

THE BARBARIANS ARE COMING

By: Luigi Jannuzzi

CAST: (4) 4 either FEMALE or MALE

SET: Bare stage with 2 chairs,
small screen for tea.

Contemporary

Comedy

CAST
(In Order Of Appearance)

GODFREE

SIDNEY

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THE BARBARIANS ARE COMING
by Luigi Jannuzzi

House lights fade and stage lights rise on one door upstage right, two chairs downstage center, and one table with two cups and saucers and one teapot on it behind a screen at up stage center. We see two Medieval Lords: GODFREE sitting in one of the chairs, and SIDNEY upstage center halfway behind the screen. The reason for the screen is so the audience can not see how the tea water is cooking. GODFREE and SIDNEY have English accents.

GODFREE

I can't decide. I just can't decide.

SIDNEY

What an interesting book this is.

GODFREE

I've been looking at both sides now and I just can't make up my mind.

SIDNEY

Did you ever read this book, Godfree?

GODFREE

How many times have I deliberated over this? How many endless hours has just man himself deliberated over this?

SIDNEY

Godfree, I'm asking you a question, Have you ever read this?

GODFREE

What?

SIDNEY

Have you ever read this? (*Holds book up.*) It's yours. Have you read it?

GODFREE

What is it?

SIDNEY

It's about the Barbarians.

GODFREE

No, I don't believe I've seen it.

SIDNEY

It's very well written, very sophisticated in its critique on Barbarian philosophy.

GODFREE

What is the name of it?

SIDNEY

"Everything you wanted to know about Barbarians.. .but were afraid to ask them."

GODFREE

Clever. Clever title.

SIDNEY

Isn't it? And you know it states here that everyone hates them.

GODFREE

Is that right?

SIDNEY

Basically because they're a roaming rather destructive group of uneducated dolts I gather. (*Leafing through book.*) Oh here, listen to this: (*reading*) "The major dislike continuously generated by the Barbarian philosophical approach to life is their continuous need for slaughter, revenge, raving, burning, looting, stealing, and killing unmercifully."

GODFREE

Those sort of tendencies would make one rather unpopular.

SIDNEY

It also states: (*reads*) "They also have a peculiar odor about them."

GODFREE

Hmm.

SIDNEY

The only thing I don't understand is why a person would do a thing like that.

GODFREE

You know, I had an uncle who insisted on bathing only one time a month.

SIDNEY

No, I mean to slaughter and kill.

GODFREE

Oh, oh that. No, I wouldn't know anything about that.

SIDNEY

And it says the Barbarians are conquering land.

GODFREE

What would they want to do that for?

SIDNEY

Don't know. They're conquering it though, it says so right here.

GODFREE

My God, it's almost time and I haven't decided.

SIDNEY

Yes I think it almost is time isn't it?

(SIDNEY lifts his foot examining the sole of his slipper.)

GODFREE

But I have narrowed it down: there's progress. It's sort of a toss up between the orange pekoe or the green pimento.

SIDNEY

(Looking at sole.) Hmm.

GODFREE

I don't know. I just don't know.

SIDNEY

Godfree, let me ask you something.

GODFREE

Yes.

SIDNEY

Godfree, how quickly does the velvet wear off of the bottom of your sole?

GODFREE

I don't know. Why do you ask?

SIDNEY

I ask because I suspect perhaps the peasants may be conspiring to use a bit of an inferior form of velvet. My God, I can almost notice where it's wearing here.

(A soldier [SERF 12] runs in the door.)

SERF

Lord, my Lords!

GODFREE

Say.. .what. . .What is this?

SERF

My Lord, the Barbarians, Lord, they're invading.

GODFREE

Now wait a second, wait a second. Shouldn't you have knocked?

SIDNEY

Of course he should have.

GODFREE

Don't you believe in knocking?

SERF

But my Lords.

GODFREE

In fact, we were just talking about this, weren't we?

SIDNEY

Yes we were in fact.

GODFREE

How it so obvious to tell about these people today and how they seem to be bred with a distinct lack of social etiquette. And it's quite obvious my good man, even to a casual bystander.

SERF

I'm.. .I'm sorry my Lords, but the Barbarians.

GODFREE

Now you march right back out there.

SERF

Sir, I don't believe you understand.

GODFREE

And knock! Do *you* understand?

SERF

Yes...yes, my Lords.

(SERF 12 walks out of door.)

SIDNEY

My God, you'd think the world was coming to an end the way some of these people treat their social responsibilities. Etiquette, mores, social taboos... Poof.. .out the window.. Poof.

(Knocks are heard from the door.)

GODFREE

Unbelievable.

SIDNEY

I know. Responsibility to social standards that have taken us as a civilization years to develop.. .Poof, right out the window, gone.

(Knocks are heard from door.)

SIDNEY

Is the tea almost ready?

GODFREE

Almost.

(Knocks heard again.)

GODFREE

(Over to door.) Oh yes, yes.. .who is it?

SERF

Messenger Serf 12 your humble Lordship.

GODFREE

Oh come in, come in.

(SERF 12 enters.)

SERF

(calmly) Your Lordship, I have a message of...of urgent urgency.

GODFREE

Yes, now see how much easier this works? Don't you feel like a gentleman now that you've knocked?

SERF

My Lords, I have an urgent message.

GODFREE

And what would that be?

SERF

(Loses composure.) It's the Barbarians, my Lord. The Barbarians are a mile away from the castle and are attacking.

SIDNEY

That's ridiculous. There's nothing to attack a mile away.

SERF

No Sir, the Barbarians, we can see then they're running toward this castle with battering rams, and...and elastic band boulder heavers.

SIDNEY

Oh, there's a picture of a boulder heaver in the book here.

SERF

They're attacking peasants along the way and everyone is running toward the castle for safety.

GODFREE

Is that right?

SERF

Yes my Lords, you can see them from the window. Our scouts, the ones that made it back to tell us that they should be here any moment. And the two walls that we

have before they get to this part of the castle.. .I fear we won't hold them.

GODFREE

(Calmly putting his arm around SERF 12 and walking him toward the door.) Well. ..you know, you keep us informed on their arrival.

SERF

And we've had to raise the draw-bridge, my Lord, and we've sealed **it** shut.

SIDNEY

Hmm, good move there my man.

SERF

Thank you Sir.

GODFREE

Yes, jolly good, good thinking Serf...your number?

SERF

Twelve.

GODFREE

Twelve! Good thinking Serf 12. So you keep us informed on this.

SERF

Alright my Lord, but I feel we won't be able to hold them.

SIDNEY

(Politely pushing SERF 12 out door.)

Oh you'll hold them.

GODFREE

Of course you will.

SIDNEY

You can do it.

GODFREE

We're rootin' for you Serf 12.

SERF

(Out door in hallway.)

Well, we've held people before, I guess we can do it again.

SIDNEY

You do it.

SERF

Thank you, thank you My Lordships.

(GOD- FREE closes door on SERF 12's face.)

GODFREE

Oh these serfs, they get so upset over invasions.

SIDNEY

(Flipping pages of book)

You know, what I've been reading, and what's so interesting about this book...listen to this, tell me what you think of this.

GODFREE

Tea's almost ready.

SIDNEY

It says here: "Basically, the Barbarians are nomadic, slobish, highly muscular beings with big feet covered with tough hide. They possess strong legs, covered with tough animal fur and all have been known to have unusually large dense hairy chests. What do you think of that?"

GODFREE

Sounds like some of the women you've been seeing.

SIDNEY

Godfree!

GODFREE

Just kidding, just kidding.

SIDNEY

And it says here that they are moving our way.

GODFREE

Which way is our way?

SIDNEY

That would be toward us I believe. ..eastwardly.

SERF

(SERF 12 runs in.)

My Lords, they're here! They're tearing down the first wall.

(SERF 12 stops, realizes that he has run in without knocking.)

Oops. Sorry.

(SERF 12 walks back to door and exits.)

GODFREE

Did you see that Sidney? Again.

(GODFREE walks over to where water is boiling.)

SIDNEY

What happens here is that once the culture is gone, it's gone. And it's.. .going to take perhaps maybe not his children, but maybe perhaps his children's children to revive and obtain a respect for it.

GODFREE

Oh, the water's almost done, it's bubbling now, it's bubbling.

SIDNEY

That's good. And you haven't made your choice yet?

(Knocks are heard at door.)

GODFREE

No I haven't.

(Knocks are heard.)

GODFREE

Yes, come in.

SERF

My Lord, the Barbarians my Lord!

GODFREE

Now calm down son, calm down.

SERF

The Barbarians are hanging on the drawbridge of the second wall, and I'm afraid if they get through the second wall my

Lord, they'll burn the castle down.

SIDNEY

They're hanging on the drawbridge are they?

SERF

And My Lords, these are ruthless beasts. They're massacring People, they're looting, they're burning, we're pouring oil on them, we're trying to beat them back, but my Lord there are hundreds of them. I don't know if we're going to be able to contain them against these odds. Plus, they have a peculiar odor about them.

SIDNEY

Oh now, come come my dear serf. I'm sure when it comes down to it, we have the facilities, the weapons, we have often repelled all sorts of attacks. Isn't that right?

SERF

Of course we have, but.

SIDNEY

Of course is right. Civilization is it's own defense my good peasant friend. And instinctively because we are civilized the deity is naturally on our side. I mean how can you even suggest the contemplation my dear uneducated friend that the reins of civilization shall fall into the paws of muscular hairy chested beings? (*snickers*) Except for the Italians of course, I don't think there's anyone like that I would trust.

SERF

But my Lords, isn't there...shouldn't there be something you could do?

GODFREE

And we're maintaining in here, we're doing the best we can in here.

SERF

Alright my Lords, I'll... I'll keep you posted.

SIDNEY

You do that. ..you keep us posted.

GODFREE

Yes, yes you keep us posted.

(Almost pushing SERF 12 toward and out door.)

Now go on back out there and go do.

SERF

Thank you my Lord, do I have your blessing my Lord?

(SERF 12 is standing outside of door.)

GODFREE

Of course you do, you've got our blessing, take our blessing, go, go. *(Closes door.)* Get lost. *(pause)* So emotional they are.

SIDNEY

Oh what do you expect. You know it says here that these Barbarians scream and yell and paint their faces, and don't wear toilet water. And with that odor, well, who wouldn't

be frightened by something like that. I think the lack of order almost chaos personified in this sort of archtypal man/beast appearance is.. .is enough to drive anyone bats I think. But we have a foundation God- free, and this is what's going to be our salvation I believe.

GODFREE

Oh of course. Nothing to worry about.

SIDNEY

No, I'm not worried. Though I do think we should do something about these velvet slippers. I feel they're using an inferior brand.

GODFREE

Well maybe we should. That sort of thing you know, that could start a sort of precedent of.. .of negligence toward the goods that are created. Yes that sort of thing has to be nipped.

SIDNEY

Surely.

GODFREE

Surely nipped.

SIDNEY

Firmly nipped.

GODFREE

Yes, surely, firmly nipped.

SIDNEY

Godfree, have you reached a decision yet?

GODFREE

Uh...no, but uh...I guess you're right, it's time for the decision isn't it?

SIDNEY

I think so.

GODFREE

What will it be: Orange pekoe, or green pimento? *(pause)*
And the winner is.

SIDNEY

I bet the orange pekoe myself.

GODFREE

Hm. ...I think the winner is.

SERF

(The door flies open.)

My Lord!

*(SERF 12 staggers in, staggering and falling to the floor
with 10 to 12 arrows in him.)*

They're here! Lock the door! Lock the door.!

GODFREE

Now what's going on here?

SIDNEY

I can't believe it.

SERF

They're past the second wall.

GODFREE

(Pointing toward door.)

Knock!

SERF

They're coming down the corridor.

GODFREE

Knock! Go out and knock!

SERF

But.

(SERF 12 turns on the floor and slowly begins crawling toward door as the Lords watch.)

SERF 12 drags his body out the door, and with arm still inside the door SERF 12 reaches in and knocks on the door.)

GODFREE

Come in.

SERF

(SERF 12 drags into view.)

My Lords, the Barbarians are coming down the corridor Lock the door. Please.

GODFREE

Oh look you're dripping on the carpet.

SERF

Lock the door.

GODFREE

Oh geez, out in the corridor please.

SERF

The peasants are being massacred, lock your door.

GODFREE

Alright, alright. ..watch your arm there.

*(GODFREE closes the door as SERF 12 pulls back his arm.
GODFREE locks the door.)*

Did you see that Sidney?

SIDNEY

Third time.

GODFREE

You know...

(Heavy pounding and primal grunts are heard from the door as someone is about to push it down.)

GODFREE

What is this now.

(The pounding grows harder.)

Hey, you're going to break that door.

(A spiked wrist band attached to a hairy man's fist and arm come crashing through the square peep hole in the door.)

GODFREE

Hey, what's going on here? Hey, Hey!

(More grunts are heard as the hand and arm is trying to open the door.)

GODFREE

Hey, you stop that.

(GODFREE pours a bit of tea from his cup on the arm and hand. The arm and hand is retracted from the door with a yell. GODFREE looks through hole in door.)

Who is this? I don't believe you're in our employment here.

(Grunts in almost a language are heard.)

GODFREE

Oh wait a second. I know you. Sidney, look who's here.

(SIDNEY rises and goes over to the door.)

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

Look who's here, it's. ..it's one of the Khan brothers.
Isn't it?

SIDNEY

(Looking in hole in door.) Oh yes it is. Hello. Hi. Good
afternoon Mr. Khan.

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

What a surprise. *(To SIDNEY)* What's his name: Kubie, or
Kubla?

SIDNEY

Kubla I believe.

GODFREE

(To door.) Kubla, right?

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

We know your grandfather. (*Looks at SIDNEY*)

SIDNEY

Genghis.

GODFREE

Genghis, yes. I remember we bought a load of two humpers off him one time.

SIDNEY

That's right, good camels. Remember his slogan: "Two two humpers for the price of one?"

GODFREE

That's right. (*To door.*) So, nice to meet you Kubla.

KUBLA

(*We hear grunts and the hand comes through the door to shake hands.*)

GODFREE

(*GODFREE shakes hand.*) Good to see you.

SIDNEY

Good to see you too.

GODFREE

So what brings you to these parts?

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

So just ravaging, slaughtering, Oh well, you know everyone's got to have a hobby. **KUBLA.** *(Grunts.)*

GODFREE

Oh that's alright, that's alright. No harm done.

SIDNEY

What did he say, I couldn't catch that?

GODFREE

Oh he said he's called off the attack, and he's sorry for slaughtering a major part of the inhabitants, tearing down the drawbridge, and sticking all those arrows in the building.

SIDNEY

It's alright, forget it, forget it. What's a few arrows among friends right?

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

In fact... Sidney's been reading a book about Barbarians:
"Everything you wanted to know about Barbarians?"

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

Is that right? Is that right?

SIDNEY

What did he say?

GODFREE

He says, they asked him to do a supplement book a
"Barbarian Two." How about that?

SIDNEY

That's very good. Very good. A little break into the
literary world there for you.

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

Yes, I think you deserve it, yes.

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

That's right. I mean, after all you are doing all the work aren't you, so why should some ghost writer come along and take all their ink.

KUBLA

(Grunts.)

GODFREE

That's right. Well, good. Yes.

SIDNEY

What'd he say? I couldn't catch that?

GODFREE

Ah, he said he's got to be going, they've got another castle to massacre before dinner.

SIDNEY

Oh.

GODFREE

So it's good seeing you again Kubie.

SIDNEY

Kubla.

GODFREE

Kubla, yes.

KUBLA

(We hear grunts as a hand comes through and shakes GODFREES's hand.)

GODFREE

Good seeing you.

KUBLA

(Hand then shakes SIDNEY's hand and grunts.)

SIDNEY

Yes, good luck to you there. *(Hand retreats.)*

GODFREE

Bye, bye. *(SIDNEY turns and goes to chair, GODFREE stays at window.)* Oh gee, look at all the peasants in the corridor. *(GODFREE turns and walks to tea pot.)* Peculiar odor that fellow had.

SIDNEY

Yes, yes he did didn't he?

GODFREE

How about that, one of the Khan Klan.

SIDNEY

Yes how about that.

GODFREE

(At tea pot.) But I wonder how the peasants will take this. There seems to be quite a lot of them lying in the corridor, and if that's any indication of the inhabitants struggle.

SIDNEY

Oh, don't worry about them Godfree, they'll just regroup and mate again. In fact, the worst that can happen is a few cliches perhaps may creep into the vocabulary.., something like, "Isn't that barbarous of you", something like that, but that should be the extent of the effect.

(GODFREE walks over with two cups of tea giving one to SIDNEY.)

GODFREE

Yes I suppose you're right. Here you are.

SIDNEY

Oh! Oh is it the orange pekoe, or the green pimento?

GODFREE

Taste **it**.

(GODFREE sits down in chair.)

SIDNEY

(SIDNEY tastes tea again.)

It sort of tastes like a combination of both.

GODFREE

It is. It's a combination of both.

SIDNEY

Oh, what an interesting invention.

GODFREE

Good isn't it?

SIDNEY

(Tastes again.)

Oh yes. Very good, Godfree. You know, Godfree, it is these gentle moments in life that make up the good life.

GODFREE

Yes, I think you're right.

SIDNEY

Godfree...a toast.

(SIDNEY holds up tea cup.)

GODFREE

(GODFREE holds up cup.)

A toast.

SIDNEY

A toast, Godfree. ..to.. .what really matters.

GODFREE

Yes.

(THEY clink tea cups.)

TOGETHER

To what really matters.

(Lights fade Curtain.)

COSTUME PLOT

SIDNEY: Velvet slippers, Socks, Flowing gown, White shirt,
Ascot

GODFREE: Velvet slippers, Socks, Flowing gown, White shirt,
Ascot

SERF: Pancho, Bare feet, Tattered shorts & Another pancho
with arrows

BARBARIAN: *(can be played by SERF)* Arm of fur coat, Chain
wrist band, Glove & Hatchet

PROPERTY PLOT

ON TABLE BEHIND SCREEN, CENTER STAGE:

Two tea cups
Two saucers
Two spoons
Two napkins
A pot of water

AT CENTER STAGE:

Two chairs w/flowing material to cover them.

BEHIND DOOR, STAGE RIGHT:

Perforated hole in door or flat next to door
for Barbarian hatchet.

Steps to stand on to make Barbarian behind door seem
very tall & huge when hand comes through wall.

Mud and ketchup for Serf.

PERSONAL PROPS

SIDNEY:

Barbarian book

GODFREE:

Tea packets