

SCREENTIME: A MODERN COMMEDIA

Cast of Characters

DOLORES: *Manages her own small PR company, 70s*

ARLENE: *Works for Dolores, 26ish*

ZOEE: *Works for Dolores, friend to Arlene, early 20s*

PADDY *Very hard of hearing; owns his own flooring company, late 70s*

BRIGGIE *Works at the Phoenix Resort, late 20s early 30s*

CLEMENT *French, but lives in Florida; owns his own flooring company, 40s*

CELINE *Has "it." Works for Clement and helps to run the company, 29ish*

The time is the present. The play takes place in the lobby of a rundown resort, Salvatore's Phoenix Resort, near Atlanta, GA.

Casting should be inclusive but care should be taken to tell a story that doesn't cause unnecessary harm to marginalized populations.

The commedia interludes involve Arlene wearing Arlechinno's mask, Zoe wearing the Zanni mask, Briggie wearing Brighella's mask, Clement wearing Capitano's mask, Celine wearing Scapin's mask, Paddy wearing Pantalone's mask, and Dolores wearing Dottore's mask. The masks are part of the hotel décor until the actors don them for the commedia scenes.

The actors should feel free to improv the lazzi; if the lazzi the actors settle into involves adding lines to the play, so be it!

There is fun to be had with Dolores' eyelashes.

There is fun to be had with the phones. Perhaps neither Paddy nor Dolores can really use their phones.

There is, perhaps, fun to be had with the bell.

LAZZO OF THE SUITCASE: Before the Play, Arlequino, Zanni, and Scapin devise an improvisation that involves dragging Pantalone's and Dottore's identical heavy suitcases back and forth through the lobby of the resort in a case of mistaken suitcase identity. Brighella pinches both suitcases and accidentally? Returns them to the right owners.

ONE

Late afternoon

Lights up on ARLENE, draped over a settee in the lobby of the Salvatore's Phoenix Resort near Atlanta. There is a sign in the lobby that says "Welcome Southeast Flooring Convention Attendees." She is scrolling through social media apps on her phone. Her bookbag and a carry-on bag are dropped carelessly on the floor beside the settee. ARLENE sits up a moment. She makes a call. No one answers. She makes another call. No one answers. ZOEE enters the lobby dragging her carry-on and sees ARLENE. She runs to greet her.

ZOEE

(joyfully)

ARLENE!

ARLENE and ZOEE give each other a long heartfelt hug.

ARLENE

(equally glad)

ZOEEEEEEEEEE! I feel like I haven't seen you in forever!

ZOEE

I know. I hate that we don't come in to work on the same days anymore.

ARLENE

Me too. That's Dolores for you. She cuts our hours and then spends tons on hardware that none of us needs just so she can talk about having the latest Apple products. For the amount of money she wastes, she could afford to put us both on salary.

ZOEE

Where is Dolores?

ARLENE

I dunno.

ZOEE

Didn't you two travel together?

ARLENE

Fuck no! I waited for her outside of ticketing at LaGuardia. She never showed up. I was afraid I would miss the plane if I didn't go to the gate. She never showed up and she won't answer the phone. I take it you haven't heard from her either?

ZOEE

ARLENE! You were supposed to make sure she got here!

ARLENE

Who decided that? Not me! I can't do that! She makes me nuts!

ZOEE

Oh my God! What am I going to tell Paddy? I ran into him on the shuttle from the airport. He's been chasing me all over this absurd place ragging me about Dolores! "When am I going to see Dolores? When will she get here?"

PADDY enters.

Oh, Lord! There he is now! HIDE!

PADDY sees them.

Ah! Too late! He sees us!

PADDY

(Huffs over)

Why did you run off? I was talking to you!

ZOEE

(shrinking behind ARLENE)

Tell him I'm sorry. I thought he wanted me to find Dolores. I'm looking for Dolores.

ARLENE

She says she's sorry and that she was looking for Dolores.

PADDY

What?

(shakes his head and adjusts his hearing aide. Do we hear

*it squeal? Is he that old with
that kind of hearing aide?)*

What did you say?

ZOEE
*(screaming in ARLENE'S
ear)*

I SAID I WAS LOOKING FOR DOLORES!

*ARLENE squeals in protest as PADDY'S hearing
aide squeals at the noise.*

PADDY
*(flinches as his hearing aide
squeals)*

Yes! WHERE is Dolores? She was supposed to meet me two hours ago! We had a meeting scheduled to discuss the conference budget and payment timeframe, and she was going to go over the details of the conference. If I'm the one footing the bill, I think I have the right to a few minutes of her time before this event begins. This is very annoying.

*ZOEE starts to answer in ARLENE'S ear but
ARLENE waves her off.*

ARLENE

Didn't you see her in the bar?

PADDY
(he isn't certain what was said)

Yes. I have a car. Isn't this a beautiful city? A beautiful city just waiting to be discovered! But I really need to talk to Dolores about this conference before I do anything. Just to make sure we are on the same page...If I'm paying for it...you know.

ARLENE
*(enunciating. Does ARLENE
sign?)*

Of, course. You didn't see her anywhere?

PADDY
*(still fiddling with the control
on his hearing aide)*

She's here? Dolores is here? She should be here by now.

ARLENE
Oh sure! She's here somewhere. She was at the front desk checking us all in not ten minutes ago.

Strong side-eye moment ZOEE to ARLENE

PADDY

You saw her?

ARLENE

(ignoring ZOEE)

Absolutely! We came together! She checked us in!

PADDY

*(gets his hearing aide adjusted
and repeating to make sure he
heard correctly)*

She checked you in? You're all checked in?

ARLENE

Oh, sure!

PADDY

Where is she then? We were supposed to meet but she never called me.

ARLENE

I am sure she tried to call you.

ZOEE

(trying to help to ARLENE)

Yeah, tell him I heard her try to call him.

PADDY pulls out his phone and examines it.

PADDY

I don't understand. I don't have any missed calls.

(to ZOEE)

Wait, you heard her trying to call me? I thought you hadn't seen her!

ARLENE

What Zoe actually meant to say was that *I* heard her trying to call you. She didn't have a very good signal. I don't have a very good signal either. Let me see your phone, Zoe.

*ARLENE takes ZOEE'S phone and fiddles with it
while she is talking.*

Zoe doesn't have a good signal either. Isn't that weird?

I think Dolores didn't feel well. I think she was trying to call to tell you that... she ate something that didn't agree with her...um...on the plane.

PADDY

On the plane!?! What did they give her on the plane? I only get trail mix and nuts. I need her number so I can text her.

ARLENE

You don't have Dolores' phone number?

PADDY

She sent it to me but I accidentally deleted it while I was trying to add it to my contacts.

ARLENE

*(moving back and forth
between two phones)*

Huh. You aren't going to believe this, but I did that too! So I don't have her number either, do you Zoe?

ZOEE

What are you doing with my phone?

ARLENE

I'm looking for Dolores' number. You don't have it either.

ZOEE

I don't?

PADDY

You expect me to believe that neither of you have a phone number for Dolores?

ZOEE

*(clearing her throat; doesn't
usually lie so she doesn't lie
as smoothly as ARLENE but
rises to the occasion this
once. She addresses the lie to
ARLENE.)*

Tell him that she messages us with messenger.

PADDY

(stares at both of them)

Messenger?

ARLENE and ZOEE exchange a look.

ZOEE

(bravely)

Yeah, you know. Facebook? Facebook messenger?

PADDY

Really? Facebook? That seems like a really clumsy way to keep in touch with your employees.

ZOEE

*(talking fast and sidling up
to ARLENE)*

We tried GroupMe but there were just too many incoming messages from everyone.

(to ARLENE)

Ask him has he really never used Messenger?

ARLENE

Have you really never used Messenger?

PADDY

*(annoyed; unsure who to talk
to; looking back and forth
from ARLENE to ZOEE)*

I thought you said Facebook.

ARLENE

*(equally annoyed that PADDY
doesn't readily know the
Facebook Messenger app)*

Facebook Messenger.

PADDY

Just give me her room number. I will call the room phone.

ARLENE

Her room number?

PADDY

(Impatiently)

Yes! Her room number! The number on the door of the room she's occupying here at this hotel. Let me have her room number and I can just call the room. What's her room number?

ARLENE

*(returns ZOEE'S phone and
pretends to look in her
bookbag)*

Ok, I have it written down somewhere here.

PADDY

Is this your stuff?

ARLENE
*(pretending to look for her
room key and number)*

Yup.

PADDY
(suspicious)

Why is your stuff still down here in the lobby if you are all checked in?

ARLENE
(caught)

Because..I am waiting on someone.

PADDY

Who?

ARLENE

Someone from the office.

PADDY

Who? Who else is coming? I thought it was just you two and Zoe is right here already.

ARLENE
Duh. It isn't Zoe. Obviously, I am not waiting on Zoe. She's already here. I am waiting on the new girl. What is her name, Zoe?

ZOEE

Her name?

ARLENE
Yeah. The new girl's name. The new girl from the office who I am waiting for.

*Strong side-eye moment between ZOEE and
ARLENE.*

ZOEE
*(can't rise to the occasion.
Slow to answer and then
faintly)*

Uh...I dunno.

PADDY
(struggling)

Ida?

ZOEE

Ida?

ARLENE

Ida? Oh. Yeah. Ida. Ida...Noe. Yeah.

PADDY

No. Ida Noe? What the hell kinda name is Noe?

ZOEE

*(caught off guard, to
ARLENE)*

I don't know what kind of name it is. Well it's HER name.

ARLENE

Right. Zoe doesn't know what kind of name that is. We just don't know. So when you see her, you know...you can ask her.

PADDY

I don't know whether or not to believe you.

ZOEE

(sputtering anxiously)

Oh! Really?

ARLENE

(too quickly)

Why would we lie about that?

PADDY

I don't know why any of you do any of the ridiculous things you do over in your peculiar little PR company. I'm getting fed up with having to deal with the bullshit that the three of you constantly pile on my head. I told Dolores I would pay for her to bring two assistants. I never agreed to pay for her to bring three.

ARLENE

(cajoling)

Paddy, calm down right now, ok? This isn't going to cost you extra. I'm waiting on...Ida. She's staying with me...us...Zoe and me...and she's... late...because of...oh, what is it I'm trying to say? She's definitely late. Because of...

ZOEE

(loud whisper to ARLENE)

Bad Traffic!?

PADDY

The traffic?

ARLENE

THE TRAFFIC! I mean...wow. Atlanta traffic, right?

PADDY

(shaking his head)

It's a beautiful city but the traffic...

ARLENE

I know. The traffic in this town is awful...and she's local...

PADDY

She's from Atlanta?

ARLENE

Yes, she's from this part of Georgia...so I'm waiting for her to get here...that's right... and then we will go up and let Dolores know we ran into you. I'll tell her she needs to give you a call.

PADDY

Ok, then. You tell your boss that if she expects to keep me as a client, she better call me or find me within the next two hours.

PADDY storms off.

ZOEE

Oh my GOD! ARLENE! Why did you lie like that? We are in such shit now!

ARLENE

Chillax, Zoe. I had to do something. He was obviously pissed. We don't want to lose our last client! Thank God he has deep pockets! Dolores already insults him mercilessly. Thank God he's too old for her to grope. If he walks, Dolores doesn't get paid. And if Dolores doesn't get paid, we don't get paid.

ZOEE

AAAAUUUGH! Do you think I don't know that? You were supposed to get her here, Arlene! You said you would get her here. Where is she?

ARLENE

(defensively)

Do you know how hard it is to wrangle her? I can't make her do anything and she doesn't have any idea how long it takes her to do a thing. She never answers her phone because she forgets to turn it on. Or at least she forgets to turn the sound up so that she can hear that she's getting a call. Honestly, I had no idea whether or not she was at the gate or on the way to the airport. So I just went to the gate and got on the plane.

ZOEE

Oh my God. Oh my God! Oh my GAAWD! And on top of all of that you lie to Paddy! We aren't going to get paid, you know. He is pissed. He knows we just lied to him.

ARLENE

If he does it's your fault. Ida Noe? That's what you come up with? Ida Noe?

ZOEE

Well I DON'T know. I said that I don't know. YOU turned it into Ida Noe.

ARLENE

I didn't turn it into Ida Noe! HE did. Geez Louise! Why are you trying to blame me? This is your fault.

ARLENE'S phone rings. She looks to see who it is.

Oh! Shit! It's her!

ARLENE answers her phone.

Hey! Where are you? What do you mean? I didn't know where you were. I thought you might be waiting for me at the gate. Well how was I to know you needed me to check one of your bags? You didn't tell me that. How long before you get here? Well, Paddy is looking for you. He seems upset. He said you were supposed to meet him two hours ago. Don't worry, we told him you were here already.

ARLENE holds the phone away from her ear because Dolores is yelling at her.

We? Well Zoe's here too.

ZOEE

DO NOT drag my name into this!

ARLENE

*(makes eye contact with
ZOEE and very deliberately
implicates her.)*

Zoe kept him at bay. She told him you were here and already checked into the room. We told him you tried to call.

ARLENE flinches and holds the phone away from her ear as DOLORES unloads on her over the phone.