

Casserole Casanova

Herbert McCollom



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ArtAge Publications

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CASSEROLE CASANOVA

by

Herbert McCollom

CAST

ROGER: Retired engineer, recently widowed, naive socially.

FRED: Divorced retiree, across the street neighbor, friend, and occasional blowhard.

MONIQUE: Any age from fifty on up. French ancestry, friend of Roger and late wife. Classy dresser. Flirts without meaning anything by it.

TRUDY: Any age fifty on up. German ancestry, friend and former client of Roger's. Wagnerian mannerisms, but romantic teaser.

VALENTINA: Any age fifty on up. Latina ancestry. Roger's former secretary. Rapid, precise gestures. Spicy.

LORETTA: Any age fifty on up. Italian ancestry. Roger's late wife's hair stylist. An unrefined drama queen with comic overtones.

PEGGY: Any age fifty on up. Asian ancestry. Owns Roger's favorite restaurant. Quiet, reserved woman who probably knows many martial arts.

Place

Roger's living room.

Time

The present.

Scene 1

Setting: A typical living room. The front door is Up Right. A curtained window is Up Left. A large sofa is Down Left with a coffee table in front of it. Other living room furnishings are at director's discretion as long as audience has unobstructed view of the front door, sofa, and a flat screen TV. A Down Left arch leads to other rooms.

At Rise: Roger and Fred are standing at Center working on a bottle of scotch. Fred repeatedly refills Roger's glass after each sip Roger takes. Roger is quite drunk.

FRED: Here you go, Rog. Down the hatch.

ROGER: *(slurs)* If I didn't know you for the cheapskate you are, I'd think you're trying to get me drunk. *(twists Fred's wrist to read the label of the bottle)* With very expensive scotch. Thank you, Fred.

FRED: Damn, foiled again. Now why would I try to get my best friend plastered two weeks after he buried his wife?

ROGER: Because you're my friend?

FRED: That has a lot to do with it. You need sleep.

ROGER: I know.

FRED: Suck up. There's still another shot or so in the bottle.

ROGER: I think I've had suff...*(beat)* suff...*(beat)* had 'nuff.

FRED: That's an order, sergeant!

ROGER: Yes, sir! I'll have a little more, Lieutenant, sir.

Fred pours the remaining shot into Roger's glass.

FRED: I want you to sleep it off tonight. I don't think you've had a good night's sleep in a month since Pat's stroke.

ROGER: *(slurs)* Prolly right.

FRED: I'm heading across for home now. I want you to go to bed the minute I shut the door. Okay?

ROGER: What if I wanna wash TV?

FRED: Whatever. I'll call you in the morning. Late morning.

ROGER: *(gives a feeble wave to Fred)* 'kay. Bye.

FRED: *(Picks up a jacket off the sofa and walks to the front door.)* G'night, buddy.
(exits)

ROGER: Night.

Roger puts his glass on a table, walks to the sofa to pick up a remote control from the coffee table and unsteadily turns to face a large TV. The doorbell chimes. Roger looks with surprise at the TV, then to the remote. He shrugs, then concentrates on the remote again. The doorbell chimes again. Roger slowly turns to face the front door. Again the doorbell chimes. Finally understanding, Roger stumbles to the door and opens it. Monique, dressed like a fashion model, stands outside.

MONIQUE: Hi.

ROGER: Hi. *(beat)* Monique.

They stare at each other.

MONIQUE: May I come in?

ROGER: Oh! Oh, sure.

He lurches aside as Monique bends to lift a large kettle and bag, then enters.

MONIQUE: I hope you won't think I'm being forward, but I brought you a bouillabaisse. Pat told me you love seafood. And I butter my croissants twice before baking.

Walks with difficulty as the pot is heavy.

ROGER: Nice. Thank you. Can I help carry?

MONIQUE: (*appraises Roger's inebriation*) That's okay. I noticed in your window that you had company, so I waited in my car. Can I set this on your coffee table?

ROGER: Sure.

Monique places the pot on the coffee table, the bag on the floor, then sits at the end of the sofa, slowly crossing her legs. Roger stumbles to a chair.

MONIQUE: Come sit beside me, Rog. I want to explain something.

ROGER: 'kay.

He struggles back to his feet, walks to the sofa and plops at the far end from Monique.

MONIQUE: No, sit next to me. I want to show you something.

Roger moves over closer to Monique an inch at a time as she encourages him.

ROGER: Mmmmmm! Smells good.

MONIQUE: (*laughs coquettishly*) That's my perfume. Wait 'til I take the lid off. Try that.

ROGER: Somethin' smells fishy.

MONIQUE: Oh, dear! I hope that's okay. Pat frequently told me how much you enjoy seafood.

ROGER: Do. Love seafood.

MONIQUE: Have you ever had a bouillabaisse before?

ROGER: What's that?

MONIQUE: That's what this is called. It's a recipe I got from my grandmother in Marseilles. Bouillabaisse d'epinards. It's a spinach seafood dish. I hope you like it. See the spinach?

ROGER: Uh-huh.

MONIQUE: Just warm this when you're ready to eat. If you bring it to a boil, the spinach will get too soft. Almost slimey.

ROGER: 'kay.

MONIQUE: Do you have a good wine to go with this?

ROGER: (*proudly*) Got three bottles. Cherry, concord grape, and dandelion.

MONIQUE: (*stunned*) I think you may do better with a Pouilly-Frisse'.

ROGER: 'kay.

MONIQUE: Have you ever tried bouillabaisse?

ROGER: Maybe. Can't 'member.

MONIQUE: (*beat*) Pat was English, wasn't she?

ROGER: (*slurs*) She was born in Rishmun. Rishmun, Virginia.

MONIQUE: Yes, but where did her family come from before they came to this country?

ROGER: Cornwall. England.

MONIQUE: I thought so. (*takes Roger's hand*) Now do you know what to do with this bouillabaisse?

ROGER: Sure. Eat it.

MONIQUE: And what should you do when you re-heat it?

ROGER: Don't boil.

MONIQUE: That's right! And what would be good to drink with it?

ROGER: (*strains to remember*) Pwee fwee.

MONIQUE: (*beat*) Just ask for a chardonnay.

ROGER: 'kay.

MONIQUE: *(releases Roger's hand and rises)* I'll be going now, but I'll be back every day with something for you to eat. Pat was a dear friend and I'm sure she's looking down at you and worrying that you may not be eating properly.

ROGER: Yeah. *(beat)* Oh, say hi to Bill.

MONIQUE: *(in shock)* Oh, Roger, I guess Pat never told you. Bill and I were divorced about eight months ago.

ROGER: Didn't know. Sorry.

MONIQUE: It was for the best. He was more married to his job than he ever was to me. *(Roger is having difficulty standing and she moves forward to give him a hug)* I'm sorry that you didn't know. That wasn't nice of me to burden you with my old news after what you've just been through.

ROGER: *(grinning)* What's that wonderful perfume?

MONIQUE: *(breaks the hug and steps back)* It's called 'Surrender.' I'll be back tomorrow with more food. You could stand some cheering up. *(she turns and walks to the door while Roger nearly falls)* Better put that pot in the fridge if you aren't going to eat it now.

Monique waves and exits, shutting the door behind her. Roger stumbles to the sofa, plops onto it face down and passes out.

Blackout

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!