

NO WHITE MONGOOSE FOR WILMA

WRITTEN BY DARREN BREALEY

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NO WHITE MONGOOSE FOR WILMA

Wilma Cruikshank – an alumnus of University of Oxford and a contemporary of Charles Darwin – is remembered for being the first woman to pen a complete description of a fossilised dinosaur, the Megalosaurus. In her spare time, however, she was also a woman who insisted on dining on everything, including roast hedgehog, potted ostrich, panthers, porpoises, puppies; garden moles, though, are a bridge too far. However, perhaps Cruikshank's greatest gustatory achievement is her reportedly having eaten the shrunken heart of King Louis XII – a distinction that arguably overshadows her account of a Megalosaurus. Wilma continues to lament over the loss of her husband and seeks to bring the perpetuator to justice.

Characters:

Wilma Cruikshank
Reginald
Mrs Carshalton
Mandrake
Mrs Zizou

In front of Wilma is Reginald, dressed in his black waistcoat and tails suit. He stands with his back to Wilma. A darts board is attached to the back of his black jacket. Only the darts board is visible. Two or three darts randomly sit in the face of the darts board. They await the arrival of their dinner guests.

*WILMA STANDS OPPOSITE **REGINALD** IN HER 16TH CENTURY BALL GOWN. SHE HOLDS A HANDFUL OF DARTS. THE LEFTOVERS OF A MEAL SIT ON A LARGE PLATTER, ON A SIDE TABLE. SHE TAKES A MOUTHFUL OF FOOD FROM THE PLATTER.*

WILMA: Delicious. There is nothing more satisfying than one's own gastronomy. Wouldn't you agree, Reginald? My exquisite dish remains the master of the Upton Snodsbury County Fare; shrunken heart of King Louis XII. Last year at the County Fare my nerves were unravelling, I eat an entire dish of flambéed Artic Skua and Puffin, deliciously decorated with a smattering of Acorn Barnacle on a bed of American Mink. In my misjudgment of the flambé, the combustion of the alcohol nearly set fire to my hair. Had it not been for that lovely gentleman in the front row with a branch of Aspen leaf, it would have been over.

WILMA THROWS A DART AT THE DARTS BOARD. REGINALD GRUNTS AS THE DART PIERCES THE DARTS BOARD.

WILMA: The mental deficiency of the entire imbecilic County Fare judging panel could be discombobulated by a Shepton Mallet winning top prize at Crufts. They were most unkind, and yet, there was one man whose face escapes my memory. Never mind, I continue to host the most sought-after Sunday Dinners in the county. They talk about me, Reginald. They gossip. I hear things you know. I do.

WILMA HELPS HERSELF TO MORE FOOD. SHE LOOKS ABOUT THE ROOM.

WILMA: My food is rich, very tasty. I'm sure it will be the death of me.

*WILMA THROWS A DART AT THE DARTS BOARD, MISSING IT. REGINALD
SIGHS WITH RELIEF.*

WILMA: Come Reginald. I've had enough of this laborious English past time.
Darts, my dear Reginald, fails to quench my thirst for life. I feel the need to
experiment, no, I have a desire for culinary zest.

*REGINALD TURNS TO FACE WILMA, REVEALING HIS PLACE AS A HUMAN
DARTS BOARD.*

REGINALD: Shall I prepare the kitchen for your menu selections?

WILMA: Reginald. My darling boy. Come to me. How long have you been by
my side?

REGINALD: Almost twenty enjoyable years, milady.

WILMA: And you still hold me close to your heart?

REGINALD: Deeply, milady.

WILMA: Once upon a time I had a man beside me in my kitchen. No one can take his place, dear Reginald. I appreciate everything you do for me, I've never considered you an outsider to my circle.

REGINALD: Thank you, milady.

WILMA: I've needed you to be a part of my inner circle. A time for all seasons, Reginald. This promise I made to your mother.

REGINALD: You truly loved my mother?

WILMA: She was a good friend, your mother. Toffee, was a strong and formidable woman with a good heart and a great sense of adventure. I admired her greatly, my Reginald. You should be proud of her.

REGINALD: Tell me more, milady.

WILMA: Toffee had such a wild sprite, dancing amongst the willows in the middle of a summer's evening. It was my honour to have Toffee give herself to my most exciting and special culinary experiments. I loved Toffee as my own.

REGINALD: Mother regaled fondly about your experiments. She held great womanly love in her heart for you. I feel as if I have taken her place, to help you milady discover the divinity in a truly great sauce.

WILMA: My dear Reginald, your divinity is blessed in being my Butler, what I need is you to be part of my world. My desire for greatness in food drove me to create the essence of the human spirit. I chose the motherly spirit and purity of woman to create this mystical sauce; only by broiling a pure specimen in a mild pot could I gain such reverence. Drawing out the essence, the basic human spirit, infusing it. My secret sauce was to be my triumph, my discerning moment. Something to wow the County Fare Judges, once and for all. But ... I'm sorry Reginald, through an awful mishap, the broiling process became exaggerated and Toffee was overcooked. I failed her, Reginald. Not a trace of toffee within.

REGINALD: When I was a child, my mother sat me upon her tender knee and explained to me, in a way only she knew how, her need to give her life. I understood her need to give herself to your experiments, for the greater good, milady.

WILMA: Your mother had the foresight to betroth you to my side.

REGINALD: I laid a wreath of flowers by mother's headstone yesterday morning, prior to you returning from the train station with Mrs Zizou. Anymore, milady and I fear I shall lose my composure.

WILMA: Mrs Zizou has always said, it's one thing to take care of a stray dog and quite another to take care of a stray boy; I saved you from straying.

THE SOUND OF A DOORBELL ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE LIVING ROOM.

REGINALD: That will be Mrs Carshalton. Prompt to a fault. Early.

REGINALD ATTEMPTS TO EXIT, BUT RETURNS TO ATTENTION EACH TIME HE HEARS HIS NAME. HE EVENTUALLY EXITS.

WILMA: Be kind, dear Reginald. Mrs Carshalton joins us for her second Sunday dinner. She is unaware of your mother's arrangements, and her Circle wouldn't understand. Mrs Zizou understands, gosh was it only yesterday we served a succulent Baked Badger on a delicious ruse of wild berry juss and organic Jamaican exotic rice? Mrs Zizou squealed with angelic delight with the first bite, Reginald. She brought along her half-brother, Mandrake. A terrible bore. He's a deplorable pestering excitable boy, Reginald, no offence. I'm convinced he was flirting with me over my Twitch soufflé. Have you ever seen such disgrace, over a Twitch soufflé? One delicacy I no longer stomach, because of its ghastly habits in the wild are those pesky little garden moles. They destroy one's spring flowers, have you smelt their vile odour when one becomes too close? Disgusting. They are a bridge too far. Grisly.

WILMA TAKES A MOUTHFUL FROM THE PLATTER.

WILMA: Mrs Carshalton. A fine woman. A darling of the quintessential set and a fine friend. Entertaining. Playful. Delicious.

REGINALD ENTERS HOLDING A TRUMPET. MRS CARSHALTON ENTERS, HOLDING A RIBBON AND BOW WRAPPED BOX. REGINALD PLAYS THE TRUMPET TO ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF MRS CARSHALTON.

REGINALD: Mrs Carshalton.

WILMA: Welcome back.

MRS CARSHALTON: Thank you. I've done nothing but talk about my first decadent dinner party of roasted Penguin and Seagull pie with thyme and rosemary. You are the toast of my little darling circle, I regaled in your triumph at the Upton Snodsbury County Fare with your King Louis XII shrunken heart. Mrs Putney is utterly green with envy. I know I'm early, and I hope you don't mind, but I couldn't stay away.

MRS CARSHALTON HANDS WILMA THE GIFT BOX.

WILMA: A gift for me? How very generous.

MRS CARSHALTON: It's a little inspiration for your delectable platters.

WILMA: Thank you. How is Mr Carshalton?

*WILMA HANDS THE GIFT BOX TO REGINALD. HE PLACES IT NEXT TO THE
LARGE PLATTER OF FOOD.*

MRS CARSHALTON: I'd rather not. Dreadful business.

WILMA: Trouble at home?

MRS CARSHALTON: He has a little bit of crumpet on the side.

*THE GIFT BOX MAKES A SUBTLE MOVEMENT, CATCHING THE EYE OF
WILMA.*

WILMA: Without tea?

MRS CARSHALTON: He's taken another woman on a Tuesday.

WILMA: Naked, on a Tuesday?

MRS CARSHALTON: I really wouldn't mind so much, if she was a little more, on the attractive side. She mortifies my sensibilities when in a state of undress.

THE GIFT BOX MAKES A SUBTLE MOVEMENT, CATCHING THE EYE OF WILMA.

WILMA: You're a stronger woman than I, Mrs Carshalton.

MRS CARSHALTON: She's a vegetarian, sometimes a vegan. It's an outrage I simply can't bear. I'm sure you understand what it's like to keep a guarded family secret.

WILMA: You've been dishonoured, Mrs Carshalton. Skin the rat alive and deliver him to my kitchen. *(LAUGHS)* My sense of humour sometimes surprises my closest and dearest.

MRS CARSHALTON: Last time, I recall our unfinished conversation about your Reginald. He's very devoted to you.

REGINALD: Thank you, Mrs Carshalton.

MRS CARSHALTON: Please don't think of me as impertinent, I believe my conversation is directed to your Mistress.

WILMA: Mrs Carshalton, I expressed my gratitude to my dear Reginald prior to your arrival and his important role in my life; he is part of my circle. Very much by my side.

MRS CARSHALTON: I see.

THE HEAD OF A WHITE MONGOOSE SHOWS THROUGH THE LID OF THE GIFT BOX. BEFORE WILMA NOTICES, REGINALD COMMANDEERS THE BOX. REGINALD EXITS.

REGINALD (*exiting*): No White Mongoose...

WILMA: Did he say, mon, mon, mongoose ... I can't bare the thought ... quickly, what are you to do about your Mr Carshalton?

MRS CARSHALTON: Reginald must teach my little Derek how to play with his trumpet. He's my only Nephew.

WILMA: I meant, the fat woman in your bed.

MRS CARSHALTON: I shall find other ways to entertain myself.

WILMA: Do tell.

MRS CARSHALTON: (*OPENS PURSE*) I have here a 'How To' book and this blindfold. They arrived in yesterday's morning's mail.

WILMA: I'm a little disturbed.

MRS CARSHALTON: We shall entertain ourselves, after your Sunday dinner?

WILMA: Reginald. Reginald.

MRS CARSHALTON: I've had a yearning to broaden my horizons and learn something new. With Mr Carshalton's lack of good judgement...

WILMA: Reginald.

MRS CARSHALTON: It's only a little blindfold.

REGINALD ENTERS, COVERED IN A SMATTERING OF WHITE MONGOOSE

FUR.

REGINALD: Yes milady.

WILMA: My dear boy, I think it's time to serve refreshments?

REGINALD: I have lost all sight of my senses.

WILMA: Cocktails?

MRS CARSHALTON: Since Mr Carshalton's dalliance I'm sworn off those things. A little wine if you please.

REGINALD: Very good.

REGINALD EXITS. THE SOUND OF A DOORBELL ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE LIVING ROOM.

WILMA: Mrs Zizou and I once entertained dubious courtships at grand soirees, with extraordinary cuisine. Mrs Zizou introduced me to many great people throughout the years at our grand soirees. Many of our grand soirees were hosted by my dear departed husband, Bertie. Poor Bertie. He was a good man, my Bertie. I yearn for him. How scandalous to conjure thoughts of his return, but I do miss him; a good man.

REGINALD ENTERS CLEAN OF FUR WITH A TRAY OF WINE-FILLED GLASSES AND CIRCULATES.

REGINALD: Mrs Zizou.

WILMA: My dear friend Mrs Zizou has an amazing passion for culinary delights.

MRS CARSHALTON: Will she be interested in my 'How To' book and blindfold?

MRS ZIZOU ENTERS. REGINALD PLAYS HIS TRUMPET TO ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF MRS ZIZOU. MRS ZIZOU PUSHES PAST REGINALD, TAKES A GLASS OF WINE AND HUSHES REGINALD. HE STOPS PLAYING.

MRS ZIZOU: Darling Monty, there's my Queen of the Upton Snodsbury County Fare. How are you?

WILMA: I have a penchant to conjure something utterly delectable. Firstly, allow me to introduce Mrs Carshalton. You missed her at our last soiree.

MRS CARSHALTON: A pleasure to make your acquaintance. I'm Ms Cruikshank's number one fan.

WILMA: Call me, Wilma, Mrs Carshalton. After all, we are now friends. What of Mandrake?

MRS ZIZOU: He's still a terrible bore. Mr Zizou and I were discussing taking a trip across the Nile next month and he is convinced you must join us.

WILMA: The Nile, that's a fair distance.

MRS ZIZOU: The food is frightfully dull, the usual cuisine of choice, especially those trays of bacon strips, dripping with fat, and surrounded by swarming Americans galloping towards the trays of fried eggs and lashings of maple syrup. One would think they'd not eaten in months.

REGINALD ENTERS, QUIETLY CHASING THE WHITE MONGOOSE ACROSS THE STAGE AND EXITS TO THE OTHER SIDE; NO ONE NOTICES.

WILMA: I shall consider it.

MRS ZIZOU: There are many more morsels out there for us to discover. Hanging gardens, maundering beasts and delightful sights, exotic things you'd never thought to have imagined in your life. It's an inspiration, Monty. Might do you good to break up the habit and get out of the trenches.

WILMA: It could be an inspiring adventure holiday. You have tweaked my interest.

MRS ZIZOU: Jolly good. Then it is set.

MRS ZIZOU BELLOWS OUT THE WINDOW, WAVING.

MRS ZIZOU: Edwin. Edwin, organise a second cabin and another one of those Sherpa-guide people. They're awfully helpful.

WILMA: Is Mr Zizou, with you?

MRS ZIZOU: Of course. I never travel without him. He's my one staple in life, my rock. Couldn't live without him. Oh, I'm sorry, Monty. That was awfully careless of me.

WILMA (*WAVING TO EDWIN*) No matter. It's forgotten.

MRS CARSHALTON STANDS NEXT TO WILMA AND LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW.

MRS CARSHALTON: Is he coming inside for Sunday dinner?

MRS ZIZOU: Heavens, no.

MRS CARSHALTON: Why is that?

MRS ZIZOU: My dear Mrs Carshalton, men are ghastly outdoor things. Just like cats. Although I can't stand the beastly things ... cats I mean. Men I adore. And besides, the poor man wouldn't know what to do if he was allowed inside the house. Probably mess the whole thing up.

MRS CARSHALTON: I, see.

MRS ZIZOU: Best left outside. Keeps them rugged, like a finely tuned piano.

MRS CARSHALTON: Won't he get awfully lonely outside?

MRS ZIZOU: I'm not a barbarian. My Edwin has Harry to keep him company. He and Harry travel everywhere together. I'm sure I have some photos of

our last holiday. We went to Machu Picchu. Isn't that funny, somebody builds an entire city and then loses it. That's men for you.

MRS CARSHALTON: Is Harry your son?

MRS ZIZOU: Our horse. We haven't eaten him, yet. He's part of the family.

MRS CARSHALTON: Your horse?

MRS ZIZOU: Don't think we'd get much of a meal off my Edwin. Not much meat on the old boy, these days.

MRS ZIZOU LETS OUT A RAUCOUS LAUGH AT HER OWN JOKE. MRS CARSHALTON LOOKS CONFUSED.

WILMA: I was telling Mrs Carshalton how your Edwin and my Bertie were good friends. Do you remember how these decorated hallways echoed with laughter? Gossip of indiscrete forbidden affairs flitted off the tips of the tongues in the town. My Bertie knew how to throw a party. My little affairs will never hold a flame to his majestic overtones. Bertie encouraged me to follow my passion and create my dining dream. No man can replace the man who once held my hand and warmed my bed.

MRS ZIZOU: Monty, let's follow your passion and create your dining dream upon a new adventure in our award winning roasts of hilarious hedgehog, feted foxes, squashed squirrels...

WILMA: ... potted ostrich,

MRS ZIZOU: ... or petrified panthers,

WILMA: ... and parred porpoises,

MRS ZIZOU: ... parched puppies,

MRS CARSHALTON: ... marmalade mongoose.

WILMA: Mongoose? Not Mongoose.

WILMA RUNS FROM THE ROOM, FLAILING HER ARMS IN THE AIR.

MRS ZIZOU: No. Not Mongoose, Mrs Carshalton. Don't you know what happened to her Bertie. And then there was the disastrous outcome from the Upton Snodsbury County Fare roast dinner Judge.

THE SOUND OF A DOORBELL ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE LIVING ROOM.

MRS CARSHALTON: No. No. I don't. Oh dear, I became so caught up in the moment. I'm so sorry.

MRS ZIZOU: I practically had to drag Wilma to the Upton Snodsbury County Fare with her award winning King Louis XII shrunken heart dish. We don't talk about it, but she almost lost her nerve.

REGINALD ENTERS.

REGINALD: Mandrake has arrived.

MRS ZIZOU: Thank you, Reginald. Show him in.

REGINALD: What happened to Ms Cruikshank?

MRS CARSHALTON: I'm so sorry, Reginald. It's my fault.

REGINALD: You mentioned Mongoose, didn't you?

PAUSE. THERE IS A SOUND OF SOMETHING CRASHING TO THE FLOOR.

REGINALD: Mandrake. Please follow the sound of my voice.

MANDRAKE ENTERS. REGINALD PLAYS HIS TRUMPET TO ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF MANDRAKE. MANDRAKE FALLS DOWN AND INSTANTLY STANDS UP.

MANDRAKE: Here you are. Exquisite. Spiffing. Golly, here's another one, in the next room, just like this one and many more down the long what's it, far away, five more doors, how about that. Regrettably had a moment of falling down, lapse of standing in the other, nothing too much of a disaster, nothing a broom wouldn't make right, old boy.

REGINALD: Yes, sir.

MANDRAKE: Good chap, jolly good, right-o, lovely...

MRS ZIZOU: Mandrake. Would you mind shutting up before you decant your anguished soul from your incandescent eccentric ramblings and we discover the ineffectual characteristic development of your physical and mental state, turning us all into an asylum of yodelling mindless nincompoops. Be grateful to the good lord above you made your way from the train station without falling down a mine shaft and land at the bottom of the ocean; let's end it there. Mrs Carshalton, I give you my half-brother, Mandrake. If only you could take all of him.

MRS ZIZOU LETS OUT A RAUCOUS LAUGH AT HER OWN JOKE.

MANDRAKE: Good afternoon, Mrs Carshalton.

MANDRAKE STRETCHES OUT HIS HAND TO MRS CARSHALTON AND KNOCKS OVER THE LARGE PLATTER OF LEFT OVERS.

MANDRAKE: Oh dear.

MRS CARSHALTON: Hello. Sorry to be a bother, could we check on Wilma?

MRS ZIZOU: We will be in Monty's room.

MRS ZIZOU AND MRS CARSHALTON EXIT.

MANDRAKE: Spiffing what, um ... aaaar ...

REGINALD: Yes, indeed, sir.

MANDRAKE: Tell me, Reginald. Wilma, I mean Ms Cruikshank, how is she? How is her health? It's just I saw her dashing in a sporting fashion down the hallway, screaming, her arms vigorously waving in an odd sort of arrangement.

REGINALD: A personal matter.

MANDRAKE FIDDLES WITH THE FURNISHINGS.

MANDRAKE: You see, here's the thing, the stirrings of revolutionary ardour fulfil my rousing heart. Akin to a trumpet sounding the alarm for man to bear arms. Within moments of gazing upon Wilma, I mean, Ms Cruikshank, circling doves and falling angels blazon my horizons. One might call it, the wrong kind of fate worse than death. Akin to a love that dares not speak its name, I dare not encroach upon Wilma, I mean, Ms Cruikshank, with my sudden gush of heart-felt feelings. It may startle her, causing another dash down the hall on an errand of a similar personal matter. I am unnerved and unable to hold onto myself. I'm a total wreck, you see, the thing with the mess in the other room and what-not. It's clear I'm a goner. Totally gone. Decidedly besotted by Wilma, I mean, Ms Cruikshank, in the swiftest of ways I ask you, kind sir, to demonstrate an immediate, yet effective procession to permit my newly beloved to visually discern my heated passions. What could I do, what trick can I persuade my current infatuation to take a fancy on this ragged and lonely shape of a man, how can I draw her close enough to see?

REGINALD: A bucket of white Mongoose should enlighten milady's attention.

MANDRAKE: White Mongoose, you say, spiffing. A jolly sentiment old man. White Mongoose, what? Hmmm. My half-sister will have her favourite procurement man speedily deliver the finest white mongoose in this fine country of ours, immediately to our good Lady.

REGINALD: May I be so bold as to suggest a farm, sir?

MANDRAKE: Procure the blighters, myself? Old man! Why, yes. Go on my good fellow.

REGINALD: Upton Snodsbury has the finest mongoose breeding farm, sir.

MANDRAKE: Splendid. You're a good man, Reginald.

REGINALD: Thank you, sir.

AS MANDRAKE EXITS HE KNOCKS OVER A CHAIR.

REGINALD: A bucket of white mongoose to ensure *my* beloved...

MRS ZIZOU ENTERS.

MRS ZIZOU: Where is my full dim-witted, half-brother off to, Reginald?

REGINALD: Errands to run, Mrs Zizou.

MRS ZIZOU: He's up to another one of his childish misadventures. He's been fiddling with the furnishing. The last time he had that look in his eye, I found a South African long tooth tiger in my pantry and a rare featherless ostrich in my fridge. Normally, I wouldn't mind, but the damned things were still alive. They destroyed the entire kitchen. Reginald, my dearest Monty is feeling poorly, the poor darling. I want to lift her spirits with a platter of roasted hedgehog.

REGINALD: If I may speak a few deep personal thoughts, Mrs Zizou?

MRS ZIZOU: Proceed.

REGINALD: I am gravely concerned for milady's health. Milady has cared for me as my own mother would have, if she still be alive today. I'm quite fond of her. Milady's food experiments, as exciting and adventurous as they are, they are slowly taking their toll on milady. They are unhealthy choices in fine dining and the after effects causes milady great unpleasantness. And at times, with my breathing, but my grave concerns are purely for her good health and longevity. Please, Mrs Zizou, could a platter of garden greens lift milady's spirits?

MRS ZIZOU: Pugwash. Monty's as fit as a Fox Terrier. Lovely idea, let's serve a platter of Fox...

REGINALD: I must insist.

MRS ZIZOU: My health is fine. We assist each other with our ongoing experiments. You look concerned, allow me to consult my research.

REGINALD: Thank you.

MRS ZIZOU: Was there something else?

REGINALD: Forgive me, something of a personal nature. Your half-brother, Mandrake, would his origins stir from Upton Snodsbury?

MRS ZIZOU: Are you aware of his birth place?

REGINALD: A vague memory stirs, yet still, it is unimportant.

MRS ZIZOU: I hope it passes.

MRS CARSHALTON ENTERS HOLDING HER 'HOW TO' BOOK AND WEARING A TUTU.

MRS CARSHALTON: It's Wilma. Come quick. She's in an awful state. She's reacted unfavourably to the blindfold. She's most displeased. I meant to look after her. It says here on page 42, "place the blindfold gently across the eyes of your beloved, once the wrists have been bound together and the ankle straps are secured".

REGINALD: Mother.

REGINALD EXITS.

MRS ZIZOU: What have you done?

MRS CARSHALTON: I followed your instruction, to keep Wilma calm and comfort her.

MRS ZIZOU: By restraining Monty's wrists and ankles?

MRS CARSHALTON: It says here, "the gentility can relax and engage your beloved in consensual..."

MRS ZIZOU: ... how is this relaxing?

MRS CARSHALTON: It says here.

MRS ZIZOU: Before you repeat your incessant droll regarding relaxation, please consider...

WILMA ENTERS WEARING SPANDEX RUNNING SHORTS, HOLDING A FIRE POKER; SHE WAVES IT ABOUT AS SHE SPEAKS.

WILMA: Be gone you vile creature. Return to where you cometh. Away. Away. Away. Leave me to be alone, enough of your torturous insistence. Leave me.

MANDRAKE ENTERS HOLDING A BUCKET OF WHITE MONGOOSE. HE FALLS DOWN AND INSTANTLY STANDS UP AGAIN. REGINALD ENTERS, TAKING HOLD OF THE BUCKET.

MANDRAKE: I bring you white Mongoose to feast upon my little starling. My heart beats as one with yours. Our destinies entwined.

REGINALD THRUSTS THE BUCKET INTO MANDRAKE'S HANDS.

WILMA: Stand where you plant your feet otherwise I will skewer you, sir.

MANDRAKE: ... Revolutionary stirrings in my...

WILMA: Keep your stirrings where I can see them, sir.

MANDRAKE: My ardour fulfils my rousing heart. Within moments of gazing upon you, circling doves and falling angels blazon my horizons. Decidedly besotted by you my spiritual being, please permit my heated passions to...

WILMA: You brought me white Mongoose. You brought me white Mongoose.

MANDRAKE: Reginald, said to, to bring me closer to you, to seek your approval, to...

REGINALD: I know you, sir. Milady, I would be delinquent not to speak the truth, that man is the Upton Snodsbury County Fare roast dinners Judge.

WILMA: Yes. A memory stirs. You are that face that has for so long lingered within the dark recess of my memory, you sir sat amongst that imbecilic judging fraternity at the Upton Snodsbury County Fare. You. You wear a disguise to fool me.

MANDRAKE: No, you have mistaken me for another. I would never lower myself to such a ghastly station.

WILMA: You viper in the grass. You highly caddish wet blanket. Take it like a man.

WILMA LUNGES AT MANDRAKE WITH THE FIRE POKER.

MANDRAKE: What is this business of an imbecilic fraternity?

WILMA: If my faithful Reginald, the one boy, man, who has truly only had my intentions in their heart, says what he says you are, than I believe what he says without question.

MANDRAKE WALKS ABOUT THE ROOM WITH A NERVOUS TWITCH.

MRS ZIZOU: Mandrake. Mandrake. Stand still, I wish to chastise you. Distance, is well-known to lend enchantment, even to the less attractive. Stop this harassment. Your brain is divided into three parts like Caesar's Gaul, you are a glutton for punishment and the very fibre of your being lives on the edge of lunacy, damn and blast you, man. You come hither not to assist our gastronomy experiments, yet to dabble your icy grip from your high horse ... never darken my door again until

you have fathomed any demonstration of basic sanity excreting from that flimsy human shell of yours. Go take your tablets you indelible chinless wonder. Go.

MANDRAKE: But, Sister. I am in love.

MRS ZIZOU: Half-sister. You are insane. Again. Go. Out. And take your mongoose with you.

MANDRAKE EXITS WITH THE BUCKET OF MONGOOSE.

WILMA: Thank you. What treachery awaits me?

MRS CARSHALTON: Wilma, he is clearly not in control of his faculties.

WILMA: Reginald? Reginald?

MRS CARSHALTON: Oh Wilma, will you survive this outrageous assault?

WILMA: Reginald?

MRS ZIZOU: Monty, I had no idea my half-brother could be responsible for such an outrageous misfortune as he has been accused. Mr Zizou and I shall get to the bottom of this.

WILMA: Reginald?

REGINALD: I am right here, milady.

WILMA: Bring me my robe.

REGINALD: At once.

REGINALD EXITS.

WILMA: It was a misty day, strange and filtered. Bertie and I had prepared seven main courses of Mon... Mon... Mon... I can't bring myself say it. We had glorious platters of Ferret, Hamster, Guinea Pig and others; they weren't important. The Snodsbury Mon... Mon... Mon... Breeding Farm were there in their finery, with some award winning... Bertie, Reginald and I were chasing the County Fare Best Range Award, the finest award anyone could wish for. My dear, dear Bertie, he put his heart and soul into the lead up to the County Fare. Little did we know our name would soon become a disgrace to be uttered. The Snodsbury County Fare roasts

dinner judge was there, in front of our table. Snout up paws out and eyes feasting upon my delights. Right at that moment, that very moment, a ferocious gang, a maundering hoard of Mon... Mon... Mon... came running across the Common, a gaggle of them, along the Loch and through the Dale, around the meadow and headed straight for the judge, for our table. Suddenly, a god-awful almighty crash. Women screamed. Children cried. Men fled. The sun burned out that day and the clouds rolled in, the lightening crashed and the rains fell. No one knew why it happened, we were all plunged into darkness, but three key eye witnesses told us those ... plummeted upon the judge and my Bertie and when the smoke had cleared and the fur blew away, that judge, that dreadful man, was gone. Never to be seen again. Disappeared. Have you any idea what I have been through? Since my dear, dear Bertie lost his life at the Upton Snodsbury County Fair. He was my soul mate, Mrs Carshalton. My only one true love. It pains me to say out loud. My Bertie was discovered face down in a bucket of white mongoose urine, drowned for the entire world to see and that is an utterly careless way to lose one's life.

PAUSE.

MRS CARSHALTON: Oh, how dreadful.

MRS ZIZOU: Monty darling. I'm so sorry. I will take care of Mandrake. I shall hang him by his ankles from the footbridge until his entrails hurtle from his sorry little throat.

MRS CARSHALTON : (*REFERS TO BOOK*) I never thought of that.

MRS ZIZOU: I promise it won't be relaxing for the swine.

MRS ZIZOU EXITS.

MRS CARSHALTON: Oh Wilma. I'm so sorry to hear about Mr Cruikshank.

WILMA: Bertie.

MRS CARSHALTON: Sorry. Bertie. How terrible for you.

WILMA: It was humiliating. I was the laughing stock of Upton Snodsbury.

Never again have I shown my face at the County Fare. I was devastated.

REGINALD ENTERS HOLDING A SATIN LOUNGING GOWN.

REGINALD: Milady.

WILMA: Thank you, Reginald.

MRS CARSHALTON: Allow me to use my 'How To' book for instruction on how to bring us some cleansing comfort to...

WILMA: Out. Out. Out. I can't continue in this fashion. Madam, we are done. It is over. There will be no supper tonight, Mrs Carshalton. I can no longer cope with these shenanigans, these crazy moments. There will be no more of this madness. Out.

MRS CARSHALTON: I despair.

WILMA PICKS UP THE FIRE POKER AND THROWS IT INTO THE FIRE PLACE. SHE FALLS INTO REGINALD'S ARMS. MRS CARSHALTON EXITS BY SLOWLY CLOSING THE DOOR.

WILMA: Reginald. Bring me smuggled budgie. I'm peckish.

REGINALD: Yes, my love.

CURTAIN