

# CYBER & DOUGHNUTS

a comedy in two acts

by

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## Characters

**Kenneth Brownstein:** Law student. Sensible, affable, conscientious . . . and slightly put-upon by his younger brother. Kenneth is popular with women, just by being himself.

**Mitchell Brownstein:** Architecture student. Immature, overconfident, self-centered and unreliable . . . but not without a goofy likeability. Can be clever when he wants to be. Thinks he has a way with women, but (how to say this?) he doesn't.

**Lydia:** Law student, and junior partner in Dunweigh Digital. Highly intelligent and efficient, with a good-natured, well-rounded personality. Generally considered a "knockout" in the physical-appearance department, too.

**Mayor Abigail Katz:** Pompous but not unsympathetic.

**Bootsie:** Owner of Dipsy's Doughnut Shop. Plucky small-business owner.

**Shane Shuttlecock:** Conceited, high-handed cable-TV director. Not interested in much of what anyone else has to say, with the exception of Kathy.

**Kathy:** Shane's assistant. Smart, sexy, and slightly kooky. Likes men almost as much as she likes her trusty light meter. Can be any age -- her type never loses her spark.

**Pam:** Senior partner in Dunweigh Digital. Thirtyish. Businesslike almost to the point of brusqueness. Her "stunning" looks, like Lydia's, attract attention -- but she's not as much fun.

**Humphrey Trill, ASA:** Boutique owner, and leader of the Disco Tuba Orchestra. Cuddly middle-aged crank.

**Elliott Plunkett:** Head of the Dunweigh Plaids. An abrasive middle-aged man; Kathy smooths him out a bit.

**Representative Higgins:** Slightly undignified state legislator. Can be cast either as a man or a woman.

A life-sized **Raggedy Ann**, i.e. a citizen who is dressed, grotesquely, as an oversized doll. If the effect comes across as "cute", your costume designer has failed you.

Time: June

Place: The Chamber of Commerce office in Dunweigh, Connecticut,  
a quaint little town on the Long Island Sound.

*Note: When characters enter or exit, it is assumed to be through the "outside door" of the office, unless stated otherwise.*

ACT I  
SCENE 1

(Late afternoon in a small, functional ground-floor office, appointed with a desk, an assortment of chairs, filing cabinet, bookshelves, computer, coffee machine, dehumidifier, etc. In addition to the door which leads to the outside, there are two doors into internal rooms that, for the purposes of our protagonists, function as "Kenneth's bedroom" and "Mitchell's bedroom". A fourth exit leads to an offstage kitchenette. As the lights come up, Kenneth and Mitchell enter from outside, carrying luggage, a boombox, and a beer cooler. They drop these articles pretty much anywhere, and look over their summer home.)

MITCHELL

So, here we are! The whole summer ahead of us, a free place to live in the perfect little vacation town, a well-earned break from law school

(He indicates Kenneth on "law school")

and architecture school . . . .

(On that he indicates himself.)

Ten weeks of no responsibilities, except to have ourselves a fantastic time.

KENNETH

No responsibilities? What are you talking about?

MITCHELL

I'm talking about the absence of responsibilities. A responsibility count of "zero".

KENNETH

Us? Me and you??

MITCHELL

What is this, the Annual Pronoun Festival?

KENNETH

But look . . . listen . . .

MITCHELL

(He makes a game-show buzzer noise.)

Those are verbs, not pronouns.

KENNETH

Mitchell! You know perfectly well that *Dad* is counting on us.

MITCHELL

Who?

KENNETH

*Dad!* Our father. That nice old guy with the big ears who Mom's fond of.

MITCHELL

Oh. Right. I knew it was a familiar name.

KENNETH

Perhaps you're also familiar with the fact that Dad runs the Dunweigh Chamber of Commerce, and that he has left us in charge of the office -- this office you might have noticed around us -- while he and Mom take their first vacation abroad in twenty years.

MITCHELL

(He yawns.)

Your point being?

KENNETH

My point being that -- yeah -- this should be a nice, easy gig compared to the grad school grind, and, hey, believe me, I plan to be at the beach and the bars as much as I can. But I don't think we should start the summer by *completely* forgetting that our primary reason for being here is to make sure Chamber of Commerce business is attended to with punctuality, precision, and . . . .

(He hesitates.)

MITCHELL

Yes?

KENNETH

Well, I don't know. I wanted something else with the letter "p", but I couldn't think of one.

MITCHELL

Hmm . . . . "Poise", maybe?

KENNETH

I don't know. I don't feel very poised. Do I look poised?

MITCHELL

Well . . . no.

KENNETH

In any event --

MITCHELL

I hate that expression. Could you start that sentence differently?

KENNETH

Next time. All I want to establish here is that our promise to Dad comes first.

MITCHELL

Yeah, yeah.

KENNETH

Why is it that your attitude fails to inspire me with confidence?

MITCHELL

Poise, confidence. You can't have everything, Kenneth. Moving on to more important matters . . . . What'd you think of those two hot chicks at the computer support store?

KENNETH

What did I think of the who at the what?

MITCHELL

Ah, so we're back to Pronoun Week.

KENNETH

Huh?

MITCHELL

Interjection. I interpret these monosyllables to signify that you -- somehow, incredible as it seems -- failed to register those two gorgeous, friendly, highly intelligent women at the computer center we walked by just now.

KENNETH

Oh . . . well, I guess I remember noticing some kind of sign, now that you mention it.

MITCHELL

The *sign*. You noticed *the sign*?

KENNETH

Yeah. The sign in the window.

MITCHELL

What are you, some kind of *reading* freak?

KENNETH

The term is *law student*.

MITCHELL

But you didn't notice what else happened to be in that window? Namely, two of the most dazzling faces that have ever been seen in this town?

KENNETH

This is your first day in town, Mitchell.

(Wagging a finger)

You have no basis for comparison.

MITCHELL

Objection overruled, Counsel. I don't *need* a basis for comparison. I don't need any kind of basis when it comes to instinctively spotting beautiful women. This operation

(He taps himself on the chest with his forefinger)

runs on *intuition*.

KENNETH

All right, all right, Mr. Instinctive Intuition. So what did they say that penetrated to the very shallownesses of your soul, while I was apparently preoccupied with something else (like doing our job, for instance)?

MITCHELL

Say? Nothing. They didn't talk to us. You know that. We just walked by.

KENNETH

(Scoring a lawyerly point)

And yet you described them as "friendly" and "intelligent".

MITCHELL

Well, how could they *not* be, with faces like that! Honestly, Kenneth, sometimes I feel like I have to explain *everything* to you.

(He shrugs.)

I guess that just goes with being an older brother.

KENNETH

But *I'm* the older brother.

MITCHELL

Well then start doing your job!

KENNETH

That is *exactly* what I've been trying to do, for the past half hour. Look, the first thing Dad asked us to attend to was introducing ourselves to the Mayor. Since you've obviously got other things on your paper plate

(He taps his own temple to represent Mitchell's empty head),

I'll be glad to handle that alone. Do you think you can keep this place from deteriorating into your usual chaos for just a few minutes, till I get back?

MITCHELL

Relax. And say hi to Mayor Skippidee for me.

KENNETH

Her name is Mayor Katz.

MITCHELL

Really? When did she change it?

KENNETH

She didn't change it. You just -- oh!

(Kenneth ends his speech by waving a dismissive hand at Mitchell, then exits.)

(Mitchell begins to make himself at home by removing his shoes, opening a beer from the cooler -- he makes a face, because it's warm -- and trying to get the "Classic Rock" station on his boombox. Soon the bell above the door tings, and Lydia enters. Though Mitchell thinks of himself as a smooth "ladies' man", he is, in reality, nervous and ridiculous around women he finds attractive, and the present instance will prove no exception.)

MITCHELL

Wow!

LYDIA

Excuse me?

MITCHELL

I said . . . uh . . . "Now".

LYDIA

"Now"?

MITCHELL

Yes. As in . . . "Now then, what can I do for you?"

LYDIA

Oh. I need the phone number of an air conditioning company.

MITCHELL

(In his best singles bar manner)

Really? That's *so* interesting.

LYDIA

I don't know about that. All I know is that now that it's starting to turn humid, our computers are beginning to get a little cranky. My partner and I don't really mind it ourselves . . . .

MITCHELL

(Under his breath, to the audience)

She is *hot* .

LYDIA

I beg your pardon?

MITCHELL

I said . . . uh . . . "Hot". It can get *hot*.

LYDIA

(Giving him a funny look)

Yes. I know. That's the point.

MITCHELL

(Trying to be agreeable)

Exactly! You are *so* right.

LYDIA

So . . . about that phone number?

MITCHELL

What phone number?

LYDIA

The *air conditioning company*. You have something on file, don't you?

MITCHELL

Why would I have that?

LYDIA

(She looks around, bewildered.)

This *is* the Chamber of Commerce office, isn't it?

MITCHELL

(He also looks around, as if realizing for the first time where he is.)

Oh! *Yes!* Of course it is. Right here. *This* office. Chamber of Commerce. You are *so* right! Exactly!

(He just stands there, grinning at her idiotically.)

LYDIA

(Expectantly, with an effort to remain patient)

And . . . the phone number?

(Mitchell finds his way to the computer, fumbles with a power button, and waits for it to come alive.)

MITCHELL

No problem. Let me just get to that screen.

LYDIA

(Suddenly embarrassed and apologetic)

I'm sorry -- you were already shut down for the day! I didn't realize.

MITCHELL

That's okay. Would you like something to drink?

(Still nervous but intent on making Lydia feel at home, he walks to the cooler, which is in the middle of the floor.)

I have beer, "Pepsi Warm",

(He holds up an unrefrigerated bottle)

and "Pepsi Flat"

(He holds up another bottle, this one not only unrefrigerated but also half-consumed.)

LYDIA

No thanks.

MITCHELL

(Doing his best to play host)

How about a sandwich?

(Conceitedly)

I happen to be a first-rate sandwologist.

LYDIA

"Sandwologist"?

(She shakes her head in confusion.)

Listen, if you were about to eat, I can come back first thing in the morning.

(She moves toward the door.)

MITCHELL

(Becoming frantic at the prospect of seeing her walk out of his life so soon.)

No! Don't come back!

LYDIA

(Offended)

Well, okay. I'm sorry.

(She begins to leave.)

MITCHELL

No! I mean . . . don't come back. *Stay*. Now. Here. I've got the info. Please.

LYDIA

If you're sure it's no trouble . . . .

MITCHELL

I'm sure. No trouble. Exactly.

(Trying his tired line one more time)

You are *so* right.

(He returns to the computer. Lydia gives him another dubious look.)



MITCHELL

It's funny. This computer doesn't seem to want to turn on.

LYDIA

(She joins him by the computer.)

It might be more enthusiastic about turning on if you flipped the correct power switch. I think the button *you* pushed belongs to that dehumidifier.

MITCHELL

Heh-heh. Of course. All that talk about humidity got me hot under the collar, I guess . . . .

(He fumbles with the computer and finally flicks the right switch. As he waits for it to start up, he awkwardly attempts to make conversation.)

So . . . what did you do about the humidity problem *last* summer?

LYDIA

Oh, Pam didn't open Dunweigh Digital till October.

MITCHELL

(To the audience)

Pam must be the other gorgeous babe.

LYDIA

What's that?

MITCHELL

Er . . . I said, "Pam must be enjoying this gorgeous day."

LYDIA

Ha -- you don't know Pam. I'm lucky if I can get her to look out the window, let alone venture outside, away from her workstation. Anyway, I said we were "partners", but I'm really just the junior partner. Pam talked me into investing 25% of the capital and pitching in with my computer skills for the busy season. I just got here yesterday, in fact.

MITCHELL

Well then, since you're new in town . . . maybe I can show you around.

LYDIA

(With a dry politeness that does not conceal her complete lack of enthusiasm for this idea)

Yeah . . . thanks. Thanks a lot. Hey, how're we doing on the phone number?

MITCHELL

Coming at you any second now! The computer finally seems to have slipped up.

LYDIA

You mean "booted up"?

MITCHELL

Exactly! You are *so* right.

(Lydia rolls her eyes.)

MITCHELL

I just need to figure out -- uh, I mean *open* -- the business directory database.

(He is clearly unsure where to begin.)

Do you think that might be under "Quickbooks"?

LYDIA

Quickbooks? That's a bookkeeping program.

MITCHELL

Of course! How silly of me. I just thought that since you wanted the information *quickly* . . . .

LYDIA

(Beginning to get exasperated, she glances around the room.)

How about a phone book? You do have a phone book, don't you?

MITCHELL

You bet.

(Flustered, he opens a drawer at random and grabs what he thinks will be the phone book. It is actually a muffin tin. He stands there, staring at it, unsure what to do next.)

(Kenneth enters from outside. He recognizes Lydia instantly as a buddy from law school, and greets her with a casual ease that astounds and annoys Mitchell.)

KENNETH

Hi, Lydia!

LYDIA

Kenneth!

(She smiles and relaxes upon seeing her chum.)

What brings you to the Dunweigh Chamber of Commerce?

KENNETH

That's simple enough. This is Dad's gig, and my brother and I are running it for him this summer.

LYDIA

(To Mitchell, with a touch of annoyance)

You didn't tell me you were Kenneth Brownstein's brother.

MITCHELL

(Stiffly, to Kenneth)

We were having a little trouble with the computer.

KENNETH

We should call those computer support people down the block.

LYDIA

(With a laugh)

That's *me!* I decided to get a real job this summer before we plunge back into law school Year Two. After two ass-busting semesters of law classes, I can't imagine *anything* will seem like work by comparison.

KENNETH

(Chuckling agreeably)

You are *so* right.

(By contrast with his brother's insincere delivery of this line, Kenneth says it in a completely natural manner, and Lydia laughs pleasantly with him at their shared perspective on law school. She is fully comfortable with Kenneth, and Mitchell is visibly envious.)

LYDIA

Listen, I've gotta get going, Kenny. Oh -- Do you know the Soggy Doggy Pub?

KENNETH

No. We just got here a little while ago.

LYDIA

*That* explains why your brother was having trouble getting into the computer.

KENNETH

My brother always has trouble getting into a computer. I don't know if he mentioned that he's an architecture student. As you may know, most people in his field are now using "Computer-Assisted Design". You've heard of it?

LYDIA

Yeah, I guess so.

KENNETH

Well, Mitchell specializes in Computer-*Resistant* Design.

(Kenneth and Lydia laugh together again. Mitchell is not amused.)

LYDIA

Anyway, the Soggy Doggy has a great Happy Hour. I never miss it. Why don't you drop by later on? I'll try to drag Pam along, too -- but don't hold your breath.

KENNETH

Sounds great.

MITCHELL

(Tired of being ignored)

Yes, *we'll* be there.

(Lydia gives Mitchell an unenthusiastic look, then smiles at Kenneth as she heads toward the door.)

LYDIA

(To Kenneth)

See ya soon!

(She exits.)

KENNETH

(As he moves unhurriedly around the office, unpacking a bit)

Well, Mayor Katz is a bit of a tough customer, but I think she'll be all right. She's got a lot of confidence in Dad, so as long as we don't screw up, I think she'll be cooperative.

(A pause, as Mitchell just glares at him. Kenneth is oblivious to this, as he continues to bustle around the room.)

KENNETH

The one thing Mayor Katz seems to be especially concerned about is the big June Parade, which is coming right up. I didn't quite realize it before, but organizing the Parade is basically our responsibility. The Mayor is practically obsessed with this thing, so we've got to make sure we deliver on that.

(He finally stops moving and faces Mitchell.)

But – hey, how hard can it be?

MITCHELL

Kenny.

KENNETH

What do you mean, “Kenny”?

MITCHELL

She called you “Kenny”. Even *I* don't call you Kenny.

KENNETH

(He shrugs.)

So call me Kenny, if it'll make you happy.

(Kenneth picks up an armful of clothes and begins to move toward his bedroom door. Mitchell follows him, grabs him

by the elbow, and turns him around to get his attention.)

MITCHELL

Kenny – I mean – Kenneth, I want you to tell me about Lydia.

KENNETH

What's to tell? She's just a friend from law school.

MITCHELL

But I mean . . . how well do you know her, what does she like doing, what's she all about?

KENNETH

What difference does it make? You've made it very clear, time and again, that you're not interested in hearing about law school, so I'm not going to bore you by telling you about my law school friends.

MITCHELL

Kenny -- *Bore me. Please.*

KENNETH

Look, we'll be seeing her at the pub later on, where you can ask her to bore you herself. So there's no point my standing here and giving you a presentation about how many hours I've spent with her in the library and whether we've ever slept together.

(He begins to move away, but he is stopped by the urgency in Mitchell's voice.)

MITCHELL

*Kenneth!*

KENNETH

We haven't. Unless you count a friendly nap in the library after a particularly exhausting exam. It's none of your business, Mitchell -- so I don't know why I'm indulging your moronic curiosity -- but I'll tell you here and now that Lydia and I are just friends. I like her a bunch, and I'm glad she's here to liven things up, but that's it. She doesn't make me feel romantic, or sexy, or like a whole new man, or the only man in the world, or Neanderthal Man, or Java Man, or Manfred Mann, or even the Michelin Man. And I'm pretty sure I don't make her feel like the Sensuous Woman or the Bionic Woman or whatever *you're* hoping to make her feel like. All right?

(Without missing a beat)

And why is there a muffin tin on top of the computer?

MITCHELL

(Still huffy)

I *told* you – we were having technical problems.

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 2

(The next morning. Kenneth is alone in the office, talking on the phone. He has a cup of coffee at his elbow.)

KENNETH

Yes . . . yes, I see . . . . Well, I'll do what I can. But, as I understand it, the Mayor is traditionally first in the parade. I can try to put your organization second, but that's probably the best I can promise . . . .

(Mitchell enters from outside.)

KENNETH

(Still on the phone)

No, as a matter of fact, I didn't realize that the Mayor was your sister. Maybe you should take this up with her, then . . . . Yes, I understand. Well, in that case . . . . No, she probably wouldn't call *me* a stinky sweatsock, but still I -- okay . . . . Okay, I'll look into it. Oh, and about your free annual evaluation -- you wanted August 20th?

(He looks at the calendar.)

No, I don't have the 20<sup>th</sup>. But if *you* have August 20<sup>th</sup>, I can give you an August 10<sup>th</sup> and two August 5ths in exchange . . . . Fine.

(He hangs up and addresses Mitchell.)

That was Marleybone Lozenge.

MITCHELL

What in the world is Marleybone Lozenge? A racehorse?

KENNETH

(He picks up his coffee.)

Mr. Lozenge is one of Dunweigh's self-styled pillars of the community. He presides over --

(He pauses to toss a legal pad and a pen to his brother.)

Here, you'd better take notes. You've got to know this stuff.

(Mitchell easily catches the pad and pen but does not make any effort to take notes.)

KENNETH

He presides over the Dunweigh Ornamental Cabbage Club, which I guess is a pretty big deal around here. Persuasive talker. I think I just promised him that I'd try to get his sister, Mayor Katz, to relinquish her spot at the beginning of the parade so that Marleybone and his favorite cabbage can head things up.

MITCHELL

I heard that part. You did promise.

KENNETH

That's what I was afraid of.

(He takes a sip of coffee.)

Before that, we had a call from someone named Horace Yubb in New Jersey, who wanted me to recommend someone here in town who could supply him with firewood. Who in the world orders firewood from 500 miles away?

MITCHELL

Horace Yubb, evidently.

KENNETH

(After another slug of coffee)

Oh, and Lydia phoned, too.

(Mitchell now begins taking notes assiduously.)

MITCHELL

Yes?

KENNETH

Pam wants us to promote Dunweigh Digital by giving out mousepads with their name on it to all Chamber of Commerce members, in exchange for the free computer support they've promised us. Can I ask you to make some calls for price quotes on imprinted mousepads?

MITCHELL

(Impatiently)

Yeah yeah, fine. Did Lydia say anything else?

(Hopefully)

Like about wanting to go out with me, for example?

KENNETH

Ahem. Not that I recall. And I wouldn't get your hopes up, if I were you.

MITCHELL

Why?

(Frantic with curiosity and concern, he reaches across the desk to grab Kenneth.)

What did she say??

KENNETH

(He calmly removes Mitchell from his person, giving us the impression that he's had to do this many times before.)

She didn't *say* anything. But I know Lydia pretty well, and my understanding is that she prefers to date men of her own . . .

(He gives Mitchell a disdainful look)

*species.*

MITCHELL

Hey! Are you saying that I'm lacking something when it comes to interacting with women?

KENNETH

Look, I'll grant you that where women are concerned, you may have a certain nauseating appeal, and an unforgettable glow of intriguing schmuckiness. These are good qualities, Mitchell, and you are rightly proud of them. But you've just got no *class*. I mean -- well, did you ever see Humphrey Bogart with Lauren Bacall?

MITCHELL

(Enthusiastically)

*Bogey!*

KENNETH

You know how he just has this, uh, charisma?

MITCHELL

(With more exaggeration now, and plenty of body language)

*Bo-o-o-o-gey!*

KENNETH

Right. Bogart. He's got something. You know what I mean?

MITCHELL

(With an admiring shake of his head)

*Bogey.*

KENNETH

Okay, BOGEY! BO-O-O-O-O-GEY, already. Are you paying any attention to what I'm saying?

MITCHELL

(Sarcastically)

Your every word is like wax to my ears. It is truly a shame that I have only one lifetime to spend listening to you. And I do so hope that you'll do all the talking at the next Happy Hour. Of course, I'll be sitting at a separate table.

KENNETH

Speaking of which . . . .

MITCHELL

Speaking of which *what*?

KENNETH

Which what, indeed. You should be ashamed of yourself.



MITCHELL

(Averting his eyes)

I have no idea what you're talking about. Besides, it was as much your fault as mine.

KENNETH

Ha! *My* fault? We're sitting with my friend Lydia at Happy Hour last night, enjoying some microbrews, a little rock music, and some casual conversation. Suddenly, you launch a farfetched, wholly fictitious, and wholly *implausible* story about our computers malfunctioning, which goes on for something like twenty-five minutes, until -- out of sheer pity -- poor Lydia agrees to drop by today and look things over. So that you can have another hopeless chance at getting her to like you. The whole scenario is so repulsive I don't even want to dwell on it . . . but I must admit I am fascinated by the interesting idea that it's somehow my fault. Please, enlighten me. How was this my fault?

MITCHELL

Well, she's *your* friend.

KENNETH

All I know is, every time I turn around, you're embarrassing me with one of your ridiculous set-ups.

MITCHELL

Then stop turning around.

KENNETH

Look, it's too nice a day to spend inside arguing with you. I'm going out for a walk, before the rain hits. *Carpe diem*, to use the Latin expression.

MITCHELL

Gimme a break with the lawyer talk. What's "carpe diem"?

KENNETH

It means "seize the day".

MITCHELL

Oh. Well, all right then, Petronius, you go out and *carpe* some *diem*, while it's still carvable. See you in a couple of carps.

(Kenneth exits.)

MITCHELL

Good riddance. Lydia should be here any minute to help me. I just need to make sure I do a convincing job of pretending to be clueless about computers. Fortunately, I really *am* clueless about computers.

(Lydia enters.)

LYDIA

Hello, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

(To the audience)

She remembers my name. *Excellent.*

LYDIA

I mean . . . it is Mitchell, isn't it? I'm not very good with names of people I don't  
li --

(She breaks off)

. . . er, people I don't *know*. Where's Kenny?

MITCHELL

Kenny? I don't know any Kennies.

(He moves right along.)

Let's get some jazz on the subject.

(He turns on the radio.)

Hey, am I glad you're here! I was getting so frustrated, I was ready to flush my ZIP  
drive down the toilet.

LYDIA

(Looking at the computer, she responds matter-of-factly.)

Your machine doesn't have a ZIP drive.

MITCHELL

See what I mean? I'm so clueless I don't even know what to flush. Oh -- would you  
like some coffee?

LYDIA

Thanks.

(He instantly slaps a pre-filled mug into her hand. She looks  
at it, a little surprised, then takes a sip.)

LYDIA

So . . . aside from flushing nonexistent components down the toilet, what exactly  
were you trying to accomplish when you began to have problems?

MITCHELL

All I was doing was trying to enlarge a picture that Kenneth asked me to take a look  
at. But I couldn't get it to open in the spreadsheet I was using. And then the 100-  
page file of architectural codes I was printing off the web sort of froze up, and the  
printer started having trouble with the signal coming from the scanner, where I was  
working on getting a Doobies album cover uploaded into PowerPoint so I could fax  
it to one of my buddies. So I tried turning the monitor off, but then everything kind  
of went black.

LYDIA

Hmm.

MITCHELL

Was I doing something wrong?

LYDIA

Look, I won't be able to stay here longer than thirty minutes today. How about we concentrate on your most important priority. What would that be?

MITCHELL

Making sure we don't miss Happy Hour.

LYDIA

I mean the most important thing you want your computer to do for you this morning.

MITCHELL

Well . . . I guess that would be the photo. Kenneth and I have to make a decision on that tomorrow.

LYDIA

Good. Turn the monitor back on.

MITCHELL

How do I do that?

LYDIA

The same way you turned it off. With the button.

MITCHELL

But that's the "off" button. Don't we need the "on" button?

LYDIA

It's the same button! An on/off button.

MITCHELL

Oh! Is that what they call "multi-tasking"?

(Lydia reaches across to turn the monitor on. Mitchell admires her arm.)

LYDIA

Now we need to exit out of all this.

(Mitchell shrugs and heads toward the door.)

LYDIA

Where are you going?

MITCHELL

You said to exit.

LYDIA

It was a computer term, not a stage direction.

(Mitchell shrugs again, and returns to the computer. Lydia grabs the mouse and closes application after application. Mitchell watches her, in awe. With each decisive click of her mouse, Mitchell's eyebrows bounce up.)

LYDIA

Before we go any further, you'd better back up.

(Mitchell heads toward the door again, this time walking slowly backwards.)

LYDIA

*What are you doing?*

MITCHELL

I don't know. You've lost me with all this technical talk, like that stuff about backing up. Maybe we'd better – you know -- back up a bit.

LYDIA

No. If we're going to get anywhere today, we've got to move forward.

(Mitchell returns to the desk.)

MITCHELL

I'm sorry, Lydia. You just do whatever you think is best, and I'll -- uh -- back you up. Is my machine still down?

LYDIA

No, it's back up.

(Mitchell shrugs and begins to walk backwards toward the door again.)

LYDIA

(She turns her head and notices that Mitchell has walked away.)

Will you get over here!

(Mitchell returns to her side.)

LYDIA

Now, this photo. What program do you want to use to open it?

MITCHELL  
Program? Uh . . . we have Windows, I think.

LYDIA  
"Windows" would be your operating system.

MITCHELL  
(Concerned)  
Is that bad?

LYDIA  
(She shrugs.)  
Matter of opinion. Don't get me started.

(Kenneth enters, carrying a bag of rice.)

LYDIA  
(Brightening)  
Hi, Kenny.

KENNETH  
Hello. Hey, I *love* that natural foods shop on the corner. I can't wait to cook up this basmati rice. How's the -- uh -- *computer support* coming?  
(He glares at his brother.)

MITCHELL  
Oh, swell. I think we're really getting somewhere.

LYDIA  
No, we're not. But I really need to get going.

MITCHELL  
But you can't leave yet! Our computer still isn't working right.

LYDIA  
Well . . . .

MITCHELL  
And I was just about to pour more coffee! Wasn't I, Kenneth?

KENNETH  
Huh?

MITCHELL  
(He floats over to Lydia with the coffee carafe.)  
Can I top you off?

LYDIA

Well, I shouldn't have too much more . . . why don't you just middle me off.

KENNETH

(To Lydia)

What kind of nonsense has my brother been feeding you, anyway?

MITCHELL

None of your . . . *basmati*.

LYDIA

Kenny . . . How about I come back later to finish this consultation?

KENNETH

Absolutely. At your convenience. I'm usually in.

LYDIA

I'm not so much concerned about who's going to be in, as about who's going to be *out*.

(She cocks her head in the direction of Mitchell.)

KENNETH

(Smirking)

I understand. Listen, Lydia. I think the computer will be okay. We'll call you if we need any more help, all right?

(He escorts her to the door.)

KENNETH

Thanks for stopping by. We owe you one.

(He gives her a quick, brotherly kiss on the cheek.)

LYDIA

(Smiling)

Thanks, Kenny.

(She gives him a playful pat on the butt and exits.)

MITCHELL

Hey! How come I didn't get a pat on the butt?

KENNETH

(Wearily)

I don't *know*, Mitchell. Do you want me to run out and *ask* her?

MITCHELL

(Thinking aloud)

I wonder if I overdid the "clueless" bit. Maybe if I'd boned up on Quickbooks and Windows and all that stuff, she would have patted my butt, too.

(To Kenneth)

I'll see you later.

(He takes a couple of computer manuals off a shelf, and heads toward his bedroom.)

KENNETH

Where are you going?

MITCHELL

Where else? To bone up.

(He exits into his bedroom.)

(Lydia re-enters.)

KENNETH

Well, hello again.

LYDIA

I'm sorry, guys. I --

(She looks around.)

Where's your brother?

KENNETH

He's boning up.

LYDIA

Excuse me?

KENNETH

In the bedroom.

LYDIA

Uh . . . yeah. Listen -- did I leave a diskette here?

KENNETH

(Looking over the materials on the desk)

Maybe. Are any of these yours?

LYDIA

(She joins him at the desk and paws through all the disks.)

No . . . no . . . no . . . and no. That's funny, I thought I'd brought it. Oh, well. Let me know if it turns up, willya? It's translucent orange, with pink writing on it.

KENNETH

Sounds delicious.

LYDIA

(Smiling)

Ta ta.

(She exits. Kenneth moves to the desk, and a moment later Trill walks in.)

KENNETH

May I help you?

TRILL

I'm Humphrey Trill. I own a boutique in town.

KENNETH

Pleased to meet you, Mr. Trill.

TRILL

I've come to see you about the free annual business consultation that the Chamber of Commerce offers.

KENNETH

Okay. When would you like to schedule that?

TRILL

Well, that's the thing. I don't really need the consultation. My little shop is right on track, I'm happy to say.

KENNETH

That's great.

TRILL

So, since I'm not taking the free consultation . . . do I get something else?

KENNETH

Excuse me?

TRILL

You know . . . a clock-radio or something?

KENNETH

No, not really. The idea was just to --

TRILL

(Not listening)

But, now, I was forgetting. I already have a clock-radio, don't I. What else have you got?

KENNETH

I may be able to set you up with a complimentary mousepad.

TRILL

Oh, all right. That will do for now, I suppose. I can always exchange it later, yes?



Be sure to send me the catalog. Good day.

(He exits.)

KENNETH

(To the audience, with dry irony)

And imagine . . . Dad needed a vacation. Go figure.

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 3

(A few days later. Kenneth is in the office, which has begun to look very lived-in, with books and papers scattered everywhere. He is finishing up a phone call as Mitchell enters.)

KENNETH

(Speaking in a warm, friendly tone)

Yep, I will . . . .

(He laughs pleasantly.)

You bet. And, listen, give Judy my best, all right? . . . . Absolutely. Hey, it's been great talking. You take care now, okay? . . . . Bye-bye.

(He hangs up the phone and picks up his coffee.)

MITCHELL

Who was that?

KENNETH

(He shrugs.)

Wrong number.

(He picks up a legal pad.)

Okay, now let's review what we've covered these past few days.

MITCHELL

Why do we have to review?

KENNETH

Because I want to make sure that you're capable of running this office when I'm out on Chamber of Commerce business.

MITCHELL

What makes you worry that I'm not?

KENNETH

(Casually)

Oh, just everything you've ever done in your entire life.

MITCHELL

I see. But suppose I don't want to participate in your stupid little review session?

KENNETH

Mitchell, either you're going to let me drill you on the basics of the Dunweigh Chamber of Commerce, or else I'm going to have to stay here 24/7 to oversee things.

MITCHELL

Let me get this straight: If I don't drill with you, you'll never go away?

KENNETH

Exactly.

MITCHELL

(He sits up straight, then claps his hands twice like an eager coach.)

Drill Number One! Ready! Set! Beee. . .gin!

KENNETH

Smart decision. Okay, first question: Where do we keep our records on what commercial buildings are available for public events?

MITCHELL

Uh . . . that would be the Facilities File.

KENNETH

(He is pleased.)

Right! And where's the first place to look for the Facilities File if it's not where it belongs?

MITCHELL

Um . . . mixed up in the Factotum File.

KENNETH

Very good. And what do you do if the mayor calls, needing some detailed statistics in a hurry?

MITCHELL

Hide under my bed.

KENNETH

*Wrong.*

MITCHELL

Hide under *your* bed?

KENNETH

We'll come back to that one. Now let's go over all the miscellaneous details we need to attend to before the Parade. We've only got a week and a half left, and I'm going to be counting on you to handle at least some of these. Here's the list Dad left us:

(He picks up a memo.)

(1) Dayglo banners for all the streetlamps. (2) Chalk drawings on the sidewalk at major intersections. (3) Pretzel machines to replace phone booths. (4) Teddy bears on dashboard of all public buses.

(He stops reading from the list.)

I'm thinking some of these items may not be a hundred percent necessary.

(He continues reading -- now a little more slowly, as he's reached a difficult item.)

(5) Re-furbish central carnival cubbyholes two weeks prior.

(Again looking up from the list)

I have no idea what that means, but in any case it's too late.

(He is about to continue reading, but Bootsie enters.)

BOOTSIE

(She looks around.)

Where's Phil?

MITCHELL

Dad's on vacation. May we help you?

BOOTSIE

Phil's on vacation?

KENNETH

Yes, that's right. Can we assist you with something?

BOOTSIE

Phil won't be in at all today?

MITCHELL

He's away. He won't be back until August 30<sup>th</sup>.

KENNETH

So we're filling in. We're his sons. What can we help you with?

BOOTSIE

August!

MITCHELL

Yes. August 30<sup>th</sup>.

BOOTSIE

You don't say . . . .

MITCHELL

It falls on a Monday this year.

BOOTSIE

Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup> . . . .

KENNETH

I'm sorry. I know you're used to dealing with Dad. But we'll do our best to help you.

BOOTSIE

So if I need to speak to Phil, I have to wait until August 30<sup>th</sup>.

MITCHELL

That's right. Or, you can let us help you right now.

BOOTSIE

Oh, I don't think you could. You're sure Phil's not around here somewhere?

KENNETH

(Smiling patiently)

Positive. But we can take a message, and he'll get in touch as soon as he returns.

BOOTSIE

Well, maybe you can help me.

MITCHELL

Why didn't we think of that?

BOOTSIE

I need some guidance on my new business plan.

MITCHELL

Oh, you'd have to speak to Phil about that.

KENNETH

(Impatiently, to Mitchell)

Wait a second!

(To Bootsie)

What kind of guidance?

BOOTSIE

I need to keep my public aware of the vital role my establishment is playing in their lives, as we grow through a new century.

KENNETH

Of course. And which establishment do you own?

BOOTSIE

Dipsy's Doughnut Shop.

KENNETH

(Spit-take)

Dipsy's . . . .

BOOTSIE

Doughnut Shop.

MITCHELL

Are you Dipsy?

BOOTSIE

Don't be absurd.

MITCHELL

Just asking.

BOOTSIE

My name is *Bootsie*. Dipsy sold out years ago.

KENNETH

Well, let's see, Bootsie . . . . Does the doughnut shop currently have any kind of PR hook -- you know, a slogan of some kind?

BOOTSIE

(Proudly)

"We make doughnuts."

KENNETH

Uh -- yes, I know. But what I'm asking is: Do you have a slogan?

BOOTSIE

That's our slogan.

MITCHELL

What is?

BOOTSIE

What I just said -- "We make doughnuts."

KENNETH

*That's* not a slogan. That's just a statement of fact. Not even a particularly interesting one.

MITCHELL

Yeah. You could even do better with something like "It's raining outside."

BOOTSIE

We tried that. Then one day it didn't rain.

MITCHELL

Look, Dipsy . . . .

BOOTSIE

(Touchily)

*Bootsie*.

MITCHELL

Look, Bootsie. I think we need to jazz it up a bit. In today's marketplace, you really need to dazzle people if you want to get their attention. You've got to *grab*

them.

BOOTSIE

(Dubiously)

I wouldn't want to get powdered sugar all over their clothes.

KENNETH

He means grab them with your advertising. And I'm afraid that "We make doughnuts" isn't going to do that.

BOOTSIE

Oh! I get it. So you mean something big, bold, and fresh.

MITCHELL

Yes. Now you've got the idea.

BOOTSIE

Something that jumps right out and gets their attention.

KENNETH

Exactly.

BOOTSIE

Like . . . "We make *good* doughnuts."

KENNETH

Hmm . . maybe we should forget about the slogan for a while. Mitchell, what else do you think we can do to promote Dipsy's?

BOOTSIE

I want to talk to Phil.

KENNETH

Please, Bootsie, give us a chance.

MITCHELL

I know! We've got the Parade coming up, right?

KENNETH

Of course.

MITCHELL

So . . . what if the Parade were led by a giant doughnut?

BOOTSIE

(Chuckling)

Say, that's cute. But I'm afraid I can't make a doughnut much bigger than 6 inches across or so. Bigger than that, and you run into technical problems. In the business, we call it the "DLF" -- the doughnut limiting factor.

MITCHELL

I don't mean a *real* doughnut. I mean someone in a doughnut costume.

BOOTSIE

Hey, that could be a beautiful sight.

KENNETH

Uh . . . earth to Mitchell! You seem to be forgetting that the Parade is always led by Mayor Katz -- or, just possibly, Marleybone Lozenge and his incredible cabbage. But definitely *not* a person in a doughnut costume.

MITCHELL

I wasn't forgetting at all. The way I see it, there's no reason that the Mayor . . .

KENNETH

Yeah?

MITCHELL

And the giant doughnut . . .

BOOTSIE

Yes??

MITCHELL

Can't be one and the same.

KENNETH

You mean . . . get the Mayor to put on a doughnut suit? You're out of your --

BOOTSIE

I *love* it! You're a genius, kid. Oh, this is gonna be great! My sister is terrific at making costumes for all the school plays and stuff. This'll be right up her alley. All you guys have to do is inform Mayor Katz that she's going to be a doughnut, and you can leave the rest to me. Thanks!

(She bustles out of the office.)

KENNETH

Nice work, pal. Now what are we supposed to do?

MITCHELL

(He shrugs nonchalantly.)

You heard Bootsie. All *we* have to do is inform Mayor Katz that she's going to be a doughnut. I'd get right on that, if I were you.

(Mitchell exits to his bedroom with a magazine, leaving Kenneth fuming.)

(Blackout.)



## SCENE 4

(Later that day. Kenneth is sitting at the desk, once again on the phone.)

## KENNETH

Yes, hi. This is Kenneth Brownstein from the Dunweigh Chamber of Commerce . . . . No, not "Tennis". *Kenneth*. From Dunweigh . . . . With a "D" . . . . "D"! As in "David" . . . . No, not "Bay Bridge". *David*. David with a "D", as in "Dennis" . . . . No, *not* "Tennis" . . . . Anyway, I believe my brother Mitchell called you earlier about imprinted mousepads. Yes, the two-color item. Is that still available? . . . . Oh, good. Now the quantity would be 120 to start with, and -- Huh? . . . . "Out of stock"? But I thought you just said it was available . . . . Oh, I see, "available for *order*", not available to actually obtain. Well, do you have a similar item on hand? . . . . Yeah, that sounds like it would be okay. What's the difference between this one and the other one? . . . . Ah, a different catalog number. I'll need to check with my client, but I think we can live with that. Now the price you quoted sounds competitive, but I'm a little concerned about the turnaround time. Do you think you might be able to -- No, I'm not Mitchell, I'm David -- er, Dennis -- er, *Kenneth*. And what I'm wondering is if you've got a "rush" plan or anything, because we're in a bit of a hurry here . . . . No, I don't mean that I'm in a hurry to get off the phone *now*. I mean can you rush our order into production, say, maybe a week sooner? . . . . Well, sooner than you otherwise *would* . . . . No, we don't want the *mousepads* to be made of wood. All I'm asking is when you can get them into production . . . . Well, sure, I think 11 a.m. is a great time of day to manufacture mousepads, but I'm more concerned with what *day* than what precise time . . . . Yes, 11:03 a.m. next Tuesday sounds perfect . . . . And about the legend: We're thinking just the name "Dunweigh Digital" in large letters . . . . *Dunweigh*, not "Monday" . . . . Yes, I know, Tuesday is the soonest you can start, but I'm saying the name on the mousepads needs to be "Dunweigh" . . . . No, not "Crumcake" . . . . You know, on second thought, a plain, solid-color design will be fine. That's right, no lettering at all -- we'll go for "subtle". . . . "*Subtle*". With an "S", as in --

(Mayor Katz enters, carrying an armful of paperwork, and -- after carefully moving aside a hand-puppet that has somehow been left lying on the available chair -- seats herself across the desk from Kenneth.)

## KENNETH

(Still on the phone.)

I'll have to call you back.

(He hangs up.)

Mayor Katz, I really appreciate your stopping by on such short notice.

## KATZ

Nonsense. When I get a call that says "important community business", I'm ready to drop everything.

(As she finishes this line, she accidentally drops all the files, papers, and letters she has been holding. Kenneth scrambles around the desk to pick them up. Finally, when she has her documents back in hand, Kenneth returns to his place behind the desk.)

KATZ

So, Mitchell, what's on your mind?

KENNETH

I'm Kenneth, actually.

KATZ

Oh, of course. The younger son.

KENNETH

No, last I checked I was the older one. Anyway, I asked you here because something has come up.

KATZ

(She leans forward, with an artificially-exaggerated look of concern.)

Something *problematic* for Dunweigh?

KENNETH

(Under his breath)

We'll soon know.

KATZ

What's that?

KENNETH

I said . . . "No." Not something problematic.

KATZ

(Beaming grotesquely)

Something *good* for Dunweigh!

KENNETH

Yes . . . good. Good as . . . *doughnuts*.

KATZ

Ucch! I hate doughnuts.

KENNETH

(Under his breath)

You're not making this any easier.

KATZ

What's that?

KENNETH

I said . . . uh . . . "Maybe if they made them *cheesier*."

KATZ

No, I'd still hate them. Do you know that every morning, when I enter the Town Hall, all I can smell is the disgusting doughnutty stench from Dipsy's, wafting across the park. Blech! For that one minute each day, I'm tempted to resign my office -- just so I could work in a different part of town. I tell you, that Dipsy fellow could be the end of my political career.

KENNETH

No, that would be Bootsie. Everyone knows Dipsy sold out years ago.

KATZ

Nobody tells me anything! At any rate, you obviously didn't ask me here to talk about doughnuts.

KENNETH

(He laughs nervously.)

Actually, Mayor, it's funny you should put it that way, because --

(The phone rings. Kenneth, welcoming the interruption, answers on the first ring.)

KENNETH

Hello? Oh, hi Mr. Lozenge.

(Katz makes a distasteful face.)

KENNETH

(Speaking on the phone)

Yes, July 22nd, that's right. The Seaside Picnic is always the third Saturday in July, as I understand it . . . . Rain date? Gee, I don't know. Probably the following Saturday, I guess . . . .

(He looks puzzled.)

July 15<sup>th</sup>? For the *rain date*? . . . . I see . . . . No, I didn't know that. But nevertheless, I believe it is traditional to schedule the rain date for a day that comes *after* the target day, not before . . . . Yes, I agree. Some traditions *are* silly. But I think that this particular one makes a sort of sense, if you stop to -- Please, Mr. Lozenge, the Chamber of Commerce *does* care that July 15<sup>th</sup> is your birthday. It's just that . . . . all right, I'll see what we can do.

(He hangs up.)

KATZ

I hope Marleybone isn't still full of that nonsense about leading the Parade.

KENNETH

Actually, he was calling to pester -- er, I mean *inquire* about something else.

KATZ

You know, Marleybone doesn't win every game; but, boy, he's always in there bitching. So when did you last speak to him about the Parade?

KENNETH

Let's see . . . I think it was yesterday. He called to renew his request for leading the Parade, and he insisted on supplying me with personal references. Then he called back about an hour later, offering to decorate this office with cabbages. I tried to politely decline this act of generosity, but he wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

KATZ

Tell me about it! Even when he's trying to be helpful, he always manages to come across as an utter pain in the ass. I don't know how he manages to get such a consistent effect -- it's rather impressive, really.

KENNETH

Anyway, though fourteen cabbages are being delivered tomorrow morning, I did manage to put him off with regard to his leading the Parade. I reiterated that I would have to refer the question to you.

KATZ

And rightly so. Marleybone is a buffoon. Why, the idea! The Dunweigh June Parade must be led by someone

(She stands and indicates herself with a grand gesture)

with *dignity*.

KENNETH

Heh-heh. Which brings me back to what I was starting to say before. You see--

(He breaks off in mid-thought, as he has suddenly had an inspiration. He rises to his feet and resumes speaking, with confidence and enthusiasm.)

Yes! *Dignity*. Exactly. I couldn't have put it better myself.

(Katz smiles graciously at the compliment.)

KENNETH

Mayor Katz, you are the very *personification* of dignity. Why, I bet if we looked up "dignity" in the dictionary, there'd be a picture of you. A very *dignified* picture.

KATZ

You're very kind. I do try always to maintain the humble dignity of my office.

KENNETH

(Continuing to make his pitch with full momentum.)

And what is dignity, after all?

(Katz opens her mouth to answer, but Kenneth forges on, pacing the room.)

KENNETH

It's not just about the clothing one wears. Innate dignity goes deeper than that. If an individual is endowed with *true* personal dignity -- as you so obviously are, Mayor -- then this dignity shows through, no matter what she's wearing.

KATZ

(Trying, without much success, to appear modest)

Well . . . I suppose.

KENNETH

Why, a dignified person could dress up in *anything*, and she'd still be the very image of dignity. An Edwardian bathing suit. An enormous pink tutu. A clown outfit. Even . . . .

KATZ

Yes?

(Blackout.)

ACT II  
SCENE 1

(The next day. Kenneth is in the office, which is now littered with decorative cabbages. Shane and Kathy enter. Shane carries a clipboard, and Kathy a light meter. It is clear from their manner that they consider themselves to be very important. Kenneth rises to greet them.)

KENNETH

Hello.

SHANE

Hi there.

(He looks around the office.)

Dunweigh Chamber of Commerce.

(As this is a statement, not a question, Kenneth is not sure how to respond.)

KENNETH

Umm . . . yes.

SHANE

Not bad.

KENNETH

No?

SHANE

Not bad at all.

KENNETH

Oh. Good.

SHANE

For the size.

KENNETH

The size.

KATHY

Population?

KENNETH

The population is . . .

(He rummages around on the desk for a brochure, then consults it.)

Small.

SHANE

Exactly.

KENNETH

Well, good. I'm glad we were able to clear that up. Have a nice day, now.

SHANE

I'm Shane Shuttlecock.

KENNETH

I'm sure you are.

SHANE

From COCN.

KENNETH

From where?

KATHY

COCN. Cable television's one and only Chamber of Commerce Network.

(She sighs.)

Chambers of Commerce are *so* fascinating. Some of them have *marvelous* lighting.

KENNETH

(Looking around for a camera.)

I'm on TV?

SHANE

Not yet.

KATHY

Week from Saturday.

SHANE

The Parade.

KATHY

We're filming it.

SHANE

We're making a documentary.

KATHY

I'm Kathy.

KENNETH

"Kathy" with a C or with a K?

KATHY

(Flirtatiously)

Oh, I like a little bit of both.

(Katz enters. Shane and Kathy look at her as if not impressed.)

KENNETH

Ah! You're just in time. These are the people from COCN.

KATZ

From where?

KENNETH

(He smiles condescendingly.)

You know, the Chamber of Commerce Network.

(Now he smiles at Shane and Kathy.)

*Great* programs on that channel.

KATHY

We're here to film the Dunweigh June Parade for our documentary.

KATZ

I'm afraid you can't do that without our approval.

SHANE

We have permission, naturally.

KATHY

Of course.

KATZ

(Huffily)

Permission? Permission from whom, may I ask?

SHANE

From the mayor.

KATZ

(She instantly deflates.)

Oh.

KATHY

We've had the signed permission form on file for months.

(Enthusiastically)

It's signed in two places, not counting initials!



KATZ

It's funny -- I don't remember signing that.

SHANE

Are you the mayor?

KATZ

Yes.

SHANE

It's funny you don't remember signing that.

KATZ

Then again, I sign a lot of things. I fear the demands of my noble office do sometimes obstruct my commitment to giving each document my full attention.

SHANE

Hey, that's okay, Mayor. I space out at my desk sometimes, too.

(Mayor Katz does not appreciate the comparison.)

SHANE

The important thing is, we've got the necessary paperwork on file, so we can begin our preparations for filming your Parade --

KATHY

(Interjecting)

In exhaustive detail --

SHANE

-- for America to relish on our Chamber of Commerce Nightly Roundup program.

KATZ

(She approaches the COCN team.)

Is this going to be . . . *disruptive*?

SHANE

(He smiles reassuringly.)

Don't you worry, Mayor. We're experts. We know how to handle things so that we don't disturb a leaf on your trees or a dandelion on your lawn.

KATHY

Or a jimmy on your ice cream.

(To Kenneth)

I like ice cream.

KATZ

Well, this is a relief. If there's one thing I want to avoid, it's disrupting normal life during the Parade. I want people to be able to dress in wild outfits and march along

in absurd formations and crowd the sidewalks and make an incredible, pointless racket -- just like on any ordinary day of the year. No inconveniences.

SHANE

No inconveniences.

KATHY

No inconveniences.

SHANE

(Consulting his notes)

Now then . . . How soon do you think you can begin excavating that fountain you have in the Town Square? We need that moved one block south.

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 2

(The next day. The office is empty of occupants -- but not empty of clutter. Pam enters quietly. She looks around.)

PAM

Hello? Anyone home? It's Pam from Dunweigh Digital. We left a disk here last week.

(When no response comes, she continues speaking, to herself.)

Just as well. I can probably find what I'm looking for faster without a bunch of amateurs trying to help me. I *hate* dealing with amateurs. They're so . . . *unprofessional*.

(She moves to the desk and sees what a mess it is.)

Oh . . . my.

(She does not know where to begin. After pausing a moment in horror, she begins sorting randomly through the mess. She soon sits down in the desk chair to get better access.)

This is impossible. If I'm going to find that disk, I'm going to need some clues.

(She dials the phone.)

Hi, Lydia? It's me. You didn't tell me this place was the office equivalent of a sloppy joe. How am I supposed to find the desk, let alone find the disk? Wait a second . . . I think I may have struck it lucky. Yes! A pile of diskettes. Hold on . . . . Yes, this must be the one. See you soon.

(As Pam hangs up the phone, Trill enters and approaches the desk. He is carrying a sheaf of papers.)

TRILL

Excuse me?

PAM

Uh, yes?

(He hands her a business card.)

PAM

(Reading)

"Humphrey Trill, ASA." What does "ASA" stand for?

TRILL

You know, I can never remember.

(He pauses a moment in thought.)

Oh! That's right. "American Society of Abbreviators". Is this where where one comes to get one's paperwork signed for the Parade?

PAM

Well, probably, but I --

TRILL

Oh, good. I've got it all filled out. We're just the 11 vehicles this year . . . .

PAM

"We"?

TRILL

DTO!

(Trill smiles enthusiastically, but Pam just gives him a blank look.)

TRILL

The Disco Tuba Orchestra, of course. As I was saying, it's just 11 vehicles this year -- 20 tubas on 10 flatbeds, with the conductor and the disco ball on a separate float, naturally.

PAM

(She is not interested, and is eager to get rid of him.)

Fine, fine. We'll put you in the usual slot.

(Trill exits, satisfied.)

PAM

(To the audience)

Why did I say that?

(Plunkett enters.)

PLUNKETT

Good afternoon.

PAM

Good afternoon. You're probably looking for the --

PLUNKETT

I'm from the Plaids.

PAM

You're from where?

PLUNKETT

The Dunweigh Plaids -- Dunweigh's only all-ages, kilt-wearing, bagpipe-playing club.

PAM

Ah. How nice for you.

PLUNKETT

I'm here to see you about the Parade.

PAM

No, actually it's not me you need to see at all, it's --

PLUNKETT

(Impatiently)

Oh, nonsense. I'm not that fussy. You'll do just fine.

PAM

But I --

PLUNKETT

(Condescendingly)

You must have more self-confidence, my dear.

PAM

I'll make a note of that.

PLUNKETT

But getting back to the Dunweigh Plaids . . . .

PAM

Must we?

PLUNKETT

Our bagpipers weren't quite satisfied with their placement in last year's parade. Especially the Petite Plaids -- the 5-to-7-year-old pipers. The Parade means so much to them, you know.

PAM

Are you politely implying that the Plaids weren't pleased with their placement?

PLUNKETT

Plainly.

PAM

Well, I'm sorry to hear that, but --

PLUNKETT

Excellent! I knew you'd be able to do something about this.

PAM

Do . . . ?

PLUNKETT

Nonsense, you've done more than enough already. I can't wait to tell the other Plaids that you've guaranteed us spot #2 in the Parade! Right behind the Mayor --

instead of that silly Disco Tuba Orchestra (hmpf). I can't thank you enough! Have a good day.

(He exits. A moment later, Kathy enters. Seeing Pam at the desk, she naturally assumes, as has everyone else, that Pam works for the Chamber of Commerce. Pam rises and begins to move away from the desk.)

KATHY

No, please, don't get up. I just need to make some notes.

PAM

(Who assumes, in turn, that Kathy works for the Chamber of Commerce)

Well, wouldn't you like to use the desk?

KATHY

No thanks, I've got my light meter.

(She holds up her light meter for Pam to see. She then looks from the meter to Pam, and back again.)

Say, you should get more sun.

PAM

Ah. Good idea. See you later.

(She exits, carrying her diskette.)

(Kathy walks around the office, taking light readings. She has, quite unintentionally, ended up behind the desk at the moment when another citizen enters. This one is dressed as a lifesized Raggedy Ann doll.)

RAGGEDY ANN

(She speaks in a surprisingly guttural voice.)

Hiya, sweets! The Raggiedies Club wants to go first in the Parade this year.

KATHY

Fine with me.

RAGGEDY ANN

(She walks to the door, opens it, and hollers out to her offstage companions.)

We got it!

(She winks broadly at Kathy and gives her a "thumb's-up". She then exits, squeezing by Shane, who is on his way in and gives her a curious look.)

SHANE

Oh, here you are. Hey listen, Kathy – I'm really sorry about last night.

KATHY

Oh, don't apologize. It was my fault for not closing the door all the way.

SHANE

(Hastily)

No, I wasn't talking about that. I meant *earlier* last night. Taking us to that idiotic meeting. What were they called – the Plaid Dumdums?

KATHY

It's the "Dunweigh Plaids".

(She puts her hand on his arm, sympathetically.)

I hope you don't mind my correcting you, Shane. I know I wouldn't mind it if *you* corrected *me*, if I were wrong.

(She sighs.)

Unfortunately, my problem is that I'm always right. Annoying, isn't it?

SHANE

"Dunweigh Plaids", eh? I really thought it would be a good idea to get some footage of their meeting, as part of the build-up to the Parade. Only --

KATHY

Only you didn't realize they were going to be a bunch of boring loudmouths who all wanted to be the center of attention?

SHANE

Something like that.

KATHY

I thought that Plunkett guy was kind of cute. But the rest of them . . . yecch.

SHANE

To put it mildly. The bagpipe-belching contest was pretty embarrassing.

KATHY

Not for them, unfortunately. Are you ready for lunch?

SHANE

You bet. I'm so hungry I could eat a disco tuba.

KATHY

Not on my nickel.

(They exit. After a beat, Lydia enters.)

LYDIA

Hello? Kenny?

(To the audience.)

Pam brought back the wrong disk, of course. That's the trouble with diskettes -- they all look like . . . diskettes.

(Mitchell enters, and sees Lydia from behind.)

MITCHELL

Lydia?

LYDIA

(She turns to face him.)

Oh. Hello, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

You know, I'd really love it if you wouldn't be so formal. After all, you call my brother "Kenny".

LYDIA

You want me to call *you* "Kenny", too?

MITCHELL

No, of course not. Not "Kenny", but, you know, the equivalent.

LYDIA

(Doubtfully)

You want me to call you "Mitchell-y"?

MITCHELL

Hmm . . . I see what you mean. Doesn't have the same ring to it as "Kenny" does. Well, I suppose you'll just have to compromise and call me "Hot Stud Superman".

LYDIA

(Very doubtfully)

Uh . . . I don't think so.

(She moves toward the door.)

MITCHELL

(Hastily)

Or just "Mitchell" would be fine.

(She stops.)

MITCHELL

Anyway, before you go . . . .

LYDIA

Yes?

MITCHELL

Why are you here?



LYDIA

Oh.

(She thinks.)

Oh! I almost forgot.

MITCHELL

Forgot what?

LYDIA

Why I was here.

MITCHELL

You were?

LYDIA

Where?

MITCHELL

Here.

LYDIA

When?

MITCHELL

(He shrugs.)

Now.

LYDIA

Oh.

(She pauses.)

Yes . . . I was here because I forgot something.

MITCHELL

Forgot what?

LYDIA

I forget. Oh! Now I remember. I forgot . . . .

MITCHELL

You remember what you forgot?

LYDIA

Yes. A diskette.

MITCHELL

Ha! I knew it!

LYDIA

Excuse me?

MITCHELL

I knew your *subcutaneous mind* would lead you back to me. I just didn't know how. It's *amazing*, the workings of the subcutaneous mind, isn't it?  
Oh – I'm sorry. Can I get you a coffee or anything?

LYDIA

Whoa – let's back up a second.

(Mitchell starts to walk backwards again, but Lydia quickly stops this silliness by grabbing his arm.)

MITCHELL

(Ecstatically, to the audience)

She grabbed my arm!

(Lydia lets his arm drop abruptly, as if it were an item of refuse.)

LYDIA

What was that part about my "subcutaneous mind"?

MITCHELL

You know – your "deep down" innermost self.

LYDIA

Do you possibly mean my *subconscious*?

MITCHELL

Yeah, that's the puppy.

LYDIA

Uh-huh. And you think my subconscious – how did you put it? – *led me back to you*? Why would it do an idiotic thing like that?

MITCHELL

"Why?" Why do the birds sing? Why do the flowers bloom? Why do dolphins breathe underwater?

LYDIA

They don't.

MITCHELL

(Ignoring her)

And why do we love? Who are we to fathom these great imponderables? No, Lydia, I'm sorry, but I am just a man –

LYDIA

An obnoxious, tiresome, clueless man . . . .

MITCHELL

(Still not hearing her)

. . . and so I cannot, Lydia, explain why it is that you love me . . .

LYDIA

Why I *what?!*

MITCHELL

Why you are drawn to me so irresistably, so unconsciously . . .

LYDIA

I'd *have* to be unconscious to be drawn to you. "Dragged" would be more like it.

MITCHELL

Don't you realize that these insults are just a futile attempt to resist the compulsions of your own heart? Can't you see that you're completely enchanted with me, and that this is why you "*forgot*"

(He pantomimes the quotation marks, in a patronizing manner.)

to take your diskette with you when you left.

LYDIA

And I suppose I also "*forgot*"

(She mimics his pantomime)

how irritating, unappealing, and generally revolting you are?

MITCHELL

(To the audience)

She *does* love me!

LYDIA

(She hesitates a moment, as if in thought.)

Would you happen to have a glass of water?

MITCHELL

(Sweetly)

Of course, baby.

(He exits in the direction of the kitchenette, and quickly returns with the water. He begins to hand it to her, with an air of great chivalry.)

LYDIA

(She does not take the water.)

No – it's not for me. It's for you.

MITCHELL

For me?

LYDIA

Yes. To soak your *tiny little head!*

MITCHELL

(He is finally giving up, for now. He sets the water on the desk, dejectedly.)

Oh.

LYDIA

Now then . . . . Let's forget about my diskette. I'm sure it will turn up. But as long as I'm here, I do have a favor to ask.

MITCHELL

(Angrily)

Oh, I get it. You ignore me, you insult me, you tell me to soak my head . . .

LYDIA

Your *tiny* head.

MITCHELL

Then you tell me you *need* something. You want me to do you a *favor*. I'm . . . I'm outraged.

(He pauses a moment, then continues cheerfully.)

Okay, I'm over it. What did you want?

LYDIA

It's just a business thing.

MITCHELL

Well, that's all right. I *like* business things. Some of my favorite things are business things.

LYDIA

It's Pam's request, actually. She's been thinking about that promotional mousepad idea, and she's come up with something she likes better. She wants to run a race.

MITCHELL

(Agreeably)

Fine with me. I can clear some floor space for her right now.

LYDIA

No, I don't mean that she wants, personally, to run. She wants to *sponsor* a 5K race here in town.

MITCHELL

I see. And where does the Chamber of Commerce come in?

LYDIA

Probably in last place, if your running skills are anything like your interpersonal

skills.

MITCHELL

No, I mean what's our role in making the race happen?

LYDIA

Oh. Well, you guys would just do all the planning, publicity, organizing and troubleshooting, and be completely responsible for making sure everything goes smoothly.

MITCHELL

(Innocently)

Oh, is that all? Fine.

LYDIA

(A little surprised)

You mean you'll do it?

MITCHELL

Yeah, no problem.

LYDIA

Don't you have to talk to Kenny about it, or anything?

MITCHELL

(A little indignant)

Look, do you think I can't tie my buttons or snap my laces without help from Kenny? I said we'd do it, and we'll do it.

LYDIA

That's great, Mitchell! Pam will be delighted.

(She again moves toward the door, then stops.)

Oh -- when should I tell her?

MITCHELL

(He shrugs.)

Tell her right away, if you want to.

LYDIA

No, I mean when will the race be?

MITCHELL

Hmm . . . let's see. Where's the calendar?

(He rummages around for the calendar, and comes up with the muffin tin again.)

Forget it. I don't need a calendar. This operation runs on *intuition*. The race will be . . .

(He covers his eyes with one hand, and raises the forefinger of his other hand decisively.)

Next Saturday.

LYDIA

Sounds perfect. I'll go tell Pam. See ya.

(She exits.)

MITCHELL

Uh-oh. I think I may have just screwed things up.

(He looks again for the calendar, finds it, and consults it.)

Yes, I did. I just screwed things up. I . . . just . . . screwed . . . things . . . up.

(Singing, to the tune of "Strangers in the Night", he paces the room restlessly.)

I just screwed things up, da dee dee dee dum . . .

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 3

(The following day. Mitchell is seated in the office, reading a magazine. Plunkett enters, in a kilt -- and in a huff.)

PLUNKETT

You've got to do something!

MITCHELL

I *am* doing something. I'm reading a magazine.

PLUNKETT

You've got to do something about that . . . that *cinematic menace!*

MITCHELL

"Cinematic menace"? I didn't even know we had one. Is it near Dipsy's Doughnut Shop?

PLUNKETT

I refer, of course, to those so-called television people, working on their supposed documentary about our alleged parade.

MITCHELL

As long as you're sure.

PLUNKETT

They actually had the nerve to ask us, the Dunweigh Plaids, to change the pattern on our kilts! They said the colors in our tartan would make for "poor television".

MITCHELL

Well, they would know.

PLUNKETT

My dear boy, the Dunweigh Plaid Tartan is an old and revered tradition. Why, we've worn these kilts ever since I accidentally mail-ordered a gross of them over the Internet, back in '99! These documentary people have no right to alter a time-honored custom. Shane Shuttlecock actually wants us to substitute a pattern *he* picked out. He even had a swatch to show us.

MITCHELL

(Trying to soothe him)

Look, Mr. Plunkett, we at the Chamber of Commerce are truly sorry that Shane tried to yank your kilt.

PLUNKETT

And what are you going to do about it?

MITCHELL

You tell him I said to lay off.

PLUNKETT

(He laughs incredulously.)

Ha! Fat lot of good that will do.

MITCHELL

Okay, then tell him . . . tell him his swatch violates a town ordinance For all I know, it really might.

(Kathy enters.)

KATHY

(To Mitchell)

Hi, I'm Kathy.

MITCHELL

"Kathy" with a C or "Kathy" with a K?

KATHY

(Giving him a disdainful look)

Do you have *any* idea how many times I've heard that line?

PLUNKETT

I'm glad you're here, Kathy. I've got a bone to pick with you TV people. About these kilts . . . .

KATHY

(Charmingly)

Oh, I *am* sorry about that. Shane can be such a baby about his swatches. I think your own kilts are very nice.

(She feels the fabric at the hem of his kilt. Plunkett seems gratified at this.)

KATHY

(Now downright flirtatious)

I am just a teeny bit concerned about the harmonic luminosity overtones, though. I'll need to examine the kilt without all this sunshine streaming in.

(She points towards Kenneth's bedroom.)

Let's take a look at it in there.

(She takes Plunkett by the arm and leads him toward the bedroom.)

We may have to hold it right up to the overhead light.

(Plunkett looks stunned but happy as Kathy leads him into the bedroom to examine his kilt. Mitchell shrugs and closes the door behind them.)



MITCHELL

I never knew Chamber of Commerce business could be so . . . stimulating.

(Pam enters. Mitchell looks her over approvingly.)

PAM

I'm Pam from Dunweigh Digital. Are you Kenny or Mitchell?

MITCHELL

Mitchelly. I mean . . . Mitchell.

PAM

(To the audience)

He's the one Lydia warned me about. Luckily, I have my own fool-proof system for dealing with fools like him. Well, I might as well get it over with.

(To Mitchell, with a friendly smile)

Hello, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Pleased to date you. I mean -- pleased to *meet* you.

PAM

I'm here to discuss the 5K race we're sponsoring.

MITCHELL

Of course. But first . . . what are you doing tonight?

PAM

(Matter-of-factly)

Tonight? I'm going out with you.

MITCHELL

(A little surprised)

You are?

(He taps himself on the chest.)

*Me* me?

(Pam nods.)

MITCHELL

Wow! That's great! Uh . . . where would you like to go?

PAM

(Cheerfully)

Oh, wherever you like best. I do just have one little request, though.

MITCHELL

Sure. Yeah. Anything.

PAM

I really don't like doing things by half-measures.

MITCHELL

What do you mean, "half-measures"?

PAM

I mean, when I go on a date.

(She walks in close to him, provocatively)

I want it to be a *complete* date, if you know what I mean.

MITCHELL

(Deliriously)

Of . . . course.

PAM

To me, dinner and drinks and dancing . . . is just half a date.

(She looks him up and down.)

At the most.

MITCHELL

(Gulping)

No problem . . . I'll . . . try to . . . keep that in mind.

PAM

In fact, I consider it an unfinished job to plan just one date at a time. I think it's so shortsighted.

MITCHELL

(Now a little confused)

Shortsighted?

PAM

Exactly! I'm so glad you agree. So what do you say . . . shall we plan by the month? I'm thinking dates every night for the first month, then . . . .

MITCHELL

Well, sure, but don't you --

PAM

Of course, once we have our own place set up, then we won't have to go out all the time. I think the best dates happen at home, once you get to that stage . . . .

MITCHELL

That . . . stage?

PAM

And then -- Oh! I almost forgot. You're an architect, aren't you? Why, that's perfect! What kind of house do you envision for us? Now, don't worry, I want you

to just go ahead and design it however you like . . . I wouldn't dream of getting my clumsy amateurish hands

(She runs them over his chest)

All over your exquisite professional blueprints.

(Mitchell gently, but firmly, pulls away from her.)

MITCHELL

I am *so* silly! Did I say tonight? For a date? Oh, I am so sorry, Pam. I was completely forgetting that Kenneth and I need to meet about the Parade, and then . . . uh, I have to finish architecture school, and find a position with the right kind of firm, and -- well -- you know how it goes. Can I call you in about 3 years, maybe?

(Pam discreetly makes a "mission accomplished" gesture to the audience by touching together the thumb and forefinger of her downstage hand.)

PAM

Hey, as long as I'm here . . . can we talk a little business?

MITCHELL

(Relieved)

Please!

PAM

I just want to make sure that we're clear on the details for the 5K.

MITCHELL

Oh -- I'm glad you brought that up. You see, about that date . . . .

PAM

I thought our date was off.

MITCHELL

No, I mean the date of the race. It turns out that . . .

PAM

It's perfect, I know. I couldn't have picked a better date myself. I'm so excited about this, I've already spent about \$500 on advance publicity. I've plastered that date all over the fitness community in 5 counties.

MITCHELL

Heh-heh. That's . . . uh . . . great.

PAM

So, naturally, with so much invested in this, I want to make sure things go smoothly at your end. Streets clear, route well-marked, crowds under control . . . . Well, I don't have to tell you what's required, I'm sure.

MITCHELL

No, I wish you wouldn't.

PAM

Anyway, I'd better be going. You can give me a progress report tomorrow.

(She exits.)

MITCHELL

(He looks around the room.)

I wonder how long it would take me to disguise myself as an ornamental cabbage.

(Blackout)

## SCENE 4

(Later that day. Kenneth and Mitchell are in the office. Kenneth is looking for something on the desk.)

KENNETH

What did you do with the Parade diskette?

MITCHELL

Do with it? *Me?* Do I look like I'd do anything with a diskette?

KENNETH

Sure -- you look like you might lose it, break it, erase it, drop it into a container of yogurt . . . . Did you?

MITCHELL

What flavor yogurt?

KENNETH

Mitchell!

MITCHELL

Seriously, I haven't dropped any diskettes in yogurt in at least a month. I certainly haven't done it since we got here.

KENNETH

I wonder what could have happened to it.

MITCHELL

Maybe someone took it.

KENNETH

Who would want to do that?

MITCHELL

I don't know. Maybe your friend Lydia.

KENNETH

Are you out of your tree? Why would *Lydia* take one of our diskettes?

MITCHELL

(He shrugs.)

It just seems like the kind of thing she'd do.

KENNETH

Oh, so now you're an expert on Lydia, huh? Besides, I thought you *liked* her. Had the hots for her, even.

MITCHELL

Yes, that's correct. I do like her, and I officially have the hots for her. It just so happens that I'm attracted to women who take diskettes. You have a problem with that?

KENNETH

What I have a problem with is not being able to reference all our carefully-assembled documentation regarding the Parade. This could get us in trouble, you know.

MITCHELL

Relax. You worry too much. Remember, I'm good in a crisis.

KENNETH

I just don't understand the way things suddenly disappear in this place. Which reminds me -- did you take my copy of the *Dunweigh Gazette*?

MITCHELL

No.

KENNETH

That's funny -- I can't find it anywhere. You sure you didn't take it, just for the crossword puzzle?

MITCHELL

(Becoming irritated)

Kenneth, I did not take your *Dunweigh Gazette*.

KENNETH

I know your habits. You probably cut the crossword puzzle right out of my copy of the *Gazette*.

MITCHELL

Look. The *Dunweigh Gazette* doesn't even *have* a crossword puzzle.

KENNETH

Well sure, not *now* it doesn't. Okay. I suppose we're just going to have to wing it regarding the Parade. Do you think you can manage that? Do you have at least a basic grasp of what's required of us?

MITCHELL

Naturally. How stupid do you think I am?

KENNETH

Hmm . . . that's a very good question. How stupid do I think you are? Let's see . . . what measurement are you looking for? I mean, do you want it in Standard Thermal Stupidity Units, or do you prefer I use the Metric Cluelessness Conversion Ratio?

MITCHELL

Kenneth . . . .

KENNETH

How about a graph? Or maybe a pie chart . . . .

MITCHELL

Would you calm down? It's just a silly little small-town parade.

KENNETH

I know. But it's a *complicated* silly little small-town parade. By my estimate, we've made promises to about 25 local organizations -- the details of which are recorded on that missing diskette. What order the floats go in, where each concession stall sets up, what time the various musical groups start playing, who needs to be under a tent . . . . At this point, who knows what unrealistic promises we might have made, in our enthusiasm.

MITCHELL

Okay, then look at the bright side. Even if we had the disk, we probably couldn't live up to those promises anyway. So it really doesn't matter that it's lost, does it?

KENNETH

You're not reassuring me.

MITCHELL

Well, what do you expect me to do?

KENNETH

Something other than what you're doing. For pete's sake, I thought you said you were good in a crisis.

MITCHELL

I didn't mean *this* crisis.

KENNETH

Maybe if you hadn't turned Dad's tidy, organized office into a junk pile within 24 hours of our arrival . . . . I mean, why on earth did you have to open every single book on the bookcase and spread them out all over the floor?

MITCHELL

I was trying to be efficient.

KENNETH

And look at that desk! Covered in crapola. It's unbelievable.

MITCHELL

(Fed up with his brother's criticism, he now mocks him, swaying sensuously behind the desk with handfuls of debris and singing, to the tune of "Volare" . . .)

Crapola, whoa-hoa  
Crapola, oh-oh-oh-oh . . . .

(Katz walks in on this display, carrying a business envelope,  
and quickly stops in her tracks. Mitchell freezes.)

KATZ

I'm sorry, boys. I'll come back when you're not busy.

KENNETH

No, Mayor. Please come in.

KATZ

Thanks, Kenny.

(She suddenly sobs.)

KENNETH

Mayor, what's wrong?!

KATZ

(She sighs and sits down.)

I've just had some shocking news. The State Legislature has decided to abolish  
Dunweigh.

KENNETH

*What?*

MITCHELL

But they can't! I'm having all my mail forwarded here.

KATZ

As of September 1, we're going to be absorbed into the neighboring town of  
Parkingdale.

KENNETH

Parkingdale! That place is like one big shopping mall.

KATZ

This decision won't really have much effect on life here in what used to be  
Dunweigh. Your dad will even continue to operate this office, as a district  
Chamber of Commerce. The only big change, really, will be that we . . . they . . .  
won't need . . .

(She breaks down.)

. . . a mayor . . . .

(Kenneth tries to comfort her with a box of tissues. But it is  
a brand-new box, and he has trouble opening it.)



MITCHELL

Don't cry, Mayor. Maybe they'll let you keep the title -- at least on your license plate.

KATZ

(Regaining her composure)

It is now more important than ever that everything go smoothly at the Parade next Saturday. I want to be remembered for showing this town a good Parade. I'm counting on you, boys.

(Mitchell and Kenneth look at each other, then back at Katz.)

KENNETH AND MITCHELL

(Together)

Right!

(Blackout.)

## SCENE 5

(It is mid-day on Parade day. Mitchell is alone in the office, just finishing a phone call. As he hangs up, Kenneth enters.)

KENNETH

Well, it's official. The Parade is a first-class fiasco. I wouldn't be surprised if you and I made the cover of *Fiasco Magazine* this month. Seven different organizations claiming the privilege of going first, and practically leap-frogging over each other in the street to jockey for position. Bagpipes and tubas sandwiched together in perfect disharmony. A foot-race running in circles and knocking over giant Raggedy Anns. On top of all this, we have one very disgruntled, mayoral doughnut. And these are just the highlights. I'm sure we'll be hearing more details as the day progresses. Who was that on the phone?

MITCHELL

Uh . . . that was Dad.

KENNETH

You just spoke to Dad?! Tell me about it.

MITCHELL

(Nervously)

Oh, you want me to tell you about it?

KENNETH

Of course!

MITCHELL

About my conversation with Dad, eh?

KENNETH

Yes, your talk with Dad just now.

MITCHELL

Just now, huh?

KENNETH

Yes!

MITCHELL

On the phone, you mean, eh?

KENNETH

*Mitchell!*

MITCHELL

Well, I'll tell you . . . Umm . . . We had a really good connection.

KENNETH

Okay.

MITCHELL

Yes, indeed, the connection was what I'd call a really good one. So that was that, and . . . .

KENNETH

And what?

MITCHELL

And – let's see – oh, and then I said hi to Mom, and she sent her love, and – *oh!* I almost forgot . . . .

KENNETH

Yes??

MITCHELL

There's a postcard on its way to us. Could show up any day.

KENNETH

You don't say. And – if it's not prying – what did Dad say when you told him how upset Mayor Katz was about the Parade?

MITCHELL

(He laughs nervously.)

It's funny . . . what with everything else – the postcard, the exceptionally good connection and all that – I don't recall if I actually got around to mentioning the Parade.

(Mayor Katz enters, wearing a doughnut costume. It does not flatter her. Mitchell begins giggling uncontrollably.)

KENNETH

Mitchell! Shh! Uh . . . hello, Mayor Katz.

(Now he begins giggling, too.)

KATZ

Oh, yes, very funny . . . the mayor is a doughnut. Very amusing, indeed.

MITCHELL

Now, come on, you have to admit that --

(Mitchell breaks off as Katz turns to glare at him.)

MITCHELL

Well, maybe not.

KENNETH

Look, I'm sorry Mayor Doughnut --

KATZ

*Katz!*

KENNETH

I'm sorry, Mayor Katz. But please try to remember, it was a promotional idea, to help one of our town's local businesses. I mean, we all love doughnuts, and . . . uh, except you, that is, I know you don't love doughnuts, but I mean, well, we just . . . . Mitchell, say something!

MITCHELL

(Tentatively)

"We make doughnuts"?

KENNETH

(He sinks his face into his hands.)

Nice try.

MITCHELL

Well, really, why such a fuss? I think she looks good! Good enough to ea--

KATZ

Watch it, buster.

KENNETH

Now, look, Mayor Katz. I know today was a little embarrassing . . . .

KATZ

A little? Let's review my day, shall we? I leave the house at the usual time, dressed as my least favorite food. My husband's comments I will leave to your collective imagination. I arrive promptly at the Town Square -- still, let us remember, wearing this outfit. I am immediately accosted by the ladies and gentlemen of the press, who unfortunately all have well-equipped camerapeople in tow, and who are augmented by our friendly cable TV documentary team, who ask me to reverse the Parade's direction so that the sun won't be behind us, and who insist on addressing me as "Katzy" -- which, I have to admit, is one of the *nicer* things I was called today. Next, I am approached by my asinine brother, who informs me that *you*

(She points an accusing finger at Kenneth)

have granted him and his stupid cabbage the privilege of leading the Parade -- over my repeated and well-articulated objections.

KENNETH

Wait a second -- I *never* told him he could lead the Parade. I never told *anyone* they could lead the Parade.

(He turns to Mitchell.)

What's been going on around here?

MITCHELL

Don't look at me! I may be negligent, unreliable, superficial and exasperating . . . but I'm *not* irresponsible.

KENNETH

(To Katz)

Is it possible that Mr. Lozenge just *assumed* we would let him lead the Parade after he was -- ahem -- kind enough to decorate our office with cabbages?

KATZ

Possible? No. *Probable* -- yes. But back to my story. Marleybone soon disappears behind his cabbage, but not before poking me in the belly and saying -- and I quote -- "You're a cutesy-wutesy pastry." I imagine he expected me to giggle like the Pillsbury Dough Boy -- but I needn't tell you there was nothing doing in that department. Next, I am escorted into position by four unicyclists.

(To Mitchell)

Why unicyclists? What happened to the aldermen who normally accompany me?

MITCHELL

(Shrugging)

I don't know. I've always liked unicyclists. I could never quite warm up to aldermen.

KATZ

But did you have to put them in orangutan suits? Do you have any idea what it's like to be escorted in a parade by four unicyclists in orangutan costumes?

MITCHELL

I'm sorry, Mayor. That's my bad. I phoned in the costume order a little late, and they'd run out of zebra outfits.

KATZ

(Continuing her story)

At this point, naturally, I begin muttering obscenities. But fortunately no one can hear me, because right behind me are (a) the Disco Tuba Orchestra and (b) the Dunweigh Plaids, whom I had specifically asked your father to omit from the Parade entirely, owing to their decidedly indecorous behavior at previous parades. A tradition they surpassed this year, when the Petite Plaids decided to run amok up and down the side streets with gummi candy. Then, as I turn the corner, I believe I am -- what's the term? -- "*moon*ed" by one of the Raggedy Anns -- though I couldn't swear to it. Gentlemen, it was not a good day.

KENNETH

Well, look at it this way, Mayor. It's scarcely noon. The day could still turn around for you!

(Katz gives him a lingering, dirty look.)

KENNETH

Well, maybe not.

(Trill enters.)

TRILL

All right, who's in charge here?

(He notices Katz.)

Ah -- Mayor Katz. Er . . . you are Mayor Katz, aren't you?

KATZ

Of course I am, Humphrey.

TRILL

You don't usually dress like a doughnut, do you, Mayor Katz?

KATZ

No, Humphrey, I do not usually dress like a doughnut.

TRILL

(He smiles.)

Good. Anyway -- well, I guess you might as well hear this, too, Mayor, as long as you're here. I have a complaint.

KATZ

You do, do you?

TRILL

Yes. A complaint regarding today's parade.

KATZ

(Sarcastically)

Today's parade? A complaint? Incredible! It was such a lovely event, for all concerned.

TRILL

(Missing the sarcasm)

Maybe if you were dressed as a doughnut it was lovely. For those of us playing disco tuba, it was awful.

MITCHELL

Maybe next time you should wear ear plugs.

TRILL

(He addresses Kenneth, indicating Mitchell)

Who is this bozo, anyway? What's he got to do with the Chamber of Commerce?

KENNETH

This bozo is Phil's son.

TRILL

(He laughs cynically.)

Oh, I get it -- necrophilia.

KATZ

I think you mean "nepotism".

TRILL

Well, whatever it is . . . I don't think I want to deal with some jackass just because he's the son of a Chamber of Commerce official. I want service, not relatives.

(He again addresses Kenneth)

Can I talk to *you* instead?

KENNETH

You bet.

TRILL

And you are . . . ?

KENNETH

Phil's other son.

TRILL

Say, where's the young lady who works here?

MITCHELL

There's a young lady who works here? Kenneth, if you've been holding out on me, I'll never speak to you again.

KENNETH

There's no young lady who works here.

TRILL

Well, I mean -- she looked young to *me*. But then I'm no spring chicken.

KENNETH

There are no women of any age working here.

TRILL

I'm not actually a chicken at all, in fact. It's just an expression, you understand. I didn't intend to give you gentlemen the impression that I was literally a chicken.

MITCHELL

(To Kenneth, still holding out hope)

Are you sure there isn't a young woman working here?

KENNETH

Of course I'm sure.

MITCHELL

(He shrugs)

Easy come, easy go.

TRILL

There must be some mistake. You must be forgetting someone.

KENNETH

Honestly, Mr. Trill, while Dad's away it's just the two of us.

TRILL

She was pretty as a picture, too. Hey! Maybe all this time you thought she was a picture! Maybe you just didn't realize that she was *real*.

(Condescendingly, he addresses Kenneth as if he were a small child.)

Do you have a *very, very* pretty picture somewhere around here that you could show me?

MITCHELL

(Helpfully)

I have a topographical map of Rhode Island on my bedroom wall.

KENNETH

Look, Mr. Trill. I think I know what might have happened. This "employee" -- was she near the computer when you came in?

TRILL

Yes, I think she was.

KENNETH

And did she seem a little disoriented, like maybe she wasn't sure how to field your questions?

TRILL

Well, now that you mention it. But I just thought she was dazzled by my animal magnetism.

KENNETH

(He clears his throat tactfully.)

Well, she may have been, sir . . . but I also think I need to advise you that the woman you spoke to does not actually work in this office at all.

TRILL

She doesn't work in this office? But then what was she doing here?

KENNETH

Working.

(Trill looks at him, baffled.)



KENNETH

Working on our *computer*. She's from Dunweigh Digital.

(Pam and Lydia enter.)

TRILL

*There* she is.

(Seeing Pam, Mitchell hides behind Kenneth, who gives him a puzzled look.)

PAM

I have a complaint.

MITCHELL

Get in line!

PAM

I *am* in line.

MITCHELL

Oh.

KENNETH

What's your complaint, Pam?

PAM

Do you really want to hear it?

KENNETH

I'm hearing everyone else's complaints. I may as well have a complete set.

PAM

Well, it's just that when I run a race, I don't expect to be obstructed by floats, and bagpipes, and unicycles, and

(She glares at Katz)

giant overstuffed doughnuts!

KATZ

What do you mean "overstuffed"? I'll have you know that this doughnut costume has precisely the correct amount of stuffing -- no more, no less. My staff made sure of that before I donned it.

KENNETH

Just a second here. Whose idiotic idea was it to have the 5K and the Parade on the same day, in the same place?

MITCHELL

Uh . . . that would be me.

KENNETH

Okay, just checking. I'm glad something adds up around here.

(Bootsie enters, with a cardboard carry-out box of doughnuts. Shane trails behind her, filming. Bootsie deposits the doughnut box on a table.)

BOOTSIE

(To Trill)

Hey, I know you. You own that cute little boutique on the corner.

SHANE

(To Lydia, as he tries to make a note on his clipboard)

What's that she said about Little Bo Peep?

TRILL

(Proudly, to Bootsie)

Yes, Trill's Trifles. We've just been upgraded to three persimmons in the Periwinkle Knick-Knack Guide. And you're the doughnut lady, aren't you. Your shop has *such* a catchy slogan -- I'll never forget it. "We miss doughnuts." Great!

BOOTSIE

That's "*We make* doughnuts."

TRILL

Oh, I'm sorry! What did I say? "We hate doughnuts"? No, that wouldn't be right, would it. I'll try to remember it correctly now. Let's see . . . "We make sailboats." Yes?

BOOTSIE

(To Kenneth)

You're a law student, right? So tell me -- am I allowed to sue the Mayor?

MITCHELL

(Waving his brother aside)

Hold your horses!

(He addresses Bootsie)

Why do you want to sue the Mayor? I mean, wouldn't you rather build a nice vacation home? I think I might be able to help you out there, for a very reasonable fee.

BOOTSIE

I want to sue the Mayor for giving doughnuts a bad name.

KENNETH

Er -- I'm not sure that's actionable.

BOOTSIE

But she ruined the whole thing!

KENNETH

Hmm . . . there might be a precedent, at that.

(He picks up a law book that is lying on the desk, and opens it at random.)

In *Barneezles vs. Zayleskie*, the respondent was charged damages for "spoiling an entire evening". I'd have to do more research, of course, but I think you may have a case, Dipsy.

BOOTSIE

Bootsie.

KENNETH

Sustained.

KATZ

Well, I don't know if Bootsie has a case for suing me . . . .

BOOTSIE

Ooh! You've got some nerve, Mayor Katz.

(Angrily)

What bus stop is yours!

KENNETH, MITCHELL, LYDIA, AND PAM

(Confused, they all speak together.)

"What bus stop is yours"??

BOOTSIE

I'm sorry. I always get that expression wrong. Let me see, something about a bus . . . .

(She concentrates a moment, then brightens.)

Oh, I know.

(She turns to Mayor Katz and resumes her posture of indignation.)

Where do you get off!

KATZ

(To Kenneth, as she gently pushes Bootsie aside)

Like I was saying, I don't know if Doughnut Breath here has a case against me. But I *know* I have a case for firing both of you -- and possibly your father as well. I can't give Parkingdale a Chamber of Commerce run by clowns! They're not zoned for that.

KENNETH

Please, Mayor! It's not really our fault!

KATZ

Not really your fault? Not really your fault! Everything that has gone wrong today was the direct result of the carelessness, irresponsibility, poor planning and bad judgment exercised by you and your brother. If this is not your fault, then whose fault, pray tell, do you think it is?

MITCHELL

The playwright's?

KENNETH

(To Mitchell)

Shh!

(Urgently, to Katz)

But you *can't* fire us. You *wouldn't!*

KATZ

(Reflectively)

You know, I think you're right -- I wouldn't fire you, and I won't. Oh, there's no doubt that you've made an incredible mess of what used to be our little town. But, amazingly, I can see through all the chaos that it really *wasn't* your fault in the deeper sense, that you were just trying to do your best -- which happens not to be very good. Luckily, I have the clear vision of a true public servant. It's just too bad that I'm not . . . going to be . . . Mayor anymore . . . .

(She breaks off into sobs.)

MITCHELL

Mayor Katz, you're the greatest!

KATZ

Aw, shucks. I bet you say that to all the mayors in doughnut costumes who agree not to fire you.

(Higgins enters.)

HIGGINS

Excuse me. I'm Representative Higgins, from the State Leggy-weggy.

KENNETH, MITCHELL, LYDIA, AND PAM

The State *Leggy-weggy*?

HIGGINS

Ahem. Yes. It's what we legislators call the State Legislature. It's a pretty dull job, you know. We have to amuse ourselves however we can.

KATZ

(Stepping forward to greet Higgins)

How do you do, Representative. I'm Mayor Katz.

HIGGINS

(Giggling)

Oh, so *you're* the doughnut, eh? Well, Mayor, it's good that I found you here. You see, I witnessed your town's parade today . . . .

KATZ

Oh, dear. I don't know how to apologize, Representative. Such an embarrassment. Of course, with the State's plans to abolish Dunweigh altogether, I guess I can safely say that what you saw today will never happen again.

HIGGINS

Never happen again? It *better* happen again! Why, a madcap, zany festival like the Dunweigh June Parade could be one of our state's biggest tourist attractions!

KENNETH

What??

HIGGINS

That's why I stopped in -- to tell you that I'm going to recommend to my committee that Dunweigh be left intact.

(All cheer.)

HIGGINS

I further plan to recommend that we allocate you folks some state funds to augment the Parade. To get some better-looking tartans on those kilts, for instance. Yecch.

SHANE

(He steps forward importantly, to introduce himself.)

Shane Shuttlecock, Representative. From COCN.

(He shakes Higgins' hand.)

Relax, don't be nervous -- we TV people are just like everyone else, only a lot more glamorous, charismatic, and impressive. I have a treat for you, Representative. Today's parade -- as filmed by *me* -- is really going to put Dunweigh, New Hampshire on the map. I'm talking coast-to-coast viewing, with commercials and everything.

KATZ

Dunweigh . . . *New Hampshire*?

BOOTSIE

This is Dunweigh, Connecticut, hon.

SHANE

(Scoffing)

Impossible! My permissions forms are all clearly signed by the mayor of Dunweigh, New Hampshire. And so if this were not Dunweigh, New Hampshire . . . I mean, if I got on the wrong plane or something . . . then . . . that would mean . . . .

(He falters.)

Oh, crap. I *hate* it when we go to the entirely wrong state.

(He stamps his foot petulantly, then exits.)

KATZ

Well, Representative Higgins, you've brought us wonderful news. Let's celebrate, everyone! Drinks are on --

(She looks at Kenneth and Mitchell)

Drinks are on the *Chamber of Commerce*.

(All cheer, except Kenneth, Mitchell, and Lydia.)

BOOTSIE

And I'll supply the doughnuts! At Dipsy's, we've got doughnuts to suit every mood . . . and some moods you never even have.

KATZ

Hey, that's a good slogan.

(All exit in a spirit of general festivity, except Kenneth, Mitchell, and Lydia, who remain.)

KENNETH

What a relief! Disaster averted. Everybody happy. No calamitous news for Dad.

MITCHELL

So everything's really under control, eh?

KENNETH

Yeah, I think it really is.

(Mitchell walks into his bedroom, and comes out a moment later, carrying his suitcase. He walks to the front door.)

MITCHELL

Enjoy the rest of the summer, guys! I'm outta here.

KENNETH

But why?

MITCHELL

(He speaks with an excess of self-confidence.)

Now that I've skilfully navigated the Chamber of Commerce terrain here in Dunweigh, I think it's time I took my expertise somewhere it's more vitally needed. My plan is to start my *own* Chamber of Commerce, someplace else, where I can build from the ground up and allow a growing community the full benefit of my talents. Until school starts again, of course. See ya!

(He exits.)

LYDIA

Is he really gone?

KENNETH

Yes.

(He steps in close to Lydia and puts his arms around her.)

Now we can stop pretending.

LYDIA

I've been aching for you, baby.

KENNETH

(He kisses her.)

Mmm . . . me, too. Thank you for being such a good sport while Mitchell was around.

LYDIA

Oh, it was the only choice we had. You were absolutely right -- he would have driven you up the wall if he'd realized we were . . . .

KENNETH

Yes.

(He puts his hand on the knob of the door to his bedroom.)

Shall we?

(They start to move into the bedroom. They stop abruptly and back out, as Kathy and Plunkett scurry out -- in their underwear. Kathy and Plunkett jog toward the front door, giggling and only a little embarrassed. As they pass the box that Bootsie has left behind, Plunkett snags a doughnut, without breaking stride. As Kathy and Plunkett exit, Kenneth and Lydia watch them, fascinated.)

LYDIA

(Leading the way into the bedroom.)

Now then . . . .

KENNETH

Just a moment.

(They stop.)

I think this occasion calls for some special words . . . a special statement.

(He takes both her hands and looks into her eyes, then speaks with great sincerity.)

We . . . make . . . doughnuts.

(Lydia yanks him into the bedroom. A moment after they disappear from sight, Plunkett's kilt flies out of their bedroom and onto the stage, having been tossed out of the

way by Lydia.)

(Blackout.)

THE END