

Howl Playwrights

Auditions: Tuesday (9/6) @ 7pm & Wednesday (9/7) @ 7:00pm

Performance Dates: October 7-9, 2022 (Friday & Saturday @ 8pm, Sunday @ 3pm)

Location: The CENTER for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck

The following short plays will be a part of our program.

*We are seeking a variety of performers (please see notes below).

Audition sides are attached.

***Plan Ten from Dutchess County* Written and Directed by David Simpatico**

A nefarious alien plan to take over the world through Starbucks and Facebook threatens the planet!

***Seeking:**

MEGAN TELLY, conservative blonde cable pundit

TODD, a gay newlywed; admin assistant

ROD, Todd's gay husband; airplane pilot (good with physical comedy)

SAM, amiable proprietor of the Mercury Grande Hotel; also, an alien mastermind intent on enslaving Planet Earth (think bad Shakespeare)

JOANNE, Sam's amiable partner in alien crime (sexy B starlet on the way down)

DELIA, a woman trapped in the hotel, at the whim of forces she cannot possibly ken

LUKE: a man who places his trust in a Magic 8 Ball

***Hearts and Minds* Written and Directed by Anthony Leiner**

A couple's most intimate moment criticized by their internal thoughts

***Seeking:**

3 men and 3 women all in their mid 30s

***Meter Maid McGee* Written and Directed by Dwight Watson**

Good-natured Randy Cope feeds coins in expired parking meters in a courthouse parking lot. Spotted by Officer Rita McGee, a dedicated traffic service enforcement officer, Randy is threatened with a citation for his "generosity." When Officer McGee discovers that Randy is also an organ donor, she chides him for his kind-heartedness, but then replaces the citation with an offer that Randy may or may not wish to consider.

***Seeking:**

RANDY COPE, a benevolent pedestrian, male, 50+

***Sad Lonely People* Written and Directed by Seth McNeill**

Wade and Harriet are kinda sorta friends as of just now. If they're lucky, it might last into the New Year, but it's best not to get hopes up.

***Seeking:**

HARRIET: 20s - 30s, Female, any race

WADE: 20s - 30s, Male, any race

***Donna Spillgore Monologues* Written and Directed by Darrah Cloud**

DONNA is a righteous, fierce, in your face and out-of-control-with-her-own power divorce lawyer.

***The Save* Written by Louisa Vilardi and Directed by Seth McNeill**

How important are first impressions anyway?

***Seeking:**

SARAH, A single woman, 30-40, Female

ANDY, A single man, 30-40, Male

***Dinner at Donovan's* Written by Nan Gatewood Satter and Directed by Seth McNeill**

Hilarity ensues when Jack and Laura, happily married for thirty-five years, attempt to borrow a page from the Millennial playbook in an effort to stave off loneliness.

***Seeking:**

LAURA, Female. Mid-60s to mid-70s. A retired high school English teacher, she's a naturally friendly, gracious person who tries to make the best of any situation. Happily married to Jack for 35 years.

JACK, Male. Mid-60s to mid-70s. A retired professor of political science, he is relaxed and comfortable in his own skin. Although he doesn't suffer fools gladly, he usually tries to rein himself in for Laura's sake.

H, A twenty-something, gender nonconforming waitperson who somehow manages to put up with the restaurant's demanding guests.

HAROLD/ARTHUR/EDDY, Male. Played by one actor, mid-60s to mid-70s. Various: health-obsessed and whiny; wealthy and self-satisfied; excited by the prospects of the evening.

***Break of Dawn* Written by Paul Allman and Directed by David Simpatico**

A cursed ship loaded with city garbage, a lonely captain and a misfit crew, at large on the open sea and its bottomless, curious depths. A comedy of doom with sea chanties and penguins.

***Seeking:**

THE CAPTAIN. Any gender. Should be seasoned enough to have seen it before, but not seasoned beyond curiosity. Wily. Stubborn. Professional. Disillusioned. Adheres to routine, but is alert to adventure. Talks to birds and means it.

***Let Them Eat Cake* Written and Directed by Martina Deignan**

When Stormi uses a cake competition to discover the truth about her husband's relationship with Nora, the situation goes from bad to worse when Nora has an allergic reaction to Stormi's cake.

***Seeking:**

NARA, 30s, attractive
VOICE of the 911 operator

***Overtime* Written and Directed by Margie Castleman**

Will Benjamin's ill-timed proposal to Sheila be too late for her to swallow?

(Hint: she does unknowingly eat the ring)

"Porsche Song" Written and Performed by Danielle Frimer

A sort-of love song inspired by Dave Foster Wallace and armpit sweat.

***The Kiss (a 10-minute love story)* Written and Directed by Anne Undeland**

A woman's encounter with a Rodin sculpture causes her to question the meaning of love and physical connection and to ask herself, what if?

***Seeking:**

PAM: a woman in middle age

PHIL: Pam's husband, a man, also in middle age

PERSON: could be anyone, preferably female or non-binary, main stipulation is they have good chemistry with Pam

PERSON 2: could be anyone, preferably on the other side of the gender spectrum from Person (this is a one-line walk-on, rehearsal isn't essential)

PLAN TEN FROM DUTCHESS COUNTY

AUDITION SIDES

MEGAN TELLY:

MEGAN TELLY, cable pundit, addresses the audience.

MEGAN

Greetings, my friends, Megan Telly here, interrupting your normally scheduled programming to bring you the breaking, exclusive and terrifying special news report. What appears to be a bizarre, zombie-like plague emanating from the heart of Dutchess County is, in fact, directly linked to an insidious secret alien plot to enslave the planet. Ladies and Gentlemen, no longer dare we keep this a secret, but, rather, let us lift high the flaming sword of truth, let us punish the guilty, and praise the innocent, before the future before us is filled with the broken dreams of the scattered hopes of the shattered lives of those unchosen souls left behind. Ladies and Gentlemen, can your heart stand the gruesome horror of grave robbers from outer space? Can your brain comprehend the ultimate, insidious evil of Plan Ten from Dutchess County!?

ROD AND TODD, GAY NEWLYWEDS

A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT.

SFX: Thunder and lightning.

ROD, a strong-jawed Air Force pilot, and TODD, a mid-level administrative assistant, seek shelter from the rainstorm, under The MERCURY GRAND HOTEL neon sign.

TODD

Oh, of all the gosh-awful nights to have a flat tire, and no spare, yet! It's raining cats and dogs, I tell you--Oh, look, Rod, the Mercury Grand Hotel. And we're in luck, it says 'vacancy!'?

ROD

Yes, it is indeed a dark and stormy night filled with dreadful portent, Todd, but as long as we're together, it's 75 degrees and clear skies, with 15 mile an hour winds out of the southwest in my heart.

TODD

And it's also our official honeymoon, Rod!

ROD

I do so love you, my love.

TODD

And I you, my darling flyboy. Oh, Rod, we have our whole lives together, Rod, you up there in the happily ever-afters of the high-flyin' cockpit and me down here in my 9-5 administrative assistant's cubicle!

SFX: Crash of thunder and lightning.

ROD

Todd, my darling, I can't keep it from you any longer: last night on the flight back from Alaska, I saw what can only have been described as an actual flying saucer from outer space, shaped like a manhole cover hovering in the sky next to the plane, in defiance of all accepted gravitational theory. Well, don'tcha see, Todd, it's aliens, I tell ya, it's gotta be. I saw it with my own two eyes! I want to say something, to scream it from the very rooftops, but I'm sworn to secrecy, darn it, manacled by top Army brass!

TODD

Oooo look, according to my Smart Phone, the Mercury Grand has a karaoke bar, complimentary Starbucks, and free Facebook terminals!

ROD

Kiss me, you little fool.

MEGAN AND ROD;

(I want the Rod actor to act out the description that Megan blurts out 😊)

*Rod's body **enacts** each side-effect as Megan goes down her list.*

MEGAN

Side effects may include: Aches and pains; Nausea, dizziness and vomiting; shaking; uncontrollable movements of face, tongue, or pelvis; Decrease in testicle size; Stiff, inflexible joints and limbs; dementia; cardiac arrest; death; Reanimation; an over-bearing need to tell the on-line world what you had for breakfast; An unquenchable thirst for Starbucks coffee; And an unslakable hunger for human flesh.

Zombie-Rod picks up the finger; eats it.

MEGAN AND ROD: *Seduction and resistance*

SFX: *They WALK to the coffee area.*

JOANNE

Have you tried our new Zombicino, it's all the rage.

ROD

One percent milk, please, got to stay in fighting trim in case I need battle any space aliens or zombies, eh?

JOANNE

You are well-thewed and wise beyond your years, manling. It would be wiser still to leave such matters to lie fallow and festering in the moist, sticky sanctum of salutary neglect

ROD

(Pondering) Food for thought.

JOANNE

Ruminate upon it.

ROD

Hey, I'm a married man.

LUKE AND DELIA, desperate to leave but trapped; turning into zombies

Joanne PLACES a coffee order on the Counter.

JOANNE

Frozen double latte grande French vanilla Zombicino double decker.

Luke and Delia lunge for it.

DELIA

Oh, that's me, thanks!

LUKE

That's mine, dear, you had the Splenda.

DELIA

No, dear, that coffee is mine. I've been waiting right here for the last four and a half minutes.

LUKE

Over my dead body!

*They **attack** each other in a mad frenzy of bloody, inhuman need. Delia **BITES** off Luke's finger.
My finger! You bit off my finger!*

Joanne puts up a second coffee.

JOANNE

Sorry, guys, my mistake, here's the other coffee, with the Splenda.

The couple comport themselves, go back to their spot.

DELIA

Oh that's mine, sorry.

LUKE

I think you have a problem.

DELIA

You think I have a problem. That's funny. That's very, very funny

SAM, JOANNE AND TODD

At the climax of the play, the aliens spill the beans: Sam, big bad Shakespearean delivery

JOANNE

Sam, see how the human clones replace actual thought with a mere rush of passionate words and a fervent need to like and share--

SAM

They shall crumble before the unstoppable might of Plan Ten: Project *Starface*!

JOANNE

Facebucks. Project *Facebucks*, we talked about this, Sam.

SAM

Yes and I told you branding is crucial. Starbucks. Facebook. (With a dramatic sweep of his hand) *Starface*.

JOANNE

Fine, whatever. Project *Starface*.

SAM

(referring to the Facebookers) For ten years, our team of brain-dead human clones has been spreading the virtual infection via the electromagnetic ocularities transferred along the conduit of cyberspace into the view screens and keypads and fingertips, yay, into the very hearts and minds of humanity itself, herding them like insecure lemmings to the cliffs of homogeneity found at our alien-abducted coffee counters round the world.

JOANNE

Soon, Earth shall be ours!

TODD

What are you!?

JOANNE

We are the stuff of dreams, we are your worst nightmare!

SAM

We are the Aliens!

JOANNE

From Outer Space!

SAM

And we have come to take over your planet!

Hearts & Minds

Man

Woman

Man's Mind (M'sM)

Man's Heart (M'sH)

Woman's Heart (W's H)

Woman's Mind (W's M)

	M.M.
Shit.	
	W.M.
Why did he have to say that?	
	M.M.
Why did you say that?	
	W.H.
That's a first.	
	M.M.
Why did you say that?	
	M.H.
It felt right. . .	
	M.M.
Now it feels wrong.	
	W.M.
All wrong.	

W.H.

Say something.

M.M.

Abort, abort.

M.H.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MAN runs out of the bedroom races to get dressed.

M.M.

You fucked it up. You always fuck this up.

WOMAN comes out after him.

WOMAN

Its okay.

MAN

I'm sorry

WOMAN

It's okay!

W.H.

Convince him.

W.M.

I'm trying

MAN

It's weird, I made it weird

M.H.

I didn't mean to.

M.M.

Shut up.

WOMAN

No you didn't. It happens.

M.M.

Never again.

MAN

It just sort of slipped out.

W.M.

Tonight's theme.

WOMAN

I'm not mad you said it.

MAN

Ruined the night.

W.H.

Not at all.

WOMAN

As long as you stay, the night's not ruined.

*She takes him by the hand and leads
him back to the bedroom.*

MAN

Do you?

WOMAN

What?

M.M.

What?

W.M.

Fuck.

MAN

Do you?

M.M.

Definitely ruined the night now.

M.H.

I have to know.

Pause.

W.H.

Do we?

W.M.

I don't know.

WOMAN

I don't want to lie to you.

MAN

So no.

W.M.

Not really the moment for this.

W.H.

Doesn't it feel like a yes?

W.M.

You tell me.

WOMAN

Do you?

MAN

Yes.

M.M.

Do you really?

MAN

Yes I do.

M.M.

Are you sure?

WOMAN

How can you be sure?

MAN

When you know, you know.

WOMAN

Alot was happening.

W.M.

Alot of good stuff.

M.M.

Really good stuff.

MAN

You don't believe me?

Audition Side for *Meter Maid McGee*

Characters

Randy Cope (a benevolent pedestrian, male, older)

Rita McGee (A Traffic Enforcement Officer, female, about the same age as Randy)

P5

McGee

Wait a minute. Did you say you can donate your face?

Randy

Yeah, I think so. I think, now it's considered an organ.

McGee

Really? So, they take your face and they put it on someone else's head?

Randy

Sure. I mean, I don't know, maybe, mainly, the skin, I don't know for sure.

McGee

Hmm. And, as an organ donor, you're okay with that?

Randy

Well...with what?

McGee

Some schmuck walking all around the city with your face?

Randy

I guess so. Why not? I won't need it anymore.

McGee

But it's your face, Randy Cope, like Randy Cope is your name!

Randy

I never liked my name.

McGee

It doesn't matter, it's still yours. The face and the name are the same. What if the recipient of your face is a criminal?

Well... Randy

A psychopath? A shithead? A motherfucker? McGee

I guess...I'd...well...I...don't... Randy

When you were at the DMV and checked the box to be an organ donor, Randy Cope, did you also check the box that said, "Don't put my face on a motherfucker." McGee

No, I didn't. Randy

It's your face! Your face and your name are all that matters. Don't you care? McGee

Look, as an organ donor, as a dead person, I will have little control of the sweet hereafter. Randy

If you give your organs away, there will be no heaven for you, just a meat locker with body parts. McGee

A bit extreme, Officer...Officer... Randy

McGee. My name. My face. So, how would you like it if they plastered **your** face on someone like **me**, on, Officer McGee. McGee

You? Randy

Yeah, moi. McGee

They wouldn't do that to you. Randy

No? Why not? McGee

Randy

Well, they'd look for a good match and you have nice skin.

McGee

Oh...

Randy

I mean, if you needed a face transplant, they'd find a good-looking person, an attractive woman with silky skin.

McGee

You think...

Randy

They'd want to get as close to the original as possible. They'd want a good match.

McGee

Oh...well...okay.

Randy

They'd wanna match the color and texture, right?

McGee

I guess so.

Randy

Besides, really, you wouldn't want to have my face, now would you?

McGee

No. I mean, it's not objectionable, but, no, you just wouldn't look right on me. I mean...hmm.

Randy

As you can see, I have some sagging, some age spots, and, then, there's the pruritus.

McGee

(stepping back)

Pru-ri-tus? What's that? Like leprosy or something?

Randy

No, nothing like that. It's just I have severe itchy skin. It's a disorder...provokes me to scratch...some times.

McGee

But what about other body parts...say, your heart?

Randy

You need a heart transplant?

McGee

No, no, just thinking what body parts might be acceptable.

Randy

My heart in place of yours?

McGee

Yeah, how would that be?

Randy

Good question. It would probably be an...upgrade. You should be so lucky.

McGee

Right. Okay, Batman, we are finished here. Take your license with your little red heart and stick it in your pocket. I'm letting you go this time with a warning.

Randy

I appreciate that, Officer McGee, thanks, because this whole ordeal was beginning to make me itch.

Sad Lonely People sides

WADE

So do you um
do you have like
do you have New Years resolutions?

HARRIET

I make weekly resolutions. Well okay I guess tomorrow's a Sunday so technically I do have a New Years resolution but it's really just my next weekly one.

WADE

...
Oh okay. So what's the one for this week?

HARRIET

I don't like ... share them.

WADE

...
Making new friends.

HARRIET

Huh?

WADE

Sorry, I mean that's my resolution. Fresh blood and such, you know?

HARRIET

I'm fine with the old ones.

WADE

Oh, I didn't mean I was getting rid of ...

HARRIET

I was / just kidding.

WADE

The old ones they all moved away, like this mass exodus. Well not "mass", it was like three people and two of them were married to each other, but ...

HARRIET

Been there.

WADE

Friends moving away?

HARRIET

(with quiet gravity)

No, I've been wherever they're going.

WADE

...

(uncomprehending)

Yeah.

HARRIET

I have no idea what I meant by that. Seemed profound, but ... I'm kind of drunk.

WADE

Me too

Oh wait this is sparkling cider, I guess I'm just sleepy.

HARRIET

They don't break out bubbly until it's almost time.

WADE

It's like less than ten minutes.

HARRIET

You're right. You gonna watch the ball drop?

WADE

No.

Wade chuckles

HARRIET

What?

WADE

It's just kind of funny. "Watch the ball drop". Hehe.

HARRIET

Huh?

WADE

Like puberty

or well I guess balls drop before that so whatever.

And we're not facing in the right direction for that.

For what?

HARRIET

Ball dropping.

WADE

...
Are you fucking serious?

HARRIET

The Save

Lights up on a table and two chairs. There is a service bell in the center of the table (please see note). ANDY and SARAH enter at the same time.

Sarah?
ANDY

Andy?
SARAH

Both SARAH and ANDY nod in agreement and sit down.

I'm so nervous.
ANDY

Me too.
SARAH

How many saves did you get?
ANDY

Three. I thought that was enough.
SARAH

Only three? Wow. You must be good at this. I had to buy 10.
ANDY

You probably won't need them all.
SARAH

Hopefully not!
ANDY

So...?
SARAH

So...?
ANDY

Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself.
SARAH

Well, I can start with I am very nervous about this date.
ANDY

SARAH

Already knew that. Plus, I can totally tell. So, ah, what do you do for a living?

ANDY

I recently got fired from my job for stealing.

SARAH

What?!

ANDY rings the bell.

SARAH

So, ah, what do you do for a living?

ANDY

In the process of making some career changes, really. Lots of options. *Tons* of options, actually.

SARAH

Well, that's good! Always good to have options.

ANDY

Yeah. I never really was one to want to be nailed down.

SARAH

Oh, I totally get it. Being nailed down is never fun.

ANDY

I mean...I wouldn't mind nailing you down.

SARAH

Um. Oh.

ANDY rings the bell.

SARAH

Oh, I totally get it. Being nailed down is never fun.

ANDY

Agreed!

DINNER AT DONOVAN'S sides

SIDE ONE

LAURA (cont'd)

I've always been curious about why people order water with no ice. Why no ice?

MELANIE

Oh, ice interferes with digestion. Any extremely cold food or beverage does.

HAROLD

It's a hidden killer!

LAURA

(nearly choking on her iced water)

Excuse me?

MELANIE

Ice. It's the hidden killer of the microbiome.

HAROLD

And there's nothing more important to your health than your microbiome.

HAROLD picks up his phone and texts.

LAURA

I've... heard that.

HAROLD

I'm sending you both some essential information right now.
You'll thank me.

LAURA

I'm... sure we will.

She smiles and raises her ice-free scotch.

LAURA

Cheers!

JACK, HAROLD, and MELANIE

Cheers!

They all raise their glasses and drink.

H

We have some lovely specials tonight. Chef has/

MELANIE

/Not necessary for us. We'll have tossed salads, dinner-sized portions. For the mixed greens, substitute in fresh-baby-kale-very-lightly-steamed, not-raw-not-cooked-to-death. Single cold-pressed olive oil on the side with three wedges of lemon. Apiece. Please. (to JACK and LAURA) We studied the menu before we came.

HAROLD

(soberly)

We find it leads to the least disappointing outcomes.

H

(turning to Jack and Laura)

Would you like to hear the specials?

JACK

No thanks, H. I've heard your ribeye is fantastic. I'd like that, please. Medium rare.

LAURA

I'd like the salmon please, also medium rare. Thank you, H.

H

Very good. Two dinner-sized tossed salads with kale/

MELANIE

/Very lightly steamed. With three wedges of lemon. Apiece.

H

Absolutely. And the ribeye, medium rare, and the salmon, also medium rare.

JACK

You got it. Thanks, H.

SIDE TWO

LAURA

So tell us, how are you settling in?

JUDITH

Well, to be honest, we've always had a very active social life but we're finding it difficult to meet people here. Hence the, you know.../the Mature Couples...

ARTHUR

/Well, meeting people isn't really the problem. It's just that everyone/

JUDITH

/John, let's not go down that path.

ARTHUR

It's just that everyone up here is so damn provincial.

JUDITH

John! (As if to a toddler) Our goal is to make new friends tonight, isn't it?

ARTHUR

Oh come on. You said it yourself! The town is a helluva lot more...*quaint*, to use your word...than we expected. I always said we shouldn't go an inch beyond Westchester!

JUDITH

He doesn't really mean that, do you dear?

ARTHUR

Of course I do. Moving here may have been the single worst mistake of our entire marriage! But that's what we get for fleeing the city in the middle of a global health crisis. We grossly overpaid.

JUDITH

My husband hates mistiming the market. How long have you lived here?

JACK

Thirty-two years.

JUDITH & ARTHUR are stunned.

ARTHUR

And you don't find it to be a little... boring? Come on now, you can tell us the truth.

H enters and serves drinks.

JACK

Well, if we're being completely honest—we like living in a quaint, provincial, boring town. We fit right in.

A moment passes.

ARTHUR

Oh, I get it. You're joking!

JUDITH & ARTHUR laugh uproariously.

JUDITH

Oh, you're mischievous, you are. I can see we're going to be great friends.

JUDITH & ARTHUR continue laughing way too much. JACK & LAURA sip their drinks.

Break of Dawn

CAPTAIN

Captain's Log: Every time I say 'this is the worst of it', it seems to be the second worst of it. Then a new and better worse comes along.

As captain of this tugboat, I am commissioned to escort a garbage barge from New York harbor, to its destination in North Carolina.

The stink of the ship is terrible. My view of the dismal cargo from the window of my wheelhouse: a mountain of black garbage bags, piled three stories high in a perfect pyramid. A cloud of white seagulls circling the peak. Thirty-one hundred tons of trash. At large on the wide black big blue open sea.

Three thousand tons of garbage, and me.

CAPTAIN

Captain's log: About my crew. They are, to a man, lazy, unpredictable, and unfit for labor of any kind. I do not ask too much of them. All they have to do is keep the lines tight, so that the cargo doesn't shift in heavy seas. Keep the engines running, the gas tanks full, oil where it belongs and lubrication where it is needed. Their de-facto representative on board is a skinny little rodent of a man named Smoule.

Our cargo was supposed to have been delivered thirty days ago. But we have been refused by numerous ports of call. This is big city garbage. Rumors have spread down the coastline. Rumors of hospital waste on board. Syringes. Disease. Turned away from Morehead City. Rejected by Louisiana, Alabama. I am forced to sail for Jacksonville, Florida, four hundred and fifty-four miles beyond our original destination. A six-day voyage, now one month old.

LET THEM EAT CAKE

It's an early afternoon in July in the San Fernando Valley. Nora (late 30s) in a cropped top, mini skirt, high heel wedge sandals with perfect hair and make-up is talking on her phone. She's getting ready to go out.

NORA

(Softly) Hey! Oh, that's so sweet! Aww! What? Oh. What are you afraid of? (Surprised) She's not gonna know. I'll never tell. It's our little secret. (Pause) Believe me she is not going to find out. Yeah! I'm sure! I don't want to get ...

Nora hears a ping and sees she has a text.

Oh! My God! It's Stormi! (Whispering, as she looks out the window) I thought you said she was going to that cake competition. You did a taste test? Was it any good? Well I hope she wins. It'll take some of the time pressure off of us. Her text says she's coming here - now...I have to get out ...What? What did you say? Oh my God! I can't have her corner me. I'll tell her ...what? I'll tell her I have a toothache ...an emergency dentist's appointment. Stan? What did you say? You're slurring your words. Stan? Stan? Can you hear me? Meet me ...(Loudly) I'LL MEET YOU AT THE 7-ELEVEN IN 20 MINUTES! Okay? Okay? Shit! I hope he heard me.

Nora quickly looks at her watch, throws her phone in her bag, looks in the mirror and rushes to the door. As she opens it, Stormi (60s), disheveled and out of breath, is at the threshold. She holds two pieces of cake on a paper plate. Nora screams.

NORA

AHHHHH!

Stormi pushes her way inside.

STORMI

OH! Did I scare you? I texted you to say I was coming over.

NORA

Yes, but just now ...I was leaving ...NOW ... I need ...I have so much to do and ...

STORMI

(Pushing her way inside) Please I need to talk just for a few minutes and get your honest opinion on my cakes. The contest is today and I am so nervous. (She brushes past Nora.) One is vegan, the other gluten free. (She smiles)

NORA

I have an appointment ...I was just ...(Looks at her watch) Uh-Oh. I'm due at ...my dentist in like 15 minutes. I have to go.

She crosses to the door.

STORMI

OHHHH! Is that why you're all sexed up?

Stormi jumps in front of her, blocking her access to the front door.

NORA

Excuse me?

STORMI

Well ya got your mojo on ... miniskirt, cropped top, stilettos hair...

NORA

These are not stilettos and besides I dress like this all the time. I'm not a galumpf.

STORMI

That's reassuring ...Dr. Reems's head'll be spinning ...and so will his drill. He reminds me of a pileated woodpecker.

NORA

I have to go.

Nora tries to get around Stormi.

STORMI

(Pleading)) Wait! Two minutes is all I need. I just want you to tell me which one you prefer and then I'll know which one to bring to the competition. (Weepy) I'm so nervous. There's nothing more painful than entering the wrong cake in the wrong category. Who would do that right? But it happens and its heartbreaking. I'm telling you, I think it's more painful than a friggin' toothache because you know in your gut something's not right but you go ahead and do it anyway.

Nora looks at her watch again.

NORA

If I eat the cake, I'll have to brush my teeth again ...I ...

STORMI

Please ...make me be a winner today. The vanilla has buttermilk but the chocolate is gluten free and also vegan. These are just samples, I have the competition cakes in my car all ready to go! It'll only take a minute and I want to feel good about myself. I need to hear the truth. I'd help you if you wanted to feel good about yourself. (Pause) Do you?

NORA

What?

STORMI

Want to feel good about yourself?

NORA

I guess.

STORMI

Well that's not exactly a ringing endorsement.

NORA

(Hesitates) Oh! Well, in that case ...ok. (Pause) I shouldn't but ...I will. (Confiding) I have a terrible sweet tooth.

STORMI

Oh yeah? Well you're not alone, I got 32 of them. (Whispers) Between you and me ...I've put on a few pounds in these taste tests.

Stormi hands Nora the vanilla cake. Nora takes a bite as Stormi watches her smiling.

NORA

MMMMMgood! There's something different here. I can't quite put my finger on it.

STORMI

(She talks quickly) Probably the buttermilk and a few other secret ingredients! There's no end to my imagination in the kitchen. (Proudly) ...I'll tell you, Nora, I am the boss of that batter! Now try the chocolate. You might notice a difference. Maybe not as full-bodied, but you don't get that puckery feel in your mouth. It's the absence of gluten.

NORA

(She smiles and slurs her words a little.) Interesting! I'm curious. What makes you want to bake?

STORMI

It's therapy. (Pause) I think I bake ...because ...punching people out is frowned upon.

NORA

(Giggles) Oh, you're funny.

They both laugh. Nora begins to enjoy the taste test as she unconsciously smears some of the chocolate icing on her mouth.

NORA

Hmmm. I'd say this chocolate has floral notes to it.

STORMI

Really? How so?

NORA

Like it's from the ...um ...forest floor ...yeah that's it ...with a hint of ...(Nora smells the cake, as she searches for words) white pepper ...and weeds ...and toasted hazelnuts. It's really good.

STORMI

I knew I could count on you! Do you know what Stan said to me when I asked him to do a taste test?

NORA

(Giddy) No, what?

STORMI

He said that my cakes had a 'threatening aura' about them. Can you believe that?

NORA

Aww. That wasn't nice. I think they're delicious! I never tasted anything like this chocolate cake.

Nora coughs a little.

ACH! ACH!

STORMI

You okay, honey?

NORA

Oh sure. Just a little tickle in my throat. ACH! ACH!

STORMI

Gee I hope you're not allergic to anything in my cake.

Nora starts breathing heavily and wheezing.

NORA

(Gasping) AHHH! OHHHH! I ...My inhaler.

STORMI

Where is it?

Nora wheezes as she points to her bag. Stormi talks to herself as she looks in the bag.

Gosh! I hope Alexander didn't sit too close to the cake or lick the icing.

NORA

(Wheezing) Who?

Stormi hands Nora the inhaler. Nora uses it.

STORMI

(Baby talk) My honey, bunny, boo, baby, boy, kitty. Don't you know Alexander? When I'm baking or cooking, he's right up there on the counter keeping his mommy company. He's such a sweet fur baby! He's always there for me even when Stan the Man isn't.

NORA

(Wheezing, pointing to herself) Al ...ler ...gic!

STORMI

(Feigning surprise) Oh dear! I had no idea.

Nora continues to cough and wheeze.

Oh! Now I get it! You probably got a hairball! I think it's the Heimlich for you!

Stormi quickly crosses to Nora and stands behind her as she wraps her arms around her waist. She begins an upward thrust on Nora.

NORA

(Tries to speak) Nah ...I ...

STORMI

Don't move! Let me help you! You could die from a blockage.