

COMEDY ZOO

Episode Title: Finding Cleo

It's busy Saturday night at the Comedy Zoo, and Leon is mixing up a storm. In fact, Leon is now a "mixologist." This is confirmed by a prominently-displayed, framed diploma from the Aquamerican Bartending School, certifying that one "Leon from the Bayou" has passed the School's courses and is a Certified Mixologist. Every time Leon looks at his diploma, he sheds a fishy tear or two.

Bernice is hustling to and from the bar, calling out orders, occasionally in song just because she feels like it. We hear Max doing a "thank you and here's the next act bit," which incorporates the old "canary joke" (enterprising bird store owner captures thousands of canaries who sing beautifully; on plane back to his NY store, the plane crashes, and the traumatized canaries forget how to sing. The bird store owner sells the canaries to unaware customers, and one after another, they return to complain about their purchase. Before they can complain, however, the pet store owner says, "Welcome back! So did you get a singer or a dancer?")

Two pairs of canaries get up and leave, but one of them is giggling. Bernice mutters to Leon about those yellow-feathered losers with no sense of humor. Leon ignores her, however, because a vision of piscatorial beauty has just shown up at his bar and is asking him for a krillatini. Dirty. Leon mixes her drink while heavenly music plays, and fantasy visions appear of himself and the beauty running through flowery meadows, sharing an ice cream soda (one glass; two straws), kissing atop the Eiffel Tower, riding a carriage through Central Park, and in a rowboat on a lazy pond in the sun. Leon rows while beautiful fish lounges back under a parasol. Then they both jump into the pond and resurface in front of a minister, pledging love and devotion to each other. Leon's fantasy ends as he presents her with her drink and takes her fin in his. Leon asks her name, and she replies "Cleo. My name is Cleo."

Leon and Cleo have Sunday brunch the following day, and they get to know each other. Cleo is from San Francisco and is well read, interested in current events, good books and the life of the mind.

Leon take out his phone and shows her pictures of his immediate and extended family – slack-jawed, vacant-eyed fish in all sorts of clothing: farm wear, dressed to the nines for weddings, at Leon's Aquamerican Bartending School graduation, and for Halloween when the entire clan is dressed as an octopus. Cleo seems to enjoy the brunch, and after they part, Leon starts looking for a larger aquarium to accommodate the fish family he plans to have with Cleo. Sadly, Cleo was only in town for a personal growth conference about learning not to fear lemons and frying pans. She texts Leon a “lots of fun meeting you, call if you're ever in San Francisco & I'll show you around!” We leave Leon standing in front of a real estate office with ads in the window for “Foreclosed luxury aquariums for pennies on the sand dollar!” and “Turnkey fishbowls available! Designer pebbles & little diver guy already installed!”

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