

Shoe Shine Diner

by

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Cast of Characters

<u>BETSY</u> :	40's
<u>HAMMER</u> :	50's
<u>CHLOE</u> :	Teens

Place
Diner

Time
Afternoon

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside a large but old school 1950's American styled diner. It's old but retains its charm.

At Rise: The play opens with Hammer wiping down the counter with a towel and Betsy staring at the clock on the wall, while holding a broomstick.

BETSY: You set that clock back, Hammer?

HAMMER: Why is it...that's today?

BETSY: Yep.

HAMMER: Shit. I can't be gettin' on no ladder today.

BETSY: I'll do it.

HAMMER: No, no, no, you'll fall.

BETSY: I have better balance than you.

HAMMER: Betsy, forget it, let the clock read wrong all damn day for all I care. Not like we gettin' any customers anyhow.

BETSY opens up a closet stage right,
dragging out a ladder.

BETSY: Even still, we keep things in working order, we get paying customers. Gotta believe that.

HAMMER: Alright, I guess.

BETSY places ladder below the clock.

HAMMER: Be careful, lemme stand beneath ya, hold the damn ladder in place.

BETSY climbs the ladder and grabs hold of
clock on wall.

BETSY pretends to fall and screams.

HAMMER screams.

BETSY laughs her head off.

BETSY: Shoulda seen your face!

HAMMER: You call that funny?

BETSY: That was so worth it.

HAMMER: According to you. I almost fainted!

BETSY adjusts the clock's time and mounts
it back on the wall.

BETSY descends from the top of ladder.

BETSY: Done!

HAMMER: Easy peasy.

BETSY: Lemon squeezy.

BETSY takes ladder and puts in back into
the closet.

HAMMER: You expecting a raise now?

BETSY: Maybe.

HAMMER: Shit. (he laughs)

BETSY: It's been six months.

HAMMER: Six months my foot. Gave you a raise not two months ago. I
keep track a these things you know.

BETSY: Yeah, yeah, don't get so excited.

HAMMER: I've already had enough excitement for the day.

In comes CHLOE.

HAMMER: Spoke too soon.

CHLOE: Hello Mr. Hammer, Betsy.

HAMMER: You ain't come to sell me chocolate candy again, have ya?

CHLOE: Nope.

BETSY: Or papers, we already sell them all.

CHLOE: Nope.

HAMMER: Or Silver spoons. Or ladies underwear. Or toothpaste. You
know this is a family diner.

CHLOE: I'm not selling anything today.

BETSY: That's a first.

CHLOE: Besides, ya'll never buy anything.

HAMMER: Cause you don't bring nothin' in here worth buying.

CHLOE: I have a proposition.

HAMMER: Ah, here we go.

CHLOE: It's a really good deal.

BETSY: Anybody says it's a good deal, means it ain't a good deal.

CHLOE: I want to be business partners.

BETSY: (laughs)

HAMMER: What kind of business partners?

CHLOE: I'm gonna polish shoes.

HAMMER: Is that what all that baggage you're holdin' is?

CHLOE: Sure is.

HAMMER: Lemme see what you got there.

CHLOE opens up a wooden box.

CHLOE: This is all I need, THIS and a spot.

HAMMER: Spot? What's a spot?

CHLOE: A business location.

HAMMER: Yeah---

CHLOE: I'd like to set up shop in the corner of this here diner Mr. Hammer. I'll give you fifty percent of my profits.

HAMMER: Half?

CHLOE: Correct.

HAMMER: And where exactly would you set up shop?

CHLOE looks around and finds a vacant corner.

CHLOE: (pointing) There!

CHLOE walks over to the corner.

CHLOE: Right here! This'll be perfect.

BETSY: You'll be blockin' traffic to the restrooms.

CHLOE: That's the whole point. I need foot traffic.

HAMMER: Why not go to the station for that?

CHLOE: Cause the way I figure it, people are on the go at the stations. And if people here can afford to sit back an' eat in your diner, they sure as well can afford to have their shoes polished too.

When they come here, they sit down for at least thirty minutes, that gives me plenty of time to polish their shoes while they eat. It's a convenience. By the time they finish their meal, they'll have a new pair of shoes waitin' for 'em.

HAMMER: That don't sound half crazy?

BETSY: (to HAMMER) But she's gonna be blockin' up the whole path for people who need to use the restrooms!

CHLOE: All I need is a chair, which I can wedge in here and I won't be in anybody's way. I'll make sure of it.

BETSY: And what else d'you want? Expect me to wait on you with a constant supply of burgers and fries and coca-cola?

CHLOE: That don't sound like a bad idea.

BETSY: Absolutely not!

HAMMER: (laughs)

CHLOE: What about it Mr. Hammer?

HAMMER: This can't be an everyday thing, you have school.

CHLOE: I can work the hours of five to nine. I'll do dinners.

BETSY: That's when we're most busy.

CHLOE: Doesn't it work out great?

HAMMER: Ah, hell, now...what you make of this Betsy?

BETSY: I think this is gonna be a disaster.

HAMMER: Hmm. Chloe, why do you wanna polish shoes?

BETSY: Money.

HAMMER: And why do you need money?

BETSY: Same reason everybody needs money, Mr. Hammer.

HAMMER: ...Lemme see what you can do with these first?

HAMMER takes off his shoes.

HAMMER (cont'd): Polish them up good and if you do a good job with 'em, maybe we can go forward with this business partnership.

CHLOE takes HAMMER'S shoes and gets to polishing stage left.

BETSY: Why you givin' this girl more room to annoy me?

HAMMER: She's not so bad.

BETSY: She's an outright pain in the butt!

HAMMER: (laughs) I get a kick out of her.

BETSY: She's gonna take my tips. What will you do then?!

HAMMER: Take it easy Betsy--

BETSY: I have mouths to feed Hammer. I can't have no obnoxious teenager taking food off my table.

HAMMER: Let's give her a chance.

BETSY: This is foolish of you.

HAMMER: I'll tell you what, that fifty-percent split she was talking about giving me, I'll turn over to you.

BETSY: To me?

HAMMER: That's right. You might even make more money than you are currently making. How does that sound?

BETSY: I don't like how it sounds...sounds, sounds complicated. I like things steady, not all over the place like a yo-yo. I need consistency or I get confused. And she confuses me. She talks too fast, she's too quick, makes me nervous and now you want her to stay here, work here, every day? My son goes to school with her and I hear stories, stories you don't know nothin' about. She might attract shady characters here and there and they'll be makin' their ways around this place, what will you do then Hammer? No, no. I should start lookin' for other work cause this is, this is beyond my comprehension. And I like workin' here, I'm family. Aren't we family? That girl is an invader! She's a space invader, ah, ah, a different kind a' species that will swallow us up in here, into something, something unrecognizable...please Hammer, please reconsider this idea!

HAMMER: Did you use the term space invader?

BETSY: I believe I did.

HAMMER: We're all space invaders, aren't we?

BETSY: There needs to be a trial period of some kind.

HAMMER: Alright. I'll give Chloe two weeks.

BETSY: Two weeks?!

HAMMER: Sure.

BETSY: My life can be over in two weeks. Was thinkin' more like two hours.

HAMMER: Now, now, Betsy.

BETSY: We need to compromise.

HAMMER: ...One week.

BETSY: ...That's still---

HAMMER: Betsy, we both know them stories you're talkin' about. That girl comes from a bad home. I know it. I'm fully aware. But that don't make it right to rob her of an opportunity if she wants to try and do right. Lot's of kids in her position don't try and do right...if for some strange reason I've been chosen to open up a door and give her a chance to, I don't know, encourage her along a decent path, then who am I to stand in the way, or you for that matter. That wouldn't be right.

CHLOE comes with polished shoes.

CHLOE: Here you go!

HAMMER: That was fast?

CHLOE: Fast and furious.

HAMMER: What do I owe ya?

CHLOE: That's on the house. Do we have a deal?

HAMMER: Well...(examining his shoes) looks pretty darn good to me...you have yourself a deal.

CHLOE sticks out her hand and shakes HAMMER'S.

CHLOE: By the way that clock is wrong.

BETSY: No, it's not.

CHLOE: Yeah, supposed to be 5PM, it reads 7PM.

BETSY: Oh, I, I must have gotten it wrong before.

CHLOE: That's alright, that's what I'm here for.

END OF PLAY