

THE FORTUNE TELLERS' RIVALRY

A Short Comedy

By

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PLOT	A male demon; cohort to SCHEME
SCHEME	A female demon; cohort to PLOT
EFFIGY	A fortune teller; BALAMB's rival, any gender
BALAMB	A fortune teller; EFFIGY's rival, any gender

SCENE

A Dark Place, A Room and On A Street, all represented by light changes on a bare stage.

TIME

The present, during the day.

NOTES

This comedy is meant to be quick, with a lot of energy and excitement, particularly in the character of Plot. This version has been edited so that there are no scene changes and the action is constant. The pauses in between sections should be no more than a couple seconds in length.

PROPERTY LIST

Broken Umbrella
Spoons
2 Notes
Tarot Cards
Crystal Ball
Spork
Sheet of Paper
Bandages
Rubberbands

SET PIECES

Box (Large enough for Scheme to sit in and only have her head peaking out through a hole in the top)

THE FORTUNE TELLERS' RIVALRY

AT RISE:

(PLOT is sitting at the edge of the stage, his legs dangling, in the process of shredding and destroying an already **broken umbrella**. There is a spotlight on him.)

PLOT:

Ah ha ha! Carnage! Destruction! Mayhem! Disaster awaits whoever uses this umbrella! Ah ha ha ha!

(SCHEME enters)

SCHEME:

Oh Plot, I have... (Notices what he is doing to the umbrella)...what the hell are you doing?

PLOT:

(Tossing the umbrella offstage) Why? Uh...nothing.

SCHEME:

Well, anyways, I have wonderful news!

PLOT:

Wonderful? Yegh! How repulsive.

SCHEME:

No, I didn't mean it that way. I mean it's good...(PLOT looks at her)...bad for us. I've found a cure for our recent boredom

PLOT:

Really? Do tell.

SCHEME:

Well, when I was out and about today I caught wind of a feud.

PLOT:

A feud, heh? Please tell me it's one with violence and bloodshed.

SCHEME:

Um...no. Not yet, at least. (PLOT snaps his finger in disappointment) But if my plan goes right, there just might be some.

PLOT:

Well, who's feuding?

SCHEME:

Get this: two fortune tellers, Effigy and Balamb, hate each other's guts. They're always trying to outdo each other. Sadly, though, their feud is only minor. I was thinking we could stir up some trouble, then kick back and let the fireworks fly!

PLOT:

YES! LET'S DO! But wait, I'm confused. How shall we stir? With a spoon?

SCHEME:

No, not with a spoon. I had another idea in mind.

PLOT:

We could always throw spoons and place the blame on the other Fortune Teller. That would get them fighting.

SCHEME:

I was thinking more of a note.

PLOT:

Huh? How are we supposed to write a note on spoons? Oh, I get it, we write nasty things on spoons, and launch them at the Fortune Tellers! Or maybe we can poke their eyes out. That would be fun.

SCHEME:

No, you idiot. We can send a note to each Fortune Teller from the other. It can say horrible, nasty things. Heh heh heh.

PLOT:

Oh poo, and I thought we'd get to use spoons.

SCHEME:

After sending the notes, they'll hate each other even more. Then we can pop up here and there and lend some helping hands.

PLOT:

AND THROW SPOONS!

SCHEME:

Not quite what I had in mind, either.

PLOT:

Well, can we at least tie the notes to spoons and throw them?

SCHEME:

Oh, I guess so. Come on, we have notes to write!

PLOT:

And spoons to throw!

(PLOT and SCHEME exit as EFFIGY enters from the opposite side. The lights change and we are now at EFFIGY's fortune-telling parlor. He is pacing around, shuffling his deck, obviously in deep thought. PLOT and SCHEME peek in from a corner of the stage. PLOT is playing with some spoons and SCHEME is folding a note.)

PLOT:

Pretty spoons, don't you think?

SCHEME:

Shh! There he is.

PLOT:

But don't you think they're pretty?

SCHEME:

Just give me one so I can send this note on its way.

(PLOT hands SCHEME a spoon. She rubberbands a note to it)

SCHEME:

I did well to fill the note with horrible nasty things. Oh, a marvelous feud we shall have. Now flutter away, little note!

(SCHEME launches the spoon at EFFIGY, pegging him/her in the back. PLOT and SCHEME exit)

EFFIGY:

Ouch! What is this? A note attached to a spoon? I wonder who has the nerve to sneak into my place and throw a spoon at me? (Unfolds the note) Oh my...(Reads the note out loud) "Dearest Effeegy, you are smelly pig poo and I revile the ground you walk on. You can't see into the future no more than you can see in front of your face. Silly fortune teller imposter thingy! I spit in your general direction while wiping my nose on your so called Tarot Cards! I challenge you! Neener neener. Balamb." (Pause) What sort of nonsense is this? He/she can't even spell my name right. Has Balamb really resorted to such childish insults and the throwing of silverware? Oh...Balamb, if it is a war you want, it is a war you will get! (Exits as the room blacks out. The spotlight comes on as PLOT and SCHEME enter)

PLOT:

Did it work!? Did it work!? Did it work!?

SCHEME:

You have eyes; you very well saw it did.

PLOT:

Nya ha ha. Soon there will be bloodshed...and SPOONS!

SCHEME:

Don't be too sure of yourself. We still have one more note to deliver. Let's go.

(Plot and Scheme run offstage. The lights change and we are now in Balamb's parlor. A second later Balamb enters, polishing his/her crystal ball. Balamb, like Effigy, is preoccupied. Plot and Scheme enter.)

SCHEME:

Ah, yet another pretty note to send on its way. Plot! Give me one of those spoons!

(PLOT ignores her and is trying to stick a spoon to his nose. SCHEME snatches the spoon away and ties the note to it. She throws it towards BALAMB, however, it misses him/her.)

SCHEME:

Damn, missed!

(PLOT and SCHEME exit; BALAMB looks up)

BALAMB:

What was that? Who's there? I demand to know! (Notices the spoon and picks it up. He/she unfolds the note) Huh, what's this? A note from Effigy? (Reads out loud) "Dearest Balamb, you are smelly cow dung and I revile the air you breathe. You can't see into the future no more than you can see in front of your face. Silly fortune teller imposter. I **salivate** in your general direction and then I wipe my arse on your so called crystal ball. I challenge you. Neener neener. Efeegy." (Pause) What kind of an idiot are you, Effigy? You couldn't even spell your name right. Hmm, pitiful insults...sounds like you had children write this for you. I'm impressed, instead of the traditional brick, you just decided to use a spoon...how original. But that doesn't get you off of hurtling silverware at me. I'll make you pay! (Exits as the room blacks out. The spotlight comes on as PLOT and SCHEME enter again)

SCHEME:

Aha, we are so brilliant...(Looks at PLOT)...well, maybe just me. Just think, Plot, we may soon have what we want.

PLOT:

Yes, many, many wonderful, shiny spoons. Gardens of spoons, spoons, cascades of spoons, spoons everywhere!

SCHEME:

Yeah...right...whatever you say, Plot. Now, we must be off. If I'm right, the two will meet in the streets in a few minutes!

(PLOT and SCHEME exit, the lights change, then Effigy and Balamb enter from opposite sides.)

EFFIGY

Gee, nice running into you here, you **swank!**

BALAMB

Wish I could say the same.

EFFIGY

Our quarrel ends here, you crystal ball obsessed freak!

BALAMB

Yes, it will, you card shuffling raging psychopath!

EFFIGY

I see why you like crystal balls so much. You have a lot in common with them! Nothing more than trapped air!

BALAMB

Well, I never! At least my customers come back!

EFFIGY

Oh, so we're bringing customers into this? Well, I've heard from customers of mine that when they went in to see you, you did nothing more than admire yourself and pick your teeth in the reflection of your crystal ball!

BALAMB

At least I have something to admire! Wish I could say the same for your face!

EFFIGY

Grr, I could just...um...curse you right now! (Realizing it's a no win situation) Um, uh, unfortunately, I must be going! Yeah, I have um, appointments with CUSTOMERS to keep, unlike some people!

BALAMB

Yeah, you just get going, do your fancy little card shuffling shenanigans. We'll see who's the top Fortune Teller. And just for your information, Mr./Ms.. I Think I Know Everything, I'm booked ALL DAY with appointments.

EFFIGY

Ooh, booked all day. I'm so happy for you. That's more people you can scare off and send my way. I should be thanking you.

BALAMB

You're so welcome. Your generosity is so admirable that I think I'll go **vehemently** vomit now. Just wait till our paths cross again!

(BALAMB abruptly turns around, snubs EFFIGY and exits the way he/she came. EFFIGY does the same shortly after. The lights go black for a second, and then come back on. Balamb enters, and begins frantically pacing around, muttering and cursing about Effigy under his/her breath)

BALAMB:

Oooh...that Effigy....why I outta...

PLOT:

(Offstage) SPOONS!

BALAMB:

What was that? Who's there? And what was that about spoons?

PLOT:

(Offstage) I like spoons!

BALAMB:

Show yourself! (PLOT enters and takes a seat in front of BALAMB) What? A demon? How can this be?

PLOT:

I've come to help you. I know of the nasty things the terrible, wicked, naughty Effigy says.

BALAMB:

How do you know that?

PLOT:

Silly human, I'm a demon. I know these things.

BALAMB:

Well, if you are here to help, what do you have to offer?

PLOT:

I have come...to offer you...a weapon!

BALAMB:

Ooh tell me, don't keep me in suspense.

PLOT:

It is a most nasty weapon. Can cause a lot of damage, yes it can!

BALAMB:

Tell me already. (PLOT pulls out a spork)

PLOT:

It is the spork.

BALAMB:

A spork?

PLOT:

You know, a cheap plastic cross between a fork and a spoon...spoons!

BALAMB:

What an odd little demon. What use will a spork be to me?

PLOT:

I'd rather have given you a spoon, but you couldn't cause as much pain. With spork, you can poke, prod, puncture, mutilate, maim, rip, tear, shred, stab, scrape, gouge, bash and otherwise make a mess of Effigy's face.

BALAMB:

I'm very interested now. But why are you helping me, little one?

PLOT:

No reason...(To himself) Wait, I need a reason or I'll look suspicious...

BALAMB:

What was that? I couldn't quite hear you.

PLOT:

Oh nothing, actually...I'm helping you because...um...Effigy...stole my spoon! Yeah, that's it. He/she stole my spoon and threw it at you! There we go.

BALAMB:

Oh I get it...I think. I'll gladly accept this offering of the spork. Ha ha ha, be prepared Effigy. Your time will spoon be up! Hah ha ha!

(Blackout with the simultaneous laughter of BALAMB and PLOT. Pause. The lights come back up, and this time, Effigy enters and begins frantically pacing around, muttering and cursing about Balamb.)

EFFIGY:

Oh that Balamb, does he/she really expect to win this feud? Hmm, I need something useful to use against Balamb...if I only had some sort of weapon...

(Just then EFFIGY hears SCHEME'S voice.)

SCHEME:

I may have something to offer.

EFFIGY:

Huh? Who said that? Has Balamb learned how to make me hear voices in my head?

SCHEME:

No you idiot...

EFFIGY:

Oh no, now the voices are insulting me!

SCHEME:

Would you just pay attention?

EFFIGY:

I must be losing it. Now I'm hearing them plead with me.

(SCHEME enters.)

EFFIGY:

What manner of power is this? Instead of just hearing the voices, now I'm seeing things as well!

SCHEME:

Shut up and hear me out. I wasn't sent by Balamb, but my being here concerns both of you.

EFFIGY:

Why is that? And what the hell are you?

SCHEME:

Hell is exactly right. I'm a demon, as if you couldn't already tell. I've been eavesdropping lately on your little feud, and I totally despise how he/she is treating you. I thought I'd drop in and lend you a little hand.

EFFIGY:

What kind of help are you offering?

SCHEME:

I come to bring you a means to destroy Balamb--a weapon, if you will.

EFFIGY:

Ooo, a weapon. What is it? Let me guess. Is it a knife?

SCHEME:

No.

EFFIGY:

A semi-automatic machine gun?

SCHEME:

Nope.

EFFIGY:

A secret government nuclear weapon?

SCHEME:

No, this...

(SCHEME pulls out a clean sheet of white paper.)

EFFIGY:

You've lost me.

SCHEME:

Ah, but this is the most painful and dangerous weapon of all.

EFFIGY:

What does it do? It looks like just a piece of paper. What am I to do? Crumple it up and throw it at Balamb?

SCHEME:

No, this is the almighty piece of paper that causes the most excruciatingly painful PAPER CUTS!!! Ha ha ha.

EFFIGY:

Paper cuts? With all the powers of a **lava**-filled hell, you bring me a piece of paper? You demons are demented.

SCHEME:

But it can slice, it can dice, it can level your opponent to his knees in only three seconds!
It's so much more than a sheet of paper.

EFFIGY:

Well, when you put it that way, I guess I'll take it. Balamb beware, I'll soon have you in
multiple pieces. Heh heh heh. (EFFIGY exits, proudly displaying his sheet of paper.
PLOT enters.)

SCHEME:

Did you do it, did you give Balamb a weapon?

PLOT:

Oh, yes I did, a marvelous weapon.

SCHEME:

What did you give him/her?

PLOT:

A very dangerous Spork!

SCHEME:

I should have guessed it would be spoon related.

PLOT:

How did you do?

SCHEME:

Very well. I gave Effigy a most violent piece of paper. It causes the wickedest of Paper
Cuts.

PLOT:

Hee hee, very nice. Soon we should have bloodshed and gore.

SCHEME:

Yes, my plan is all going perfectly. As long as the two idiots don't catch on that we're
stirring up trouble...

PLOT:

STIR STIR STIR STIR STIR!!!!

SCHEME:

Memo to self: don't use any spoon-related words.

PLOT:

Nya ha ha! Spoons!

SCHEME:

(*Very annoyed*) Would you get over it, already! I'm sick of hearing about spoons. If I hear so much as one more thing about spoons from you, I'm going to shove a spoon where the flames don't shine!

PLOT:

But...

SCHEME:

No.

PLOT:

Just one...

SCHEME:

Nope.

PLOT:

One little...

SCHEME:

I don't think so. Now come on, things should be starting to get interesting between Effigy and Balamb and I don't want to miss any of it.

PLOT:

(Hiding it in a cough) Spoon.

SCHEME:

Did you just say what I think you did?

PLOT:

Um, no. No I didn't. Must be the wind. I...uh...farted.

SCHEME:

Hmm. That's what I thought.

(PLOT and SCHEME exit.)

EFFIGY:

(While entering from one side of the stage.) I've waited for this moment!

BALAMB:

(While entering from the opposite side.) Yes, so have I. And I've come prepared, too!

EFFIGY:

Ah, mortal opponents think alike. I, too, have come prepared!

(EFFIGY thrusts up the piece of paper.)

BALAMB:

Ooh I'm scared!

EFFIGY:

You very well should be.

BALAMB:

What are you going to do, write me a note or give me a paper cut?

EFFIGY:

A paper cut is exactly what I'm going to give you. Ha ha ha!

BALAMB:

Oh yeah, well feel the wrath of my SPORK!

(BALAMB pulls out the spork and points it into EFFIGY'S face. EFFIGY backs up.)

EFFIGY:

What do you plan to do, spoon feed me?

BALAMB:

Yes, I'll spoon feed you the remnants of your face after I'm done with it.

EFFIGY:

Wanna bet?

BALAMB:

Bring it on...

(BALAMB thrusts at EFFIGY but EFFIGY backs up. EFFIGY then swings the paper but BALAMB moves. This back and forth fighting without contact goes on, meanwhile, SCHEME and PLOT appear.)

SCHEME:

Ah! Things are going just as planned!

PLOT:

YES YES!! VIOLENCE! FIGHTING!!

SCHEME:

Oh, I'm so enjoying this. What a way to cure boredom.

BALAMB:

Parry, thrust, parry, thrust!

EFFIGY:

Wha ha, slicey slicey!

SCHEME:

Oh come on already, kill each other!

(The fighting immediately stops as EFFIGY and BALAMB hear SCHEME'S comment. They hadn't noticed the demons but now they do.)

EFFIGY:

Hey, it's the demon who gave me the paper!

BALAMB:

And that other one gave me the spork.

EFFIGY:

Hey Balamb, you don't think we may have been tricked?

BALAMB:

You may have a point.

PLOT:

Um Scheme, I think we have a problem.

SCHEME:

Yes, a big problem.

EFFIGY:

Balamb, was it you who threw a spoon at me with a note tied to it?

BALAMB:

No, I thought YOU threw a spoon at ME with a note tied to it.

EFFIGY:

I never wrote a note and if you didn't, and these demons are rooting for us to kill each other, then are you thinking what I'm thinking?

SCHEME:

You are both delirious, so....kill each other!

BALAMB:

I was wondering why that stupid other demon kept blurting out the word spoon.

PLOT:

Um...spoon?

BALAMB:

Yes, exactly like that! So, what do you say, Effigy? Since we will always hate each other, why don't we call a temporary truce and deal with these two? Then we can resume as enemies.

EFFIGY:

Sounds good. But after we take care of them, let's not kill each other. Let's just verbally assault each other from now on.

BALAMB:

It's a deal.

(EFFIGY and BALAMB embrace each other as if they are glad they hate each other.)

PLOT:

Scheme, I'm scared now. I think maybe we should leave.

SCHEME:

Wow, for once you actually said something intelligent.

(PLOT and SCHEME go to walk off but are quickly cut off by BALAMB.)

BALAMB:

Going somewhere?

(The demons try to walk in the opposite direction, but are cut off by EFFIGY.)

EFFIGY:

Now, what was that about killing each other?

SCHEME:

Um, really, we were just...joking! Yeah, that's it. Joking!

PLOT:

That's not what you said earlier, Scheme. The idea was for them to kill each other and amuse us.

SCHEME:

Plot...just, nevermind. I won't say it...

(EFFIGY and BALAMB begin to back PLOT and SCHEME offstage.)

EFFIGY:

Shall we?

BALAMB:

Let's do!

(EFFIGY raises up the piece of paper and BALAMB raises the spork as the stage grows dark. Everything blacks out with a simultaneous scream from the demons.)

(The lights come back up. PLOT is sitting center stage, covered in bandages. Next to him is a box, which SCHEME's head is on top of.)

PLOT:

Scheme, we screwed up, didn't we?

SCHEME:

You could say that. If only you hadn't opened your big mouth...

PLOT:

I'm sorry. Could I ask you a favor, Scheme?

SCHEME:

(Harshly) What?

PLOT:

Could you spoon feed me? my arms are still sore.

SCHEME:

You idiot! With WHAT do you expect me to feed you?!

PLOT:

Duh, silly, a spoon! But then again, it depends on the food. Hmm, I've never given much thought to that. It may be wiser to use a spork. Spork! What a marvelous thing! Screw spoons. Viva La Spork!

(Blackout to the utterly annoyed scream of SCHEME.)

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