

Count Yourself Lucky

A play by

Jamie Henville

contact@brightsidecomedy.com

ACT I

1

PROLOGUE. FITZELBERGER's Wine Cellar.

FITZELBERGER enters, a sign hanging from his neck. It reads: 'ad insaniam covertunt'. He is without his tuppee, with a bald patch glimmering from his head. He begins to sing.

FITZELBERGER

(**Singing**) Duke Fitzelberger, Duke Fitzelberger!

A broken and pathetic figure, **FITZELBERGER** exits.

2

Scene 1. FITZELBERGER's Hall.

BUTCH enters. **BUTCH** rifles through a sack of letters and picks a few out, reading them out loud.

BUTCH

(**Reading**) Dear Count Fitzelberger, with the enclosed lead pipe, please proceed to... That's enough of that one. (**Reading**) Dear Count Fitzelberger... Oh! What foul language. This one looks royal. (**Reading**) Dear Count Fitzelberger, I would like to thank you for your most courteous and kind offer of marriage. Unfortunately, I must politely decline your lovely offer, however I have enclosed the following to show just how highly you are in my regards. Signed, Phyllis Cravendale, The great Duchess of Corindoor. What a lovely lady.

BUTCH searches the bottom of the envelope.
What in gods name? Mary!

MARY enters.

MARY

You called?

BUTCH

I'll need you to take this sack out of here before Count Fitzelberger sees it.

MARY

What is it?

BUTCH

It's a sack of fan mail. Yes! People sending in their admiration's for the Count.

MARY

You mean a sack of hate mail and death threats.

BUTCH

Ha! Good one Mary, but no, I can assure you the people of the County hold great affection for the Count.

MARY begins to try to move the sack of letters.
Is something wrong?

MARY

It's too heavy, I can't move it.

BUTCH

What do you mean its too heavy?

MARY

I mean I can't lift it. Still, I'm not surprised, I'm sure the people just love the fact he's pilfering off the poor!

BUTCH

Frederick, get in here!

FREDERICK enters.

Get lifting that sack with Mary, would you?

FREDERICK attempts to lift the sack with MARY, both struggling.

FREDERICK

What's in this?

BUTCH

Fan mail.

MARY

Hate mail.

FREDERICK

That smells more like it.

MARY

It's coming from that letter. Someone sent in what they really think of the Count.

BUTCH

That he's a loving, kind man with a good heart.

MARY

Which is why he won't show us.

BUTCH

Don't be silly.

MARY

Show us what's in the letter.

BUTCH

Erm, no, I'm not sure that would be appropriate.
There's some rather explicit and personal material in
this envelope.

FREDERICK

I bet there is!

MARY

Let me see it.

BUTCH

No.

***FITZELBERGER** calls out for **BUTCH**, it startles him.*

BUTCH

Quick, he's coming, hide that sack from him! Mary,
dispose of this!

***BUTCH** looks for a place to hide the envelope, but
resorts to simply throwing it afar.*

***FREDERICK** fails to hide the sack.*

MARY

Let me see!

BUTCH

Give it here!

*There's a moments silence before **FITZELBERGER**
walks in with the substance on his head. He glares
at the room in anger. There is a long pause.*

FITZELBERGER

Butch.

BUTCH

Yes my Count?

FITZELBERGER

What's going on in here?

BUTCH

You have some more letters, sir.

FITZELBERGER

Good letters?

*BUTCH takes a moment to assess his surroundings,
before shaking his head in defeat.*

Out. Now!

FREDERICK and MARY exit.

FITZELBERGER

What news of the great Duchess of Corindoor?

BUTCH

She has declined your lucrative offer, sir.

FITZELBERGER

Rats! I was sure she'd marry me. After all, with a nose as extraordinary as hers, she can't be too picky. Still, it's just as well. I don't want a horse for a wife!

FITZELBERGER begins to laugh, BUTCH looks uncomfortable.

Why the long face?

BUTCH

I wouldn't go that far.

FITZELBERGER

I would. Well, if she declined my offer, what of my other offers? I'm sure one of those eligible Duchesses would gladly snap me up!

BUTCH

Actually sir, they've declined. All of them.

FITZELBERGER

All of them? What did you say to them?

BUTCH

What you told me to say to them. Every word. You wrote it down. Count Fitzelberger is a real man with dashing good looks and a firm, robust buttocks.

FITZELBERGER

And does anybody appreciate my firm, robust buttocks and dashing good looks?

BUTCH

I can think of someone, sir.

FITZELBERGER

Yes, well. No-one that's a Duchess! Hang on, I didn't say any of that rubbish.

BUTCH

Oh, my apologies sir, that must have been my mind racing again.

FITZELBERGER

No wonder none of them accepted my offers, they must think I'm some sort of amorous, sex-crazed fanatic.

BUTCH

If only.

FITZELBERGER

You've scared them all off! Well, now what are we to do?

BUTCH

Nothing, sir. There isn't a single Duchess in the country who will wed you.

FITZELBERGER

I don't believe you. I am a catch. A hoot! It must have been something you said.

BUTCH

Not a single Duchess, sir.

FITZELBERGER

Not even saggy Maggie?

BUTCH

Not even her.

FITZELBERGER

Oh, what about Gail the whale? She just has to be available.

BUTCH

Actually, she considered your offer but sadly slipped on some prawns and died. Fell right into the buffet.

FITZELBERGER

Ouch. Still, they say it's the ones you love that hurt you the most.

BUTCH

Quite so.

FITZELBERGER

Well Butch.

BUTCH

Yes, sir?

FITZELBERGER

You're fired. Pack up your clutter and get out of here by noon.

BUTCH

What? But why?

FITZELBERGER

Your inability to find me an eligible Duchess to wed means I have little use for you.

BUTCH

No wait, sir. Please sir, don't send me back, sir! I will find you a Duchess, I will. But it's-

FITZELBERGER

See this is why, Butch. You're all ifs and buts. If I wanted ifs I'd ask, and if I wanted buts I'd marry Brenda.

BUTCH

Huh?

FITZELBERGER

Big buttocks Brenda? And she's not even a Duchess!

BUTCH

I can find you a suitable wife, sir. I promise. Just don't fire me, I love this job. If you do, I'll be forced to head back home. They'll throw me to the wolves! Oh, please my lord, please!

FITZELBERGER

Oh, alright. But I swear to you Butch, if you do not find me a suitable wife, I won't just be letting you go. I'll have you locked up for the rest of your days! Do I make myself clear?

BUTCH

Crystal, sir.

FITZELBERGER

Well?

BUTCH

Well what, sir?

FITZELBERGER

Go and find me a suitable wife!

***BUTCH** scurries off and exits.*

I have some time to kill before supper.

***FITZELBERGER** admires himself in the mirror and presses down on the crown of his head.*

With a full head of genuine luscious locks. Oh yes! You are one handsome man, Count Fitzelberger. Oh yes. Oh yes indeed.

***FITZELBERGER** begins masturbating over the mirror, **BUTCH** and **EDMUND** enter.*

Oh, good gracious me. Butch! I told you, always knock, always!

BUTCH

I'm sorry, sir.

FITZELBERGER

You never know what I might be up to. I could have been making love to a woman and you'd have walked right in.

BUTCH

It looks like you were making love without a woman, sir.

FITZELBERGER

I spilled coffee on my trousers!

BUTCH

Yes my lord. Anyhow, you have a visitor.

FITZELBERGER

Count Fitzelberger.

EDMUND

Actually, I'm not-

FITZELBERGER

Not that you don't already know. Butch, what have I told you about letting the common rabble in here? I don't want the low lives germinating up the place! I could catch a nasty disease.

BUTCH

Like the flu or poverty.

FITZELBERGER

Too right. Anyhow, you'll have to crawl back to whatever grotty plane of existence you came from, I'm far too busy today to be mingling with the likes of you. Butch, will you?

EDMUND

Excuse me for pointing this out, but when I walked in you were trying to fornicate with a mirror.

FITZELBERGER

A man with as much girth as I have does not need to practice the act of intimacy with a mirror. My bed is never short of company! Isn't that right, Butch?

BUTCH

No sir?

FITZELBERGER

What?

EDMUND begins to laugh.

That is quite enough! What is it you actually want?

EDMUND

Actually, I didn't come here to see you.

FITZELBERGER

What? Butch why did you let this moron in?

EDMUND

I came to locate a lady by the name of Mary. One that lives under this roof. She is of significant importance.

FITZELBERGER

Are you calling me a woman?

EDMUND

I beg your pardon.

FITZELBERGER

Some kind of practical joke, is it? This is outrageous! I am as much a man as you are.

BUTCH

Sir?

FITZELBERGER

You certainly wouldn't find this much hair on a woman called Mary, that is for sure!

BUTCH

Unless she's called hairy Mary?

EDMUND

Who's hairy Mary?

FITZELBERGER

Butch, have him locked up for making a fool of his Count.

EDMUND

What's going on here?

BUTCH

I don't think he's making a fool of you sir, I think he's actually looking for a lady called Mary.

FITZELBERGER

Well why's he come here?

BUTCH

One that works here in the manor.

EDMUND

Let me make this abundantly clear. I'm not mistaking you for a woman! I'm looking for a lady called Mary.

FITZELBERGER

I don't know who told you about this person of great significance, but I'm afraid you are ill-informed. I am the only person of significance under this roof and I am most certain there is no Mary working here under my command. You'd best be on your way. Good day.

BUTCH

Actually sir, there is a Mary who works here.

FITZELBERGER

What? Is she hairy?

BUTCH

A little. No more than the usual. She's a maid.

FITZELBERGER

Here in the manor?

BUTCH

Yes, sir.

FITZELBERGER

And you're sure?

BUTCH

Positive, sir. She's been here longer than I have.

FITZELBERGER

What does she look like?

BUTCH

Like one of the ugly step-sisters.

FITZELBERGER

Nope, not ringing any bells.

BUTCH

The woman who comes running when you ring the bells, sir.

FITZELBERGER

Nope.

BUTCH

She's even grumpier than you are. Just looking at her puts me in a bad mood. She has this constant miserable expression on her face like..

FITZELBERGER

What is wrong with you? Have you been running into walls head first again? Excuse his incompetence, he's quite the idiot. Anyhow, you best be on your way. Goodbye now.

EDMUND

I know she works here. And I'm not leaving until I speak with her.

BUTCH

What do you want with her? She's just a maid, the Count has half a dozen of 'em.

EDMUND

I'm not sure I should discuss it with you.

FITZELBERGER

In that case, you know where the door is. Butch, see this idiot out will you? I'm going to my quarters to err.. Meditate.

BUTCH

You're going to meditate? Can I join you?

FITZELBERGER

Err, no. I like to do my meditating on my own.

BUTCH

Oh, but I love to meditate. Can't I at least sit and watch?

FITZELBERGER

No! No, I'm quite capable of meditating by myself.

BUTCH

Are you sure? I can help you meditate if you like.

FITZELBERGER

Good heavens, no! Why can't you leave me to meditate in peace? Now I'll be in my quarters, alone. Do not disturb me.

FITZELBERGER exits.

EDMUND

I'm not leaving until I speak with Mary.

BUTCH

Who?

EDMUND

The maid?

BUTCH

Oh yes. Well unless you have good reason, you're not allowed to speak with any of Count Fitzelberger's house staff. I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

EDMUND

I must speak with mistress Mary first.

BUTCH

Not without good reason. Now get out!

EDMUND

Not before I speak to Mary.

BUTCH

Get off the premises.

EDMUND

Make me.

BUTCH

I beg your pardon?

EDMUND

Get your grubby hands off me!

BUTCH

Guards! We have ourselves a wriggly wriggler!

EDMUND

She's a Duchess!

BUTCH

What?

***FITZELBERGER** bursts in, trousers around ankles.*

FITZELBERGER

What?

BUTCH

Mary, a Duchess? How can this be?

EDMUND

(**sighs**) I and my colleagues were recently assessing a royal family line when we discovered a number of discrepancies. Mary's parents brought a single child into this world that disappeared a long time ago. Mary was born into a very wealthy family. Royalty in fact. They lived in a distant humongous castle for many years. However, Mary's parents were members of an inclusive membership society. The Society of Iocus Intent as it was known.

BUTCH

What's that!?

FITZELBERGER

Iocus Intent? What sort of lousy name is that?

EDMUND

It was a society dedicated to.. Cannibalism.

BUTCH

What's that?

FITZELBERGER

It's when humans eat each other. I should know, I bet I'd be a very tasty man indeed!

BUTCH

I'm sure you would, sir.

EDMUND

Yes... Well, nevertheless. Mary's mother ate the brain of a local cobbler.

BUTCH

What's that?

FITZELBERGER

It's a person who makes shoes.

EDMUND

By this point, she had contracted a nasty brain disease. Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease as it is known.

FITZELBERGER

What's that?

BUTCH

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is a rare, degenerative, fatal brain disease caused by an abnormal infections protein in the brain known as prion, which when ingested into your body, causes your brain cells to die off, which can then lead you to insanity.

EDMUND

That's.. Right.

Pause.

FITZELBERGER

What happened next?

EDMUND

Mary's mother, a once formidable Duchess, did become insane very quickly after that. Her hunger for human flesh grew greater. She was a great eater of pork also, but she could no longer tell the difference between them both. Soon, she had eaten her husband, the Duke, by mistake.

FITZELBERGER

That's disgusting.

FITZELBERGER pulls his trousers up.

EDMUND

The unfortunate Duke. All he did was go to eat an apple.

BUTCH

I almost ate my thumb, once.

FITZELBERGER

What happened?

BUTCH

I made a sandwich. I smelled the sausage and got excited.

FITZELBERGER

Not you, imbecile!

EDMUND

Their friends found Mary's mother three days and eleven stone later. Mary was orphaned and adopted shortly after, never knowing her real family background.

FITZELBERGER

My god, how awful!

BUTCH

Poor Mary.

FITZELBERGER

All that money and power going to waste. So you're saying Mary doesn't know that she's a Duchess?

EDMUND

She couldn't have known.

FITZELBERGER

And you're sure of this?

EDMUND

Positive, sir. That's why I'm here, to tell her.

FITZELBERGER

Right. Let's get to it then.

EDMUND

Thank you, Count Fitzelberger.

FITZELBERGER

Butch?

BUTCH

Yes, my Count?

FITZELBERGER

Arrest this man and lock him away.

EDMUND & BUTCH

What?

FITZELBERGER

You heard me. Take him to the dungeon!

BUTCH

We don't have a dungeon.

FITZELBERGER

Well then take him to the wine cellar. But still lock him up!

BUTCH

Yes my lord. Frederick!

***FREDERICK** enters.*

FREDERICK

Yes, Butch?

BUTCH

Have this man taken to the wine cellar and locked up.

FREDERICK

I'll see to it right away.

EDMUND

You won't get away with this Fitzelberger. She'll find out eventually!

***FREDERICK** drags **EDMUND** away, they exit.*

SAMPLE END.