

What's on TV?

Drena Heizer





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WHAT'S ON TV?

By Drena Heizer

CAST

NARRATOR: Can be either man or woman

FRANCES (OR FRANK) FONDUE: Can be either man or woman

BOBBY BASSETT: Man

MARY CONTRARY: Woman

CINDY CRAWFISH: Woman

STAGE POSITIONS: Optional, because the actors don't communicate with each other. The narrator can sit down offstage after his first lines and then return for his final lines – unless it is decided to use a 'clicker' (see below), in which case he might sit or stand in view of the audience.

PROPS: A sign on the outside of each stand, labeling each program with large print: DATING, COOKING, GARDENING, PETS. Simple file folders serve the purpose well, with the fold placed over the top of the stand and the lettered side facing the audience.

PERFORMANCE NOTES: This skit depends completely on exact timing, with the actors picking up their lines quickly from the unfinished sentence of the previous actor. Then there needs to be a pause while the audience catches up with the unexpected twist and, we hope, rewards us with a few chuckles.

CLICKER: This skit can be performed with the narrator using a 'clicker' immediately after the previous actor's unfinished sentence, to indicate the 'channel change.' However, this is a tricky bit and must be done very quickly and followed immediately by the next actor picking up his opening line. If the use of a clicker slows down the pace of the skit, then it is best to perform without it.

WHAT'S ON TV?

NARRATOR: Daytime television. Pretty dismal stuff. Soap operas, talk shows, old reruns, cartoons. What I want to know is what ever happened to culture and education? Well, today I was surfing through the TV channels and I came across four different programs that sounded kind of interesting and informative – but they all came on at the same time, so I had to keep flipping back and forth among all four channels, and here is what I heard.

FRANCES: Hi there, folks. This is FIT TO BE FRIED, your favorite cooking show. I'm Frances Fondue, here to tell you how to prepare a wonderful company dinner.

BOBBY: Welcome to YOUR PET DEPARTMENT, the show that's all about our furry friends. This is Bobby Bassett, your pet vet. Today's topic is how to break your pets of bad habits.

MARY: Well, hello. You've tuned into DIRT, your gardening show, and this is Mary Contrary. We will talk first today about creating a compost heap. This is really wonderful stuff for your garden, and it's so easy to put together. I'm going to tell you how.

CINDY: We're back with you today on THE DATING SCENE. I'm Cindy Crawfish with dating tips for you guys from a woman's point of view. Now, women love flowers, so when you go to pick her up for dinner be sure to bring her a lovely bouquet of –

MARY: --rotting leaves and old grass clippings...(pause)...Keep turning these over in your compost pile so it will decompose evenly and make all this goopy, smelly –

FRANCES: --salad for your first course...(pause)...This will absolutely amaze your guests, but allow them only one small serving because there is so much more food coming UP –

BOBBY: --all over the floor...(pause)...Now, you don't want your puppy to do this, so be sure to put down a lot of newspapers for her.

CINDY: When you do these nice little things for her, a woman really appreciates your thoughtfulness, but she may not be able to express her gratitude in words, so don't be surprised if she –

BOBBY: --jumps up and puts her paws on your knees...(pause)...This is a really bad habit that a lot of them have, and sometimes it is difficult to break, but try pushing her off and hollering NO!

FRANCES: --or you can sprinkle on some grated cheese...(pause)...Well, let's move ahead. I promised to tell you how to make those cute little appetizers. First you break two eggs and put them —

CINDY: --in one ear and out the other...(pause)...Your girlfriend won't really LISTEN if you talk about football, because she isn't really interested. So try to talk about something that SHE enjoys, like maybe —

BOBBY: --making a mess on the carpet...(pause)...Now, don't punish her for this. I know some people might spank her with a fly swatter, but don't do that. A fly swatter is only good for —

FRANCES: --beating your egg whites until they form soft peaks. ...(pause)... Be careful not to overbeat them or they won't mix well. Now carefully fold the egg whites into —

MARY: --your old rubber gloves...(pause)...It's a good idea to wear these when you handle the compost because this stuff makes a rather nasty concoction —

CINDY: --for your romantic dinner...(pause)...Since you want to impress the lady with your good taste, be sure to choose a place that has soft lights and nice music. And don't forget —

BOBBY: No matter how much she begs, don't let her eat food from the table...(pause)...You must be consistent in making her eat from a bowl on the floor.

CINDY: And another thing to remember is that a woman always appreciates compliments about her appearance. For instance, admire her hair. Tell her it looks like —

MARY: --a collection of yard waste and old table scraps...(pause)...Almost anything like this can be added to the compost pile, so you see what wonderful nourishment this can provide for your garden. It is always good to toss a shovelful into the —

FRANCES: --piecrust mix for the little appetizers...(pause)...Now put it in the refrigerator to chill while you make the filling. First take out your mixing bowl and get a big clove of garlic and rub it all over —

CINDY: --her lovely face...(pause)...You can see how pleased she is when you tell her how pretty she looks. So say something nice about her dress. Tell her it makes her look like —

BOBBY: --something dragged in from the garbage...(pause)...All dogs will dig into a trashcan if the lid isn't on tight, so be sure to get a secure fit. You can even take something heavy, like a cement block, and —

FRANCES: --toss it into your bowl of cheese filling...(pause)...And another nice touch is a dash of white pepper. Now mix this well and then —

BOBBY: --drag it all over the yard...(pause)...So it bears repeating that to prevent this you must be sure the lid is on tight. Otherwise your dog might dig out something pretty awful —

CINDY: --to give to your lady friend...(pause)...A woman always appreciates a little surprise gift. So hand this to her, and imagine her delight when she opens it and finds —

MARY: --something damp and disgusting...(pause)...Now, compost may seem that way to you, but your garden will just love it. And next we're going to talk about transplanting a pot bound begonia into —

BOBBY: --your shoe...(pause)...Some dogs will chew on anything they can find, so it's not a good idea to leave shoes on the floor. And another thing you don't want to leave lying around on the floor is —

CINDY: --your girlfriend...(pause)...She likes it when you say romantic things, so put your arm around her and whisper some sweet talk into her —

BOBBY: --bedroom slippers or handbag...(pause)...Don't ever leave these things where your dog can get at them. If your dog has a bad habit of chewing on things, just give her —

CINDY: --dancing lessons...(pause)...But even if you never learned to waltz, don't just sit there. Go on, take your lady out on that dance floor and —

FRANCES: --spread butter all over both legs...(pause)...Then sprinkle with salt and pepper and wrap in aluminum foil...(pause)...This will keep your chicken moist while it's baking. And for a nice flavor I usually add a generous amount of —

MARY: --potting soil...(pause)... But before you put that in you'll need to allow for drainage, so fill the bottom of the flowerpot with about two inches of —

FRANCES: --mashed potatoes and gravy...(pause)...This will go well with the chicken. Now for the gravy, you simply stir the drippings and flour into —

CINDY: --your girlfriend's hair...(pause)...A woman likes it when you show her these little signs of affection. For instance, when you are seated at the restaurant she might appreciate being —

FRANCES: --rolled out on the table...(pause)...I always use the table to roll out the piecrust because there is more room than on the kitchen counter. Now, take your cheese filling and spread it evenly —

CINDY: --across your girlfriend's lap...(pause)...Usually the waiter does this, but if he doesn't, it might be a nice gesture for you to place her napkin there. Then it's a good idea to —

BOBBY: --rub her belly and scratch behind her ears...(pause)...They all love this. And also be sure to give her a lot of praise. Tell her over and over what a good dog she is, because —

CINDY: --pleasant dinner conversation is very important...(pause)...If you want to make a good impression, don't just talk about yourself. Get your lady to talk about Herself. For instance, ask her if she ever —

BOBBY: --drinks out of the toilet...(pause)...My dog used to do this all the time. It was a real problem, until I finally tried...

FRANCES: --covering it with a layer of finely chopped onion...(pause)...When you serve this as an appetizer, your guests will surely ask for the recipe, but just smile mysteriously and say it's a secret...(pause)...Now by this time the chicken —

CINDY: --isn't saying very much...(pause)...But even if your lady doesn't talk a lot, you can often tell how she feels about you by observing the little things she does. For instance, you might notice that she is —

BOBBY: --throwing up...(pause)...This may happen because she ate something she found outside...(pause)...So keep her under supervision when she runs loose. My dog once ate —

FRANCES: --a houseful of dinner guests waits to be served...(pause)...If dinner is going to be late, this can be pretty embarrassing, but don't worry about it. Just give them cocktails and —

MARY: --stack them on top of each other in the potting shed...(pause)...Saving these old cracked pots is always a good idea. They can be broken up and used for drainage pieces. Just put them in your planter along with-

FRANCES: --the chocolate pudding...(pause)...This is always nice for a simple dessert. Meanwhile you can finish setting the table and then go back to your guests and —

MARY: --pinch off the dead ones...(pause)...Getting rid of these faded flowers on your plant will encourage new growth. Now you're ready to transfer the pot bound plant into your —

CINDY: --plate of spaghetti...(pause)...This is not the best thing to order if you tend to drag your sleeve in the sauce. You don't want your date to think you're a slob so ask for something safe, like a nice order of-

MARY: --fertilizer...(pause)...Some people do add this to their potting soil, but you can just put in some of your compost instead. And when you do this, be sure to —

CINDY: --spill it all over your necktie...(pause)...But don't worry about it. These things can happen to anyone. And if you accidentally butter your fingers, just discreetly wipe your hands on —

BOBBY: --the dog...(pause)...So many of them are longhaired breeds, and this type of dog may require a lot of special attention, such as —

CINDY: --summoning the waiter if she wants more coffee...(pause)...A lady appreciates it when you anticipate her needs in this way. For another example, you might look across the table and notice that she is —

BOBBY: --shedding all over the place...(pause)...If you find this annoying, and you don't like this kind of bother with a dog, then you might be better off to get a cat. All they require is —

CINDY: --a final spin around the dance floor, followed by chocolate mousse and champagne...(pause)...As your romantic dinner draws to a close, smile lovingly into your lady's eyes and fill her wine glass with —

BOBBY: --kitty litter...(pause)...Now, cats are very fastidious creatures, so you'll have to clean the box frequently and empty the litter —

FRANCES: --in the middle of the dining room table...(pause)...A beautiful centerpiece like this always lends that final touch to a festive dinner setting. Now all you have to do is to go and call in your guests and ask them to —

BOBBY: --do something behind the couch...(pause)...This is a bad habit that some cats develop, so it is very important to —

CINDY: --thank her for a lovely evening...(pause)...And now that you and your girlfriend are alone at the door of her apartment, you might want to lean over and give her —

MARY: --a sharp rap on the bottom...(pause)...Hitting the base of the flowerpot in this way will loosen the soil and the plant will slip right out.

CINDY: And now for a final word on the dating scene. You don't have to spend a lot of money to go out to some fancy place. Just bring some good wine and you can have a wonderful evening just sitting around her apartment —

BOBBY: --coughing up hairballs.

NARRATOR: Well, I turned off the TV at this point, because that was about all the culture and education I could take in one sitting. Maybe that's all you can take, too, so that's the end.