

RICH PICKINGS

a comedy

Synopsis:

A homeless man plans to score accommodation aboard a luxury yacht.

Characters:

DEREK, senior man, hates being homeless

KEL, senior woman, enjoys being homeless

DOUG, mature man, enjoys displaying his wealth

SANDRA, mature woman, hates her husband's ostentation

Setting:

A marina

Time:

The present

A deck chair stands near a shrubbery and a trash can.

Derek enters, wearing tattered clothes and carrying several overstuffed bags.

He hunts through the trash can, sniffs some food scraps, and turns his nose up at them.

Hearing a car arrive in the distance, he quickly strips down to stylish Bermuda shorts, hides his belongings behind the shrubbery, and reclines in the chair, reading a book.

Kel enters, wearing old clothes and carrying a food container.

KEL

Derek. No luck?

DEREK

Take a hike.

KEL

Clearly, the fish aren't biting.

DEREK

This is my patch.

KEL

Nothing wrong with the location. Try different bait.

DEREK

When I want your advice, Kel, I'll drown myself first.

KEL

That could work. Flail about in the water. A passing billionaire might rescue you. Once you're on board the yacht, you'll have a captive audience for your spiel.

DEREK

I'm after somewhere nice and dry. Don't fancy getting soaked.

KEL

That's your trouble, Derek. No commitment.

DEREK

I'm not the one who walked away from a high-paying job.

KEL

I committed myself to my resignation. My freedom!

DEREK

Do you have to be so smug?

KEL

That's half the fun.

DEREK

Did you come here just to annoy me?

KEL

I've brought you some food.

DEREK

Holy ravioli.

KEL

I gave directions to a lost couple. They rewarded me with a chocolate cake.

DEREK

I thought you shunned handouts.

KEL

From the government. But the cake was a token of appreciation. First Rule of Gratitude: Always Accept a Gift.

DEREK

Champion!

KEL

I loathe sugary treats. Third Rule of Gratitude: Pay it Forward.

DEREK

A thousand thanks, Kel.

KEL

Do a favor for someone else.

Derek opens the container.

DEREK

What the hell is this?

Dandelion salad.

KEL

Where's the chocolate cake?

DEREK

I ate it. Every last horrible crumb.

KEL

You shoulda given it to me!

DEREK

Second Law of Gratitude: Never Regift.

KEL

So you offer me weeds.

DEREK

A nutritious meal. It was to be my dinner. But my belly's full.

KEL

Buzz off!

DEREK

Aren't you hungry?

KEL

For more than vegetation. Here come my targets.

DEREK

Have I been insensitive?

KEL

Look, Kel. Wanna help me out?

DEREK

I'm morally obliged to, by the Law of Pay it Forward.

KEL

Then play along. "Leave the area! Begging is prohibited."

DEREK

"Fair enough, sir. I respect the marina rules."

KEL

Kel exits with the container.

Derek pretends to read his book.

Doug enters, wearing yachting clothes and a captain's cap.

DOUG

Come on, Sandra. Don't dawdle like a landlubber.

Sandra enters, wearing oversized wet weather gear and struggling to fasten a life jacket.

SANDRA

I've never lubbed land as much as I lub it today.

DOUG

There's no need to wear a life jacket. Our yacht's over 68 feet long.

SANDRA

So was the *Titanic*.

DOUG

Modern boats are as safe as houses.

SANDRA

Houses survive on solid ground.

DOUG

Sandra!

SANDRA

I get seasick in the bath.

DOUG

You'll soon get your sea legs.

SANDRA

I'd sooner have another C-section.

DOUG

Let's go up on deck. The luxury will calm your nerves.

SANDRA

I'm not nervous, Doug. I'm embarrassed.

By what?
DOUG

The name.
SANDRA

It's an accurate description.
DOUG

If only it weren't.
SANDRA

Allow me to hazard a guess.
DEREK

Excuse me?
DOUG

I bet I can pick which yacht is yours.
DEREK

We're having a private conversation.
DOUG

You've publicly emblazoned the name in gold lettering—if you're the proud owner of *The Banker's Jackpot*.
DEREK

Hear that, Doug? The sin of pride.
SANDRA

I'll call my property what I damn well please.
DOUG

Bravo! You're amongst fellow eccentrics here. You'll fit right in.
DEREK

Thanks. I wondered how welcoming the neighbors would be.
DOUG

Relax. We're a community of like-minded individualists.
DEREK

I was afraid the marina might be an exclusive club.
DOUG

DEREK

It is. When you purchased the berth, you became a member.

DOUG

That's a relief.

DEREK

We look after our own. Keeping a watchful eye on each other's boats.

SANDRA

Is there a security issue?

DEREK

Wherever wealth is on display, you'll always find unsavory characters snooping about.

SANDRA

Oh, dear.

DEREK

I had to chase one off a minute ago.

DOUG

I saw.

DEREK

They won't try anything as long as one of us is around.

SANDRA

Sharing guard duty?

DEREK

If you like.

DOUG

Unfortunately, we can only be here on weekends.

DEREK

I'm retired. I regularly check boats along this stretch. Happy to add yours to my patrol.

DOUG

That's very kind of you.

DEREK

All I need is the access code to your pier gate.

DOUG

Err...

DEREK

Those gates are a feeble barrier. A scuba diver can easily climb on your boat from the water.

DOUG

Does that happen?

DEREK

Never underestimate the ingenuity of the dishonest.

DOUG

The Banker's Jackpot has a smooth hull and a high deck.

DEREK

A piece of cake for a determined criminal. Shall I show you how they'd do it?

DOUG

Please. So I can install preventive measures. A waterproof electric fence. Motion-sensitive spikes. Trigger-activated torpedoes.

DEREK

Lead the way.

DOUG

Coming, Sandra?

SANDRA

No. I'll never set foot on that monstrosity.

DOUG

Don't be ridiculous.

SANDRA

I mean it. I can't take your obsession a moment longer.

DOUG

Let's not argue in front of our guest.

DEREK

Don't mind me.

SANDRA

Choose, Doug. Your yacht or your wife?

DOUG

Be serious.

SANDRA

I'm deadly serious. Get rid of the thing right now, or I'll leave you. This minute!

DOUG

You're not thinking straight.

SANDRA

It's a simple choice. You either love me enough or you don't.

DOUG

Listen. Even if I put her on the market today, she could take months to sell.

SANDRA

Find a quicker way.

DOUG

There isn't any.

DEREK

Actually, there is. Pay it Forward.

DOUG

Pardon?

DEREK

You've been blessed with a wonderful wife. Show you're grateful. By giving the boat away.

SANDRA

Yes! Like in the movie. To a complete stranger.

DEREK

Or a recent acquaintance.

SANDRA

No. It has to be a complete stranger. Someone down on their luck.

DEREK

Actually, I'm—

SANDRA

Look! Over there. That woman watching us. She looks disadvantaged.

DOUG
She's a beggar.

SANDRA
Perfect.

DEREK
Hold on—

SANDRA
Hello! ... Yes, you! Would you mind joining us? ...Thank you.

DOUG
Sandra. If I go through with this—

SANDRA
You'll never have to say how you feel ever again. Just remind me what you did today.

DOUG
Deal.

DEREK
I should warn you. That woman. I knew her years ago. She used to be a lawyer.

SANDRA
Really?

DEREK
One day, she packed it all in. To live on the street.

SANDRA
Goodness!

DEREK
She refuses to own anything beyond her immediate needs. Including yachts.

DOUG
Let me handle this. I'm a bank manager. I ooze charm.

Kel enters.

KEL
I'm glad you called me over. My conscience is killing me.

Why?
DOUG

KEL
I misled you. I was an accomplice in Derek's scam.

DOUG
Scam?

DEREK
I'm ready to accept my punishment, Kel. Will you accept yours?

KEL
Of course.

DEREK
Champion! Remember your Second Rule. No Regifting.

KEL
I don't understand.

DEREK
Don't worry. You won't have to live on board. I'll look after the yacht for you.

KEL
Huh?

Doug hands a set of keys to Kel. She gapes.

DOUG
Now, about this scam—

SANDRA
Shoosh, Doug. Take the win.

Sandra kisses Doug.

Derek takes Doug's cap and puts it on Kel's head.

DEREK
Ship ahoy, Cap'n.

End of play.