

Mike 'Hard-As' Nails and The Case of the Missing Mink

Georgia Tuxbury





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MIKE "HARD AS" NAILS AND THE CASE OF THE MISSING MINK

CAST

MIKE 'HARD-AS' NAILS
MARY THE CLEANING LADY
SUZETTE SWANK

Setting: The office of MIKE 'HARD-AS' NAILS. There is a desk with a chair and another chair to the side of the desk. The desk holds an ash tray and coffee cup as well as scattered papers and pens. A hat rack stands in a corner.

At Rise: Rinky-tink piano music is playing. MIKE sits at his chair, feet on his desk. He swings his legs off the desk, rises and, walking back and forth in front of his desk. As he speaks to the audience. music ceases.

MIKE: I'm Mike Nails. 'Hard-As' Nails they call me, and I'm a Private Eye. I investigate some really tough cases. But it's pretty hard making a buck these days with money as tight as it is. Yeah, it's been a long time since I had a well-heeled client. The only person who comes through that door is the cleaning lady. And she's anything but well-heeled. Round-heeled maybe, but not well heeled.

(MIKE goes to sit on desk; from the wings we hear MARY singing, "She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes, yahoo, she'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes...")

MIKE: And speak of the devil...

(MARY, the cleaning lady, enters. She is pushing a dust mop and still singing.)

MARY: *(as she mops she sings)* "She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes, yahoo, she'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes..." *(She goes to the desk) Lift yer leg up, sonny boy. (She dust mops under his leg, then props the dust mop on the desk, takes a feather duster from her pocket and starts dusting the desk) Move yer butt, sonny boy. (He rises and she dusts the desk. He sits back down. (she picks up his coffee cup) What's this? Coffee? Laced with a little brandy, I'll just betcha. (she takes a sip) Yup! I was right. (she finishes it off) Not too bad either. (now she really sings)* "She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes, YAHOO!"

MIKE: Listen, Mary, I'm getting pretty sick of hearing you comin' round that mountain. You shoulda been round it a long time ago. Don't you know any other song? That song's enough to drive a man to drink.

MARY: *(going to desk drawer, bringing out a pint of whiskey and showing it to MIKE)* And a mighty short trip it is.

MIKE: Aw, come on now, Mary. Put the bottle where you found it. So you know a few of my foibles.

MARY: *(putting the bottle back in the drawer)* A few of your foibles? I know 'em all, smart guy.

MIKE: So if you know my foibles, you know I get sick of that song. I think it's time you expanded your repertoire.

MARY: *(shaking her butt at audience)* Hey, I thought I had a kinda cute repertoire. It's a cinch it don't need expanding!

(MARY takes feather duster and dusts MIKE under the chin)

MARY: "Oh, I'll tickle you under the chin. I'll do it agin and agin."

MIKE: *(brushing aside the duster)* Okay, you'd better get your dusting done with and get outta here. I've got an important client coming in.

MARY: Oh, sure you have. And I've got me a date with Tom Cruise. *(she walks to stage left, still singing)* "She'll be ridin' three white horses when she comes..." *(as she walks out)* And he'd be a mighty lucky guy! "YAHOO..."

MIKE: I hate to admit it, but she's right—the last well-heeled client I had was so long ago, gas was only a buck a gallon. Everything must be going too well around these parts. Nobody's got a problem. Times have been tough for me! My bank account is as empty as the cleaning lady's head. If only someone would walk in that door that's got some money, I'd be a happy man.

(Piano music while he goes to waste basket and removes the pack of cigarettes, and is about to light one when in strides Money in the form of SUZETTE SWANK, dressed to the hilt, with glittering jewels.)

MIKE: *(he returns to sit on desk)* I didn't hear you knock.

SUZETTE: I don't knock. It's not my style.

MIKE: Sit down, won't you? *(he points to chair and she sits down)*

SUZETTE: I'm Suzette Swank, Mr. Nails.

MIKE: Just call me 'Hard-As.'

SUZETTE: Okay, 'Hard-Ass.'

MIKE: That's 'Hard-As.'

SUZETTE: I'll call you what I want to call you.

MIKE: Then can I call you Suzette?

SUZETTE: No, you can't.

MIKE: Then can I call you Mrs. Swank?

SUZETTE: No, you can't. I'm Ms. Swank. I'm single. Divorced.

MIKE: I'm sorry to hear that. I hope your divorce was...friendly.

SUZETTE: Oh, yeah, it was friendly all right. I'd like to kill the guy!

MIKE: My, my, Ms. Swank. What brings such wrath?

SUZETTE: My husband ran off with Miss Onion Blossom.

MIKE: Miss Onion Blossom, h'mm...

SUZETTE: He's always been a fool for a title.

MIKE: Really?

SUZETTE: I, for one, was the fishing derby's Miss Red Snapper.

MIKE: An apt title, I'm sure. A few years ago, right?

SUZETTE: What do you mean by that?

MIKE: Not a thing. *(he decides he'd better change the subject)* I see all your diamonds. I just bet you live up on Knob Hill Road.

SUZETTE: No, I don't. Right now I'm considering buying a place at Cedar Valley Condos. I think the place needs a little class, and I've got it. Besides that, I understand it's a great place to raise kids.

MIKE: A great place to raise kids? My dear Ms. Swank, as I recall, it's a child-free community; there's a three week limit to having children under eighteen stay at Cedar Valley Condos.

SUZETTE: That's what I mean. Three weeks is all I can stand with the little brat. After that he can go with his daddy and little Miss Onion Blossom.

MIKE: I see your point. So, Ms. Swank, why are you here?

SUZETTE: I want you to find my mink coat. It was stolen.

MIKE: You wear a mink coat in the middle of summer?

SUZETTE: I keep my air conditioning set at 60 degrees. And I like to wear it to do my shopping, too. They keep the stores really cold.

MIKE: So what happened to your mink coat?

SUZETTE: Someone stole it from my shopping cart at Walmart.

MIKE: You put it in your shopping cart? Along with lettuce and carrots?

SUZETTE: The air conditioning was on the blink. I had to put it somewhere.

MIKE: But in your shopping cart?

SUZETTE: Well, my son was in the child's seat, so I couldn't put it there.

MIKE: *(taken aback)* Your son? How old is he?

SUZETTE: He's three.

MIKE : You have a son three years old? His birth must be in the Guinness Book of World Records.

SUZETTE: He's adopted, 'Hard-Ass,' and no more insults.

MIKE: Fair enough. So someone lifted your mink while you were shopping.

SUZETTE: I was at the lobster tank when someone must have snatched it. And I'll pay you good money to find the person who committed the dastardly deed! I'm lost without my mink!

MIKE: You came to the right man, Ms. Swank.

SUZETTE: How about you taking my case on a contingency basis. If you find it, I'll pay you a thousand bucks. You don't find; I don't pay.

MIKE: I don't work that way. It's on an hourly basis or no deal.

SUZETTE: So what's your hourly rate?

MIKE: Fifty bucks.

SUZETTE: That's pretty steep.

MIKE: Pretty steep, but I'm good.

SUZETTE: Yeah, I heard you were tougher than a two dollar steak. I guess you've got me over a barrel. So let's cap it at five hundred bucks. I know your type. You'll keep looking forever as long as I'm paying.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!