

Razing the Brow

a short play

by

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original concept by

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Razing The Brow

LATE NIGHT AT THE DINER 1

The Diner -- NIGHT

(ARTY sits at a table in the diner. It is very late at night, and the only other customer in the diner is a very DRUNKEN MAN teetering on his stool. Arty's wife, MOLLIE, in a waitress uniform, is busy working. She is clearing off the tables.)

ARTY

(flipping through a newspaper)

"Man Struck By Lightning Faces Battery Charge"; "New Obesity Study Looks For Larger Test Group"; "Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft."

(cracking up)

Who writes this stuff?

MOLLIE

I think the newspaper reporters do, dear.

ARTY

Listen to this: "Man Steals Clock, Faces Time."

MOLLIE

I don't get it.

ARTY

Okay, Mollie, how's this one? "Air Head Fired."

MOLLIE

I'm in the paper?

ARTY

No...

MOLLIE

But that's exactly what Calista from the Flaming Hair Boutique called me, an airhead!

ARTY

The *newspapers* don't know you're an airhead.

MOLLIE

That's awful, you jerk!

ARTY

I'm sorry, honey. I just don't quite think you get it. The "air head" fired was a missile!

MOLLIE

I don't think that's funny.

ARTY

(reading on)

"Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead"; "Kids Make Nutritious Snacks"; "Sex Education Delayed, Teachers Request Training." I swear, Mollie, we must be passing through some sort of nexus of bad writing.

MOLLIE

Want some coffee, Arty?

ARTY

Nah.

MOLLIE

You've been up for days, Arty. I don't know how you do it. Or why. You looking for material for your act?

ARTY

I'm here to look at you, Betty Boo.

MOLLIE

But the scout's going to be there at Pierre's club tomorrow night. He told you to write some fresh material.

ARTY

(slapping the newspaper)

Yeah, something *topical*.

MOLLIE

You should be home at the computer, writing this stuff down.

ARTY

(folding the newspaper and putting on the table)

Too much trouble. Who needs it?

MOLLIE

We do, baby. This could be your big break. And you know what tomorrow night could mean for us?

ARTY

Day shifts at the diner?

MOLLIE

Remember those little booties your mom got us for Christmas?

ARTY

Yeah. They didn't fit.

MOLLIE

But they might find little footsies somewhere, Arty.

ARTY

What are you driving at?

MOLLIE

It's my time of the month.

ARTY

Way to kill the mood!

MOLLIE

To conceive, Arty. We're over thirty now. Don't you want to make a baby?

ARTY

(taking her in his arms)

Let's make some twins, babycakes!

MOLLIE

(looking down at her boobs)

Looks like I've already got a pair.

(Arty kisses her passionately.
After a second or two, Mollie
struggles away from him.)

MOLLIE (Continued)

(laughing)

No, no, no! Not while I'm at work!

ARTY

You're supposed to please the customer, and hey, I'm the customer!

MOLLIE

You'd probably just stiff me with tip!

ARTY

Come on, I'm the only person here, well besides...

(They look at the drunken man sitting at the counter. The man falls forward onto the counter and starts to snore loudly.)

ARTY (Continued)

Touchdown!

MOLLIE

I'd better go call him a cab.

ARTY

Nah. Let him sleep it off.

MOLLIE

Maybe you should go home and sleep a bit, too, Arty. Your going to need your rest...

ARTY

For what? You know this is the only time I get to see you anymore.

(FRITZ and LLOYD loudly enter the diner. Fritz wears an UPS uniform and Lloyd wears a FedEx uniform. The two have been running and are breathless. Both throw their coats on the floor. They start beating their jackets on tables and chairs as if they were on fire. Arty and Mollie quickly untangle themselves from each other and look on, bewildered.)

FRITZ

Get 'em off me! Get 'em off me!

LLOYD

I think we'll be safe here.

(Lloyd sprays Lysol around him in a wide circle and as the aerosol settles both he and Fritz calm down.)

MOLLIE

(wide-eyed)

At least *someone* cleans around here.

FRITZ

There's no one here...Is this a restaurant?

ARTY

No, it's a furniture store. We specialize in tables and chairs.

FRITZ

(noticing all the chairs and tables are the same)
Not much selection.

LLOYD

(to Arty)
You're that guy!

ARTY

And you're *that other* guy!

LLOYD

I saw you on the TV.

MOLLIE

You didn't!

ARTY

You must watch "Cops."

FRITZ

You're the funny man.

ARTY

Yep. That's me. Funny, man.

MOLLIE

You guys must be either family or insomniacs, 'cause no one else has ever seen him!

ARTY

Thanks, honey.

FRITZ

I haven't been able to sleep in weeks! My apartment is haunted!

MOLLIE

What?

LLOYD

We just checked it out and let me tell you, it really is. You wouldn't believe what just happened to us!

ARTY

(coolly)
Oh, I'd *believe*. Might not care.

LLOYD

You will care, once you hear this.
(he produces a cassette tape from a Radio Shack bag)

ARTY

A demo tape?

LLOYD

Evidence of supernatural existence. Real Mulder and Scully type stuff. I didn't believe it myself until I went the to collect evidence.

FRITZ

My fifth story walk-up has come under the dominion of evil spirits. I can't sleep. There are all these flashing lights and colors when I close my eyes. My food disappears from my cupboards, from my refrigerator; things walk off all by themselves. My belongings get shifted around when I'm not looking. My car keys disappear every night. It's really weird.

MOLLIE

So you two have been...

LLOYD

Ghost hunting.

FRITZ

We have a kit.

ARTY

Professional. Whatcha got?

FRITZ

Well, we got flashlights, some aerosols...

LLOYD

The Lysol was my idea.

ARTY

You're gonna *clean* the ghosts?

FRITZ

A Bible and crucifix...cloves of garlic...

Just in case. LLOYD

In case of what? MOLLIE

In case you want to make a pizza? ARTY

And some silver bullets for good measure. FRITZ

Don't you need a gun for those? ARTY

(Fritz and Lloyd look at each other,
panicked.)

Did you intend to *throw* the bullets at the werewolf? ARTY (Continued)

(Fritz and Lloyd shrug.)

I'm glad you guys have already found another line of work. ARTY (Continued)

This right here is the piece of the resistance. LLOYD
(he pulls out a bulky plastic Fisher Price tape
recorder)

Fisher Price? ARTY

Good brand. FRITZ

I stole it from my three-year-old. LLOYD

Borrowed. (correcting) FRITZ

Borrowed. I recorded this at Fritz's. Here: Listen. LLOYD

(Lloyd puts the tape in the player,
pushes play, and cranks for volume.)

(The tape is mostly static, but we hear Fritz and Lloyd bumbling around in the dark looking for ghosts. After a few seconds, we hear high pitched human voices, sounding disembodied, talking nonsense.)

MOLLIE

That's just an old tape. You're putting us on.

FRITZ

No, it's new.

(holding up his Radio Shack bag)

Just got it at Radio Shack, see?

ARTY

I don't know, honey. This might warrant further explanation.

LLOYD

Another witness! You should come with us!

MOLLIE

I think you guys should go home and get some sleep. Don't you have deliveries to make early in the morning?

FRITZ

(in an "of course we do!" manner)

Do fish sleep?

MOLLIE

I really don't know. Do they?

(Another waitress, FANNY, stomps through the door with a nasty expression on her face. Her hair is a mess and her makeup is heavy and running from crying. Her blustery presence breaks up the conversation.)

MOLLIE (Continued)

A little late, Fanny?

FANNY

I wish. At least I'd be getting some.

FRITZ

(quietly, to Arty)

What's wrong with her?

ARTY

Yeah, what's wrong with you, Fanny?

FANNY

Piss off. You and your small wit are as stubby and useless as your Y chromosome. All you men disgust me.
(she eyes Lloyd and his Fisher Price tape recorder and gives him an evil stare)
I don't even know you but you disgust me, too.

FRITZ

She's a peach.

FANNY

I bet none of you would even look at me if I weren't yelling in your face.

(Arty, Fritz, and Lloyd look at each other, reach instant consensus, and nod slowly.)

MOLLIE

What happened with Eugene, dear?

FANNY

Nothing. Same as always. That's the problem. Every time I'm with him I can just hear his eyeballs turning in their sockets toward every big-breasted blond bimbo that walks by. How can I compete? I'm 38 and single. I might as well be invisible.

ARTY

It can't be all bad. You're a handsome, um...woman.

FANNY

My biological clock chimes the hour like Big Fucking Ben: it makes pigeons *scatter* across the city!

MOLLIE

What did Eugene do this time?

FANNY

It's what he didn't do. It was our anniversary. We've been dating for two years--that's like sixteen dog years for an old bitch like me! He was supposed to take me out to dinner at this tiny seafood restaurant I've always loved. Then we were to go to the opera at eight.

(Arty, Fritz, and Lloyd start pantomiming the pomp of the upscale evening plans.)

MOLLIE

(glancing at Arty)

Sounds nice.

FANNY

I thought this was the night, you know? *The night*. So I get my face done at Sephora, spritz on some perfume, squeeze into a slinky black dress, and wait. And I wait. He doesn't come home till nine! He blows the reservation and the opera and what's his excuse? He was busy at work.

MOLLIE

No one deserves that.

FANNY

You know where he did take me, in my little black dress and fuck-me shoes?

LLOYD

McDonald's?

(Fanny stares at him like she's trying to burn a hole through his head)

Otherwise you wouldn't have mentioned it.

MOLLIE

No!

FANNY

I was expecting swordfish. He got me a Happy Meal.

MOLLIE

(covering Arty's mouth, preventing a dumb remark)

What a jerk.

FANNY

What's worse is that I love the jerk.

MOLLIE

Oh, no.

ARTY

(mocking them)

Oh, that *is* bad.

FANNY

Despite my utter detestation of the entire lot of you vile, brain-dead, overgrown children, I still love that guy.

ARTY

How can anyone love a guy named Eugene? I mean, *Eugene*?

FANNY

(to Arty)

What's next? A quip about my fanny? Look, fool, the only funny thing about you is that you don't understand my half of the population one bit.

MOLLIE

(to Arty)

Maybe you should stay out of this.

FANNY

You are going to order something, aren't you? This isn't a halfway house.

FRITZ

(to Arty)

You told me this was a furniture store!

LLOYD

And your doctors certified you "normal."

ARTY

(under his breath)

Nothing for me, you crone.

FANNY

What was that?

ARTY

Got any tea and scones?

MOLLIE

No, we don't, honey.

ARTY

(diving into a menu)

Okay, let me think about it a sec.

FANNY

(To Fritz and Lloyd)

And for you?

FRITZ

Um, nothing for me, thanks.

LLOYD

Please excuse us, madam. Seeing the flip side of death in my humble colleague's's apartment has stripped the appetite of us both.

MOLLIE

Where do you come from?

LLOYD

Four years of schooling.

ARTY

And not a clue in the world. Order something, guys.

FRITZ AND LLOYD

Coffee.

MOLLIE

(to Arty)

And you, sir?

ARTY

Haven't had pie in a while.

MOLLIE

Well let's see. The last time we checked we had...grandma's apple pie...

ARTY

Not *my* grandma's.

MOLLIE

Dutch apple pie.

ARTY

Damn foreigners and their elm disease.

MOLLIE

Apple-raisin-lime cream.

ARTY

That's just wrong.

MOLLIE

Peach pie.

ARTY

Got anything else?

MOLLIE

Let me see... Shoefly pie, and I think there's...um...

FANNY

(a litany, after having listened in)

Key lime pie, blueberry pie, mango pie, lemon meringue pie, tango pie, cherry pie, French custard cream pie, strawberry pie, strawberries and rhubarb pie, chocolate mousse pie, chocolate cream pie, mocha almond pie, mocha chip pie, cappuccino pie, banana cream pie, chocolate and banana cream pie, peanut butter pie, and blackberry pie.

(to Mollie)

Get your act together, hussy!

MOLLIE

But that's not all. You started at the bottom of the list. There's also apple pie, wildberry pie, angel light pie, devil pie, potato pie, pumpkin pie, squash pie, apricot pie, mulberry pie, some very old mint chocolate chip with the chocolate cookie crust that has crusted over the tin for five consecutive days pie; then there's peach pie, key lime pie, blueberry pie, mango pie, lemon meringue pie, tango pie, cherry pie, French custard cream pie, strawberry pie, strawberries and rhubarb pie, chocolate mousse pie, chocolate cream pie, mocha almond pie, mocha chip pie, cappuccino pie, banana cream pie, chocolate and banana cream pie, peanut butter pie, and blackberry pie.

(playfully, to Fanny)

Take that, bitch!

LLOYD

(in quiet awe)

Wow...

ARTY

What kind of ice creams you got?

MOLLIE AND FANNY

(dryly)

Vanilla.

MOLLIE

So what will it be, dear?

ARTY

Um, can I have my *real* wife back?

MOLLIE

Very funny.

ARTY

I think I'll have some hot cross buns.
(slapping Mollie's butt)
Two of 'em, with extra frosting.

MOLLIE

I'll see what I can do.

LLOYD

As we were saying, there--

FRITZ

Before we were so rudely interrupted--

LLOYD

My friend's apartment is haunted. I really think you should take a look. This stuff is wild, it's out of this world, it's scary as hell.

ARTY

You guys are nuts. Why would I go to this guy's apartment?

LLOYD

You don't seem to be doing anything right now.

ARTY

I don't know you guys. You could try to attack me or something.

FRITZ

Us attack you? Come on!

(Mollie and Fanny come out of the kitchen with the men's orders.)

ARTY

Let me have my desert and I'll think about it.

(Fanny essentially drops the coffee on the table in front of Fritz and Lloyd; then she leaves. Mollie slides a plate of pie in front of Arty and hovers by him.)

ARTY (Continued)

This is peach pie. Where are my sweetie-buns, sweetie-buns?

MOLLIE

Sorry, baby. We're out. I thought you'd like some peach pie.

ARTY

(sarcastic, he detests peaches)
Oh, I'd love some, Mollie.

MOLLIE

Well, come on, have a bite.

ARTY

Not hungry.

MOLLIE

(getting really close to him, kissing him on the cheek)
I know you'll like it.

(Arty takes a look at the pie. He picks up his fork, hovers it over the pie, then stabs it. After this hesitation, Lloyd steals a bite off the back of the pie with his fork.)

LLOYD

Yoink!

(Lloyd eats his bit. Arty takes a bite and forces it down. He fakes a smile.)

MOLLIE

You don't like it, do you?

ARTY

Oh, no. It's the best I've had.

MOLLIE

Doesn't it remind you of something? The pungent scent? The inviting wetness?

ARTY

It's the most vile concoction on God's green earth!

MOLLIE

What?

ARTY

I hate it. I've always hated peach pie, Mollie. Yet you insist on serving it to me over and again!

(Mollie looks hurt. She starts to cry a little.)

ARTY (Continued)

What? What's wrong?

(Mollie starts rubbing the perfume off her neck.)

ARTY (Continued)

Get over here. Oh man, you got peach perfume on.

MOLLIE

What man wouldn't want a wet, juicy, pungent peach? What man wouldn't recognize that his wife wears peach perfume every day of her life?

ARTY

I'm sorry. It's no big deal, really. I love you, Mollie. That's all that counts.

MOLLIE

Words count. Actions count. You want to love me, don't treat me like Eugene treats Fanny. I won't stand for that. I won't stand for a deadbeat husband who won't take me out to the opera, who won't see his wife for the wonderful person she is...or at least tries to be.

ARTY

Just because I don't like peaches? You've got to be kidding me.

MOLLIE

You're the kidder, here, bucko. You've been kidding me for too long. I'm going to be famous. We're going to be successful.

ARTY

Hey, we're happy.
(Mollie stares at him)
I mean, we were...

MOLLIE

You know what makes me happy? Your mom knitting us little booties for Christmas.

ARTY

Me chasing your booty.

MOLLIE

I don't think you want to have kids, Arty. You're not done being one. Go on, then. Go out with your new friends here and play ghostbusters in his haunted mansion. I don't care.

ARTY

What are you talking about?

MOLLIE

We have these dreams, Arty. You want to be a comedian.

ARTY

I *am* a comedian.

MOLLIE

And I'm a painter. Give me a break. We don't have anything right now. How can we be a couple--how can we start a family--if between the two of us we work twenty-four hours a day just to support ourselves?

ARTY

So I should've ditched my dreams and gotten a job as a banker?

MOLLIE

You should have succeeded at something. At least by this point, Arty. I believed in you for the past...almost ten years now. And I still do. That's what makes it so hard for me. You haven't worked for it. You piss away your time on stupid schemes and ghost stories and sitting on your butt in this stupid diner.

(There is a huge crash in the kitchen. Fanny starts yelling in anger. Apparently she's smashing the dishes.)

MOLLIE (Continued)

What's the point of believing in somebody who doesn't believe in himself?

(Mollie runs into the kitchen.)

ARTY

(to Fritz and Lloyd)

What did I do?

LLOYD

That was a little much about the pie, funny man.

FRITZ

Women have always been a mystery to me.

LLOYD

She's obviously very needy right now.

FRITZ

You gonna go talk to her?

ARTY

You know, guys, at times like this I tend to get a little drastic.

(getting out of his seat)

Let's go bust some ghost ass!

LLOYD

Now you're talkin'! Let's kick some ass!

(Arty, Fritz, and Lloyd get up to leave. Lloyd leaves his Radio Shack bag behind.)

FRITZ

I don't think ghosts have asses, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Unless they're all ass, Fritz.

FRITZ

Weird.

(Arty, Fritz, and Lloyd all exit. Mollie comes out of the kitchen after they are gone. Disappointed that they just left--without paying no less--she picks up Arty's paper and starts to clear their table.)

THE NEXT DAY 2**Arty and Mollie's apartment -- MORNING**

(Arty and Mollie are asleep in their bed. Arty wakes up and stumbles out of bed. At length, he kicks off one of the sheets that's clung stubbornly to his leg. Arty then stumbles to the bathroom sink to wash his face and fix his hair. Looking into the mirror, he notices that one of his eyebrows is gone! It disappeared overnight. He freaks out. He rubs his eyes and looks again. It's still not there. He grabs a photograph of him and his wife just to check if he ever had an eyebrow. Check. It's there. He goes back to the mirror and stares in horror and confusion. He tugs vigorously on his other eyebrow to see if it stays. It does. Arty gets angry, goes back to the bed, and wakes up Mollie with a shake.)

MOLLIE

Wha...?

ARTY

I can't believe you did this to me!

MOLLIE

Yeah, wha...?

ARTY

You shaved off my eyebrow? What kind of a person does that?

MOLLIE

(half-asleep)

The worst kind, Arty. What kind of person wakes up at eight AM on a Saturday?

ARTY

Maybe you don't understand. You *shaved* off my *eyebrow*.

MOLLIE

(slowly waking up)

I didn't shave your eyebrow, Arty.

ARTY

And you have the gall to deny it, too! That's low. You've made me some sort of lopsided freak and it's my big night tonight at the club.

MOLLIE

Some men in your position end up with more important things missing than eyebrows.

ARTY

Thanks a bunch. You expect me to go on stage like this? You, after yelling at me about acting like a grown-up last night!

MOLLIE

And you not coming home till...I don't even know. You just blew out of the diner. You didn't even pay for your pie.

ARTY

I didn't *order* pie.

MOLLIE

I don't want to hear it. I had no idea where you were last night.

ARTY

So to get back at me you shave off my eyebrow?! I don't even know you anymore!

MOLLIE

I didn't shave off your eyebrow.

ARTY

Oh, I'm sorry. The roaches did. There's one with a little roach razor. Come off it, Mollie. You're the only one here.

MOLLIE

Look, Arty. Where the hell were you? You talk me up in the diner and then you don't show up at home.

ARTY

I was just out at Fritz's. We were investigating his little ghost situation.

MOLLIE

I can't believe you wasted your time with those guys. Can't you slip into bed with your wife like a normal guy?

ARTY

Big deal! I was out with my new friends.

MOLLIE

You were supposed to be in this bed with me. And you wonder why Fanny gets pissed off at Eugene. You don't have a clue.

ARTY

Not when I'm sleeping with the enemy, Mollie. I was going to write some jokes today so I can make some money for us someday. But now I've got to go out and find something for my stupid eyebrow that you chopped off. You're freaking me out.

(Arty puts on some of his clothes, slips on a jacket, and pulls a wool cap over his head, then down over his entire forehead. Mollie sighs in frustration and sinks beneath the covers once again.)

The Diner -- AFTERNOON

(It's late in the day now. Arty has been walking throughout the city in an aimless quest to restore his eyebrow. He carries a bag full of junk that he bought to try and conceal his deformation. Fritz and Lloyd are there, poring over a map or a blueprint stretched out across the table. They are visibly shaken by something once again.)

ARTY

You guys are here again?

LLOYD

Last night it was safe at Fritz's. But something today went horribly awry.

FRITZ

I think it's a poltergeist.

ARTY

Come on. We didn't see anything last night.

FRITZ

Yeah. My apartment's not haunted any more. At least right now. Now it's my car that's possessed.

ARTY

Repossessed, right?

LLOYD

We think it wants to kill him.

FRITZ

We're pretty sure. I mean, after all the lights and colors in my bedroom the last few nights, this is the last straw. On our way over here, the brakes give out. I try to swerve out of the way of an innocent fruit stand and the steering wheel's locked too!

LLOYD

If we hadn't run out of gas a few blocks ago we might have been killed!

ARTY

Maybe your car just sucks.

LLOYD

(grabbing Fritz's hands and showing them to Arty)
Okay. Then how do you explain this?

FRITZ

Yeah, I got little cuts and scratches all up and down my hands. And my fingers...they're all crooked. Look at them. Look at my freakish hands!

(Arty shakes his head and strips off his ski-hat. Fritz and Lloyd notice that one of his eyebrows is missing and shrink back in horror.)

FRITZ (Continued)

Omigod!

LLOYD

He bears the mark! I have it, too.

FRITZ

I think they're warning you.

ARTY

What's going on now?

(Lloyd wipes off one of his eyebrows--
it was merely painted on.)

ARTY (Continued)

(amazed)

Whoa... Mollie got yours, too?

LLOYD

Both of us were in that damned apartment last night, Arty.
Those spirits think we defiled their space.

FRITZ

You shouldn't have taken a dump in my bathroom. That was a
toilet of the dead!

LLOYD

We're gonna get it now. Doesn't that freak you out?

ARTY

I was wondering how you painted that eyebrow on. It looked
good.

LLOYD

Stole my wife's eyebrow pencil.

FRITZ

She didn't even notice this morning!

LLOYD

She hasn't noticed much in years!

ARTY

My God, guys. I blamed my wife for this.

FRITZ

That's ridiculous!

ARTY

I thought she was trying to get back at me for fighting with
her last night and not coming home and all.

LLOYD

That's just silly. Obviously, since both of us are missing
these things after trespassing in Fritz's spirit-haunted
studio yesterday, we must conclude that we've been spooked!

FRITZ

I'm sorry, guys. I had no idea you would get burnt like
this.

ARTY
This is the last straw. I'm gonna call the cops.

(Mollie enters in her waitress
uniform.)

ARTY (Continued)
Mollie!

MOLLIE
I'm not speaking with you.

ARTY
Of course you are. Listen to yourself!

MOLLIE
Cute.

ARTY
Look, babe. I'm sorry. I apologize. The guys and I decided
I was a jerk.

MOLLIE
So you've come to your senses?

ARTY
Yeah. I mean, you wouldn't have shaved off my eyebrow.
That's nuts.

MOLLIE
I'm glad you came to reason.

ARTY
Yeah. It was some ghost.

MOLLIE
What?

ARTY
To teach me a lesson. Lloyd's missing his, too. I don't
think you snuck over to his place and abducted him in his
sleep. I mean, twice in one night is a bit much, even for
you.

MOLLIE
What's that supposed to mean?

ARTY
You didn't remove my eyebrow. Fritz's spirits did. Nothing
else makes sense.

MOLLIE

Then why isn't Fritz's gone, too?

ARTY

He's been haunted for awhile.

LLOYD

Maybe he's built up an immunity.

FRITZ

I've got enough problems with these damn evil spirits! They're hitting my friends before they hit me. It's psychological warfare.

MOLLIE

I can't believe you guys. You live the lives of ten-year-olds.

ARTY

Please understand me, Mollie. This is serious stuff. I mean, we're fooling around with supernatural forces here. Before I can do anything else I've gotta find my way out of this.

MOLLIE

You always have to get out of something, Arty.

(Mollie leaves them and exits,
walking into the kitchen.)

ARTY

(calling after her)

Come on, Mollie. You've gotta believe me!
(to Fritz and Lloyd)

Okay, guys. We've got a two-fold mission here. I'll help you if you help me. You've got to get these damn ghosts off your backs. I gotta perform tonight for a talent scout. Tonight! I've gotta kill or else I won't get a break, I won't get anything at all. And this eyebrow thing is killing me. You wanna go up in front of two hundred people with a lopsided face? You gotta help me out.

LLOYD

Let's try this make-up.

ARTY

(sighing)

I can't believe this.

(Lloyd draws in an eyebrow in with the eyebrow pencil. It doesn't match Arty's other eyebrow at all.)

LLOYD

Sit still!

ARTY

So guys, how does it look?

FRITZ

It looks good.

ARTY

(after a moment looking at his reflection in a napkin dispenser)

This looks like crap!

LLOYD

Yeah, it doesn't match. You could always go to the salon and dye your hair.

ARTY

That I'm painting an eyebrow on my face is bad enough!

FRITZ

(reaching into the bag and pulling out a charcoal pencil)

Let's try this.

LLOYD

He's not prepping for a football game.

(Fritz starts smearing the charcoal over Arty's forehead.)

LLOYD (Continued)

That's altogether too dark.

(sifting through the bag)

There's got to be something else.

ARTY

(reaching in the bag)

Let's try these.

(Arty gets out a pair of big sunglasses and slips them on.)

LLOYD

Aviators! Where'd you find those?

ARTY

Never you mind. They look fine.

FRITZ

I can still tell your missing an eyebrow. I mean, they cover practically every bit of your face *except* where your eyebrow should be.

LLOYD

On second inspection, my colleague here is correct.

(Arty pulls out a bottle of minoxidyl.)

ARTY

Eyebrows grow back, right?

LLOYD

I hope so!

ARTY

Good enough. I've got some Rogaine.

FRITZ

Why do you have that?

ARTY

Shut up, Fritz!

(Fritz takes a dropper of minoxidyl and puts it on Arty's forehead. The liquid drips down into his eye.)

ARTY (Continued)

Ah! My eye, my eye! It's on *fire*!

(As Arty suffers, Lloyd pulls out a novelty fake mustache and positions it on Arty's forehead.)

ARTY (Continued)

Yeah. I thought we could try and glue it on or something.

FRITZ

I don't know about this.

LLOYD

Okay, I give up. We'll have to find something else.

(Arty cleans his face and splashes a glass of water into his eye.)

ARTY

Maybe I can just go on without it. I mean, who'll notice?

LLOYD

Yeah, see me? It's not all that weird. Who'll notice?

(Fanny storms in, in her usual huff.)

FANNY

(to Arty)

What the hell happened to your eyebrow?

(to Lloyd)

And you too. Is this some stupid man cult?

ARTY

Nice to see you, too, Fanny.

FANNY

Some people leave their wallets at home, or maybe their car keys. You leave little, non-essential body parts. I feel sorry for your wife.

ARTY

You don't get it.

FANNY

Neither will you, with that deformity.

(Mollie comes out of the kitchen and begins waiting on customers. She overhears Fanny and Arty's exchange.)

ARTY

I was abducted by ghosts last night in Fritz's apartment. I woke up and my eyebrow was gone.

FANNY

Well I woke up and my Eugene was gone. How you do like that?

MOLLIE

(running over)

Omigod!

ARTY

I'm sorry, Fanny.

FANNY

Not as sorry as he's gonna be if he ever drags his scrawny ass back to me.

MOLLIE

Maybe he had to figure some stuff out.

FRITZ

But you know what they say when men lose interest in sex?

MOLLIE

I doubt he's on the arm of a twenty-year-old. Or even a sixty-year-old! Guys are just moody sometimes.

ARTY

Yeah we are. You women get moody a couple days each month. We men are moody twenty-four seven!

(Fanny exits in a huff, going back to the kitchen.)

MOLLIE

(to Arty)

Can't you keep your big mouth shut sometimes?

ARTY

Come on, Moll. You know I'm a total prince.

MOLLIE

You didn't come home last night either.

ARTY

That's different. I explained!

MOLLIE

I don't want to end up like Fanny.

ARTY

Are you mad because you think I'm taking you for granted?

MOLLIE

Yes.

ARTY

That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

MOLLIE

And for putting me down all the time.

ARTY
I though you liked being "put down."

MOLLIE
Only on the bed.

ARTY
And on the floor, and on the kitchen table, and on the--

MOLLIE
All right, stud!
(turning toward the kitchen)
Fanny!

(Mollie scurries after Fanny and
exits.)

FRITZ
You said something about the cops?

ARTY
And the ghosts? Yeah. There's definitely something strange
going on.

LLOYD
The local constabularies wouldn't believe us.

ARTY
They don't take kindly to ghost stories...

FRITZ
Or to me!

ARTY
Not that I'd expect them to. We'll try a different angle.
Burglary. Pranksters.

FRITZ
We might have to call in the Psychic Friends Network.

ARTY
Something like that. Definitely. Let's go.

(Fritz and Lloyd exit the diner. As
Arty moves to exit, a man in a
tuxedo enters. Arty stops to see
what's going on. Fanny comes out
of the kitchen with a tray of food.
When she sees the man at the door,
she drops her tray and freezes.)

FANNY

Eugene! You're wearing a penguin suit!

EUGENE

The guy at the store called it a tuxedo.

FANNY

Wh-why?

EUGENE

Come on, girl. We're going to the opera!

FANNY

I've got nothing to wear.

EUGENE

I bought you a dress. It's in the limo.

FANNY

Limo? You can't afford to do all this.

EUGENE

I can't afford not to, babe. We better go. We've got dinner reservations.

(Fanny runs toward him and hugs him.)

FANNY

Wait a minute, bucko. You forgot our anniversary last night. You can't just sweep me off my feet.

EUGENE

Our anniversary is *tonight*. I let you *think* it was last night.

FANNY

Sure you did. Let's go.

(Eugene gives Arty a big wink.
Eugene and a giddy Fanny exit.
Mollie walks over to Arty.)

MOLLIE

He winked at you. What's that about?

ARTY

Nothing.

MOLLIE

You set this up! You're the reason he wasn't at home this morning, aren't you?

ARTY

We might have ran into him after we left the diner.

MOLLIE

I bet he was crawling back to apologize.

ARTY

Empty-handed, too. That wouldn't do.

MOLLIE

It was sweet of you to help him.

ARTY

I was only thinking of your safety. I mean, who knows what could have happened if that woman didn't get any sometime soon?

MOLLIE

So when are you taking me to the opera, Mr. Matchmaker?

ARTY

When are you taking me to Wrestlemania, my little love bean?

MOLLIE

Once you stop chasing ghosts and start chasing your dreams.

ARTY

I'm trying.

MOLLIE

Look, Arty. Look at yourself. Look at us together. You're the man I want to be with. But you've got to be a man, Arty. You can be a kid, but you can't *just* be a kid. You can't keep running away from your work, your life, your responsibilities to yourself and to me. We're not twenty-two any more.

(A BEAT COP comes in with Fritz and
Lloyd in tow)

BEAT COP

Anyone belong to these two nutjobs?

ARTY

Um. I guess that's me. Don't worry about them; they're harmless.

BEAT COP

To others, maybe. Just keep these guys off the streets until whatever there on wears off, okay?

ARTY

Sure, officer.

(The cop drops the two on the floor
and exits.)

FRITZ

Thanks, Arty. We couldn't been dragged into the pokey or something.

LLOYD

No one says "pokey" anymore, Fritz. It's a "correctional institution."

MOLLIE

You two would do well in an institution.

FRITZ

Thank you.

MOLLIE

I know a little something about missing eyebrows, boys.

ARTY

It was you all along?

MOLLIE

(producing Arty's old newspaper)

You'd do well to read beyond the headlines, honey. Look at page 3.

ARTY

(reading)

"Fuzzy Peaches Raise a Hairy Situation" Two batches of contaminated peaches entered the city last week. There is no immediate threat to human health, officials say, but eating the contaminated peaches could result in either a 24-hour euphoric high--

LLOYD

Where's *that* batch?

ARTY

--or the spontaneous loss of facial hair.

(MORE)

ARTY (Continued)

Most of the afflicted suffer from the loss of half a mustache or one eyebrow. Doctors say that such hair loss is only temporary and nothing to worry about.

(to Mollie)

Holy shit! It was the pie you served me.

FRITZ

And Lloyd here snuck a bite, too!

MOLLIE

Who knew? And you thought it was the stupid ghosts.

FRITZ

But what about my ghosts? We have incontrovertible evidence--

LLOYD

In the form of my recording.

MOLLIE

You know, the newspaper is a treasure trove of information. Check out the Metro section.

ARTY

(reading)

"Late Night Work Keeping Residents Howling at Moon." Local residents have been filing a record number of complaints about loud noises and flashing lights. The lights and nighttime noise are a direct result of the installation of a new building-sized video screen in the downtown area.

LLOYD

So they're installing a new billboard or something?

ARTY

Noise and lights.

FRITZ

And the food and stuff?

ARTY

You really should call an exterminator.

FRITZ

But what about the tape? Your tape, Lloyd. With the voices!

MOLLIE

I think you might be interested in this.

(She holds up a Radio Shack bag)

Remember your "brand new tape?" Well, here it is.

LLOYD

No!

MOLLIE

I'd take a listen one more time.

(They get their tape recorder out and play the tape. The first side plays the same recording of Fritz and Lloyd bumbling about with unheard vaguely human voices in the background.)

MOLLIE (Continued)

Okay.

(They flip the tape and play the other side. They hear a little girl singing children's songs.)

LLOYD

That's my daughter!

(The tape continues a couple seconds. We hear Lloyd wrestling the recorder from his daughter's hands.)

FRITZ

So there aren't any ghosts?

LLOYD

I guess you're just incredibly unlucky, Fritz.

ARTY

(laughing and hugging his wife)

Unlike me, Mollie. Baby, why do you put up with me?

MOLLIE

Because I love you.

ARTY

I'm such an airhead sometimes.

MOLLIE

Compared to me, you are. Little did you know I'm such a smart cookie.

ARTY

Just don't let that cookie crumble, sweetie.

(getting frisky, nuzzling Mollie)

Be soft and most of all, be moist for me.

(then realizing the time)

Holy crap! I go on in four hours. I gotta go write some new jokes!

MOLLIE

Good luck, honey. I'll see you there.

ARTY

This won't be a problem at all. Fritz, Lloyd, Mollie's got extra passes to my show. Come on and see it.

FRITZ

Thanks, man!

LLOYD

Great!

ARTY

Just don't drive there, Fritz.

(Arty kisses his wife and exits the diner.)

The Comedy Club -- NIGHT

(Arty assumes the stage at the comedy club and begins his act. There's a good crowd. Mollie is in the audience watching him with admiration. Fritz and Lloyd are there, too. The TALENT SCOUT, a man wearing a suit and carrying a message pad sits on the other side of the room, laughing along with the crowd.)

ARTY

Stand-ups like me always say, "A funny thing happened to me today," and let me tell you, it's a total lie. We comedians get up and two in the afternoon and watch TV in our boxers all day in our one-bedroom apartments before taking a cab to the club. When my day started today, though, I woke up missing a particular part of my anatomy. I know what you're thinking. My ass. I'm missing my ass. But no. I'm missing my eyebrow. Look at this. This is a fake. A falsie.

(MORE)

ARTY (Continued)

A grown man wearing falsie. Now it's an eyebrow. Now it's a mustache. That's insane.

(Arty's act trails on and everyone is laughing or applauding.)