

COMEDY ZOO

Episode Title: Barney & the Bright Lights

The gang is at an informal business meeting, discussing club operations, swapping jokes, and eating sandwiches. The conversation turns to life goals. Max shares that he would like to find a therapist who can cure him of his neurotic disorders once and for all. Bernice tells Max that if that happened, he wouldn't have any personality left. After a bit of urging, Leon confesses that he wants to find true love with a fishy soul mate. He sighs and remembers Cleo. Bernice hollers, "For gods sake, you idiot, you spent three hours with her! MOVE ON!" Leon looks hurt.

Bernice launches into long, detailed account of the reality show she will one day produce and star in (Bernice, Uncaged), the products she will develop (eyewear, margarita cuttle bones, bedazzled bells) and the celebrities who will be her guests. Leon gazes at her during her account, and asks to please be allowed to be a guest when the show launches.

Barney hems and haws a bit, finally revealing that while he loves running The Comedy Zoo, he dreams of doing a stand-up act of his very own. Clyde admits he would like that, too. Max gets excited and volunteers to help them work up an old school, two-man act (think Cheech & Chong or Bob & Ray or Bugs & Daffy). Max works with them on developing personae, learning timing, etc. Clyde is a natural; Barney is not. Clyde uses his street life experience to craft a knowing, self-deprecating feline who riffs on the unspayed life, the Meow Mix cats, and why Siamese aren't true cats. Barney can't keep up. His delivery is stiff, he keeps looking at the index cards Max helped him write out, and there's zero flow.

Barney realizes stand up is not his forte, but his male doggie pride won't let him back down, and in spite of Max's and Clyde's increasingly more pointed suggestions that maybe this isn't the best idea, Barney insists that he and Clyde open the following Saturday night. It's a disaster. The herbivores in the audience, including rabbits and monkeys, hurl tomatoes and melons. Ducks lay eggs and throw them. Clyde abruptly leaves the stage and commences bouncer duties, assisted by his small crew of mice.

Bernice flies around the club, whacking disorderly customers with her wings. Leon orders the bar customers to leave, as no more alcohol will be served tonight. Among all this activity, Barney stands on the stage, looking bewildered and dejected. The following day, the crew acts like nothing happened and no one mentions Barney's humiliation. Later, when they're alone, Clyde tries to discuss the evening, and Barney cuts him off with an abrupt, "I don't want to talk about it. Now or ever."

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