We'll see. Who's got a question for Diane?
- 25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Diane, you obviously have a problem
26 with Nelly. Did you shoot her?
- 27 DIANE: Wow. Though I'm not all teary-eyed and weepy, it
28 wasn't me. I was at the elderly home when the shooting
29 occurred. From where I sit, I think you should be looking
30 at the one who is the quietest, not the loudest. Right?
- 31 STEVEN: Great idea. How about Toby? What do you have to say
32 for yourself?
- 33 DIANE: I wasn't talking about Toby.
- 34 TOBY: Because I'm soooo quiet. Like a mouse. Never say a
35 word. Keep my mouth shut. Zip. *(Speaks with lips together.)*
36 So shy, people wonder if I'm here.
- 37 GEORGE: Let's practice you shooshing. *(Makes hand signal for*
38 *talking.)* This is what you're doing, *(Does the hand movement*
39 *for closing trap)* this is what you *should* be doing. *(Beat)* Now,
40 does anyone have a question for Mr. Toby Lemur?
- 41 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You do seem innocent. Why aren't you
42 voicing any disgust for the prima donna?
- 43 TOBY: I just like to laugh. Guns aren't funny. *(Beat)* Did you
44 know there are only three things visible from space?
45 *(EVERYONE just looks at him.)* The Great Wall of China, the



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