PRIZE CHUMPS

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A Four-Minute Play

by

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For Tanvi Dodia and Jason Felipe
Spontaneous Combustion #27
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<u>Cast of Characters</u>

Barnacle Festivus (Jason Felipe): Inventor-Detective
Snaky Jane Wilbury (Tanvi Dodia): Burglar-Metaphysician-Detective

Setting: Barnacle Festivus sits at his desk, trying to fit a
small battery-operated fan into a rubber chicken's ass. Snaky
Jane reads Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, occasionally casting an
annoyed glance at Festivus over the top of the book. A copy of
Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* lies on the floor beside her.

                         FESTIVUS
This isn't gonna work out, Snaky Jane.

                         SNAKY JANE
It wouldn't have helped us anyway.

                         FESTIVUS
You don't know that.

                         SNAKY JANE
Listen to me, Barnacle Festivus. You're a mad inventor. I'm a
burglar who moonlights as a professor of metaphysics. I don't
know why anyone would hire us as detectives in the first place.

                         FESTIVUS
Well they did. And we're going to solve this case if it kills us.

                         SNAKY JANE
You know what we are, Barnacle Festivus? We're a couple of prize
chumps.

                         FESTIVUS
We're a couple of nut jobs, Snaky Jane.

                         SNAKY JANE
We're a fine couple of saps.

                         FESTIVUS
We're a couple of eggs short of a dozen. A couple of elevators
short of the top floor.

                         SNAKY JANE
What is being? What is nothingness?

                         FESTIVUS
A couple of tough questions. God, you're gorgeous when you talk
like that, I love metaphysical women! Wait! It moved!

                 (He is referring to the chicken.)

                         SNAKY JANE
I don't think it did.

                         FESTIVUS
It did! It did! It did! No, you're right, it didn't. It's not
going to work.

SNAKY JANE
I just don't think, even if you did invent a flying rubber
chicken, that it would help us solve this case.

                          FESTIVUS
It's not...you don't...it isn't...the chicken idea, it's not just
a flying chicken that happens to be rubber, that's not the point.

                          SNAKY JANE
No?

                          FESTIVUS
No! It's a, it's a, it's a, the idea is, it's a rubber chicken,
right, that flies, OK, *and spies*. It gathers information,
dumbhead, and helps you solve detective cases!

                          SNAKY JANE
OK, I apologize, Barnacle Festivus. I take it back. That would
be pretty good.

                          FESTIVUS
I'm sorry I called you a dumbhead, Snaky Jane.

                          SNAKY JANE
OK, so we're both sorry. We're a couple of sorry-ass losers,
that's what we are.

                          FESTIVUS
We're a couple of goddamned bozos. Fuck this chicken!

                    (Festivus angrily hurls the chicken across
                    the stage.)

                          SNAKY JANE
All right, all right, let's take this from the beginning. What we
have here is a case of somebody going into somebody else's house
in an illegal manner. Now, this somebody...

                          FESTIVUS
Or somebodies...

                          SNAKY JANE
Very good, Barnacle Festivus! So this person or persons, they go
into this house, and they take stuff that doesn't belong to them.

                          FESTIVUS
They're burglars is what they are, Snaky Jane.

                          SNAKY JANE
Or a burglar.

                          FESTIVUS
Right. So let's see. Burglary. Who do we know who's a burglar?

                    (Snaky Jane looks nervous.)

                          SNAKY JANE
Um, well...

FESTIVUS
And what did they take?

                    SNAKY JANE
Um, a couple of books is all, I think.

                    FESTIVUS
A couple of books. What kind of books?

                    SNAKY JANE
Aristotle, I think, some Sartre...

                    FESTIVUS
Right, right. I feel like we're getting so close here, I just...

                    SNAKY JANE
It was me.

                    FESTIVUS
Of course! I was just going to say that! I swear! You beat me
to it! Because you're a burglar and those are the exact books
right there! We did it!

          (They celebrate.)

                    SNAKY JANE
It's funny how the criminal always thinks she's been so clever,
but in the end she trips up somehow.

                    FESTIVUS
Especially when you've got a couple of ace detectives on the case!

                    SNAKY JANE
We're a couple of bonafide sleuths!

                    FESTIVUS
We're a couple of private dicks!

                    SNAKY JANE
So what do we do now?

                    FESTIVUS
I've got a couple of ideas on the subject.

                    SNAKY JANE
Want to go for a couple of drinks?

                    FESTIVUS
Well, I guess I've got a couple of minutes anyway...

               (She holds out her hand, Festivus takes it.)

               (BLACKOUT)