

Anti-Semitic Chicken

by

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"BBQ JUDGES"

CAST

Cal - 30's

LeeAnne - 30's

(Inside the Judges' tent at a BBQ
contest. LEEANNE enters.)

LEEANNE

Cal! Get your lanky butt in here. Now!

(CAL enters.)

What in the hell is wrong with you?

CAL

It's lies, all of it! And if a judge can't tell the truth then
you might as well strip him of his ribbon and be done with it.

LEEANNE

Don't you preach at me. Fifteen years you been judging barbecue,
and I have abided your eccentricities.

CAL

I know it.

LEEANNE

Your contempt for vinegar based sauces. Your referring to pork
as anti-semitic chicken. Your refusal to acknowledge Tennessee's
statehood.

CAL

History will prove me right on that.

LEEANNE

Perhaps. But Cal, this is the Waxahachie Bull Blast and
Rattlesnake Roundup, the crown jewel of the Summer Brisket
Circuit.

CAL

I know it.

LEEANNE

You cannot shout Adulterer at the contestants!

CAL

There was ketchup and corn syrup in that sauce. I saw it!

LEEANNE

It's not against the rules—

CAL

Then the rules are wrong! If we are gonna call ourselves judges, if we have any discernment at all, we must hold the line between order and chaos, between sauces painstakingly crafted over decades and mass market abominations.

LEEANNE

Cal, I don't question your passion or integrity. I never have.

CAL

I appreciate that.

LEEANNE

But there comes a time in the history of every sport when you have to shake hands with the devil to do the Lord's work.

CAL

So we just bend over for the folks at Heinz, is that it? Sell our souls to K.C. Masterpiece?

LEEANNE

Stop it, Cal.

CAL

Just keep chasing those dollars 'till we are just two more painted ladies in the harem of Big Sauce.

LEEANNE

Dammit, will you please stop!

CAL

Why LeeAnne? Why stop? You remember what it was like in the beginning, don't you?

LEEANNE (Hesitates.)

Yes.

CAL

Bar-B-Que was beautiful then. Before the steroid loaded meat and corporate sponsorships—

LEEANNE

—Before we were swamped by arrogance and cocaine.

CAL

Yes.

LEEANNE

Hell Carl, the young pit masters don't care about flavor anymore. This is all just a means to get their hands on big cash and bigger titties. That's our legacy as judges. My legacy. I'm a failure.

CAL

We were clean once, LeeAnne. Barbecue can be beautiful again.

LEEANNE

No Cal. We can't. It's too late for me.

CAL

It's never too—

LEEANNE

No Cal! No. It was me. I gave Heinz's Bourbon Street Sauce the blue ribbon. I called it "tangilicious." And that was a lie. Hell, that isn't even a word. I'm lost, Cal. There's no coming back for me.

CAL

Fifteen years ago, you were the best damn judge of smoke rings and savor on the circuit, and you gave a lanky loudmouth from Flat Rock, Oklahoma a chance. You've still got the best taste buds that ever touched brisket. You can come back.

LEEANNE

How?

CAL

You gotta repent.

(Offers his hand.)

You gotta get right with Barbecue.

LEEANNE

(Takes his hand.)

Help me.

(CAL & LEEANNE kneel together, side by side.)

CAL

C'mon, LeeAnne. You know the words.

LEEANNE

Been a long time since I said 'em.

CAL

It's just like marinating a flank steak. You never forget how.

LEEANNE & CAL (Together)

Hail Smoked Meats, full of flavor. Blessed art thou amongst main courses, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Brisket. Holy Barbecue, mother of taste, nourish our pit masters, now, and until the last ember dies.

CAL (To LEEANNE)

Amen?

LEEANNE (In a state of bliss)

Amen!

(Blackout.)

The End