

LOINS AND LILIES

A Short Silly Play

by

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## ACT I

## SCENE 1

(A simple office with desk. One chair sits behind the desk, another faces it. A chart of a cow showing various cuts of beef sits on an easel. The chart has a flower hastily painted on top of it.)

(AT RISE: LOIN sits behind the desk, reviewing some papers. GREGORY sits in the other chair, attentive.)

LOIN

Well, Mr. Gregory, your credentials appear impeccable. Your work experience seems most impressive. Most impressive indeed. Everything here seems to be in perfect order.

GREGORY

Thank you, sir.

LOIN

Unfortunately, you would appear to be seeking full-time employment as a butcher. Is that correct?

GREGORY

Yes, sir. I'm a butcher by trade.

LOIN

Yes, well, unfortunately, Mr. Gregory, we have very little call for butchers around here seeing as we, sir, are a florist shop.

GREGORY

Florist shop?

LOIN

Yes, a florist shop.

GREGORY

Florists as in ... flowers?

LOIN

Yes, yes. Cut flowers, arrangements, potted plants, potpourri, an occasional ceramic knick-knack. Items of that variety.

GREGORY

Your advertisement in the paper said you were looking for a butcher.

LOIN

Really? Well, that must have been some sort of error on the newspaper's part. A typographical error, perhaps.

GREGORY

(Removing newspaper clipping from his pocket)

Right here.

(Reading ad)

Wanted: Experienced butcher for cutting up and otherwise dismembering livestock of any and all varieties. Squeamish need not apply. Preference given to callous brutes with maniacal tendencies. ... Equal opportunity employer. ... Women and minorities encouraged to apply.

(GREGORY hands LOIN the clipping across the desk.)

LOIN

(Regarding the clipping)

Silly mistake. I'll have to follow this up with the newspaper right away.

(Tucks it into his desk and gestures toward the door)

Good day, sir!

GREGORY

Mistake? How can you call that a mistake? There isn't a single mention of flowers in that advertisement!

(SPARKY enters carrying a massive meat cleaver and wearing a bloodied apron.)

SPARKY

The lambs have arrived, Mr. Loin. Shall I hack 'em up?

LOIN

(Somewhat panicked at SPARKY's arrival)  
 Yes, the ... lilies. Yes! Yes, do ... snip them up for display. By all means! Thank you, Sparky.

SPARKY

Lilies, sir?

LOIN

(Motioning behind GREGORY's turned head for SPARKY to leave)  
 Yes, take the lilies and prepare them for slaughter. Sale! Prepare them for sale. Thank you.

(The sound of a LAMB braying offstage)

SPARKY

But, Mr. Loin --

LOIN

That'll be all, Sparky. Thank you.

(SPARKY exits, confused.)

LOIN

Good man, Sparky. Been with us ages. Pure, instinctive sense for arranging. A true artiste. Remarkable. Asked for by name. Truly.

GREGORY

(Incredulous)

What was that?

LOIN

Hmmm?

GREGORY

What was all that about? Just then? Lambs for slaughter!

LOIN

Oh, I'm afraid Sparky isn't all with us, you know? Bit of a screw loose. Light on. Sandwich short. All that. Fancy's he working in a slaughterhouse. Poor fellow. Funny if it weren't so sad.

GREGORY

Look here, Mr. Loin --

LOIN

Mr. Gregory, I'm terribly sorry, but I have many roses to bleed. To bury. To bludgeon! To ... beautify. To beautify. Please be on your way.

(SPARKY enters again.)

LOIN

Not now, Sparky!

SPARKY

There's not a lily in the lot of 'em, Mr. Loin.

(The sound of a LAMB braying offstage)

LOIN

Fine, I'll be right out. Thank you, Sparky.

SPARKY

Should I hack 'em up?

LOIN

I'll be right out. Thank you, Sparky.

SPARKY

(Fondling his cleaver, childlike)

I'd like to hack 'em up.

LOIN

Yes, fine then. Thank you.

(SPARKY exits.)

LOIN

Well, Mr. Gregory. Thank you for stopping by. I'm sorry we don't seem to be a satisfactory match for a man with your most impressive skill-set. However, if we ever do find ourselves in the need for the services of an experienced butcher such as yourself, we'll be keeping your resume on-file.

(Standing, offering his hand to  
GREGORY, reveals blood on his apron)

Until then, best of luck finding suitable employment elsewhere.

GREGORY

(Pointing)

What's that?

LOIN

Where?

GREGORY

There! That's blood! On your apron!

LOIN

(Looking down in horror)

Good heavens!

GREGORY

Smear'd all over your apron! It's a bloody mess! How do you explain that?

LOIN

Why that's not blood --

GREGORY

Not blood? If it's not blood then what is it?

LOIN

That's ... daisy ... juice.

GREGORY

Daisy juice?! Daisy's aren't even red!

LOIN

Daisy juice? Did I say daisy juice? I meant ... gardenia juice.

GREGORY

Gardenia are white!

LOIN

Morning glories.

GREGORY

Blue.

LOIN

Marigolds.

GREGORY

Yellow. Orange, at best.

LOIN

Baby's breath.

White. GREGORY

Dandelion. LOIN

Yellow. GREGORY

Rhubarb. LOIN

Not a flower. GREGORY

Right ... Peonies. LOIN

Pink, not red. GREGORY

Violet. LOIN

Violet. GREGORY

Bleeding heart. Yes! It's bleeding heart juice. LOIN

Then tell me. If this is a florist shop, why do you have a picture of a cow on that easel? GREGORY

(Regarding the easel) LOIN

That's a picture of a flower. *Viridiflora tulip*, I believe. Long bloomers those. Very popular, though finicky in drier climes, I assure you.

That's a picture of a flower painted over a picture of a cow. GREGORY

Yes, well of course. That's a work by the French post-industrialist Vouillard. A work from his *les Nabis* period. Striking, isn't it? LOIN



(SPARKY enters again.)

LOIN

(Bellowing)

Not now, Sparky!

(SPARKY does an about face and exits.)

GREGORY

(Approaches desk cautiously. Eying LOIN suspiciously, HE gingerly removes his resume from the desk. Beat.)

Good day, sir.

LOIN

Quite.

(GREGORY exits. LOIN sits at his desk and speaks into an intercom.)

LOIN

Send the next one in, will you?

(JENSEN enters.)

LOIN

(Cheerful)

Good morning! Mr. Jensen, is it?

JENSEN

Yes.

LOIN

(Examining papers on his desk, gesturing toward the chair)

Excellent. Please take a seat.

(JENSEN sits.)

LOIN

Well, Mr. Jensen, your credentials appear impeccable. Your work experience seems most impressive. Most impressive indeed. Everything here seems to be in perfect order.

JENSEN

Thank you, sir.

LOIN

Unfortunately, you would appear to be seeking full-time employment as a florist. Is that correct?

JENSEN

Yes, sir. I'm a florist by trade.

LOIN

Yes, well, unfortunately, Mr. Jensen, we have very little call for florists around here seeing as we, sir, are a butcher shop.

(The sound of a LAMB braying offstage)

(Quick blackout. End of play.)

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

All roles are written to be male, but can easily be played as any gender by making some small revisions to the dialogue: "Mr." becomes "Ms." And "sir" becomes "ma'am."

More ambitious productions may wish to send SPARKY on-stage accompanied by a lamb on a short lead.