

Cockroach Infestation

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COCKROACH INFESTATION

Characters:

Simone: Mid twenties. Flaming heterosexual.
Jenny: Mid twenties, more conservative in dress and manner.
Simone's roommate
Don: Mid twenties. Jenny's boyfriend.
Doug: Early thirties. Simone's boyfriend.
Morris: Early thirties. Flaming homosexual.

Synopsis:

A comedy about sex, insects and funerals.

Set during the heady days of the .com explosion, this madcap comedy follows the schemes and love life of a group of crazy young urbanites. When Simone brings home a new boyfriend she found at a poetry festival, and her roommate Jenny has her fiancée move in while his home is fumigated, the stage is set for fun, farce and a mad plan to market performance art funerals. Morris, the flaming mortician's beautician, arrives to lend his considerable skills to this wild idea to make big money.

Set and Prop Requirements:

Minimal single set of living room and dining room. A front door, a closet and maybe a bedroom door are required. Props include four bouquets of flowers, an empty box of condoms and a telephone answering machine. Optional props include a TV (not operational), a telephone (not operational), an answering machine and a CD player (not operational) .

Running Time:

90 minutes. Three scenes. One intermission.

Setting: Living room of Jenny and Simone's apartment.

On Rise: Before rise, Joni Mitchell's song "Chelsea Morning" plays. The same song ends the show.
On rise, Jenny onstage, alone, working on her taxes.

JENNY

(talking to the form she is working on)

Add line 34 and line 5. If the result is greater than . . .

What line 34? Where? There is no line 34. Idiots. This has got to be a typo. Show me, just show me line 34.

(to audience) Taxes. I'm doing my taxes.

(sighs, returns to forms, stares at forms)

Oh. That line 34. Okay. Add line 34 to line 5. Add? No subtract, right? They gotta mean subtract. Please God don't make me add line 34 to line 5.

(to audience) The three certainties. Death, taxes . . . and roommates.

Roommates. Can be great. Can be tedious. Roommates. I have had pretty good luck myself. Like Simone, my current roommate. I like Simone. I mean, we are very different people, like, you know, she's horrible and I'm not. But I like her.

However, I'm ready to leave this lifestyle behind. I'm ready to lead a life without all this tension around things like . . . the phone bill. And I am. Don and I are getting married. Don isn't exactly what I had envisioned, like when I was thirteen. But he is right for me. He is simply a good, honest person. Doesn't seem like much does it? A good, honest person. Until you look around.

DON (OS)

When do you expect her back?

JENNY

What?!

DON

(Entering w/ two drinks)

When do you think Simone will be back home?

JENNY

A couple of days ago she went to a poetry festival or something. I haven't seen her since.

DON

I don't want to be around when you ask her about me staying here.

JENNY

Oh it will be fine.

DON

I just want her to feel comfortable about saying no.

JENNY

She won't say no, for heaven's sake. It's just for a few days. And anyway, she has brought home her share of temporary roommates.

DON

I guess . . .

JENNY

Don, it's not a big deal. She's had men staying here for weeks where I don't even know their name. She can't possibly object to you. You're like family.

DON

I know, I know. I still don't want to be here when you ask her.

JENNY

Don, first of all, it's only for a couple of days. Second of all, Simone is not very aware of other human beings anyway.

(sound of Simone outside the door)

Speak of the devil.

DON

Oh crap.

(DON runs and hides in the closet)

JENNY

Don! Don, don't be ridiculous.

(SIMONE enters, carrying grocery bags)

SIMONE

Hi Jen. I thought I heard you talking with someone.

JENNY

I'm talking to Don. He's hiding in the closet.

(During the following, SIMONE is bustling around, high octane. Exiting and entering. Putting away groceries, straightening up the house etc.)

SIMONE

Great. Listen, I'm really in a rush. Could you help me.

JENNY

Say, Simone, would you mind if--

SIMONE

I can't wait to tell you what has happened to me. Remember that poetry festival I went to a couple days ago?

JENNY

Yes. I haven't seen you since.

SIMONE

By the way, I passed by Don's building. It's all covered over with a huge tarp.

JENNY

Yes they're fumigating his building, so he has to move out for a few days.

SIMONE

Oh, is that all. I was hoping it was a Cristo installation.

JENNY

No, just a cockroach infestation. So that's what I wanted to talk to you a--

SIMONE

So anyway, you haven't asked me what's happened.

JENNY

(giving up) So what's happened?

SIMONE

I think I've met someone.

JENNY

Really.

SIMONE

You know how I've always said I'm an answer looking for the right question.

JENNY

Yeah . . .

SIMONE

Guess what?

JENNY

You found the right question.

SIMONE

(squirming with excitement) I think so! Aren't you excited?!?

JENNY

Yeah . . . I guess. I mean, I could get more excited if you wouldn't switch questions every two weeks.

SIMONE

I really think this one's different. I really do. I've never felt like this before.

JENNY

Okay - so who is it this time?

SIMONE

That's not a very nice attitude.

JENNY

Sorry. So okay. Who is it?

SIMONE

Well, he read some of his stuff at the poetry festival. He was just so . . . intense. After the festival a bunch of us went out to Blake's Bar and he was there. So I get to talking to him and told him how I really liked his stuff. And he goes "I really like your stuff," you know, even though I hadn't read anything. And it's real sexy and we're like totally oozing chemistry all over the place. It was like . . . covalent bonding.

JENNY

Whoa. Great! So about Don--

SIMONE

We were in bed together within two hours. It was beyond covalent bonding, it was like . . . exothermic.

JENNY

Wow!

So, anyway would you mind if for the next few days, Don--

SIMONE

You won't believe what he does for a living.

(JENNY sighs, indicates that Simone should tell her what he does for a living)

He's a performance artist.

JENNY

A performance artist! Really - wow. That reminds me, Don needs --

SIMONE

Wanna know his name?

JENNY

In a moment, but first can we just--

SIMONE

He just has one name. He changed his name to be just one name. It's all legal. It's like on his drivers license and everything.

JENNY

Whoa - that's so cool. So for the next few days Don needs--

SIMONE

Wanna know what he changed his name to?

JENNY

(sighs)

SIMONE

(dramatic pause) Doug.

JENNY

(long pause, disbelief) Doug?

SIMONE

It's on his checking account and everything. Have you heard of him?

JENNY

Well . . . I . . . I have heard of people named Doug.

SIMONE

Well, that's him.

JENNY

Is he really making a living off of performing?

SIMONE

No, he's working part time in a funeral home.

JENNY

This guy sounds, umm

SIMONE

Oh yeah, he really is.

You know like after about the first day together we were like sharing with each other our hopes and dreams for the future.

So he told me his dream is to open up his own funeral home one day. I really think he could revolutionize the whole industry. He wants to combine performance art and funerals. He'd like to open up a whole chain of performance art funeral homes.

JENNY

Really?

SIMONE

Yeah - he's already picked out a slogan

(indicating the marquee with her hand)

"We Put the Fun Back in Funeral."

JENNY

Wow.

SIMONE

I think it could work.

JENNY

Yeah, so anyway, how about if Don--

SIMONE

And it just keeps totally blowing us away how many things we have in common. Like just last night we discovered that neither of us flushes for number one.

(waits expectantly for a response)

JENNY

(struggling) So . . . you . . .

(gets it) both share a deep concern for the environment and are committed to taking personal responsibility for your actions.

SIMONE

Exactly.

(DON raps on closet door.)

Just a minute.

(SIMONE goes to front door.)

JENNY

So as I was mentioning,

(SIMONE opens door and finds no one there)

Don is having this work done to his house and--

SIMONE

Oh Jenny, I really think this is the big one. We just have some practicalities to work out. You know, like he lives in Seattle, I live here.

JENNY

Well, these things can be worked out.

SIMONE

He is just down for the poetry conference.

JENNY

The important thing is that you care about one another.

SIMONE

And he has to get a divorce.

JENNY

Simone!

SIMONE

Well, they've apparently been having some troubles lately and --

JENNY

I can't believe this. This married guy goes to some festival, you have an affair with him for two days and now he's getting a divorce?

SIMONE

Well . . .

JENNY

This is incredible.

SIMONE

Oh I think so too.

He said he'd always dreamed of having his marriage destroyed by someone like me. Isn't that the sweetest thing?

JENNY

NO! It's not the sweetest thing! I can't believe this. You ought to be ashamed --

SIMONE

(getting defensive) Look - you are totally happy with Don, that's fine. I could never be happy with someone like him. Nice and stable and dependable. Forget it. That's not me.

JENNY

Simone! Don is in the closet!

SIMONE

Oh come on. Don doesn't have the balls to be gay.

JENNY

No, I mean--

SIMONE

But do I say you should be ashamed because you're attracted to someone like Don? No. So I lead a wilder life than you. We're different. So what?

JENNY

The . . . the "so what" is that you're breaking up a marriage after . . . after being together for two days.

SIMONE

You know what I think. I think you're envious.

JENNY

(dismissive) Ohmf.

SIMONE

You enjoy probing into my love life because you don't have the guts to do the same.

JENNY

Oh come on . . .

SIMONE

You try to pawn off your gutlessness as some morally superior position. Well, I don't buy it.

You're involved with some nice dependable guy who rotates his tires every 10,000 miles and you're too scared to try something racier.

(JENNY becomes flustered)

(more tenderly) Jenny . . .

JENNY

(hurt) Don and I have a very deep relationship.

SIMONE

And that's fine for you. For me, I need passion. If I want depth . . . I'll read a book.

(SIMONE puts her arm around JENNY.)

Look, both of us know we are very different. That's what I like about our relationship. None of my other friends are like you. Let's not let this get in the way of our friendship.

(JENNY shakes her head 'yes.')

OK then . . .

It's just like Joni Mitchell says in her song *A Case of You*:

"Oh I am a lonely painter

I live in a box of paints"

(pause)

I think that's like so true for all of us . . .

Listen, I need to get ready. I've invited Doug over for hors d'oeuvres. He wants to see where I live and meet you and everything. Oh, I am so happy.

JENNY

I can't wait to meet the new mystery man.

SIMONE

Good. Can you help me get ready?

(SIMONE exits)

I want everything to be perfect for Doug.

JENNY

Sure. Simone, listen, about Don--

SIMONE (OS)

You know, since Don's place is being fumigated, maybe he should stay here for a few days.

JENNY

Simone! That's very thoughtful of you. That would be very nice.

(SIMONE enters with box of condoms.)

SIMONE

Before I forget, I want to give you my left over supply of condoms.

JENNY

Well . . . ah . . . gee, thank you, but don't you want them?

SIMONE

(SIMONE exiting)

I thought you could give them to Don. They're much too small for Doug.

(JENNY stands there a moment, holding condoms. SIMONE enters again.)

Do we still have your mom's silverware somewhere?

(SIMONE opens closet. There stands DON. SIMONE screams, hands to the side of her face.)

JENNY

I've been trying to tell you--

SIMONE

(SIMONE turns, hands still to the side of her face.)

I left my keys in the car!

(SIMONE exits. Pause.)

DON

Well.

JENNY

Well.

DON

That wasn't so hard after all.

JENNY

No.

DON

That was nice of her to give me her old condoms.

(JENNY puts condoms behind her
back)

So, I guess we should help her get ready.

JENNY

Guess so.

DON

Whatever happened to Peter?

JENNY

Peter?

DON

Remember? Simone's friend that spent Christmas with us here.

JENNY

Peter. Hmm. I can't even remember that one.

DON

Peter was a nice person.

JENNY

You think everyone's a nice person.

DON

Remember, we used to hear "Oh Peter . . . Peter . . . PETER!"

JENNY

Ah yes. That guy who use to scream his own name during sex.
He was about five or six boyfriends in the past.