

PUNCH AND JUDY MURDER LOVE

Or

The History of the Austro-Hungarian Empire Told In Two Equally True Versions

Or

Cartoon For Adults in Twelve Episodes

Characters

Puntsch an insecure Austrian with a short temper who looks and acts like Hitler

Judit a neurotic Hungarian porn star with self-esteem issues

Arlecchino a lazy Italian who is a narcissist

Place

Deep in the middle of a cartoon called Life

Time

Here and Now, now and then. The characters wear costumes from different eras in different episodes, and sometimes costumes that are temporally different from each other in the same episode, to emphasize the timeless quality of the situations and issues. Similarly, it should be difficult to determine the age of the characters. They do not "age" throughout the course of the play, either.

Language

The language of Puntsch, Judy and Arlecchino is an argot made up of incomprehensible sounds and words from their own culture selected for their onomatopœic quality. On occasion each character speaks in the language of the spectators, with a heavy accent. Alternatively, Arlecchino, who functions as the narrative voice, can speak the language of the audience with a heavy Italian accent while Puntsch and Judy maintain their distinct gibberish.

Where necessary, translation into so-called meaningful words has been provided. But it cannot be vouched for.

Style

Each episode pre-supposes the same archetypal characters, but whether or not the episode relies on any kind of past event or past relationship witnessed by the spectators is a matter of caprice.

Where I have indicated "Lazzi" the action which follows is an example of what took place in the original production and is not intended to be followed slavishly, mulishly, or any other *sby*. Actors and directors must come up with their own, contextually valid, improvisations in rehearsal in order to fill in these aspects of the episodes.

This performance works best when the actors are visible at all times.

Screen: Episode 1: How They Met

An empty stage save for a table and two chairs. A screen can be used for the slides, or they can sit atop an easel and be replaced by the indolent Arlecchino or a stage hand.

Screen Puntsch met Judy in a café on the border between Austria and Hungary.

A café. Sad music of solitude. Puntsch sits at a corner table trying to get the attention of a waiter. Arlecchino and Judy are in a freeze position, centre stage, she on top of a table in a suggestive position, he crouched at her feet measuring a camera angle.

Pounding techno music suddenly replaces the sad music.

Arlecchino Cut! Cut cut cut cut cut.

Arlecchino steps forward and closes Judy's legs. They argue over the nature of what is a sexy and what is an artistic position. Judy tries to leave in a huff. Arlecchino follows her, pleading with her to stay, then insisting she fulfill the terms of her contract. She notes that the contract includes a Leading man. She sits on the table and demands that Puntsch do the job. Arlecchino reluctantly attempts to persuade Puntsch to join in. Judy stomps over to Puntsch and pulls him back to her table.

Arlecchino Action! Action action action action!

Puntsch gets on top of Judy. Lazzi: Arlecchino corrects Puntsch's position in a rude manner. Puntsch grabs Arlecchino's throat. Arlecchino croaks that this is exactly what he is looking for and positions Puntsch behind Judy, grabbing her throat. They begin to move, Puntsch up and down, Judy forward and back, and to make sexual climax sounds as if from a porn movie. The sound of Judy's moaning changes. She and Puntsch begin to enjoy themselves.

Arlecchino Cut! Cut cut cut cut cut! CUT!

Puntsch and Judy keep going, working in unison, now. They create a mounting crescendo of alternating moans and cries. Arlecchino gazes at the couple in bemusement. Climax. Lights out.

Screen It was love at first sight.

Screen OR...

Screen: Episode 3: Mirror, Mirror

Puntsch stands before a mirror facing the audience, putting on evening clothes, preparing for his first date with Judy. Across the stage, Judy does the same. In a corner, Arlecchino smokes. He speaks to the audience.

Arlecchino Puntsch is Austrian.

Puntsch performs a Nazi-like hygienic movement.

Arlecchino All Austrians are Nazis.

He points out Judy.

Arlecchino Judy is Hungarian.

Judy strikes what she thinks is a sexy pose.

Arlecchino All Hungarian women are porn stars.

Arlecchino checks his notes and decides to extemporise.

Arlecchino Arlecchino is Italian...all Italian men are perfect lovers.

As if to demonstrate that he is wrong, Judy walks over to Puntsch and drags him into the centre area for her "fantasy". Lazzi: She instructs Arlecchino to act as violinist while she and Puntsch dance a slow dance. Puntsch has a playing-card face (it's not his fantasy), and dances in his customarily stiff, Luftwaffe-style manner. She returns Puntsch to his mirror and she returns to hers.

Arlecchino prompts Puntsch to begin his "fantasy". Lazzi: He drags Judy into the centre and sits with her, as at a picnic. He makes war sounds, guns, bombs, enthusiastically describing to Judy the terrible war scene in front of them. Puntsch enlists Arlecchino to provide singing of a particularly martial kind, then more gun sounds, and finally asks Arlecchino to die in battle. He returns Judy to her mirror while he returns to his.

Arlecchino This is the history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Puntsch & Judy This is not a story about love.

Screen: Episode 4: First Date, 1

A covered table. Behind it, Puntsch and Judy are playing with puppets. Lazzi: Puppet Punch meets Puppet Judy, they run away, they meet again, they sniff each other, they hit each other with bats, they fall in love. Slowly after what seems like a sexual climax Puntsch and Judy rise from behind the table, breathing heavily. They take their seats self-consciously. Awkward silence. Both try to speak at the same time.

Screen Though they could not speak each other's language, Puntsch and Judy were very much in love.

Screen Love is a universal language.

Judy *In gibberish* I'm really hungry, Punstch!

Puntsch *In gibberish* I'm really hungry, Judy!

Arlecchino has been observing the puppet show with disdain. He approaches the table with two enormous menus.

Puntsch Schwarzenegger wurst mit lederhosen Von Trapp?

Arlecchino laughs, not kindly. He shakes his head.

Judy Paprikash Moholy-Nagy? Gulyas Bártok?

Arlecchino Ah. *to Puntsch* Are you Italian?

Puntsch Wass?

Arlecchino *to Judy* Are you Italian?

Judy Bok?

Arlecchino No. You are not Italian. You are foreigners. *Pause. He makes a rude gesture with his hands and smiles* You are lucky I do not kill you with my hands.

Puntsch Schwarzenegger wurst mit lederhosen Von Trapp!

Judy Paprikash Moholy-Nagy! Gulyas Bártok!

Arlecchino This is Italian trattoria. Only tradizionale Italiani food.

P & J Ah, ah. TrattORia.

Arlecchino Si, si. TrattORia. *smiling* For stupid, smelly foreigners. *Pretending to admire Punstch's jacket* Who wear funny clothes.

Puntsch and Judy inspect their enormous menus.

- Judy** Spaghetti Bolonese?
- Arlecchino** ...Non.
- Puntsch** Tortellini funghi?
- Arlecchino** Eh, fungool!
- Punstch** Nein, nein...funghi, tortellini funghi.
- Arlecchino** Ah. Scusi. Non.
- Judy** Pizza napolitana?
- Punstch** Risotto milano?
- Judy** Lasagne pomodoro?
- Puntsch** Pasta primavera?
- Arlecchino** Hmm...non, non, non, non.
- Puntsch** You have nothing!?
- Arlecchino** Tonight, we have, very special, for you, the Speciale di Kaka di Vaca.
- Judy** Can we get it now? I'm hungry, Puntsch!
- Puntsch** What is it?
- Arlecchino** Is shit. But is very special shit, from fields of Toscano, harvest by small dark and very handsome Italian farmer using only tradizionale shovel. Then is placed in special Italian bucket, placed in front seat of Lamborghini and famous bimbo from televisia drive it to la trattoria, where is baked carefully with organic spices until a perfect brown. Is then served to you, our speciale foreign customers, to eat a la Italiano, tradizionale Italian way. With your hands.
- Judy** What is he saying, Puntsch?
- Puntsch** I think he wants us to eat shit with our hands.
- Arlecchino** Is only for very special foreign customers. *Disdainful* Maybe you are not so special?
- Punstch** I'm special! I'm special!

Judy Puntsch, I don't want to.

Puntsch But Judy...

Judy He is a pig and he smells bad. Let's go somewhere else.

Punstch *to Arlecchino* We are leaving.

Arlecchino Eh. No problem. Here is your bill.

Puntsch My bill!?

Judy For what?

Arlecchino For service, of course. The tip is not included.

Punstch *(takes out his wallet)* OK, OK, let's get out of here.

He takes out a bill. Arlecchino takes it, looks in Punstch's wallet, and chooses two or three more.

Arlecchino Trattoria Mussolini we thank you. Come again.

Puntsch and Judi rise and leave.

Arlecchino Stupid foreigners.

Screen OR...

Screen: Episode 5: First Date, 2

Puntsch and Judy are sitting in the front row. Lazzi: They talk excitedly to each other and their neighbours about the magic show they are about to see. They are beginning to understand each other.

Judy *In gibberish* Puntschy, this is so exciting! A real magician!

Puntsch *In gibberish* Judy, there are no real magicians...but they say he's really good.

Arlecchino enters. He is looking for the magician. Puntsch and Judy clap their hands. Arlecchino tries to tell them he is not the magician. They call loudly for a trick. He agrees. Lazzi: He takes money from Puntsch for the trick. Puntsch asks if he will get it back. Arlecchino makes the money disappear. "Zarathustra" plays. Applause. He is encouraged. He invites Judy on to the stage.

Judy Oh, no, no!

Puntsch It will be fun... Come on!

Judy goes on stage. Lazzi: Arlecchino lies on the floor, expecting her to cover him with the large cloth he gives her. She is more occupied saying bello to everyone. Finally she covers him. He begins to rise magically off the floor, underneath the cloth. "Zarathustra" plays. Judy yanks the cloth off too soon, exposing Arlecchino in mid-trick. He moves as if to break her nose off, but instead recovers and turns to the audience.

Arlecchino Applause for the lady!

Puntsch claps his hands reluctantly.

Punstch I'm a better magician than you.

Arlecchino approaches the edge of the stage, Puntsch rises from his seat. They get closer with each utterance.

Arlecchino Oh yeah?

Puntsch Yeah?

Arlecchino Oh Yeah?

Puntsch Yeah!

Arlecchino Why don't you come up here and show everybody what a great magician you are, then?

Puntsch gets up on stage.

Puntsch Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you the World's Greatest Magic Trick. It was first performed by the Germans on the Jews.

Arlecchino Um...

Arlecchino backs away a little bit.

Judy Are you scared, Mr. Magician?

She caresses him suggestively.

Arlecchino Arlecchino is never scared.

Judy Disappear him forever, Puntch.

Arlecchino What?

Judy I'm kidding. Come on, it's just a game...

Puntch and Judy cover Arlecchino with the cloth. Lazzi: Puntch performs some hocus pocus in front of the audience while Judy takes off Arlecchino's clothes except for his Donald Duck underwear. At a signal from Puntch, he and Judy exit. "Zarathustra" plays.

Arlecchino *under the cloth* I'm ready....

Lights out.

Screen: Episode 6: Futures

Music appropriate for a marriage chapel in Vegas, something like "That's Amore" by Dean Martin. Puntsch and Judy enter dressed for marriage, looking around to see if they are in the right place. Arlecchino, very hung over, smokes in a corner. He slowly puts on a priest costume. He approaches and looks them over.

Arlecchino So, you want to get married. *Pause* OK, you're married. Get out of here.

Judy *In gibberish* Hey, we want a ceremony!

Arlecchino Oh, oh, a ceremony. You got money?

Puntsch produces money, which Arlecchino takes.

Arlecchino In the name of the father, the son, Elvis and the Big Bopper....get back there, I didn't say move forward yet.

They move back into place obediently. He approaches them, vaguely threatening.

Arlecchino Di vo Puntsch pre Judy vo mare?

Puntsch Ja!

Laḡḡi: Arlecchino asks Puntsch if he will take her in sickness and in health, etc., as well as several other gruesome and grotesque eventualities, all of which he demonstrates with relish. Judy looks repeatedly at Puntsch for confirmation.

Puntsch Ja...

Arlecchino Di vo Judy pre Puntsch vo mare?

Judy Igen Igen Igen!!

Laḡḡi: Arlecchino asks Judy if she will take Puntsch even if several horrible and gross events, which he makes perfectly clear, take place. There is a kind of contest between them to see who will give in.

Judy Igen Igen Igen.

Arlecchino shrugs his shoulders in resignation.

Arlecchino Ave despeto er mare donima. Segare!

Arlecchino By the powers vested in me, in the name of the father, the son, the mother-in-law, and the father's sister's nephew with the bad breath and the terrible hair-piece, I pronounce you Husband and Wife. Get out of here, you crazy kids.

Puntsch and Judy regard each other happily and exit.

Screen: Episode 7: Futures, 2

Night. Puntsch is working at his desk. He's preoccupied with writing his magnum opus. It's not going well. Judy moves suggestively around the bed.

Judy *in gibberish* Puntschy? Come to bed...

Puntsch *in gibberish* Ich comin...

Puntsch continues working.

Judy Puntschy?

Puntsch Ich comin...

Judy makes some porn-star sounds and writhes. Puntsch doesn't react.

Judy Puntschy?

Puntsch Ich comin, honey...!

Judy starts to get impatient.

Judy Quit those fucking papers and come here.

Puntsch *Coldly and without turning his head* I'm coming...

Judy waits for a while and then gets up quickly, takes a rope which appears from behind the bed, offered by Arlecchino, who is concealed there. She ties Puntsch, first one hand, then the other as he continues to work.

Puntsch Judy, Ich comin!

Arlecchino appears from under the bed. He poses invitingly for Judy. Judy appears undecided if she wants to go through with this fantasy, but then moves to the bed and gets under the covers with Arlecchino. Puntsch notices the commotion.

Puntsch What is this game? Who's this man?

Puntsch tries to untie himself but he can't.

Puntsch Take this rope off... What the hell is this game?!

Lazzi: Noises and energetic movement under the covers. Tableau 1: Judy's head appears at one end of the bed from under the covers; Arlecchino's head appears at the other end.

Puntsch Don't, don't you dare...

Lazzi: Noises and energetic movement under the covers. Tableau 2: another

Screen: Episode 8: Family Counselling

Arlecchino, pushing a broom, sings "That's Amore" to himself as he sweeps down a hallway. He comes into a big room with three chairs. Looking around, he decides to test the swivel chair. He makes it go up, then down. He races around with the chair. Puntsch and Judy enter. They squabble over who should sit where. They cross their arms and look at him expectantly. Silence. He regards them.

Arlecchino *swivelling over to Puntsch* Si? Non comprendo molto agitato Al Pacino.

Puntsch *Dejected, in gibberish* Sauerkraut limp wurst.

He motions to describe a sausage that is flaccid.

Judy *Bitterly, in gibberish* Lippizaner Stallion! Castrato Gelato.

Arlecchino Ah. Si. Si. Si. No Brando. Si.

He swivels over to Judy and looks at her critically.

Arlecchino No Brando, signora, non Monica Bellucci. Non voluptuare formaggio la Pisa.

He swivels with authority around the room.

Arlecchino *spinning in the chair* Uh? *They lean forward in anticipation.* Uh?

Puntsch raises his hands in exasperation.

Arlecchino Ah! Perfetto! Terapia de pattykaka!

Suddenly Arlecchino swivels to Puntsch and causes him to stand and move his chair so that he is facing Judy. Judy turns away from Puntsch. Arlecchino slaps her lightly on the cheek. Stunned, she faces Puntsch.

Arlecchino Casanova spaghetti, eh? La Pattykaka Terapia.

Lazzi: He leads them through the beginning of a game of pattycake. Judy raises her hands when Arlecchino places them on Puntsch's hands; Puntsch grabs her hands back. They struggle. Arlecchino separates their hands and carefully instructs Puntsch, who is having difficulty with the sequence. The game improves, and Puntsch and Judy push Arlecchino away.

Arlecchino Ah, amore. Si!

He swivels away, singing "That's Amore".

Arlecchino When the moon hits your eye
Like a big pizza pie

That's amore

P & J That's amore!

Arlecchino backs out of the room on the chair, singing as the couple sing and pattycake happily. They freeze in position.

Lights out.

Screen: Episode 9: At the Beach

A beach. A large umbrella shelters Judy, lying on her stomach, bored. Puntstch sleeps, with a book covering his face, his head in the small of her back. A beach ball lies nearby. Arlecchino arrives at the beach, carrying a bottle of Jack Daniel's, a beach ball, wearing designer sunglasses and a bathing costume from the 1890s. Lazzi: He spots Judy while applying the bourbon as sunscreen and begins a series of ostentatious gymnastics exercises. He lights a cigarette while flexing his biceps. Judy notices. She is unsure what to do.

Judy Puntstch!

She gets up. Puntstch wakes up.

Puntstch *In gibberish* Wha...?

Judy *In gibberish* Let's play ball.

Puntstch Judy, you know I don't like it.

Judy Oh, please Puntstch, just one game... Please!

She bounces the ball off his head in a repetitive manner.

Puntstch Okay, okay, but just let me finish this chapter.

Judy grabs the book from his hands.

Judy You finish it afterwards.

She takes the ball and walks into position, ready to play. Puntstch slowly gets to his feet and then, at Judy's prodding, into a position to play. Lazzi: She tosses the ball to him. He catches it with a Nazi salute. It rolls back to Judy. She tosses it again. He heads the ball with a stiff bowing motion. Arlecchino stands to one side, watching. Judy carefully places the ball and kicks it far away behind Puntstch. Puntstch turns as if the game is finished. Judy points after the ball.

Judy Go and get it...

Puntstch Oh, damn it!

Puntstch reluctantly walks after the ball. Arlecchino closes in on Judy.

Arlecchino Perfetto. Now we are together.

Judy Are you talking to me?

Arlecchino Is perfect daytime for making the love.

Judy That's my husband.

Arlecchino Husband is-a cuckoo, yes? Arlecchino is here to make happy the women.

Judy You are knocking at a wrong address, sir, I am not one of those women...

She slaps him. Lazzi: Arlecchino describes, at great length and in excruciating detail, his prowess as a lover. Punsch returns with the ball. Judy runs to him.

Judy *looking at Arlecchino* Punschy, It's so good you're back.

She tries to hug him. He drops the ball and stands stiffly, unresponsive. She backs away from him, considering her options.

Judy Punsch! Pizza!

Punsch Judy, come on! There's no pizzeria for miles.

Judy So find one.

She commands him to leave once again. Punsch leaves. Judy gets under the umbrella, unsure what to do next. She takes out a tube of sun cream. Arlecchino rushes under the umbrella and tips it over so they are blocked from the view of the audience. The umbrella begins to shake in a suggestive manner.

Punsch returns. He coughs. Judy and Arlecchino rise. Their heads are visible behind the umbrella. Arlecchino backs away, making a motion to indicate they were playing with the beach ball.

Punsch I forgot my wallet.

Judy Oh, really...

Punsch Judy, what are you doing? You know it's wrong to have sex on the beach.

Judy What are you talking about? How dare you talk to me this way?!

Arlecchino Mamma Mia, is an insult.

Arlecchino does not move towards Punsch.

Punsch Fine. I apologize for coming back. Sorry. I'll go now. I'll get that pizza.

Judy No, Punsch, don't go...

Punsch Fine. Fine. I'm going. You stay.

Punsch takes his stuff and walks away. Judy is near tears.

Judy Damn it, I didn't want this to happen...

Arlecchino Eh, is-a life. He leave. I come. You come. We come.

Judy He's gone forever, you stupid gigolo!

Arlecchino approaches her sympathetically.

Arlecchino Is a terrible thing. I understand. Is-a sad.

She sniffs disconsolately.

Arlecchino In times of a-sad, is best to make a-happy. We try. Eh?

Judy Maybe...

Arlecchino gently pushes her in the direction of the umbrella.

Arlecchino We make a-happy.

They disappear behind the umbrella.

Screen: Episode 10: Angels

Judy and Puntsch, once again at separate mirrors, dressing and doing various acts of hygiene. In a corner Arlecchino wearily puts on a halo and a pair of wings, one of which is white and one of which is black. He approaches Puntsch from behind.

Puntsch *in gibberish* Jörg Haider in der Mozart gepunchin.

He is evidently thinking about some recent injustice visited upon him by Judy. His sense of victimisation is total. He weeps like a Nazi.

Puntsch Die Kinder in der garten with der Papa klaimin von die bunker...alles gut mit die fräulein, sein dotter gebangin...

Arlecchino *bad angel* Pal, you got to waste her. She chopped your balls off. Waste her. Make her swim with the fishes.

Puntsch *maudlin* Sie ist mein liebchen!

Arlecchino Or even better! Like this.

He brings Judy into a circle of light and poses her in a freeze position. Lazzi: He winds her up like a doll and she begins to talk, non-stop, at a fantastic rate, about all of Puntsch's deficiencies. At Arlecchino's encouragement, Puntsch grabs a word hanging from the rafters and stuffs it into her mouth. She chokes, falls, and dies, still trying to speak. Arlecchino applauds. Puntsch looks dubious. They return to the mirror.

Puntsch Ich bin tinkin das ist nicht so gut idee.

Arlecchino *good angel* You're right, Puntsch. It's my duty to tell you that if you kill that bitch you will go to hell. Where I'm sure you will meet her. For eternity. So for God's sake, don't do it.

Puffing on his cigarette, he walks over to Judy. She stares in the mirror, remembering some fresh insult at the hands of Puntsch, something to do with a strange smell. She is on the phone.

Judy *In gibberish* Köszí szépen vagyók színház! Kukla Fran and Ollie sausage debreciner! Nem Bártok, nem Szolti, nem város! Jo estét kívánnok aroma therapie!

Arlecchino No, no, no, calm down.

He massages her shoulders.

Arlecchino *good angel* You don't want to kill him. He loves you.

Judy Kodaly stinkok soxen unter vare!!

Arlecchino Well...you have a point there. He's a pig. So...oops.

He quickly switches to the bad angel side.

Arlecchino Like I was saying, maybe you should treat him like a pig. You know...make some liverwurst out of him.

Judy *second thoughts* Jó napot! Egytem Ferenc Liszt!

She suddenly breaks out of the light, drags Puntsch away from his mirror and begins to dance with him. Even though he's not very good, it's romantic. Arlecchino begins to feel a bit neglected.

Arlecchino Hey, don't you walk away from me.

He cuts in on the dance. Lazzi: Judy holds him while Puntsch knees him in the stomach. He falls. A brief pause. Judy kicks Arlecchino in the stomach. She looks at Puntsch. He kicks Arlecchino. He looks at her. They smile. They alternate kicking Arlecchino in the stomach in perfect harmony. Satisfied, they exit.

Arlecchino I'm an angel! I'm an angel! You'll both go to hell!

Lights out.

Screen: Episode 11: The Last Straw

A living room of a house shared by Puntsch and Judy. In a chair at USR sits Puntsch. At the edge of a bed at DSL sits Judy. Arlecchino smokes at DSR. On the floor near him is a large woman's brassiere. Near it lies a man's handkerchief.

A bell rings as if for a boxing match. Arlecchino picks up the brassiere and the handkerchief and approaches the front of the stage. He calls for the microphone to drop from the sky.

Arlecchino Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the third round of tonight's feature fight. Let me remind you of the rules: the fighters may only use the word "Wow", except when using the title of the round. The final round... 'til death do them part.

He rings a cow bell.

Arlecchino Round 3: That's Not Mine.

Judy lies asleep on the bed. Puntsch is returning after a night of drinking. Lazzi: He tries to slip into bed unnoticed. He snores elaborately. Judy wakes. She asks him where he's been. They spar over his actions. Arlecchino circles the bed looking for infractions. He drops the giant brassiere on Judy's side of the bed. Judy is not placated by Puntsch's explanations. She tries to push him out of bed; he won't move. She gets up instead. She discovers the brassiere. She holds it up accusingly. Puntsch is confused. He says it's hers; she shows him it's too big. She accuses him of cheating on her. She pushes Puntsch out of bed and tells him to leave the house.

As Puntsch moves away Arlecchino drops the handkerchief at his feet. He picks it up. The accusations are now reversed, though Puntsch's reaction is quiet and deadly and Judy's is increasingly desperate. Lazzi: She accuses Arlecchino of mischief. As she moves towards him Puntsch wraps the handkerchief around her neck and drags her towards the bed. He strangles her; she fights, but is overcome. She dies. Arlecchino rings the bell. He moves to Puntsch and takes his hand, bringing him to the centre. He lifts his hand in victory.

Arlecchino Ladies and Gentlemen, after three rounds of non-stop relationship to the death, we have a winner...Puntsch!

Puntsch doesn't look like a winner. He gazes over at Judy's body. Lights out.

Screen History is the accurate recounting of factual events.

Screen There is always a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Screen Love is eternal, just like the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Screen If it's not, it should be.

Screen: Episode 12: How It Was

Screen The Arlecchino Show!

Arlecchino takes up a position behind a desk as a television talk show host. Puntsch and Judy sit on opposite sides of the stage as if in separate "green rooms". Lazzi: He comes forward and delivers a short comic monologue about a rabbit and a truck which fails spectacularly. He berates the audience. Finally, he introduces his guests: Puntsch and Judy, who, as the audience knows, have just split up their famous partnership and decided to go their separate ways.

Arlecchino introduces Puntsch, who enters and begins to speak about his latest film, "The Fourth Reich". Lazzi: Arlecchino turns off Puntsch's sound with a signal to the technician. Puntsch at last with Arlecchino's prodding talks about the split with Judy: something bad she did, something bad he did, and how the relationship is forever dead. Arlecchino asks him if he has a message for Judy. Lazzi: Believing that she is in the audience, Puntsch roves through the audience looking for her before Arlecchino manages to get him back on stage and off into the green room by pretending to be Judy from behind a column.

Arlecchino introduces Judy. She struts in front of the camera and begins to describe her new porn film until Arlecchino reminds her that it is a family show. At Arlecchino's prompting she tells the story of her relationship with Puntsch: he hit her! In the green room we see Puntsch gesticulate angrily. On the other hand, Judy continues nostalgically, I hit him. Puntsch reminisces. Arlecchino asks her if she would like to say something to Puntsch uia the camera. She murmurs something that sounds romantic, except of course no one understands so they can't be sure; she could be ordering his murder. Arlecchino persuades her to exit the stage to her green room.

Arlecchino steps forward to the audience and asks them to vote for either Puntsch or Judy's side of the story, by applauding. He introduces Puntsch, who enters and comes downstage to join Arlecchino. Applause. Arlecchino introduces Judy, who enters to applause. As it appears to be a tie, Arlecchino asks the audience to applaud once more. Puntsch and Judy bring out their puppets and the puppets kiss in the middle of the stage. Arlecchino breaks it up. He announces to the audience that for the first time anywhere on network TV, Puntsch and Judy have reunited on his show, in spite of the murders, the scandals, and the broken hearts.

Arlecchino This is the History—this is **not** the history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Puntsch and Judy peck at Arlecchino's head with the puppets.

Puntsch & Judy This is a story about love.

Lights out.

FINIS