

PIZZA PLACE

A Comedy in Two Acts

by

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## Cast of Characters

Palmer: A man in his early 20s. Manager of Mama Mao's Pizza.

Chloe: A woman in her early 20s. Mama Mao's employee.

Megan: A woman in her early 20s. Mama Mao's employee.

Jason: A man in his early 20s. Mama Mao's delivery driver.

Robert Bile: A man in his late 30s. Mama Mao's district supervisor.

Diego: A man in his early 20s. Robert Bile's assistant/yes man.

Customer #1: A woman in her 20s.

Receptionist: A woman in her 20s.

Teller: A woman in her 20s.

Atticus: A man in his 20s.

Persephone: A woman in her 20s.

Clerk: A woman in her early 20s.

Guest #1: A man in his early 40s.

Bellboy: A man in his early 20s.

Guest #2: A man in his 30s.

Guest #3: A woman in her 30s.

Customer #2: A man in his 20s.

Curator: A man in his 40s.

Scene

Mama Mao's Szechuan Pizza store.

Time

The present.

ACT ONE

Scene 1

SETTING:

Mama Mao's Szechuan Pizza franchise store. Front counter faces audience. A cash register and phone are on counter. A hotbox with pre-made, boxed pizzas inside is directly behind front counter. A door leading to the kitchen is located to rear. Glass double doors are located to side. A large, easily-visible menu sign with large block letters is located above the counter. The sign reads:

MAMA MAO'S SZECHUAN PIZZA

"IF WE DON'T GET IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME, WE'LL PROBABLY TRY AGAIN." - MAMA MAO

ALL PIZZAS PRE-FABRICATED FROM THE FINEST SYNTHETIC INGREDIENTS.

TRY "YO MAMA" FOR JUST \$29.99.

NOTE: ALL PRICES IN BASE 19.

AT RISE:

CHLOE, MEGAN, and PALMER are all resting on floor. CHLOE is sitting with legs crossed reading "Scientific American" magazine. MEGAN is sitting with legs crossed playing a game on her cell phone and blowing bubbles. PALMER is lying down sleeping with an empty Jack Daniels bottle near his head. He's using an empty pizza bag as a pillow.

CUSTOMER #1 enters and walks to counter.

CHLOE stands and walks behind counter.

CHLOE

Can I help you?

CUSTOMER #1

I want a green pepper pizza, but I want the sauce on top, the crust in the middle, and the green peppers on the bottom. And I want half of it with no cheese, and half with no sauce, and one sixteenth of it with extra sauce on the northeasternmost quadrant of the no cheese half. One fifth pan crust, two fifths thin, three tenths a waffle, and just surprise me on the last tenth. And the extra sauce sixteenth needs to be perpendicular to the waffle portion. And it has to be prepared by Benedictine monks in accordance with Sharia law under rabbinical supervision. Do you have diet cherry root beer?

CHLOE

No.

CUSTOMER #1

Just forget it then. Moron.

(CUSTOMER #1 angrily walks out.)

CHLOE

Jesus.

(The store phone rings. CHLOE answers it.)

CHLOE

(disinterestedly)

Thank you for calling Mama Mao's where we use only one hundred percent real goat cheese from only psychologically well-adjusted free-range goats with absolutely no bovine growth hormones and our sauce is made from only the freshest, choicest Roma tomatoes harvested four times daily from our proprietary tomato vineyards in Napa Valley and rushed via high-speed, armored tomato transport to a holding facility near Ogden, Utah, where each tomato is hand-inspected by a high-ranking official of the United States Department of Agriculture before continuing on its journey to...Hello? Moron.

(CHLOE hangs up, sits on floor, and resumes reading magazine.)

(Phone rings again.)

(CHLOE gives an exasperated look.)

MEGAN

I've got this one.

(MEGAN stands to answer phone.)

MEGAN

(cheerfully)

Thank you for calling Mama Mao's where we use only one hundred percent real goat cheese from only psychologically well-adjusted free-range goats with absolutely no bovine growth hormones and our sauce is made from only the...

(looks shocked)

Oh, okay.

(hangs up)

(to CHLOE and PALMER)

It's Robert! He's on his way here!

(CHLOE jumps up from floor. PALMER wakes up and sits up momentarily, then lies back down to sleep.)

CHLOE

Holy mother of God! Robert's coming! We'd better start cleaning.

(PALMER stirs again, then lies back down, pulling his pizza bag/pillow over his head.)

CHLOE

Didn't you hear? Robert's coming. How can you just lie there on the floor? What kind of manager are you, Palmer?

(PALMER calmly sits up and yawns.)

PALMER

Robert isn't even real. He's just a formless, amorphous gaseous plasma seeping through the crevices of Satan's underbelly. Pure evil has no substance.

CHLOE

Maybe. But all I know is if I lose this job, I may have to quit school. A full scholarship in biochemistry only goes so far. Bunsen burners and Petri dishes don't exactly grow on trees, you know.

MEGAN

Yeah, I'm with you, Chloe. I can't afford to get fired. When I hit five gigs of data, my phone reverts to sub-light speed. The Angry Birds will die. Not to even mention my mobile Netflix. And besides, you guys are the only family I have since my One Direction Forever Facebook group deleted me.

PALMER

Nobody's gonna get fired. Robert can't afford to lose us. We're the only sentient, intelligent life forms who'll work for the so-called wages he's willing to pay. He's just a shill for the international banking cartel that is Mama Mao's Pizza, a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Illuminati. If he could run this store with trained parakeets, believe me, he would be all over that. But he needs us.

CHLOE

Maybe, but...

(Phone rings.)

MEGAN picks it up.

MEGAN

It's for you, Palmer. Some automated message.

PALMER

Put it on speaker.

(MEGAN flips switch.)

RECORDED MESSAGE

Quinton Q Palmer, this is an automated notice from the Bank of Satan. A regularly scheduled weekly deposit from the estate of Erma Palmer has been credited to your account. You can view the details of this transaction online at...

PALMER

Just hang up.

(MEGAN fumbles with switch.)

RECORDED MESSAGE

Need a new car loan? Thinking about a second mortgage? Just visit one of our friendly Bank of Satan associates at...

(PALMER throws beer can at phone and message stops.)

PALMER

Really?

CHLOE

Well, I, for one, need this job, so I'm not taking any chances. Let's start cleaning, Megan.

MEGAN

You're right, Chloe. On it.

(PALMER lies back down to sleep. CHLOE and MEGAN grab spray bottles of cleaning spray and begin spraying it on countertop and hotbox and wiping with towels.)

MEGAN

Wow, this stuff works awesome! What is it? Formula Four Oh Nine?

CHLOE

Nope, it's my own invention, Formula Four Thousand Nine, pure concentrated sulfuric acid.

MEGAN

Wow, it sure gets off those grungy pizza sauce stains. But it appears to be eating away the countertop.

(Doors fling open. ROBERT enters wearing a business suit. DIEGO follows behind him, wearing an identical suit.)

ROBERT

Well, well, well. What have we here? Temp agency rejects attempting to create the illusion of work?

(MEGAN and CHLOE give friendly waves and smiles to ROBERT.)

CHLOE

Hi Robert!

MEGAN

Yeah, hi Robert!

ROBERT

Don't "hi Robert" me. Diego, bring me my white glove.

DIEGO

Yes, Mister Bile.

(DIEGO hands ROBERT a white glove and ROBERT puts it on. ROBERT ceremoniously runs his gloved finger over the top of pizza hotbox.)

ROBERT

Well, well, well. Very interesting. Very interesting indeed. A layer of soot with a land mass roughly equivalent to Asia.

(ROBERT picks up the bottle of cleaning spray.)

Is this cleaning spray?

CHLOE

Uh, no. That's actually men's cologne. A concentrated compound of llama musk derivatives. Very powerful aphrodisiac. I got it on eBay for my boyfriend.

ROBERT

Interesting.



(ROBERT walks to PALMER, who is still lying on floor.  
DIEGO follows behind.)

Palmer, what in the name of hell do you think you're doing?

PALMER

I'm trying unsuccessfully to recover from a very bad hangover. I might add, the shrieking bat sounds emanating from your mouth aren't helping my efforts at all.

ROBERT

Palmer, get off that floor.

(PALMER stands up.)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You are the most pathetic, utterly useless excuse for a manager I've ever seen in my life. What do you have to say for yourself?

(PALMER burps loudly. CHLOE and MEGAN giggle, then smile sheepishly at ROBERT.)

CHLOE AND MEGAN

(in unison)

Sorry.

ROBERT

Very amusing. We'll see who's amused when I inspect one of your pizzas for quality assurance. Diego, hand me a test pizza from the hotbox.

DIEGO

Yes, Mister Bile.

(DIEGO opens the hotbox and hands ROBERT a pizza. ROBERT opens the box and looks at the pizza.)

ROBERT

Well, well, well. Very interesting. This would appear to be a gelatinous, amoeboid mass of shapeless goo. Diego, call nine one one. Tell the police we've found Steve Irwin's murderer.

DIEGO

Yes, Mister Bile.

(DIEGO takes out his cell phone.)

ROBERT

No, you idiot. It was a joke.

DIEGO

Yes, Mister Bile. I mean no, Mister Bile. I mean yes, Mister Bile.

(ROBERT shakes his head in disgust.)

ROBERT

All right. Now for the real test. Let's see how it tastes.

(ROBERT ceremoniously picks up a slice of the pizza, closes his eyes, and takes one bite. He then pauses for a few moments, his facial expression unchanged. CHLOE and MEGAN look anxious and cross their fingers.)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

This is delicious. This is the best pizza I've ever eaten. It has a pungent, vaguely Romanesque quality reminiscent of the post-Modernist pies of Central Sicily.

(He sniffs pizza.)

And that nose! Pure heaven!

(He takes another bite.)

Yes, yes, the sauce is robust, yet not arrogant. I am submitting this pie to Pizza Monthly for inclusion in the Pizza Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

MEGAN

Wow, are you serious?

ROBERT

No! I'm not serious. This is the worst pizza I've ever eaten. I've eaten pizza from cesspools that tastes better.

PALMER

I don't doubt that.

(CHLOE and MEGAN giggle uncontrollably, then they force themselves to stop and look at ROBERT in a contrite way.)

CHLOE AND MEGAN

(in unison, to ROBERT)

Sorry.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

SETTING:

Reception area for Community College Biology Lab. There is a sign with large block letters reading "BIOLOGY LAB" and a door leading to the lab. RECEPTIONIST is stationed at front desk.

AT RISE:

JASON walks up to RECEPTIONIST.

JASON

Sup? Hey, do you know where the Biology Lab is?

RECEPTIONIST

(looks confused)

Um, here.

JASON

Sweet! I've got a delivery for the lab assistant.

RECEPTIONIST

Sure. Just through that door.

(RECEPTIONIST points to door.)

(JASON walks through door.)

(RECEPTIONIST giggles.)

(A horrified female scream is heard.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

SETTING:

Mama Mao's pizza store.

AT RISE:

PALMER, CHLOE, MEGAN, ROBERT, and DIEGO are standing.

JASON enters carrying an empty pizza bag. Gasping for breath, he sets the pizza bag on the counter.

JASON

That was stupid! First time I've ever been attacked by gigantic tarantulas on a delivery. Chihuahuas are bad enough. But wow, that was ridiculous!

MEGAN

Jason! Are you okay?!

JASON

Yeah, didn't get bitten or anything. Just scared the living shit outta me. It was like that movie Little Shop of Horrors. The lab assistant stood on a chair and screamed her lungs out just as they escaped from their cage. But lots of girls react to me that way, so who knew?

MEGAN

There's actually another delivery going out, Jason. Do you think you'll be okay to take it?

JASON

Sure, why not? Where's it going?

MEGAN

They said they're in the alley behind the Seven Eleven at Eighth and Madison. And they need change for a thousand dollar bill.

(MEGAN puts a pizza from the hotbox into the pizza bag on counter.)

JASON

Oh, okay. I'll stop by the bank on the way and make a withdrawal from my savings account. I can put it back in when I get the thousand, so no worries. But I'm putting on some Off just in case there are more tarantulas. Better safe than sorry.