

## POTLUCK WITH TWO HOT DISHES

Elizabeth Farris, Phoenix College

Honorable Mention, One-Act Play

CHARACTERS: MARLENE, female, 30's  
PHIL, male, 30's  
BARBARA, female, 30's

TIME: The present, a summer afternoon

PLACE: A Park Company potluck picnic

*(Marlene and Phil sit at a picnic table)*

PHIL: You see that guy over there?

MARLENE: The blue shirt?

PHIL: No. The short guy. The one with the matching white shoes and white belt.

MARLENE: Too hot today for his orange Nehru jacket?

PHIL: Yeah, a real snappy dresser. That's the Vice President.

MARLENE: That's Dave Haugland? What happened? I thought --

PHIL: Yeah. Amazing.

MARLENE: Last time I saw him he was with some god-awful woman. Remember? She was so old I thought she was his mother.

PHIL: Nope. His wife.

MARLENE: And now he's with...?

PHIL: Sometimes God rewards men simply by giving them something beautiful to look at.

MARLENE: Every man's fantasy.

PHIL: Makes it easy to go to work every day.

MARLENE: *(playful)* You cut that out.

PHIL: Don't you worry. She's no longer available.

MARLENE: Don't tell me . . . no o o o!

PHIL: Power's a real aphrodisiac, no matter how it's dressed.

MARLENE: I don't care how much money that guy has, some of us have our standards.

PHIL: Know what's so weird about it? That woman used to be his secretary.

MARLENE: He dumped his wife for his secretary? Common scenario.

PHIL: Actually, I believe the two women overlapped somewhat.

MARLENE: Overlapped?

PHIL: He left the building with her every Tuesday and Friday. At lunch time.

MARLENE: For a private conference?

PHIL: Yeah. Those days he drove his truck with the camper on the back. All the other days it was his Lincoln Continental.

MARLENE: Trying to save the company some money?

PHIL: Yeah. He probably started up with her just so he would have things set for when the old lady kicked off. But she found out about it and she's still alive. And what's worse. . . Haugland no longer owns controlling interest in the corporation. The old hag sits on the Board of Directors now. He answers to her.

MARLENE: Ah . . . the ultimate revenge.

PHIL: Yeah . . . I wonder if any of the other women at work drive trucks with campers?

MARLENE: Phil!!! Women don't do things like that.

PHIL: Women don't do it, but men do. Is that what you're saying?

MARLENE: Not all men. Just some men . . . You don't do it, do you?

PHIL: Overlap women? (*a firm denial*) No o o o o!... I don't even own a camper.

MARLENE: Ever thought about it?

PHIL: You mean have a wife and a girlfriend? Or lead one of those double lives where you have the wife and kids in Boston and another wife and kids in Tampa and nobody knows about it until the day of your funeral?

MARLENE: Yeah. Like that.

PHIL: (*adamant*) Oh no...Overlapping without total honesty just isn't right. I was raised Catholic. People burn in Hell for things like that...No. I'd tell you about it.

MARLENE: Tell me about the Tampans?

PHIL: Tampa-ites, Marlene. Call them Tampa-ites.

MARLENE: (*a pause*) You've never been to Tampa . . . (*not so sure now*) ...have you?

PHIL: No.

MARLENE: So you wouldn't have two concurrent relationships.

PHIL: Not another relationship. But maybe someone else, just for fun.

MARLENE: You mean . . . just for sex?

PHIL: A not-so-platonic friendship. Happens all the time.

MARLENE: *(panics)* Not with you it doesn't!! *(she waits for his response, he is silent.)* Phil!!!!

PHIL: *(laughs)* I said I would tell you if it ever happens.

MARLENE: Just so you wouldn't burn in Hell!!

PHIL: It's not that I'm asking permission.

MARLENE: Permission!!!

PHIL: Marlene, you'll really like her once you get to know her.

MARLENE: You're having a not-so-platonic friendship?

PHIL: Right now, it's strictly platonic. Totally platonic. Absolutely and positively nothing but platonic.

MARLENE: ...And...?

PHIL: I'd like to turn it into one that's not-so-platonic.

MARLENE: You bastard!!!

PHIL: You'll really like her. I was thinking that maybe the three of us...

MARLENE: You bastard!!

PHIL: Oh . . . Here she comes.

MARLENE: Phil, I am not going to put up with this!!! *(through clenched teeth)* Don't you dare!

BARBARA: *(enters)* Phil.

PHIL: Barbara. I'm so glad you were able to come to the potluck.

MARLENE: *(under her breath to Phil)* I'm sure you are.

BARBARA: Wouldn't miss it.

PHIL: Have you ever met my wife? Barbara, this is Marlene.

BARBARA: So nice to meet you. It's nice to finally put a face to the name. Phil talks about you all the time at work.

MARLENE: He does?

PHIL: Oh, you know...the usual office chitchat.

MARLENE: I can just envision you two friends sitting around chitchatting.

PHIL: Yup. That's all it is. Chitting and chatting.

MARLENE: So Barbara...you're Phil's new secretary?

BARBARA: No--

PHIL: Barbara is in Data Processing. The Logistics and Statistical Marketing Division. Isn't that right, Barbara?

BARBARA: Yes, that's right.

PHIL: No way. Barbara isn't anybody's secretary.

MARLENE: *(a long pause)* So what did you bring for the potluck?

BARBARA: The potato salad. The one in the big yellow bowl.

MARLENE: Oh yes. Very nice. We brought the tossed salad.

PHIL: Just the usual tossed salad with just two ingredients, lettuce and tomatoes. Same old, same old. I've been trying to get Marlene here to try some new things, but she is so resistant to change.

MARLENE: I'm pretty happy with what I've already got. I'm satisfied. No need to try something new.

PHIL: *(to Barbara)* Ever prepare a dish with more than just two vegetables?

BARBARA: You mean a salad bar salad?

PHIL: No. That's way too much. Sort of like a garden orgy gone out of control. I'm thinking maybe...three ingredients.

BARBARA: I've mixed broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots.

MARLENE: That's called California Mix.

PHIL: California? Haight-Ashbury...free love.

MARLENE: *(sarcastic)* Phil, it's vegetables, not the hippie movement.

PHIL: Three ingredients. A perfect triangle creating perfect balance. The carrots mingle with the broccoli. The carrots mingle with the cauliflower.

MARLENE: Phil!!!

PHIL: Carrots make sure both cauliflower and broccoli are equally happy. And in the end, when cauliflower and broccoli are both happy, carrots are really really happy.

MARLENE: Not all three together!!!

BARBARA: Well, it's not all that unusual.

PHIL: OK, Marlene. We'll have carrots with broccoli one time, and then carrots with cauliflower the next time. Alternate days. Carrots can only do so much at one time, anyway.

MARLENE: Carrots will never ever be with cauliflower!!!

BARBARA: It's called California Mix. It's in the frozen food section.

PHIL: Carrots being with cauliflower doesn't mean it loves the broccoli any less. Carrots will still spend time with broccoli. Broccoli will still be happy.

MARLENE: Broccoli is happy with the way things are right now.

PHIL: But carrots being with cauliflower will make carrots so much happier. And I'm sure broccoli wants carrots to be happy.

MARLENE: Broccoli doesn't really care about carrots any more.

PHIL: Both you and I know that broccoli loves carrots--

BARBARA: *(interrupts)* I think it's either Jolly Green Giant brand or Birdseye.

PHIL: Right now, broccoli is awfully self-centered.

BARBARA: Maybe it's both brands. It comes in a bag...in the frozen section.  
*(huge pause, no one speaks)* You guys aren't talking about vegetables, are you?...Marlene, I'm beginning to think that you have something against broccoli.

MARLENE: No. I love broccoli. It's carrots I'm not too happy with right now. Well, not all carrots in general. Just one carrot in particular.

BARBARA: ...Okay...

MARLENE: *(a pause)* Phil . . . ?

PHIL: Marlene ...? *(huge pause, no one speaks)*

MARLENE: Barbara...Phil has this big idea of bringing another vegetable into the mix... You would be the cauliflower.

BARBARA: I'm the cauliflower? *(a pause, then it dawns on her)* I'm the cauliflower?...Eww...!

MARLENE: My thought exactly... No offense, you make a beautiful cauliflower.

BARBARA: Thank you, Marlene. And you make a terrific broccoli.

MARLENE: Thank you... I'm glad that Phil introduced us. I've always wondered about the people he works with.

BARBARA: I can tell you this for sure, we don't sit around all day talking about vegetables!

MARLENE: Thank goodness for that!

BARBARA: *(pause, looks around)* Marlene, you see that guy over there? Red shirt. Tan shorts. Really hairy legs. Nerdy glasses.

PHIL: Larry Schneider?

BARBARA: *(to Marlene)* Pasta salad.

MARLENE: *(disappointed)* Pasta salad... Um...Too bad.

BARBARA: *(to Marlene)* Pasta salad with zucchini.

MARLENE: Zucchini!!!??

BARBARA: Zucchini.

PHIL: He's from the Accounting Department!

MARLENE: That doesn't matter.

PHIL: He works in a cubicle!!

BARBARA: *(to Marlene)* Broccoli goes with zucchini.

PHIL: No it doesn't!!!

MARLENE: *(to Barbara)* Cauliflower goes with zucchini.

PHIL: No it doesn't!!!

MARLENE: *(in unison with Barbara)* Yes it does!!!  
BARBARA: Yes it does!!!  
MARLENE: Why settle for carrots when you can have zucchini?  
*(Phil is silent, stews) (to Phil)* What about broccoli and carrots  
and zucchini?  
PHIL: Carrots and zucchini together? . . . Never . . . ever!!  
*(a pause, to Marlene)* Honey, I've changed my mind. Let's just  
stick with broccoli and carrots.  
MARLENE: What? And have the same old thing?  
PHIL: Yeah.  
MARLENE: Aren't you tired of it? Broccoli and carrots. Broccoli and carrots.  
Over and over again?  
PHIL: Well . . .not really.  
MARLENE: *(to Barbara)* Barbara, what do you say we go talk to Larry from  
Accounting and see if he would like to mix broccoli and  
cauliflower and zucchini together?  
BARBARA: Sure. Why not?

*(Barbara and Marlene exit, leaving Phil sitting all alone)*

END OF PLAY

