

QUEEN OF CUPS

(aka, "Merilee," "I See, I See")

"Pilot"

Created and Written by

Ronald V. Micci

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RVMicci@yahoo.com

COLD OPENING

FADE IN:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A SMALL, SINGLE-STORY SUBURBAN BRICK BUILDING WITH IDENTIFIER: "ACME ARCHITECTS."

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

MARILEE HUDSON, A CUTE EMPLOYEE IN HER 20S, GLANCES UP FROM A TAROT SPREAD SHE HAS SET OUT ON THE CONFERENCE TABLE, AT RICHARD PRENTICE, A COLLEAGUE IN HIS 30S, OPPOSITE.

RICHARD

Come on, Merilee, give me a good reading for a change.

MERILEE

You know I always save the best readings for you.

RICHARD

Yeah, but since my luck is usually rotten, how do you do it?

MERILEE

Cheat.

RICHARD

Last time you said I'd come into money. I totaled my car, and wound up paying a lot of money.

MERILEE

I was close. So let's see how I can humor you today.

URNS CARD: THE LOVERS.

MERILEE

Oh, that's a good one. The Lovers. The sex card.

RICHARD

Great. It can't possibly be my wife. (OFF A LOOK) What is it?

MERILEE

Do you mind if she has issues?

RICHARD

My wife or the sex card? Well, we know about my wife. What kind of issues?

MERILEE

Passive aggressive.

RICHARD

As long as she's binary and isn't into cross-dressing or anything too kinky.

MERILEE

Well, there is one thing.

RICHARD

What?

MERILEE

The card is inverted.

RICHARD

An upside down sex card. Well, we
could do it standing on our heads.

DOOR SLAMS OPEN. GARY, A COLLEAGUE, ENTERS.

GARY

Emergency meeting. Boardroom. Now.

RICHARD

Or bend into funny pretzel shapes.
I'll let you know how it turns out.
. . . Merilee, you ever get horny?

MERILEE

All the time.

RICHARD

In case this one doesn't work out,
well. . .

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDROOM

THERE ARE QUIZZICAL MURMURINGS AND STIRS OF TENSION IN THE
AIR AS THE ACME EMPLOYEES FILE IN. THEY HURRIEDLY SEAT
THEMSELVES AROUND THE BOARDROOM TABLE. RANDALL PRESCOTT,
THE COMPANY CEO, POSITIONS HIMSELF AT THE HEAD.

PRESCOTT

I have an announcement to make.

You're all fired.

DISBELIEF AND RUMBLINGS ABOUND. MR. PRESCOTT POINTS TO MERILEE.

PRESCOTT

All except you.

SHE POINTS TO HERSELF.

PRESCOTT

You're coming with me. (TO THE OTHERS) We've been merged. Don't look so shocked. We haven't had a decent project since we designed an upside down cake for my daughter's graduation. Naturally, it came out right side up.

MERILEE

You can't throw all of these people out of work.

PRESCOTT

I just did.

MERILEE

Wait, I'll prove it.

SHE QUICKLY SHUFFLES HER TAROT CARDS AND SLOWLY TURNS OVER THREE CARDS ON THE TABLE.

MERILEE

He could. . . He would. . . We're
screwed.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. BOARDROOM - SAME

AS BUMMED AND BEFUDDLED EMPLOYEES FILE OUT. MERILEE
APPROACHES MR. PRESCOTT.

MERILEE

Who are we merging with?

PRESCOTT

A lingerie company.

MERILEE

Lingerie? We design buildings.

PRESCOTT

So we'll design buildings with big
boobs. Honey, we're broke.

MERILEE

Why me?

PRESCOTT

Isn't it obvious? You have special
powers.

MERILEE

My boobs?

MR. PRESCOTT GESTURES TO TAROT CARDS.

MERILEE

If my powers are so special, why
didn't I foresee this?

PRESCOTT

I didn't say you were Nostradamus.

MERILEE

Does this mean a cut in my salary?

PRESCOTT

(A SMIRK) Not if you play your cards
right.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MERILEE'S HOUSE

HER MOTHER, MRS. HUDSON, IS VACUUMING THE CARPET. MERILEE
ENTERS WITH A GLUM LOOK. MRS. H CUTS OFF THE VACUUM.

MRS. HUDSON

So, the all-seeing prophetess is
home early. What's the matter, bad
card day?

MERILEE

If you want to know, I got fired.
Almost.

MRS. HUDSON

Almost as in horse shoes?

MERILEE

Almost as in I'm the boss's chosen
one.

MRS. HUDSON

Sex or has he just lost his mind?

MERILEE

He actually believes in my tarot readings.

MRS. HUDSON

And why shouldn't he?

MERILEE

I'm a charlatan who likes funny picture cards?

MRS. HUDSON

Besides that.

MERILEE

Look, this isn't going to make sense, but we're merging with a lingerie company.

MRS. HUDSON

You're going to build skyscrapers out of panty hose?

ENTER JULIE, MERILEE'S TEENAGE SISTER, VIA FRONT DOOR.

JULIE

What are you doing home?

MRS. HUDSON

Merilee's had a traumatic day.

JULIE

Oh really? What's the matter, your major arcana getting you down?

MERILEE

No, my major pain in the ass sister.
Butt out.

JULIE

Ooooh, listen to her. The spirits
are restless.

MRS. HUDSON

Julie, Merilee is undergoing a
transition at work.

MERILEE

We're merging with a lingerie firm.
No wisecracks.

JULIE WAVES HER HAND -- WOOOO, I'M IMPRESSED -- AND EXITS.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

A GLASS ENCLOSURE ON TWO SIDES, WITH PRESCOTT'S DESK TO OUR LEFT, AND A SMALL ADJACENT OFFICE OPPOSITE WHICH IS MERILEE'S SECRETARIAL CUBICLE, VISIBLE THROUGH THE GLASS PARTITION. PRESCOTT IS SEATED AT HIS DESK, ADDRESSING MERILEE, AS THROUGH HIS OFFICE WINDOW AT REAR CAN BE SEEN MEN CARRYING STORE MANNEQUINS, AND WOMEN IN SKIMPY LINGERIE, DRIFTING PAST.

PRESCOTT

Merilee, from now on you are going
to be my personal secretary. Indeed,
my visionary, my guru. (CATCHES
SIGHT OF WOMAN IN SKIMPY OUTFIT
PASSING BY) Unless one of them wants
to be, then you'll just be another

(MORE)

PRESCOTT (cont'd)

quack with a deck of cards. (BEAT)
With your supernatural powers, you
are going to lead this firm, all two
of us, back to prosperity. Your
communication with angelic forces,
your ability to read the cards, to
stir the proverbial tea leaves, will
give us an edge on the competition.
We can know in advance what they are
going to bid. Do you follow me?

MERILEE

Not if I can help it.

PRESCOTT

You're going to delve into those
cards and crystals. That will give
us a competitive edge.

ENTER RHONDA DEVOS, A STATUESQUE, ATTRACTIVE WOMAN DRESSED
IN A SOMEWHAT SKIMPY BLACK LACY LINGERIE OUTFIT. SHE MODELS
IT.

RHONDA

You like (what you see)?

PRESCOTT LOOKS HER UP AND DOWN. EYES MERILEE, WHO TURNS A
TAROT CARD. NODS. HE GIVES THUMBS UP.

RHONDA

You need a tarot deck for that?

PRESCOTT

I like to hedge my bets.

RHONDA

(EXTENDS HANDSHAKE) Rhonda DeVos,
CEO of Linda's Lazy Lingerie.

PRESCOTT

Randall Prescott, Acme Architects.
Our motto: If you build it, they
won't come.

THEY SHAKE HANDS.

RHONDA

So, these are your offices?

PRESCOTT

What do you think?

RHONDA

Where is everyone?

PRESCOTT

Oh, they, uh, went out for coffee.

MERILEE

And forgot to come back. What he
means is --

PRESCOTT

This is everyone. That's Merilee,
my resident prophetess and secretary.

MERILEE HOLDS UP TAROT CARDS.

MERILEE

Different strokes for different folks.

RHONDA

You know, I like that. A small,
tight knit staff. Lean and mean.

MERILEE

And broke.

RHONDA

Which is why I come before you.
Well, that and to flash a little
thigh. See, you're in luck. We're
planning an expansion -- you might
say our cups runneth over. We want
to open a series of boutiques or
emporiums and we need a crack
architect to design and build them.

PRESCOTT LOOKS AROUND.

RHONDA

You. I thought we might take a little
drive, the two of us, and scout
locations. I mean, if you're not
heavily engaged with other projects.

MERILEE

He's not.

PRESCOTT

I like that idea.

RHONDA

I'll just change into something more
business appropriate, and we'll be
on our way.

SHE EXITS.

PRESCOTT

How about that, gypsy fortune teller?

MERILEE TURNS A CARD. SHRUGS. MEANWHILE, RICHARD SNEAKILY
APPEARS IN THE CORRIDOR, BACKS OUT OF SIGHT WHEN HE SEES
PRESCOTT. THEN HE SNEAKS A PEAK, RAPS WEAKLY ON OFFICE
WINDOW TO GAIN MERILEE'S ATTENTION.

HE GESTURES.

MERILEE

Excuse me.

SHE GATHERS TAROT DECK, EXITS TO THE CORRIDOR.

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR

AS MERILEE JOINS RICHARD.

MERILEE

Richard, what are you doing here?

RICHARD

I don't want what's his face to see
me. Merilee, I'm in a jam. When I
told her I lost my job, my wife threw
me out. Along with the two hookers
I had smuggled up to my room.

MERILEE

(SCOLDING) Richard!

RICHARD

I told you I was horny. You said hot love was coming. I thought I'd give it a push.

MERILEE

What are you going to do?

RICHARD

You wanna run off to Mexico with me?

MERILEE

I can't run off to Mexico. Well, I could, but your wife would send the banditos out for me.

RICHARD

Could you turn a card?

MERILEE

Okay.

SHE TURNS TAROT CARD. THE HANGED MAN.

RICHARD

Yeah, that's me. Upside down, and hog tied. Listen, can I call you? I mean, as friends, though the Mexico offer still stands. Thanks Merilee. I better get lost. I don't want to give Prescott the satisfaction of seeing me.

(MORE)

RICHARD (cont'd)

He'll think I came back here to beg
and grovel -- which, come to think
of it, is exactly why I came back
here.

RICHARD GIVES HER A QUICK KISS ON THE CHEEK, GOES OUT.

CUT TO:

EXT. STOREFRONT - 'MADAME ROSA' FORTUNE TELLER - DAY

TO ESTABLISH THE HEADQUARTERS OF MERILEE'S NEMESIS.

INT. MADAME ROSA'S

MADAME ROSA, WEARING GYPSY BANDANNA AND SEATED AT A SMALL
TABLE, RUBS HER HANDS ABOVE A CRYSTAL BALL IN THE DIM LIGHT.

MADAME ROSA

Double double toil and trouble, fire
burn and cauldron bubble. . . Merrily,
merrily, Merilee Hudson. I've got a
score to settle.

SHE MAKES A ZAPPING GESTURE!

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR - MERILEE

SHE SWATS HER NECK, AS IF BITTEN BY A MOSQUITO. SHE THINKS
FOR A VERY SHORT BEAT.

MERILEE

Bitch.

BACK TO:

INT. MADAME ROSA'S

SHE ROCKS BACK IN HER CHAIR, LAUGHS.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVING CAR - PRESCOTT AND RHONDA

BREEZING ALONG, PRESCOTT AT THE WHEEL.

RHONDA

You're a smooth driver.

PRESCOTT

That's me alright, old smoothie.

RHONDA

The way you zoom in and out of traffic, kind of slip and slide through the tight curves. You a slipper and slider too?

PRESCOTT

Depends on the curves.

RHONDA

I like a man who slips and slides. Do you feel you get more friction on a tight curve?

PRESCOTT

Are you suggesting what I think you're suggesting?

RHONDA

If it's dirty, yes.

PRESCOTT

So, what kind of locations are we scouting?

RHONDA

Oh, I'd say nothing too jammed.

PRESCOTT

Not too jammed.

RHONDA

I like a feeling of being open.

PRESCOTT

Open, okay. Oh God. On the record,
I'm married.

RHONDA

Off the record, that won't discourage
me.

PRESCOTT

On the record, the coochie-coo has
coochied out.

RHONDA

Off the record, I am curious yellow.
(THEY EYE EACH OTHER) Oh look, how
about that little shop over there?
(POINTS TO SHOP WITH 'GOING OUT OF
BUSINESS' SIGN) Why don't you just
kind of slide her in?

CUT TO:

INT. MERILEE'S OFFICE

SHE'S MANNING THE PUSH BUTTON PHONE ON HER DESK. DIALS
OUT, PINCHES HER NOSE TO DISGUISE HER VOICE.

MERILEE

Hello, may I speak to Madame Rosa
please?

MADAME ROSA

Zeez eez Madame Rosa.

MERILEE

You eez from zee old country perhaps?

MADAME ROSA

Who eez theez?

MERILEE

Theez eez an old, old friend. She eez, how you say eet, plenty peezed off. She place beeg curse on you if you continue to pester her. Pleez, vatch your step, lady.

SHE HANGS UP. ANOTHER EXTENSION RINGS.

MERILEE

(INTO PHONE) Acme Architects, Linda's Lazy Lingerie, take your pick.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

RICHARD PERCHED IN A TREE OVERLOOKING HIS HOUSE.

RICHARD

(INTO PHONE) Merilee, it's me.

MERILEE

Richard? Where are you?

RICHARD

Up in a tree. Literally.

MERILEE

What?

RICHARD

I'm spying on myself. I mean, on my house. I mean, I guess on my wife.

MERILEE

Richard, why don't you knock on the door, kiss and make up.

RICHARD

That's just it -- I saw a strange man go into the house.

MERILEE

All men are strange, Richard. To the strange man, you're probably strange.

RICHARD

I have suspicions. I'm thinking hanky-panky.

MERILEE

Come on. She just tossed you out. You think she could recruit a sub that quickly?

RICHARD

Maybe she had one stashed in her pocket.

MERILEE

Richard. Ring the bell, ask for forgiveness, you know the drill.

RICHARD

But I had plans, Merilee. For us.

MERILEE

Whoa, down Me-hi-co way? Richard, get a grip. I'm a secretary, I'm a tarot nut. Add 'em up -- what do you get? Loser. Buck up. You'll get it together.

RICHARD

Does that mean you no longer love me?

MERILEE

Richard?

RICHARD

Come on, admit it -- little crush?

MERILEE

Look, the big dog and his lingerie mannequin cohort are due back probably any minute. Unless they went motel hopping. Richard, this woman is a flame, she's on fire. And I think Prescott is just the tinder she's been looking for. Please don't ask me to get entangled when I'm trying to figure out how to get Prescott untangled.

RICHARD

Come on, Merilee. Mexico -- think of it, warm sunshine year-round. Tequila sunrises.

MERILEE

Dirty old men in sombreros picking on guitars? Hold on a sec.

SHE SHUFFLES TAROT DECK, TURNS A CARD.

RICHARD

Merilee? Merilee, are you there?

MERILEE

Yeah, just thumbing through the deck.

RICHARD

And?

MERILEE

Look, try to kiss and make up. That's straight from the deck of common sense.

RICHARD

Just tell me you'll at least consider it. Uh -- us.

MERILEE

(PINCHES NOSE) I got another call coming in. Later, Richard.

SHE HANGS UP. OF COURSE, SHE DOES NOT HAVE ANOTHER CALL COMING IN.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUT OF BUSINESS NOTIONS STORE - MAIN STREET
RHONDA AND PRESCOTT SCOPE THE OUTSIDE OF IT.

RHONDA

Perfect fit, don't you think?

PRESCOTT

Can't we find a different metaphor?

RHONDA

Snug.

THEY GO INSIDE.

INT. NOTIONS STORE

AS RHONDA AND PRESCOTT ENTER, HIS CELL PHONE RINGS.

PRESCOTT

(INTO PHONE) Yeah?

MERILEE

This is your favorite soothsayer.

PRESCOTT

Merilee?

MERILEE

All's quiet on the western front.
Can I cut out of here early? All
the stress of these mannequins is
getting on my nerves.

PRESCOTT

Sure, go ahead. Forward my calls
here.

MERILEE

All none of them?

PRESCOTT

All none of them. And Merilee?

MERILEE

Yeah?

PRESCOTT

What do the cards say, you know,
about, about my new acquaintance.

MERILEE

Your favorite mannequin? I'm working
on it. See you tomorrow.

PRESCOTT

Tomorrow.

INT. MERILEE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

SHE GATHERS TAROT CARDS AS SHE HUMS 'DON'T THROW BOUQUETS
AT ME.' ANOTHER MANNEQUIN-BEARING WOMAN WALKS PAST HER
OFFICE.

MERILEE STASHES TAROT DECK IN HER POCKETBOOK, EXITS.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MERILEE'S

AS SHE ENTERS, TOSSES PURSE ON THE SOFA. HER MOTHER ENTERS
FROM KITCHEN.

MRS. HUDSON

Merilee?

MERILEE

No, Merilee headed for Mexico, if
she had any brains. Don't start,
things are getting crazy.

MRS. HUDSON

Aren't you --

MERILEE

Early? Yes. Good behavior. Now

I'm going to crash.

SHE HEADS UPSTAIRS TO HER BEDROOM.

INT. BEDROOM

MERILEE ENTERS, HEAVES A SIGH, THROWS HERSELF ON TOP OF THE BED. CLOSSES HER EYES.

TAP! TAP! SOUND COMING FROM THE WINDOW. SHE OPENS HER EYES BRIEFLY, SHRUGS, CLOSSES THEM AGAIN.

TAP! TAP! JESUS CHRIST, THERE'S A FACE IN THE WINDOW. RICHARD.

MERILEE

No, hallucination.

SHE CLOSSES HER EYES. ANOTHER TAP! TAP! SHE SLOWLY GETS UP, GOES TO WINDOW, OPENS IT.

RICHARD IS ON THE LIMB OF A TREE PEERING IN.

MERILEE

Oh Christ!

RICHARD

I'm sorry, Merilee.

SHE LOOKS DOWN.

MERILEE

You know, it's a long way down there.

RICHARD

I had to talk to you.

MERILEE

Christ.

RICHARD

Can I come in?

MERILEE

Richard, go downstairs. I'll let you in the front way. Can you make it?

RICHARD

Yeah, I think so.

SHE EXITS TO DOWNSTAIRS.

INT. LIVING ROOM

MERILEE LETS RICHARD IN.

MERILEE

Shush! Come on.

SHE LEADS HIM TO HER BEDROOM.

INT. MERILEE'S BEDROOM

MERILEE

What the hell is going on?

RICHARD

I got to the front door, but I couldn't do it, I couldn't face her. Now what am I going to do?

MERILEE

Oh God. Will this day please end?

(HANDS HIM HER CELL PHONE) Dial your land line. I'll do my best.

RICHARD

What?

MERILEE

How many hookers? When?

RICHARD

Two. Yesterday after I got fired.
She came home early.

MERILEE

Dial.

RICHARD

What are you gonna do?

MERILEE

Just dial and give me the phone.

RICHARD DIALS HIS LANDLINE NUMBER, HANDS OVER PHONE.

MERILEE

(PINCHED NASAL SHTICK) Hello, eez
theez Richard place? Theez eez
Richard place, no? Yes, well
yesterday I make mistake, big mistake.
Send booby women to wrong address.
What eez booby women? Use
imagination. Think prostitutas.
Yes, much makeup, much boobies.
Wrong address. My apologies. Zee
booby prostitutas, not intended for
Richard. Big mistake. Right, he no
order. My profuse apologies for
terrible, terrible mistake.

(MORE)

MERILEE (cont'd)

Who am I? Madame Rosa. Yes, gypsy fortune teller in town. I no tell fortunes, I send women. You call cops? Go ahead. Anyway, mistake, mistake, big mistake with boobalás. So sorry. Goodbye.

END CALL.

MERILEE

Now go home. Kiss and make up. I'll send you the bill in the morning.

RICHARD

Merilee, you're something. Can you get me my job back?

MERILEE

Merilee, she try. Now scoot.

RICHARD

I love you, Merilee. I still see Mexico in our future.

MERILEE

Best strike with wife while iron hot. Bye-bye.

SHE WAVES HIM OFF. HE EXITS. HER CELL PHONE RINGS, SHE ANSWERS.

MERILEE

Hello? Mr. Prescott?! What, you're in a phone booth?

INT. BACKSEAT OF PRESCOTT'S CAR

RHONDA IS ON TOP OF PRESCOTT, WHO IS DESPERATELY CHATTERING INTO HIS SMART PHONE. INTERCUT:

MERILEE

They don't make phone booths anymore.
She's got you pinned in the back
seat? What am I supposed to do?

PRESCOTT

The cards, the cards. What do they
say?

MERILEE

Oh Jesus. You don't need the cards,
you need the pro wrestling channel.
Put her on the phone.

HE DOES SO.

RHONDA

Hello?

MERILEE

(PINCHED NOSE) This is honorable
wife speaking. Kindly get off
husband. Honorable wife have big
carving knife. Choppee, choppee.

RHONDA

You're Randall's wife?

MERILEE

Yessee, yessee. Get your mitts off
him. I'm good at tearing hair out.

RHONDA HANDS PHONE TO PRESCOTT.

RHONDA

Who the hell is that?

PRESCOTT

It's my dearly beloved.

RHONDA

She sounds like a Chinese fortune
cookie.

PRESCOTT

She's an -- Asian girl.

RHONDA

She can play with her chopsticks,
we've got better fish to fry. Where
were we?

PRESCOTT

Just getting ready to scoot back to
the office.

HE MANAGES TO DISENTANGLE HIMSELF, FORCE OPEN THE CAR DOOR
AND FLOP OUT.

CUT TO:

EXT. STOREFRONT - 'MADAME ROSA' FORTUNE TELLER

A POLICE CAR PULLS UP IN FRONT OF THE PLACE. TWO COPS GET
OUT.

INT. MADAME ROSA'S

THE COPS ENTER. MADAME ROSA IS SEATED AT HER TABLE IN FRONT
OF A CRYSTAL BALL.

FIRST COP

You Madame Rosa?

MADAME ROSA

No, I'm Frosty the Snowman. Yes,
I'm Madame Rosa.

SECOND COP

Aka Louisa Schnizelbaum?

MADAME ROSA

Let's not get personal.

FIRST COP

(TO OTHER COP) So the Madame, is a
madam. Aha!

OFF A SUSPICIOUS LOOK FROM MADAME ROSA.

SECOND COP

You know anything about a couple of
call girls sent to -- (REFERS TO
NOTEPAD) -- 266 Rosewood Drive, oh
sometime yesterday afternoon?

MADAME ROSA

I'm sorry, I was busy fondling my
crystal ball. What is this?

FIRST COP

Prostitutas sent to Rosewood Drive,
to be more exact.

MADAME ROSA

Wait a minute.

SECOND COP

A little birdie called. A very angry
little birdie.

MADAME ROSA

And I just wonder who that little
birdie could have been to make such
a false, malicious call.

THE COPS SURVEY THE PLACE.

FIRST COP

What's back there?

MADAME ROSA

That's where I keep my spare
prostitutas.

FIRST COP

Very funny.

MADAME ROSA

As you can plainly see, I'm just a
poor old woman doing a shoddy crystal
ball's work.

FIRST COP MOVES TO RAG DOLLS PILED ON A TABLE IN THE CORNER
WITH PINS STUCK IN THEM. PICKS ONE UP.

FIRST COP

This part of your work?

SECOND COP

What is it?

FIRST COP

It looks like a voodoo doll. This
how you get your jollies?

MADAME ROSA

From time to time I like to plant
the occasional curse. I think I
might have a couple in just your
size.

SECOND COP

Exit, stage right.

FIRST COP

We'll keep an eye on you.

THEY EXIT.

MADAME ROSA

That little bitch!

CUT TO:

INT. PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - SAME DAY

MERILEE HAS RETURNED TO THE ROOST. SHE IS GOING THROUGH
PRESCOTT'S MAIL.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE PRESCOTT'S OFFICE

AS HE AND RHONDA COME DOWN THE HALL, AND SHE'S DRAPED ALL
OVER HIM. HE SPIES MERILEE, HERE'S HIS CHANCE, AND DUCKS
INSIDE HIS OFFICE.

PRESCOTT

Merilee? I thought you went home.

MERILEE

I tried. But you know what they
say, home is where the heart is.

PRESCOTT

This is where your heart is?

MERILEE

Not exactly. But I figured you might need someone to run a little interference.

PRESCOTT

Bless your tarot-carded soul. She's a wolf, Merilee. (WAVES TO RHONDA, WHO IS LOOKING IN FROM THE HALLWAY. SHE BLOWS HIM A KISS; HE DOES LIKEWISE) We're not technically merged, you know. I mean the two companies. We just share office space. (DREAMILY) But she wants to share so much more.

MERILEE

I knew you were a dirty old man. Congratulations. Meanwhile, you've got a bunch of mail here, and some of it looks like potential business. Oh, and about Richard.

PRESCOTT

Richard?

MERILEE

Richard Prentice? He's a damned good draftsman. I think you should bring him back.

PRESCOTT

Oh?

MERILEE

You're going to need someone to do
the dirty work when the tide turns.
And by the look of things, it's
turning fast.

ANOTHER CUTESY WAVE BETWEEN PRESCOTT AND RHONDA.

PRESCOTT

Whatever you say. Now, what are we
going to do about that wolf?

RHONDA ENTERS FROM HALLWAY.

RHONDA

Randall honey.

MERILEE

(TO RICHARD) Randall honey, you've
got paperwork. And it's piling up.

PRESCOTT

(TO RHONDA) We'll get caught up later,
sweetie. You just go fiddle with
your mannequins.

RHONDA

Yes, angel. Anything you say.

SHE BLOWS HIM A KISS, EXITS.

MERILEE

Excuse me, I'm going to puke.

(MORE)

MERILEE (cont'd)

Then I'll retire to my office. I think I need a reading.

PRESCOTT

I think we all do.

MERILEE

Open your mail. I sense your luck is turning.

PRESCOTT PICKS UP A LETTER, OPENS IT.

PRESCOTT

Merilee, you're not going to believe this -- we won the bid!

MERILEE

Was that for the Eiffel Tower or the Taj Mahal makeover?

PRESCOTT

No, I'm serious. I knew you were a good luck charm. Merilee, you're a genius!

SHE BOWS WITH A LITTLE MAHARAJA-LIKE GESTURE, EXITS TO HER OFFICE.

INT. MERILEE'S OFFICE

SHE PICKS UP THE PHONE, DIALS OUT. INTERCUT CONVERSATION BETWEEN HER AND MADAME ROSA.

MERILEE

Hello. Eez Madame Rosa residence?

MADAME ROSA

To whom am I speaking?

MERILEE

Eez very deesteent relative from old
country. You wouldn't remember.

MADAME ROSA

Try me, you conniving little bitch.

MERILEE

They have eez expression een old
country, I theenk you like. Eez
called ha, ha, ha!

MADAME ROSA

Ha-ha -- I'll get you for this.

MERILEE

Goodbye, gypsy lady. May creestal
ball explode een face.

SHE LAUGHS, RINGS OFF. SHE SHUFFLES HER TAROT DECK. THEN
THUMBS THROUGH HER ROLODEX. SHE DIALS RICHARD'S NUMBER.

MERILEE

Richard. Of course it's me. Prescott
gave the green light, you're back.
Right, I'm a miracle worker. How's
with the wifey? . . . Good. I'll
see you tomorrow.

SHE HANGS UP. LAYS OUT TAROT SPREAD.

MERILEE

Merilee, you're such a GD miracle
worker. Let's see what ye olde cards
say. . . Hmmm, hmmm, hmmm.

SHE HOLDS UP A CARD -- THE SUN.

MERILEE

(SINGS BEATLES SONG) Little darling,
it's been a long cold lonely winter.
Here comes the Sun, I say, here comes
the Sun. . . It's alright. . .

SHE HUMS, SMILES. ROLLS HER EYES. LOOKS STRAIGHT INTO
CAMERA, SHRUGS.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW