

Comparing Apples and Bananas

Jack

Linda

Figure: A figure in the shadows, either gender. Evil. Good voice.

ACT I

Scene 1: A soft spotlight illuminates a small table at center stage. JACK is sitting on one side, nervously tapping his food. LINDA is standing on the other side, holding a very large knife.

JACK (anxious): Put the knife down, Linda! Fine, I'll tell you what he did with the apple.

LINDA (slurring her words): You better spill it, Jack, I'm tired of your games.

JACK (reluctant): He.. he sold it at auction. To the highest bidder. I didn't have the scratch to get it back.

LINDA (waving the knife around as she speaks): Sold it? That apple was worth more than gold – worth more than you can imagine. Do you know what you've done?

JACK (defensive): It wasn't my fault! I didn't know he was going to sell it. I thought I could just slip in, grab it and get out. I didn't know how much it was really worth. I mean – it's fruit.

LINDA (still waving the knife): You never know anything do you. Never read the briefs, never check the news. You're always just stumbling around in the dark. You're lucky you got out alive.

JACK: Don't you dare blame me for this. If I hadn't pretended to be one of the potential buyers, we'd never even know it had been sold! You were the one who knew it's worth, Linda Lee. You're just as responsible as I am!

LINDA (bitter laughter): Me? Responsible? Hardly. I'm just a pawn in your game, Jack. (mimics him) "Boo hoo, I didn't have the scratch!" (normal voice) You think you can manipulate me, but I see right through you.

JACK (leaps to his feet): You? You don't know anything about me! You have no clue what I've been through!

LINDA (advancing with the knife): Oh, I know more than you realize, Jack-o. I know about the lies, the betr – beray – betryl –

JACK (correcting her drunken misspeech): Betrayal.

LINDA (still drunk): Right, betrayal.

(They circle each other warily, tension evident between them.)

JACK (desperate): Look, Linda, we can figure this out together. We can find the apple, get it back, make things right.

LINDA (scoffing): And why would I trust you Jack-o? Have you ever given me a reason to? I don't sink – think – so.

JACK: Because we need each other, you and me. We're in this together, whether you like it or not.

LINDA (considering): Alright, fine. But if you ever betray me again, Jack-o, I won't hesitate to use this knife.

(As distant sirens sound offstage, Linda flings the knife so that it lands point-down on the table, and bobbles there. Then... blackout.)

Scene 2: Lights up on a dark alley, the only light coming from streetlamps on the stage, and neon signs. JACK and LINDA are rummaging through metal trash cans.

JACK (grimacing): This place reeks. I can't believe we're out here sorting through – I don't even want to know what we're sorting through -for clues.

LINDA (continuing to sift through trash): It's your fault we're in this mess, remember? If you hadn't been so careless...

JACK (defensive): I might have made a mistake, but you're the one who thought we should get involved with this in the first place. (Mimics her) "We have to help, Jack-o. We have to make it right."

LINDA (snark) I'm pretty sure you're the one who insisted we 'make it right.' Oh... hey! Look at this!

JACK: What, another empty Snickers wrapper?

LINDA (holding up a piece of paper): Did you have to mention Snickers. I'm starving! (shakes paper in front of JACK's face): This! This!

JACK: Well, what's it say?

LINDA (peering in the dim light, then reading aloud): "Meet me at midnight. Warehouse 13."

JACK (excited): That's got to be a lead. Let's go, Linda Lee!

LINDA: Can we stop for a Snickers on the way?

(They hurry offstage and the lights fade to black.)

Scene 3: The lights come up on an abandoned warehouse. Light streams through broken windows from streetlights outside. JACK and LINDA enter cautiously, looking around as they move.

JACK (whispering): This place gives me the creeps. Are you sure this is where we're supposed to be. I mean, wasn't Warehouse 13 a television show? Maybe they meant the studio across down.

LINDA (annoyed, nervous): For god's sake, Jack, we're in the right place. I'm positive. But, be careful. We don't know who – or what – we're dealing with.

(The pair moves deeper into the warehouse, jumping at the sound of their own footsteps and breath until...)

JACK (freezing in place): Did you hear that?

LINDA: Hear what? Your heavy breathing? I told you that you needed to increase your cardio.

(There is a faint shuffling sound)

JACK: *That.* (Points) Over there, behind those crates.

(JACK and LINDA each draw a gun and hold them at the ready as they inch toward the stack of crates. LINDA arrives first and peeks around the corner.)

LINDA: It's... it's

(The lights shift to reveal a shadowy FIGURE holding a briefcase. A large Panama hat obscures their face, and their voice is filtered when they speak.)

JACK (to the FIGURE): You've got a lotta nerve showing your face around here.

FIGURE: But I'm not showing my face, Jack. And *you've* got a lot of nerve stealing from me.

JACK: Technically, I didn't steal anything, I only attempted a theft. (Defiant) And anyway, that apple was rightfully ours!

FIGURE (laughing): Rightfully yours? You're even more foolish than I thought.

LINDA (stepping forward): Enough with the chatter. Where's the apple?

(FIGURE opens the briefcase, and displays a glittery, apple-shaped object.)

FIGURE: Right here. I'll hand it over for a price.

JACK (Skeptical): Sure you will. (beat) How much?

FIGURE: Fifty thousand dollars.

LINDA: Oh, please, if we had that kind of money, Jack-o would've won the thing at the auction.

FIGURE: Perhaps. Perhaps not. Do we have a deal?

LINDA: What's option two?

JACK (to Linda): How do you know there's an option two?

LINDA (to Jack): There's *always* an option two. (to Figure) Well?

FIGURE: You should listen to the woman, Jack. She's right. There is another option. (beat) You could go on a little... errand... for me.

JACK: What kind of errand?

FIGURE: Let's just say... it involves a certain group of individuals buying groceries in Panama.

(Jack and Linda exchange glances, having a whole conversation with just facial expressions. Finally, Linda shrugs, and Jack nods.)

JACK (to Figure): Fine. We'll do it. If you hand over the apple first.

(FIGURE snaps the briefcase shut and hands it to LINDA.)

FIGURE: I'll let you have it, but I'll be watching. You double-cross me and when I come to retrieve this I won't be so... pleasant.

(Figure disappears into the shadows, leaving Jack and Linda alone in the warehouse.)

JACK (sighing): Looks like we're in deeper than we thought.

LINDA: True. But at least we have the apple right? (beat) Fancy a trip to Panama?

(They exit the stage, the sound of sirens wailing in the distance. Then the lights go to black.)

ACT II

Scene 1: The stage lights come up on a crowded marketplace in Panama. JACK and LINDA are nervously scanning the crowd. LINDA has the briefcase.

JACK (softly): Do you see them?

LINDA (still searching the crowd): Not yet. But they should show up any minute.

(They wait. Tension builds and their body languages shows how antsy they are.)

LINDA (poking Jack in the ribs): There! Over by the bodega!

(They move cautiously toward the people at the fruit display outside the bodega, and begin to pick up different fruits and put them down, trying to blend in.)

JACK: Are you sure it's them?

LINDA: Absolutely. Guy in a Panama hat, girl with a flamingo purse.

JACK: Everyone's wearing a Panama hat.

LINDA: But only *she* has a flamingo purse.

JACK: Gotcha. Let's make the switch and get out of here.

(Jack and Linda move toward the couple in question and trade the briefcase for the flamingo purse. They head away from the crowd.)

JACK (anxious): Something's wrong.

LINDA: What?

JACK: That was too easy. I feel like we're being played.

FIGURE appears, still with the Panama hat obscuring their hat. They're wearing a colorful "Hawaiian" shirt over loose pants.

FIGURE: Well, look who's here.

JACK: Uh-oh.

LINDA: Shh. (She reaches up and tugs on her downstage earring). Guess Panama really is the 'in' place to vacation.

FIGURE: I'll be taking that bag.

(Sirens sound in the distance, growing louder and louder with cop walla mixed in. A smoke bomb is hurled onto the stage. The crowd panics. In the confusion, LINDA and JACK make a break for it.)

LINDA: We have to go, Jack. Now!

JACK: But... but..

LINDA: Shut up. And RUN!

FIGURE (their line trails off): You can't run from me foreveerrrrrrr.

FIGURE: [Smirking] Pleasure doing business with you, Jack.

(Blackout.)

Scene 2: The stage lights come up on the same table from ACT I. Jack and Linda are sitting at the table, counting their money. A television mounted above them shows FIGURE being escorted off an airplane in handcuffs. The flamingo purse is on the table, and so is the glittery apple.

JACK (counting): That's fifty thousand dollars exactly.

LINDA (laughing): I can't believe they fell for that ploy.

JACK (also laughing): I can't believe you were wearing a wire and working for Interpol.

LINDA: A girl's gotta have her secrets, Jack-o.

JACK: Yeah. (smiling) We make a pretty good team.

LINDA (laughing): When you follow instructions, we do.

(They sit in comfortable silence for a moment, the weight of their recent escapades hanging in the air.)

JACK: Listen, Linda... I need to tell you something.

LINDA (wary): Oh?

JACK: I – I'm sorry for everything – the lying, betraying your trust. I never meant to put you in danger.

LINDA (Touched): It's okay, Jack. We all make mistakes. What's important is that we learn from them.

JACK: You're right. And I promise, from now on, I'll do better.

LINDA (magnanimous): That's all I ask. (beat) Well, that and a Snickers bar.

JACK: I have something *else* I need to tell you.

LINDA: What now?

JACK: About those about those fifty people buying groceries in Panama...

LINDA (confused): What about them?

JACK: Truth is – they were a busload of tourists on vacation.

LINDA (laughing): So there really were fifty of them buying groceries in Panama!

(As they share a laugh the lights fade to black and the curtain drops)