

STILT GIRL

By

Lou Clyde

STILT GIRL

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STILT GIRL

STILT GIRL was originally produced in October 2023 by Chapin Theatre Company (Tiffany Dinsmore, Artistic Director; Jim DeFelice, Managing Director). It was directed by Jamie Carr Harrington, and the dramaturgs were Larry Hembree and Perry Simpson. The set design was by Corey Langley, the costume design was by Tiffany Dinsmore, the lighting and sound designs were by Simon Marchant, the logo design was by Stacy Farrell, and Cindy Binnicker was the production stage manager. The following cast was featured:

Izzy.....Zanna Mills
Stephon.....Josh Kern
Debi.....Debra Haines Kiser
Tina.....Jane Peterson
Max.....Jacob Cordes

STILT GIRL ACT I represented South Carolina at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in March 2025. Cindy Binnicker was the technical director and stage manager. Jennifer Kraus was the assistant stage manager, and the following cast was featured:

Izzy.....Zanna Mills
Stephon.....Josh Kern
Debi.....Christy Shealy Mills
Tina.....Jane Peterson
Max.....Jacob Cordes

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CAST: 2M, 3F

IZZY	23, Struggling actor living in NYC, works for cleaning company
STEPHON	Late 20's, struggling actor living in NYC, works for cleaning company
DEBI	69, widow from Atlanta, strong Southern accent
TINA	55, divorced from Smyrna, Georgia, stronger Southern accent
MAX	25, grandson of Debi, sound engineer on Broadway

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ACT 1
SCENE 1

Lights up in luxury apartment in New York City on Tuesday afternoon. IZZY, dressed in a quirky vintage top with leggings and high-top sneakers, enters.

IZZY. Hey, Stephon. Sorry I'm late. The deli line was out the door. *(Looking around, realizing she's alone.)* Never mind. *(Izzy exits to kitchen humming, returns with cleaning caddy which she places on the dining room table. Exits through kitchen again, returning with broom, duster, and swifter. The door opens and STEPHON enters, wearing jeans and a T-shirt.)*

STEPHON. Hey, Iz. Sorry I'm late. The deli line was out the door.

IZZY. Sure, it was.

STEPHON. It was//

IZZY. //Kidding. Just got here myself. Did you notice 402 in the hallway?

IZZY. How could I miss him? It's like he's taking attendance or something.

STEPHON. That goofy-ass smile....

IZZY. Very Ted Lasso. Hey, maybe he's like an R.A. or something. Did you ever think of that? *(Dramatically.)* Protecting the floor from all things evil.

STEPHON. *(Grabs duster and holds it up.)* Oh yeah, look at me. I'm real scary- like Hannibal Lecter with a feather duster. *(Menacingly.)* Come closer, Clarice.

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IZZY. Please don't eat me Dr. Lecter. I'm very bland.

STEPHON. You'll be fine with a little seasoning. And some Chianti.

IZZY. My life definitely needs some spicing up. *(Stephon throws the duster to Izzy and grabs the broom. He starts sweeping in the dining room. Izzy moves to the living room to dust.)*

STEPHON. So, did you hear back about your audition?

IZZY. Not yet. Tell me the truth. Do you think I have a shot?

STEPHON. Girl. I told you. You're gonna get it. Did the director say anything?

IZZY. No. But I do think I read well.

STEPHON. Let's hear it.

IZZY. *(In heavy accent.)* "Stuck in the slammer? Try Bruno's Bail Bonds. He'll get you out of da clink before you can blink."

STEPHON. Oh, yeah. You got it.

IZZY. I hope so because I'm seriously running low on funds.

STEPHON. Amen to that, girl. So, what's new? You still seein' that waiter?

IZZY. He stole my credit card. I'm like, good luck with that. I was already at my credit limit.

STEPHON. Karma. What about that banker dude?

IZZY. Turned out he was married. And before you ask, the guy I met on Tinder with the bad haircut ditched me after I bought the first round. But that one may have actually been my fault.

STEPHON. How so?

IZZY. I think my outfit kind of scared him. I wore this amazing Mary Quant mini-dress I found at a thrift store in the village.

STEPHON. The one with the tassels you won't let me borrow? Why would that scare him?

IZZY. I paired it with a wedding veil. *(Beat.)* Men are such jerks. All the good ones are gay.

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STEPHON. True. *(Stefon moves on to the couch and starts fluffing up the pillows. He notices something stuck between the cushion and pulls out a humungous pair of granny panties.)* Oh. My. God. *(He holds them up like a trophy and flings them at Izzy. They smack her in the head.)*

IZZY. *(Muffled scream.)* Euuu! *(She bats at them, while trying not to touch them. They land on her arm.)* Oh, my God. I think they're still warm. *(She somehow hurls them into the trash bag without touching them.)*

STEPHON. How very coordinated, Iz!

IZZY. I hate you.

STEPHON. No, you don't. Hey, did you hear there's Non-Eq auditions for Rent National Tour tomorrow? You should come.

IZZY. No.

STEPHON. Come with me, Izzy!

IZZY. No. I will never audition for a musical again. Ever. In my life.

STEPHON. Don't tell me you're still thinkin' 'bout *(Using air quotes.)* "the incident"?

IZZY. Why wouldn't I? It was the most humiliating day of my life. I'm done with musicals. I'm only auditioning for straight plays from now on. Mostly comedies. Maybe just Neil Simon revivals. *(Looking around.)* They left this place in pretty good shape. We should be finished in no time.

STEPHON. Yeah, I've seen worse. I wonder how much they get for it.

IZZY. I'll look it up. *(She grabs her phone and enters the information.)* Okay. Let's see. Two-bedroom condo, two baths, East Village. There's seven properties. *(Shows phone to Stephon.)* Look. Is this it?

STEPHON. Yep. There's that ugly-ass elephant statue. How much they charge?

IZZY. \$900 a night.

STEPHON. Damn.

IZZY. At \$900 a night I could afford maybe one or two hours. If that. I can't even afford to pay \$900 a month to share a room in Brooklyn.

STEPHON. How much you pay to sleep on Lindsay's couch?

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IZZY. Whatever I can. I gave her \$40 last week. And a bagel. Hey, this is cool. Airbnb has a calendar so you can tell when it's booked. Looks like we won't be cleaning it again till next week. It's not booked till Friday. *(Her phone rings.)* Oh. Oh my God! This might be about the part! *(To phone.)* Hello. *(Listens. Changes voice to heavy Italian accent.)* Who you say you wanna talk to? This is Tony's Pizza, the best pizzeria in Brooklyn. Our pizzas are paradise on yer plate. *(Beat.)* I told ya. This is Tony's Pizza. We got a deal on a large three topping pizza and Pepsi for only... *(Hangs up.)* Shit!

STEPHON. Bill collector?

IZZY. How'd you know? *(Beat.)* So, how're things with Jerome?

STEPHON. Jerome who?

IZZY. The guy you were in love with on Friday.

STEPHON. I met someone new. Axl. He might be for real. He texts me back.

IZZY. That's great, Jonathan!

STEPHON. Stephon! Come on, Izzy. Get it straight.

IZZY. I'm sorry! I'm trying.

STEPHON. Forget Jonathan. He no longer exists.

IZZY. You know, Stephon, it's not exactly easy to forget Jonathan. *(Beat.)* I can't believe you're rebranding yourself.

STEPHON. I told you. It was my agent's idea. She said I'd get more auditions if I changed my brand.

IZZY. But you're the same person.

STEPHON. Not really. I got new hair, new edge, new image...

IZZY. I suppose you have a new logo?

STEPHON. Well, I do have a new head shot. Susanna told me I needed one.

IZZY. Of course she did. And did she pay for it?

STEPHON. I wish. It cost me twelve hundred bucks for new head shots.

IZZY. Maybe we should go into the head shot business. Better yet, we can be agents. *(Izzy receives a notification on her phone. She reads the*

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message.) Oh, no! Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit! (*Starts to cry.*) I didn't get it.

STEPHON. Oh, Iz. I'm sorry. They're idiots.

IZZY. What do I have to do to get a part in this freakin' city?

STEPHON. It takes time.

IZZY. You got that SVU gig right away.

STEPHON. No, it took two years to land that.

IZZY. It seems like you're always working. (*Beat.*) I told myself if I didn't get a part by the end of the year I was moving back home. (*Beat.*) I really don't want to live in Manitowoc.

STEPHON. Then don't. (*Izzy's phone buzzes. She looks at a text and collapses on couch.*) What's wrong now?

IZZY. Lindsay just texted me. She needs the couch for a couple days. Her sister's in town and I'm evicted! What am I gonna do?

STEPHON. (*Joining her on the couch.*) I wish I could help. There's six of us in a converted one-bed.

IZZY. No room for seven?

STEPHON. Sorry. (*Stephon stands and starts sweeping underneath the furniture.*)

IZZY. Where in the hell can I go? I have like \$75 in the bank and I don't get paid 'til Friday.

STEPHON. Could you ask your parents for a loan?

IZZY. Absolutely not. I haven't talked to my mom since our big blowup. She's been trying to get me to move back since I got here. She never took me seriously when I told her I was moving to New York.

STEPHON. But you were a theatre major in college, right? What'd she expect? (*Stephon finds a bag of sour gummy worms that may or may not have been open under the couch. Under his breath.*) Score!

IZZY. She thinks going from Manitowoc to New York was a big jump. Maybe she's right.

STEPHON. Do they have theatres in Manny talk? (*Stephon removes a gummy worm from the bag, blows on it, and pops it into his mouth.*)

IZZY. Manitowoc. Sure. Just not very good ones. I'd probably end up working at my dad's bank.

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STEPHON. (*Mouth full of sour gummy worm.*) A bank job? Oh, my God. You'd have to dress like a banker. (*Teasing.*) A navy-blue suit with maybe a white blouse and a red bow tie.

IZZY. Euuuu. Another reason for leaving. What are you eating?

STEPHON. Sour gummy worms. I found them under the couch. Want one?

IZZY. Uh. No!

STEPHON. Your loss. Hey, didn't you say this place was empty 'til Friday? Why don't you stay here?

IZZY. Here? Oh, no. That would be wrong. Very wrong. It would be stealing.

STEPHON. Would it? What would you be stealing?

IZZY. Well, I'd be stealing their –toilet paper.

STEPHON. Then bring your own. You can afford a roll of TP, can't you?

IZZY. What if I got caught? I'd lose my job. And maybe go to jail.

STEPHON. That would solve the rent problem. And maybe Bruno would give you a break on bail.

IZZY. Not funny.

STEPHON. Ok, then. I got a piece of cardboard you can borrow. You can sleep on the sidewalk. I'll help you find a good heating grate, but we better hurry before they're all taken.

IZZY. Please.

STEPHON. Or you could always move back to Manny-tack.

IZZY. Manitowoc. Stop!

STEPHON. The way I look at it, you have a choice to make. Sleep on the grates, go home to Mommy, or... (*Stephon spreads his arms indicating the apartment.*)

IZZY. You know, it is nice. (*Starting to rationalize.*) And, it'll be empty anyway. Hey! I could deep clean for them!

STEPHON. You'd be doing them a favor.

IZZY. Yes. That's true. But what if I get caught?

STEPHON. You won't.

IZZY. But what about that 402 guy? He'll know I'm not here to clean.

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STEPHON. Dress down. Wear sweats or something. That'll throw him off.

IZZY. Do you really think I should do this?

STEPHON. Either that or pack your bags for Mani (*Beat.*) whatever-the-f-it-is.

IZZY. Well...

STEPHON. Hey, I may join you. We'll be just like Will and Grace!

IZZY. I'm gonna lose my job over this.

STEPHON. You're not gonna get caught.

IZZY. I better not. But in the meantime, I'm gonna make this place sparkle. (*Holds up can of cleaning spray.*) Like a Disney princess.

SCENE 2

Later that afternoon. Door opens and Izzy enters dressed like an old lady in a gray wig, wearing a backpack, and carrying a roll of toilet paper. Her phone rings.

IZZY. Hi Jonathan. (*Listens.*) Sorry, Stephon. I'm in. (*Listens.*) Yep. He was there, but he didn't recognize me. (*Listens.*) On the couch. That way I won't mess up the bed. (*Listens.*) Yeah. I thought I'd start with the oven. So, you coming over? (*Listens.*) Cool. See you in a few. (*Izzy puts in her wireless earbuds and sets her phone in a bowl on the sofa table. She removes oven spray, rubber gloves, and a cleaning cloth/pad from the backpack and sets the backpack and toilet paper on the floor. Singing - somewhat in key.*) The sun'll come out. Tomorrow. Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow. There'll be sun. (*She rolls up her sleeves, puts on the gloves, picks up the cleaning materials, and exits toward kitchen still singing. O/S. Still singing.*) Just thinking about tomorrow... (*The singing becomes inaudible and the apartment door opens. MAX holds the door open as TINA and DEBI enter. The door then slams on Max. He elbows it open and struggles to enter, pulling 2 large roller bag luggage pieces each with a smaller piece of luggage on top of them.*)

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Debi is carrying a purse and a cloth grocery bag. Tina, who is toting an extremely large purse, looks ill.)

MAX. *(Still struggling with the bags.)* Did you have to bring all of your bowling balls?

DEBI. What?

MAX. Nothing. I thought you were only staying three nights.

DEBI. We are. This looks great!

TINA. A little small. Kind of like one of those tiny houses on HGTV. I hope we don't have bunk beds. I'm not good with ladders.

DEBI. There's two bedrooms. *(Debi drops the grocery bag on the coffee table.)*

MAX. Where do you want these?

DEBI. I guess in the bedrooms. *(Tina and Debi exit toward the bedrooms. Max follows, attempting to pull the luggage. The large bags collide with each other and tip over.)*

MAX. *(Talking to the bags.)* Oh, come on. *(Max manages to right the suitcases. To himself.)* Three nights. *(Max exits to the bedrooms battling the luggage the whole way.)*

TINA. *(O/S.)* This is a bedroom? My pantry is bigger than this. Which room do you want?

DEBI. *(O/S.)* It doesn't matter to me.

TINA. *(O/S.)* If you don't care, I'll take this one. It's closer to the bathroom.

MAX. *(O/S.)* Okay. There ya go. *(Izzy, still wearing earbuds, enters from the kitchen without her wig, looking like she lost a wrestling match with a grizzly bear. She's got dirt all over her face. She wipes sweat off her forehead, pulls her water bottle from her backpack and takes a big swig.)*

DEBI. *(O/S.)* Maxwell, those are Tina's bags. *(Izzy notices the shopping bag on the coffee table. She pulls out her ear buds and freezes.)*

TINA. *(O/S.)* Debi, Maxwell brought your luggage to my room.

MAX. *(O/S, grunting.)* I'll switch them. No problem. It's my leg day anyway.

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IZZY. Shit! (*Izzy grabs her backpack, TP, and hightails it for the apartment door.*)

TINA. (O/S.) Thank you, Maxwell. You are such a gentleman. (O/S *but getting closer.*) I'm so glad I finally got to meet you. Your Grandma's told me all about you.

MAX. (O/S.) Oh yeah? Don't believe a word she says. (*Realizing she won't make it, Izzy baseball slides under the dining room table just as Max, Tina, and Debi return.*)

DEBI. You're still looking a little green, Tina.

TINA. The Uber was more turbulent than the flight.

DEBI. No kidding! I was half expecting oxygen bags to drop from the ceiling.

TINA. Thanks for meeting us at the airport, Maxwell.

MAX. No big deal. It's easier to catch a disease than a taxi at LaGuardia. Well, I better head out.

DEBI. No, stay for a little while. We just got here.

MAX. I've got a bunch of stuff to finish up at the theatre.

DEBI. Have some appetizers with us first. You look hungry.

MAX. Oh, okay. I am a little hungry. I didn't have time for lunch. (*Max takes a seat kitty-corner to Tina on the sectional. Debi moves the shopping bag to the dining room table and removes a wine bottle. Izzy sits frozen beneath the table.*)

DEBI. Oh look, Tina. We've got a balcony. (*Tina walks toward the balcony and looks out.*)

TINA. It's so teeny. I'm not sure we could all fit out there. (*Max walks to look out. Tina exits through balcony door.*)

MAX. Not bad for the village.

TINA. (*Returning quickly.*) Is it ever windy out there! But you can see right into someone else's apartment. I wonder if it's that nice man we saw in the hallway.

MAX. You have to be cautious of New Yorkers. This isn't Atlanta. (*Tina and Max return to couch.*)

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TINA. I know. But he had such a nice smile.

DEBI. Thanks for arranging this apartment for us, Maxwell.

MAX. No worries. My boss usually rents it out through Airbnb. Got a deal on it for you.

TINA. Airbnb? That's a cute name. Air BNB. Like a bed and breakfast with oxygen. *(Debi takes 4 wine glasses from the buffet and brings them to the coffee table.)*

MAX. Why are there 4 wine glasses? Are you expecting company?

TINA. Just Therese. Debi, where is she?

DEBI. Oh, she was just taking a little nap. I'll get her. *(Debi exits to bedroom.)*

MAX. What?

DEBI. *(O/S.)* Wake up, Therese. We're here! *(Debi returns with a cylindrical container. She places it on top of the coffee table. There is a photo of Therese on the side of the cylinder.)*

TINA. *(Placing hand softly on Therese.)* Welcome to New York, Therese.

DEBI. You remember Therese, don't you Maxwell?

MAX. From chemo? Those are her ashes?

TINA. She just loved New York. Didn't you, Therese?

MAX. So you bought "her" with you?

DEBI. Uh-huh. We talked to her husband about how the three of us had planned this trip and that Therese was going to show us around the city.

TINA. And that we were all going to get tattoos.

DEBI. Her husband agreed to let us bring her along. Apparently, she didn't have any other plans for the week. *(To Therese.)* We're so glad you could join us, Therese. *(Debi reaches into her shopping bag and places about a dozen individual pretzel packets on the Lazy Susan which sits atop the dining room table.)*

MAX. So, is this your first trip to New York, Tina?

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TINA. Yes. It's the farthest I've ever been from home. (*Debi exits to kitchen. The sound of opening/closing drawers is heard.*) What 'cha looking for?

DEBI. (*O/S.*) A corkscrew. There's gotta be one here somewhere. (*Tina pulls a baggie from her purse containing 5 Drinking Buddy Wine markers.*)

TINA. Look. I brought my Drinking Buddies so we can keep our drinks straight.

MAX. What?

TINA. (*Holding up Drinking Buddies.*) My Drinking Buddies. Aren't they cute? Who do you want? (*Izzy removes a corkscrew from her backpack, reaches her hand up to the table, placing it on the Lazy Susan.*)

MAX. It doesn't matter.

TINA. (*Handing him Chip.*) Here. You can have Chip. Just put him on the edge of your glass. Your Grandma likes Mitch - he's a policeman. I'll take Goose. Therese always liked Ryan. (*Debi enters, returns to the table, noticing the corkscrew, and picks it up.*)

DEBI. Here it is. If it was any closer it woulda bit me. Max, would you do the honors? (*She brings the bottle and corkscrew to Max.*)

MAX. Sure, Grandma. (*Max looks at the bottle.*) Grandma, this is a screw top. There's no cork.

DEBI. Oh! That'll make it easier to close.

TINA. I don't know about you, Debi, but I don't plan on closing any wine bottles this week. (*Max pours three glasses of wine. He pauses, looks at Therese's glass and then at Tina.*) Just a little pour for Therese. She's not a big drinker. (*Max pours a small amount in Therese's glass and sets the bottle on the table as Debi returns to the dining table to get the "appetizers."* She returns with several bags and takes a seat on the sectional next to Tina.)

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DEBI. Eat up! *(Max grabs a bag and opens it. Izzy reaches up from beneath the table and takes a bag.)*

MAX. Grandma, are these airplane pretzels?

DEBI. Yep. They were complimentary.

MAX. They gave you all these pretzels?

DEBI. The flight attendant gave me a packet during the flight, and I grabbed a few more on my way out.

MAX. That's a lot of compliments. *(Max quickly finishes his pretzels and washes them down with his wine. Izzy quietly begins to eat her pretzels.)*

TINA. Would you like some more pretzels, Max?

MAX. No thanks. I wouldn't want to ruin my appetite. Gotta save room for dinner.

DEBI. Where are you taking us?

MAX. Maurie's. The best pizza place in town. *(Max stands to go. Izzy crawls behind one of the chairs to avoid being seen. She does not get a good look at Max.)* I better get going. Bye, Tina. Later, Grandma.

TINA. *(Holding up Therese.)* See you later, Maxwell. *(Max looks at Therese and considers saying goodbye.)*

MAX. Bye ladies. *(Max exits.)*

DEBI. *(Eating a pretzel.)* Airplane pretzels are so dry. *(Izzy drinks from her water bottle.)*

TINA. Too bad we don't have mustard. You know what else is good with pretzels? White chocolate drizzled on top.

DEBI. Sounds good.

TINA. I just wish it wasn't so fattening. You know, I've gained about ten pounds this year. Did you put on weight when you went through the change?

DEBI. I did. It started with back fat. Then arm cellulite.

TINA. Arm cellulite? You can get arm cellulite?

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DEBI. You can get cellulite anywhere. Nothing that a good pair of Spanx can't hide.

TINA. *(Puts on her reading glasses and inspects her arms.)* Oh my God. I have arm cellulite. Do they make Spanx for arms?

DEBI. They have Spanx for everything.

TINA. I hate growing old.

DEBI. It's better than the alternative. *(Izzy starts rifling through her backpack in search of her phone.)*

TINA. This one's for you, Therese.

DEBI. Here, here. *(Tina picks up her and Therese's glass and the three of them toast.)*

TINA. I can't believe it's been 5 years.

DEBI. I know.

TINA. Do you still hold your breath when you're waiting for your Mammogram results?

DEBI. Oh, yeah.

TINA. At least we only have to go once a year now.

DEBI. I'll drink to that.

TINA. *(Picking up Therese.)* Hey, Therese! You can come with us to Myrtle Beach next year!

DEBI. Lucky you, Therese. *(Beat.)* We need to avoid Biker Weekend. *(Izzy is looking for her phone. She sneaks a peak on the top of the table. Not there. She runs her hand over the top of the buffet then stands to look at all the shelves. Nothing. She tiptoes into the kitchen.)*

TINA. Some of those Harley guys are cute, Debi. *(Beat.)* So, are we going to the Empire State Building tonight?

DEBI. *(Pulls out phone and inspects.)* Yes. We have dinner with Maxwell and the Empire State Building tonight, MOMA, Chinatown, and Lion King tomorrow, the 911 Memorial on Thursday. And, of course, Hamilton on Thursday night. Then we leave at 3:00 on Friday.

TINA. Burt took Brandy to see Hamilton last year. *(Beat.)* I hate them.

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DEBI. You do know, you are way better off without him.

TINA. Twenty-six years down the toilet.

DEBI. I know. *(Izzy tiptoes back into room, frantically searching for her phone.)*

TINA. He always had the worst timing. He moves out and I get cancer.

DEBI. His loss. You survived. *(Izzy's phone rings from the sofa table. She scurries to it, grabs it, and falls to the floor. Debi turns around, just missing Izzy.)* Is that your phone ringing?

TINA. *(Fumbling in her purse.)* No. It's not yours? It sounded so close.

DEBI. These walls must be paper thin.

TINA. You know, tomorrow's their anniversary.

DEBI. Burt and Brandy? Maybe you could send them an anniversary gift.

TINA. What? Why would I do that? *(Izzy army crawls back to the table carrying her phone in her mouth. She places the phone in her backpack.)*

DEBI. Not just any gift. Hold on. *(She picks up her phone and searches.)* There's a website I read about. Here it is. Professional Poop Delivery Service for that special someone.

TINA. Are you kidding?

DEBI. Nope. For real. They package and sell poop. What kind do you want?

TINA. You can pick? I want something smelly. *(Izzy puts her backpack on her back and looks for a way out. She crawls around the sectional and toward the front door. She stops when she realizes that she can't exit without being seen. She retreats.)*

DEBI. I think they're all smelly. You can get a handful of shit for \$14.95 or a shit-full for \$24.95.

TINA. Can they put it in a pie like the lady did in that movie The Help?

DEBI. The FDA may have rules against that.

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TINA. Then a shit-ful it is. Will they know it's from me? I don't want them to know.

DEBI. You can send it anonymously. Do you want to include a note?

(Izzy returns to her spot under the dining room table.)

TINA. What would I say?

DEBI. This reminded me of you?

TINA. Best paired with Chardonnay?

DEBI. Store at 300 degrees. Here. Enter his address. I'll be right back.

Nature's calling. *(Debi stands and exits to bedrooms. Izzy quickly stands and exits through balcony door.)*

TINA. *(Struggling and grunting, then shouting to Debi.)* My fingers are too fat for these little keys. Can't I just call?

DEBI. *(O/S.)* What?

TINA. I can't figure out this dang phone. *(To Therese.)* I wish you could help, Therese. *(Tina continues to struggle. She takes her reading glasses out of her purse, puts them on and studies the phone. Toilet flushes. Debi returns.)*

DEBI. What did you say?

TINA. Can you help me? I don't know how to do this. I used to have a flip phone, but Sprint wouldn't let me keep it.

DEBI. It's okay. I'll help you.

TINA. I'm so bad at technology. Burt handled all the computer stuff.

DEBI. *(Sitting down, taking phone.)* It's easy. Type in their address here.

TINA. How do you get to the numbers?

DEBI. *(Shows her.)* Now push next. And plug in your credit card info.

Tina digs out a credit card from her purse, starts typing.

TINA. Okay. *(Tina finishes typing.)*

DEBI. There you go. Hit purchase. *(Izzy returns from balcony. Her hair is blown in all directions. She crawls back under the dining room table.)*

TINA. Done!

STILT GIRL

DEBI. (*Touching Therese.*) You go girl! We're proud of you. (*The doorbell rings.*) It's probably Maxwell. That didn't take long. (*Debi opens the door to find Stephon holding a roll of toilet paper and a bottle of wine.*)

STEPHON. (*Attempting to contain his surprise.*) Why, hello!

DEBI. Hello.

STEPHON. How are you tonight? (*Looks past Debi, scanning the room to see if Izzy is there.*)

DEBI. Great. You are...

STEPHON. Oh! My name is Stephon and I come bearing gifts. From Airbnb.

DEBI. Well, come on in. Tina, this is Stephon. From the Airbnb. (*Stephon joins Debi and Tina at the sofa.*)

TINA. Hi Stephon.

STEPHON. So how are you doing? Are you happy with the property so far?

DEBI. Yes. We got here just a while ago.

STEPHON. I forgot. You're from..?

DEBI. Atlanta.

STEPHON. That's right. Hot Lanta.

TINA. Well, technically, I'm from Smyrna.

STEPHON. Smyrna?

TINA. It's a suburb of Marietta, which is a suburb of Atlanta.

STEPHON. Oh.

DEBI. Ever been?

STEPHON. Never. But it's on my list.

TINA. Smyrna is?

STEPHON. Atlanta was but maybe Smyrna should be! (*Holding up bottle.*) Do you like Pinot Noir?

DEBI. Sure! We just have to finish our Chardonnay. Care to join us?

STEPHON. Drinks with Southern belles? How could I resist?

STILT GIRL

DEBI. Great. Let me get you a glass. *(Debi stands to get a glass.)*

STEPHON. I'll get it. I know where the glasses are. Have a seat.

(Stephon walks to the buffet and removes a glass. Izzy, who is sitting under the table, tugs at his pants. He gives a little shriek. He notices Izzy and attempts to recover.) Ooh, these wine glasses are to die for! I mean, look at the contour of the stem. Just beautiful. *(Debi and Tina look closely at their wine glasses, which are not at all extraordinary.)*

TINA. Why, I didn't notice. Very nice. *(Stephon steals a glance at Izzy. He returns to sectional and Debi pours him some wine. Stephon sits, across from Izzy and Debi.)*

DEBI. Stephon, do you own this place? You must know Maxwell.

STEPHON. No, I'm...*(Making it up.)*...I'm an Airbnb guest experience advocate champion ambassador.

TINA. Wow.

STEPHON. We want to make sure that the property is meeting your expectations.

DEBI. And it is!

STEPHON. So, what are you and..*(Looking at Tina.)* Tina, right?

TINA. Yes. And this is Therese. *(Tina gestures toward Therese.)*

STEPHON. *(Picks up cylinder.)* What? This is her picture?

DEBI. Actually, it's her ashes. *(Stephon quickly drops Therese onto table.)* Oh, she won't bite!

TINA. She loved New York so we brought her along.

STEPHON. I see. What are you and Tina...and *(Tapping Therese.)* Therese planning on doing in the Big Apple?

DEBI. We're only here 'til Friday, but we'll hit the highlights.

TINA. Empire State Building, 911 Memorial.

DEBI. And Broadway. We're seeing Lion King and Hamilton.

STEPHON. Don't miss the High Line.

TINA. Oh, no! I don't do drugs.

STILT GIRL

DEBI. The High Line is the best walk in the city, Tina. And who are you trying to kid? All that medical marijuana you smoked during treatment? I was worried you were gonna start following the Grateful Dead around the country.

STEPHON. You were a Deadhead?

TINA. Of course not. I never inhaled.

DEBI. Right. *(To Stephon.)* Tina and I are breast cancer survivors. We're celebrating five years cancer free.

STEPHON. That's great! Congratulations! *(Izzy pops her head up behind Debi and Tina, signaling Stephon, pointing to the bedroom doors.)*

DEBI. There wasn't as lucky.

STEPHON. *(Struggling to understand Izzy yet stay in the conversation.)* I'm sorry.

TINA. Guess what else we're gonna do in New York?

STEPHON. Do tell.

TINA. We're getting tattoos! We made a pact that five years out from chemo we were all getting them. Mine's gonna say Badass Survivor. *(Debi refills Stephon's glass and tops off hers and Tina's.)*

STEPHON. Love it.

DEBI. Do you have any tattoos Stephon? *(Izzy is trying to signal to Stephon to move them to the bedroom so she can leave. He shakes his head to convey his confusion.)*

STEPHON. I'm too squeamish to get one. Maybe one of these days.

DEBI. So, do you work full time for the Airbnb?

STEPHON. Nah. It's just a part-time gig. I'm an actor.

TINA. Wow! *(Izzy is full-out motioning to Stephon to get them to leave the room He doesn't get it.)*

STEPHON. One of a million. I go to lots of auditions.

DEBI. What have you done?

STILT GIRL

STEPHON. I've been in a couple off-Broadway musicals. And I was a cab driver in SVU a few years back. *(Izzy sits, frustrated. Then, gets idea, crawls back under the table, and pulls phone from backpack.)*

DEBI. You were?

STEPHON. Yep. I was a day player. Got my SAG card.

DEBI. Did you have lines?

STEPHON. Uh-huh. Two. I mean two words.

TINA. What were they?

STEPHON. *(Holds hand in front of his face, getting into character, then dramatically, with heavy accent.)* "Where to?" *(Awkward pause, then exhaling, exhausted.)* And scene.

TINA. *(Clapping.)* I think I saw that episode. You were so good!

STEPHON. Thanks!

DEBI. So, what's next for you?

STEPHON. Actually, I'm auditioning for Rent tomorrow.

TINA. Oh! We saw that at the Fox Thee-A-ter with Therese. Remember y'all?

DEBI. Of course. What part are you auditioning for?

STEPHON. My agent put me in for Collins, but I'd die for Angel. *(Realizes he's getting a text, reads it.)* Oh. Oh! This is from my boss.

I'm supposed to show you how to operate the shower. *(Standing.)*

Follow me. *(All three leave for the bedrooms. Izzy quickly stands, grabbing her backpack and the TP. Before leaving she looks at Therese and turns her to face away from her.)*

IZZY. This is our little secret, Therese. *(Izzy exits.)*

STEPHON. *(O/S.)* So, you just turn the handle up to start the shower. *(Sound of shower turning on.)*

TINA. *(O/S.)* Easy peasy.

STEPHON. *(O/S.)* And turn the handle down to turn the water off. *(Sound of water stops.)*

STILT GIRL

DEBI. *(O/S.)* Your boss must think you're dealing with a couple of bozos. *(They return and take seats.)*

STEPHON. What?

DEBI. Maybe later you can show us how to flush the toilets. *(Stephon laughs uncomfortably.)*

TINA. I could use some help with my phone.

STEPHON. What do you want it to do?

TINA. I think I want to Twitter.

STEPHON. Okay, I can help you with that. You need to download the Twitter app. Actually, it's called X now.

TINA. X?

STEPHON. Yes. X. But it's still Twitter. *(Stephon takes Tina's phone and starts downloading app.)*

DEBI. So, tell me about your Rent audition.

STEPHON. It's an open audition. We all have to sing 16 measures of a song. Then a choreographer teaches us a dance and we do it. *(To Tina.)* It's downloaded. Now you just have to sign up. What's your email address?

TINA. Oh, just a minute. My daughter helped me set it up. *(Proudly.)* It's a Hotmail address. Because I'm a hot mess. *(Tina takes a piece of paper out of her wallet and hands it to Stephon. He types it into Tina's phone and hands it back to her.)*

STEPHON. Now you need a password. Just type it in there. You also need a username.

TINA. What's that? Like my email address?

STEPHON. Make it catchy. What do you like to do for fun?

TINA. Well....I belly dance.

DEBI. You belly dance?

TINA. Yes. I'm like Shakira. My hips don't lie.

DEBI. Oh, yeah?

TINA. Yeah. We both have *(Shimmies shoulders.)* sexy Latin blood.

STILT GIRL

DEBI. You have Latin blood?

TINA. Uh-huh. My grandmother was from Columbia, just like Shakira.

DEBI. I thought your grandmother was from South Carolina.

TINA. She was. Columbia.

STEPHON. Well, Shakira, teach us some moves!

TINA. After you get me on the Twitter.

STEPHON. Let's see. Your user name. Shakira's probably taken. How about Shimmy Chick?

TINA. Shimmy Chick? I love it!

STEPHON. Now you need a picture.

TINA. I do? I don't have one.

STEPHON. Then let's take one.

TINA. Wait! I look a fright. Let me fix my face. *(Tina exits to bedrooms.)*

STEPHON. Have you been to New York before?

DEBI. A few times. It's been a long time. Since before 911.

STEPHON. A lot has changed.

DEBI. This is Tina's first time. I hope she likes it. It's a far cry from the suburbs of Atlanta.

STEPHON. I'd say.

DEBI. So, do you get nervous? When you audition?

STEPHON. Maybe a little. Not too much, anymore.

DEBI. I don't know how you do that. I think I would pass out if I had to sing in front of people. Are most people as comfortable as you when they audition?

STEPHON. I guess it depends on what the audition is for. You know, I have a friend who is a really good actress but is worst auditioner in the city. Actually, maybe in the country.

DEBI. Really? *(Stephon is ready for a refill. He goes to the buffet for the cork screw. He opens the Pinot Noir and pours himself a glass.)*

STEPHON. You ready for Pinot?

STILT GIRL

DEBI. You bet. *(Debi finishes her drink and he pours her a glass. Tina returns with her hair teased high, heavy eye makeup, and bright, pink lipstick.)*

TINA. Ready.

STEPHON. Woah! Very nice.

TINA. Thank you, Stephon. *(Tina poses seductively.)*

STEPHON. *(Taking picture.)* Perfect. Now you're ready to go.

DEBI. So, tell us about your friend.

STEPHON. Who?

DEBI. The bad auditioner.

STEPHON. Oh, Izzy! Yeah. She gets really wound up and nervous at auditions. One time she auditioned for a show and the director asked if anyone could walk on stilts and she raised her hand and said she could.

DEBI. Could she?

STEPHON. No. But apparently, she's got freakish pogo stick skills and thought they were transferrable.

TINA. So, what happened? Did she have to walk on stilts?

STEPHON. *(Demonstrates by placing foot on dining room chair.)* Oh, yeah. So, she puts her foot on one stilt and tries to pull herself up on the other. *(Stephon pulls himself onto the chair. The doorbell rings and Debi gets up to answer the door. Stephon is so engrossed in his story he does not notice.)* But as soon as she gets up, momentum pulls her forward toward the director. She's kind of running on the stilts, but is totally off balance. *(Debi goes to the door and opens it to see Izzy, still dressed in old lady clothing, but without the wig, holding a roll of toilet paper out. Her hair is still windblown, and she has dirt smudges on her face.)* And she's trying to sing at the same time. And then.... *(Starts moving back and forth, then jumps down and lands on his butt.)* What a shock. She fell off the stilts. *(Jumps to his feet.)* I wasn't there but apparently one stilt hit one of the production guys in the face and gave

STILT GIRL

him a black eye. The other one landed on the poor guy's laptop and sent it flying.

IZZY. *(Stunned by Stephon's performance.)* Hi. *(Stephon notices Izzy.)*

STEPHON. *(Under his breath.)* Shit.

DEBI. Hello.

TINA. I'm guessing she didn't get the part.

STEPHON. Nope.

IZZY. *(Enthusiastically.)* I'm from Airbnb and I'm here to officially welcome you to New York City!

DEBI. *(Taking toilet paper.)* Thank you. Wow. Airbnb really knows how to welcome people. Come on in. You're missing a great story.

IZZY. Thanks. *(Feigning surprise.)* Oh! Hi Stephon. You're here too?

STEPHON. Yeah, Iz. What a surprise.

DEBI. Iz?

IZZY. Yes, I'm Izzy.

DEBI. You're Izzy? The one with the stilts?

IZZY. Um, yes. I'm never gonna live this down. I'm gonna become an urban legend.

DEBI. Come on and join the party, Izzy! I'm Debi and this is Tina.

TINA. Hi, Izzy!

IZZY. Hi! *(Stephon goes to the kitchen to get a glass. He pours Izzy a glass of wine and they sit on the sectional. Izzy sits next to Stephon and elbows him in the side.)*

STEPHON. Ouch!

TINA. So, you're an actress, Izzy?

IZZY. I'm trying.

STEPHON. Izzy's really talented. She just needs to be discovered.

DEBI. I should introduce you both to my grandson Maxwell. He's a sound engineer on Broadway. You just missed him.

IZZY. Oh, yeah?

STILT GIRL

DEBI. Uh-huh. He got a degree from Georgia Tech in electrical engineering. Had a bunch of job offers in Atlanta, but he just up and moved here after he graduated.

STEPHON. What theatre does he work at?

DEBI. I don't remember. He just changed jobs. We'll see him later. I'll ask him.

TINA. I can't believe I'm drinking wine in New York City with our new theatre friends. Hey. I should twitter about that!

STEPHON. Go for it!

TINA. I will. *(Beat.)* How do I twitter?

IZZY. You're on Twitter?

TINA. Yeah! I'm Shimmy Chick. Stephon got me set up.

IZZY. I'll have to follow you.

TINA. You will? I have a follower!

IZZY. Why Shimmy Chick?

DEBI. Tina belly dances.

TINA. Like Shakira.

STEPHON. And she's going to give us a lesson.

TINA. After I twitter. What do I do now?

STEPHON. You're all logged in. If you want to tweet, just type in what you want to tweet.

TINA. This is so exciting! What should I say?

DEBI. How about "Hanging with my theatre peeps"?

TINA. Oh! That is perfect! *(Tina puts on reading glasses starts typing very slowly.)* H-A-N

STEPHON. Hey, Iz. Debi and Tina are getting tattoos.

TINA. *(Slowly.)* G-I-N

IZZY. Good for you.

TINA. G. How do you do a space? *(Stephon grabs Tina's phone and quickly types.)*

STEPHON. Hanging with my theatre peeps?

STILT GIRL

TINA. Yes!

DEBI. Well, Brittany - my daughter - is ready to kill me. She thinks I'm too old.

IZZY. Age doesn't count unless you're cheese. *(All heads turn to Izzy in confusion.)* I'm from Wisconsin. *(Stephon hands the phone back to Tina.)*

TINA. Now what do I do?

STEPHON. Hit "post". *(All eyes on Tina as she attempts to tweet.)*

TINA. I did it. I twittered! *(Everybody clinks glasses.)*

DEBI. Do you have any tattoos Izzy?

IZZY. Yeah. I've got one on my ankle. A paw print. I got it when my dog Nicki died.

TINA. Awww. That's so sweet. I'm twitting that.

STEPHON. I always wanted a dog but I'm allergic.

IZZY. You never told me that, Jonathan.

STEPHON. Really?

IZZY. What? I don't remember you telling me you were allergic to dogs.

STEPHON. You called me Jonathan again.

IZZY. Oh, Sorry. *(To the ladies.)* He used to be Jonathan. He rebranded himself.

TINA. Rebranded? I thought you didn't have a tattoo.

STEPHON. No, not that kind of brand. My agent suggested I change my image. My brand.

DEBI. Why?

STEPHON. She thought it would help my career. She expects things will pick up now that I'm Stephon.

TINA. So, you can just do that?

STEPHON. Why not?

TINA. Maybe I should rebrand myself.

STILT GIRL

DEBI. (*Getting text.*) Speaking of tattoos. A text from Brittany. Listen to this, “Mom, did you know you can get Hepatitis from tattoos?” (*Typing back.*) It’s too late. (*To Izzy, Tina, Stephon.*) This will be fun. (*Typing.*) I got a spider tattoo on my face. (*Looking at phone.*) Geez. She’s using all caps now. (*Dramatically.*) “Please do not get a tattoo.” Five exclamation points.

IZZY. Where are you getting your tattoos?

DEBI. There’s a salon in the village we’re going to check out. I’m a bit nervous about it to tell you the truth.

IZZY. I could go with you if you want. I’ve been through it.

DEBI. Really? That’s so sweet.

STEPHON. Hey Shakira. What about that belly dancing lesson?

TINA. If you insist! (*Stephon and Tina move the dining room table and chairs out of the way.*)

STEPHON. Siri. Play belly dancing music. (*The music comes on from Stephon’s phone.*)

TINA. Wow! Everybody stand. (*They all stand in the dining room. Tina stands in front of them.*) Okay, start with hip circles. Go clockwise. (*Tina demonstrates wide hip circles. They all attempt to follow her. Tina’s hip circles are very erotic.*)

DEBI. My clockwise or your clockwise?

TINA. Yours. Keep your pelvis neutral. Equalize the circle. (*Debi and Izzy do not understand.*) Bend your knees. Relax and get into it. (*Stephon starts moving his arms seductively. Tina is finding it difficult not to watch Stephon. In fact, she is almost purring.*) Excellent, Stephon. Now change direction. (*Stephon seamlessly changes direction. Debi and Izzy attempt to switch directions but fail.*)

IZZY. Stop showing off, Stephon.

STEPHON. Hey Izzy. We’re belly dancing, not giving birth.

IZZY. Stephon, can you bring Jonathan back? I liked him better.

STILT GIRL

TINA. Ready for figure eights? Twist and sit into it. *(Tina starts doing figure eights. She and Stephon are dancing erotically. Debi and Izzy are struggling mightily.)*

DEBI. How about figure ones?

IZZY. Yeah! We went from zero to eight without passing go!

STEPHON. I got this.

TINA. You are my star pupil, Stephon. Let's do hip drops and shimmies now. *(Stephon and Tina start belly dancing like pros. Debi and Izzy step back and watch them. Tina makes her way to the front of the window and performs. Izzy then does a pelvic thrust walk to the sectional. Debi joins Izzy, walking like an Egyptian (from 1980s music video). They sit. Tina and Stephon exit to the back hallway and the volume of belly dance music fades.)*

DEBI. How long have you and Stephon known each other?

IZZY. Less than a year, but it feels like we've been friends forever.

DEBI. I'll bet you have a lot of friends in New York.

IZZY. Not as many as you think. New York City can be a lonely place.

DEBI. I imagine it's easy to get swallowed up in a big city. Speaking of friends, let me introduce you to Therese.

IZZY. Therese? Is that what I think it is?

DEBI. Yeah. Therese went through chemo with us but...

IZZY. I'm sorry.

DEBI. She was a blast. And she loved New York. She came here every year. This trip was her idea. We were all going to get survivor tattoos.

IZZY. Well, I'm glad you brought her along. Are you going to scatter her ashes?

DEBI. Nah. We just borrowed her from her husband for the trip. We have to return her intact. So, to speak. *(Debi's phone rings and she recognizes the number.)* Sorry, I need to take this. *(Debi steps to downstage right to take the call. She talks quietly into the phone.)* This

STILT GIRL

is Debi. *(Stephon and Tina return. Stephon, shimmying wildly, moves to Izzy.)*

STEPHON. Izzy, you will never get better at dancing without practice!

IZZY. I injured my pelvis.

STEPHON. Liar. Don't blame me when you don't get a call-back for Rent.

IZZY. Read my lips. I'm not auditioning for Rent. *(Izzy is watching Debi on the phone.)*

STEPHON. Well, in that case. *(Grabbing Therese.)* Come on, Therese. I know you can belly dance.

DEBI. *(Into phone.)* Yes. That will work. Thank you. *(Listens.)* It's okay. No. I'm sure I'll have questions for you on Monday. *(Stephon and Therese shimmy in a circle away from Izzy. Tina is putting on a show in front of the window.)*

STEPHON. Look at you dance, Therese! *(To Tina.)* I wish we had some glitter. Hey! We should do a TikTok!

TINA. Great idea. *(Beat.)* What's a TikTok?

DEBI. *(Into phone.)* Thanks for calling. Goodbye. *(Debi returns to the sectional.)* Sorry about that. What were you saying?

IZZY. Is everything okay?

DEBI. Oh, yes. That was just my dentist reminding me about an appointment next week. *(The doorbell rings. Stephon and Tina don't notice and continue dancing.)* It's like Grand Central Station around here. Is this gonna be another Airbnb employee welcoming us to the Big Apple? *(Debi opens the door to find Max.)* Oh, hi Maxwell! That was quick. *(Izzy recognizes Max as the stilt guy from the infamous audition and quickly exits to the bedrooms. Stephon and Tina continue to dance, unaware that Max has entered.)*

MAX. Grandma, what the hell is going on?

DEBI. We're having fun. Come in and meet our new actor friends. *(To Tina.)* Tina, Maxwell's back.

STILT GIRL

TINA. Maxwell! Come dance with us. (*Tina grabs Max by both hands and attempts to pull him into the dining room to dance. Max is not interested in belly dancing. He politely pulls away.*)

MAX. Uh. No. No thanks. (*Stephon and Tina keep dancing.*)

DEBI. This is Stephon. Stephon, this is my grandson, Maxwell.

STEPHON. (*Waves to Max.*) Hi, Maxwell. Nice to meet you.

MAX. What are you doing here? What's going on? Grandma, who is this guy? (*Max's phone rings. Into phone, flustered.*) Yeah, Mom. I'm here. (*Listens. To Debi.*) Did you get a tattoo yet?

DEBI. Yeah. The flight attendant gave me one.

MAX. (*Into phone.*) No. (*Listens.*) Okay. (*To Debi.*) Mom wants to talk to you.

DEBI. (*Taking phone.*) What? (*Listens.*) What do you mean imagine how it will look when I'm old and wrinkly? I already am. (*Debi ends call. Hands the phone back to Max.*)

MAX. (*Even more flustered.*) Oh my God. Grandma, who is this guy?

DEBI. Stephon. He and Izzy work for the Airbnb. They're... what is your job, Stephon?

STEPHON. Siri, stop music. (*The music stops.*) What?

DEBI. What's your job, again?

STEPHON. We're Airbnb guest experience (*Struggling to remember.*) specialty welcomers. We deliver toilet paper.

MAX. What? Can I see some ID?

TINA. Maxwell, Stephon showed us how to work the shower.

MAX. The shower??!!!!

DEBI. And he brought us a bottle of wine. Wait. Where's Izzy?

TINA. She probably went to the bathroom.

MAX. Can I see some ID?

STEPHON. (*Looking in his pockets.*) Well, I work part-time for Airbnb. Where's my id? Maybe I left it at the office.

MAX. At the office. Right. And you were ... belly dancing?

STILT GIRL

DEBI. Yeah! Tina was teaching us.

TINA. I've got sexy Latin blood.

DEBI. She lost me at hip circles. *(Stephon's phone beeps.)*

STEPHON. Oh! That's my boss texting me. Izzy and I gotta go. We've got another *(Beat.)* roll to deliver.

MAX. Roll?

STEPHON. Toilet paper. *(Loudly, to bedroom.)* Izzy.... We need to move on to Spruce Street. *(Izzy enters and rushes toward the door.)*

IZZY. It was great to meet you all!

DEBI. Wait, Izzy! I want you to meet Maxwell. My grandson.

IZZY. *(Hiding her face.)* Nice to meet you.

MAX. Wait. You look familiar. Have we met?

IZZY. Oh, no. I just have one of those faces.

MAX. You're an actor?

IZZY. Yeah. Maybe you saw me on the Hallmark Channel.

DEBI. Are you sure you have to leave?

TINA. Don't go. We've been having so much fun!

STEPHON. The boss is calling. *(Max is looking carefully at Izzy.)*

IZZY. Yeah. Better go. *(Izzy heads toward the door.)*

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