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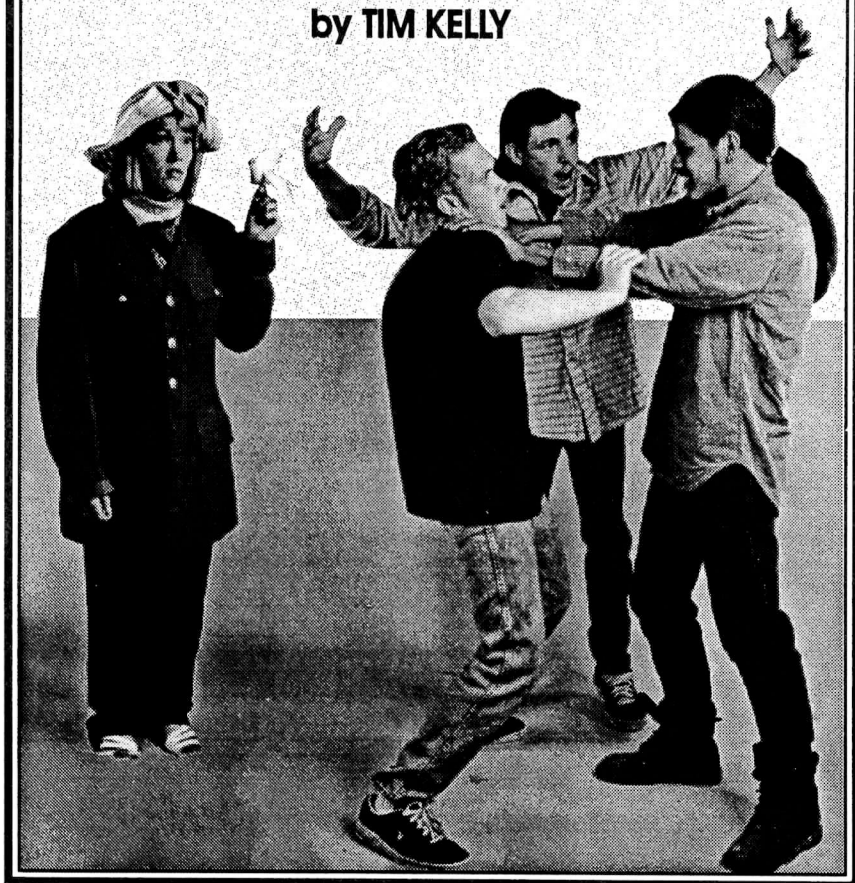
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LOOK WHO'S LAFFIN'

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A Comedy in Two Acts

by **TIM KELLY**



MERIWETHER PUBLISHING LTD.
Contemporary Drama Service
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's a youth comedy that's funny, funny, funny. Two television producers are eager to test their new talk program called "Teen Spirit." It will show youngsters in a positive light. The one who wins the coveted "host" spot is Zowie Foster. He's a cross between Jim Carey and Bart Simpson. He formerly earned his living impersonating a sea monster! Once he signs an ironclad contract, he sets out to sabotage the producers' dreams. He wants a rigged show called "Teen Trash!" In the show's most amusing scene, your audience actually gets to see what "Teen Trash" would be like ("Today's guests — Teenage cannibals from New Rochelle!"). Make way for dirty tricks. Zowie's grotesque (although hilarious) idea for the show collapses when it's discovered he lied about his age. He's actually twenty-two and his contract specifies a host who is no older than eighteen. Zowie's downfall is a hoot. There's a parade of tasty characters. Who could forget Paraphernalia Jones and her talking stuffed parrot, or Annie Andrews from "The Mustard Inn Sandwich Shop" who is Zowie's number one fan? Or Rosalie, the sponsor's fickle daughter? An added attraction is the daily routine at a cable station. You'll laugh from beginning to end. Nutty? You betcha. Easy to produce.

About ninety minutes of nonstop hilarity and entertaining action.

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

AGNES BAXTER secretary to station owner
ZOWIE FOSTER young man on the make
LOUISE cleaning woman
MANDRAKE teenage program advisor
CAROL another
SALLY another
SCOOBY DOO crew member, props
HILDA crew member, script clerk
CHUCK crew member, cameraman
DEBORAH crew member, sound
CHARLOTTE EMERY "Teen Spirit" producer
TOM SCANLON "Teen Spirit" director
ROSALIE JOHNSON sponsor's daughter
PEGGY crew member, makeup
JENNY crew member, wardrobe
JOE CAMPBELL hoping to host "Teen Spirit"
MARILYN HALL also hoping
RUTH ROSS another hopeful
PARAPHERNALIA JONES ventriloquist
KITTY BOYLE theatrical agent
DUKE small-time crook, menacing
ANNIE ANDREWS luncheonette employee
DALE KELLERMAN writer for *Today's Teen Magazine*
HECTOR photographer for *Today's Teen Magazine*

EXTRAS can be utilized as Security Guards, additional Crew Members, "Teen Trash" Spectators.

PRODUCTION NOTES

ON STAGE:

Guest chairs (3). Optional platform. Additional chairs. Prop table with: Assorted props, coffeepot, cups, spoons, sugar, tea bags, bottled water, cans of juice, slateboard with chalk. Assorted camera and filming equipment, camera on tripod or shoulder camcorder, film cans, light reflectors, electrical gear. Small table with sound recording equipment, microphone, chair.

FOR MAKEUP ROOM:

Table, chair, frame for mirror, box of tissues, towel, wig on stand, powder and paint boxes, brushes, eye pencils, magazine, clothes brush, etc. Optional section of wall with photographs, work notices, hooks. Optional clothes tree.

FOR WARDROBE/COSTUME ROOM:

Table and chair. Rack of clothing, assorted costumes, including: two male jackets (one a "glittering show biz type," if possible). Optional photographs.

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE:

Cordless phone (AGNES), delivery boy jacket and cap (ZOWIE), apron, bandana, trash bag, feather duster (LOUISE), large flat production book, pencil, glasses (HILDA), costume sketches, smock (JENNY), makeup box, smock (PEGGY), jacket, comb (JOE), measuring tape (CHUCK), hanky (MARILYN), quarter (JOE), birdcage with covering, stuffed/toy parrot (PARAPHERNALIA), attaché case (KITTY), basket with sandwiches, Band-Aid on thumb (ANNIE).

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO:

Scene One: Cordless phone (AGNES), costume on hanger (JENNY), trash bag, feather duster (LOUISE), comb (ZOWIE), basket of food items (ANNIE), clipboard, papers, pen (AGNES).

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO:

Scene Two: Pushbroom (LOUISE), shoulder bag with pad and pen (DALE), cameras (HECTOR), sunglasses, hand microphone (ZOWIE), machine gun, gangster hat, sunglasses (DUKE), whistle (DEBORAH), basket (ANNIE).

SOUND:

Musical fanfare, optional recorded applause, telephone.

COSTUMES:

As indicated in the script. CREW MEMBERS wear work clothing. DEBORAH might wear a dust smock. Make LOUISE and ADVISORS as wild-looking as possible when they appear as guests on "Teen Trash." It'll get a big laugh.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Try to make the set look as much like a "working studio" as possible. Might have a couple of work lights in view, some for overhead lights. Some scenery flats against the back wall. Or you might have a backdrop of some kind. The guest chairs (platform) could have a wall behind them. The makeup/wardrobe room might show a section of wall with a door in it, etc. The makeup table could have the frame of the mirror ringed with light bulbs.

SIMULTANEOUS ACTION:

This will take some drilling, but the effect will be worth it. The audience sees more than one scene at the same time. For example, business in the makeup room while a dialog scene plays in the studio. The silent action must come across as natural. You might consider having the background in low light as an important scene plays in strong light.

PACING:

This is crucial. The comedy must MOVE and MOVE FAST. The dialog should be delivered in sprightly fashion, loud and crisp. Cues are picked up immediately. There is never a moment when something isn't happening on-stage. Entrances and exits are lively.

"TEEN TRASH":

This sequence is played outrageously. Noisy and exaggerated. Some colorful lighting to emphasize the "imagined quality" would look spectacular. Interesting comic bits might suggest themselves during rehearsals. If they work and they're funny — use them. For example, a couple of Security Guards might jump up from the audience and attempt to break up the fracas.

ABOUT ZOWIE:

Any guy who did time as a Sea Monster should be fun to watch.

Although Zowie isn't exactly a solid citizen, he's not without wayward charm. That's the "secret" of his fascination. He doesn't bare his fangs until he's sure he's trapped his prey. Thus, Zowie doesn't reveal his true nature until that contract is signed.

When Zowie finally leaves the stage, the audience should be wondering what he's got planned for that stupid parrot act.

ABOUT THE SETTING

Essentially, it's the *open stage* used to suggest a television studio. Up Center, on a platform, if possible, are three chairs for program "guests."

Stage Right represents a makeup room. There's a table and chair facing the audience. The table's "mirror" is only imagined. Thus, when a person looks into the mirror, he or she is actually looking into the audience. The table is covered with makeup material — powder and paint, eye pencils, boxes of tissue, wig on a stand, etc. There's also a wastebasket in the room. On the makeup room wall, right, are some clothes hangers (or a clothes tree will do) and a collection of 8"x10" performer glossies.

Against the wall, in the studio, Stage Left, is a table with a coffee urn or a couple of coffeepots. The usual "coffee break" items — cups, spoons, sugar packets, tea bags, water in plastic bottles, cans of juice, etc. This area also serves as a prop table.

Down Left is a video camera on a tripod, light metal chests, film cans, some recording equipment on a small table; chair; maybe a large film camera, if you can manage it. In short, what we'd expect to see in a studio equipped to produce television shows. Somewhere there's a wall phone.

Up Left is a "dressing room" area. Table and chair positioned so audience can get a good view. A rack of clothing and costumes in the background. If a wall section is used (strictly optional), it too displays 8"x10" glossies.

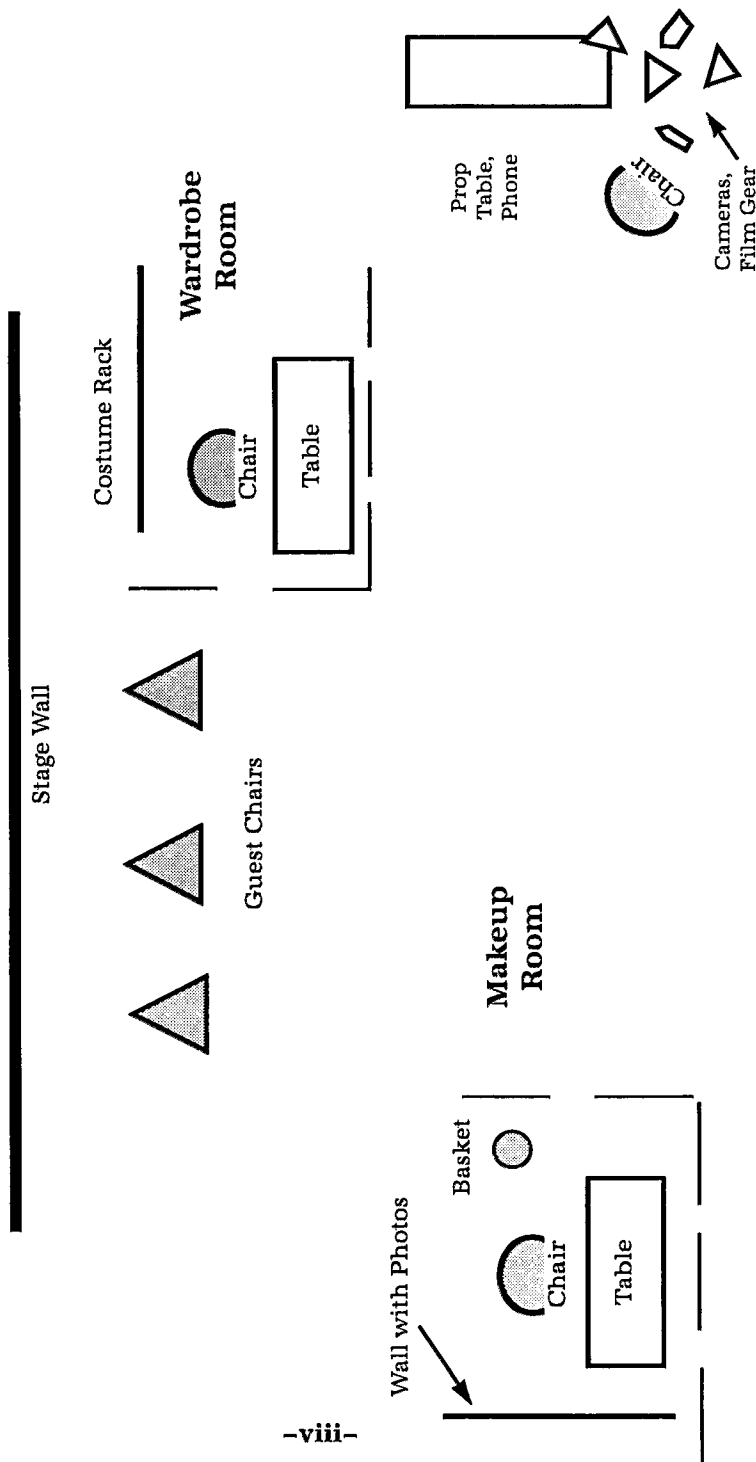
Additional stage dressing as/if desired: Overhanging lights, small refrigerator, scenery flats against the backstage wall, floor lamp(s), chairs.

Entrances/exits are Down Right below makeup room, Up Right. Down Left below "equipment" placement. Stage Left below dressing room. Also, characters can walk behind the guest chairs, moving in and out Up Left and Up Right.

For further suggestions on "dressing up" the setting, or simplifying it, consult *Production Notes*.

Basic Floor Plan

LOOK WHO'S LAFFIN'



SYNOPSIS

The action of the play takes place in a studio at a cable television station in Los Angeles, California.

The time is the present.

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ACT I

LIGHTS UP: Revealing television studio.

AT RISE: AGNES BAXTER, secretary to the station's owner, is standing center. She is using a flip [cordless] phone. As she speaks, she looks above the heads of the audience to a high, unseen office window.

AGNES: Yes, Mr. Flahooley. As far as I know, Miss Emery is ready to go. *(Listens.)* They're over in Studio "B." It's "Cooking With Gas Time." *(Checks watch.)* They have a few more minutes before the program ends. *(Listens.)* Yes, Mr. Flahooley, I know you're anxious. Why don't you take one of your expensive antacid tablets? You always feel better when you do.

(ZOWIE FOSTER, looking about eighteen, enters Stage Left. He wears a white jacket and cap, signifying he's a delivery boy of some sort. ZOWIE's like a cross between Bart Simpson and Jim Carey. He's definitely off-center, if not off the wall. Charming, clever, greedy, manipulative, boyish, ambitious, selfish, talkative. He can smile like a beagle pup, but he has the mind of a ferret. Never in doubt about his coming greatness)

ZOWIE: Never fear! Zowie's here! Ask and he'll deliver!
(AGNES puts one hand over the phone mouthpiece.)

AGNES: Mind being quiet, please? I'm speaking to the station owner.

ZOWIE: Mr. Flahooley himself?

AGNES: The same. I'll be with you in a moment.

ZOWIE: Gotcha. *(He looks for a place to sit. Sees the chairs on the platform. He sits in the middle one.)*

AGNES: *(Listens.)* How's that again, Mr. Flahooley? *(Listens.)* I'm not sure, but I think it's down to two girls and one boy. *(Listens.)* I don't know their names. But I'm sure Charlotte Emery does. *(Listens.)* Yes, I do realize "Teen Spirit" has given you a nervous tummy. *(Listens.)* I'll tell

1 Miss Emery you want to see her. (*Listens.*) In the left-
2 hand drawer, Mr. Flahooley. You'll find your expensive
3 antacid tablets in the left-hand drawer. (*Listens.*) Mr.
4 Flahooley? You still there? (*She shades her eyes with one*
5 *hand and squints high into the distance.*) Yoo-hoo, Mr.
6 Flahooley? (*Curious, ZOWIE stands. Shades his eyes with*
7 *one hand, squints high into the distance.*) He's gone. It's
8 going to be one of those days.

9 ZOWIE: That's something. Mr. Flahooley having his office
10 situated so he can watch everything that goes on in
11 this studio.

12 AGNES: He likes to look down on the people who work for
13 him. He rarely comes into the station. Today's special.

14 ZOWIE: What's special about it?

15 AGNES: We're going to pick the host for the "Teen Spirit"
16 show.

17 ZOWIE: "Teen Spirit"? (*He sits.*)

18 AGNES: This station is going after the youth market in a big
19 way. (*Gives ZOWIE a hard look.*) Who are you?

20 ZOWIE: I work for the sandwich shop across the street.
21 Y'know — "The Mustard Inn."

22 AGNES: Please don't sit on the props.

23 ZOWIE: This chair is a prop?

24 AGNES: It's part of the set. Or it will be.

25 ZOWIE: Just imagine. (*Stands.*) Anyway, Annie, the girl who
26 took today's sandwich orders over the phone, got them
27 garbled. Y'know — who gets the pickle and who don't.
28 (*He steps to AGNES.*) She tried calling back, but the lines
29 were busy.

30 AGNES: You're talking to the wrong person. I'm Mr.
31 Flahooley's executive secretary. You'll have to speak to
32 someone from the crew. Food's their thing. (*LOUISE, a*
33 *cleaning woman, enters right. Apron. Bandana on her head.*
34 *She carries a trash bag. Enters makeup room. Empties contents*
35 *of wastebasket into trash bag.*)

1 **ZOWIE:** Where will I find the crew? Enlighten me.
2 **AGNES:** Patience, Tom Sawyer. They'll be here shortly.
3 *(Three teens enter left. They are: MANDRAKE, CAROL and*
4 *SALLY. LOUISE makes a few swipes with a feather duster.)*
5 **MANDRAKE:** Is this Studio "A"?
6 **AGNES:** Each and every corner.
7 **CAROL:** We're supposed to meet with Miss Emery.
8 **AGNES:** Tryouts for "Teen Spirit"?
9 **SALLY:** We're going to be advisors on the show.
10 **ZOWIE:** Advisors?
11 **MANDRAKE:** We're going to supply youths' points of view.
12 **SALLY:** We want to insure a positive outlook for the show.
13 **MANDRAKE:** Nothing trashy.
14 **CAROL:** Strictly class.
15 **AGNES:** If you wait in here, you'll see Miss Emery soon
16 enough. *(She exits Down Right, talking to herself.)* I hate a
17 day when Mr. Flahooley comes in. *(She's out. LOUISE exits*
18 *makeup room, steps into studio space.)*
19 **LOUISE:** Never takes me long in that room. Peggy doesn't
20 like me to tidy up in there. Says it rattles the karma.
21 **ZOWIE:** Peggy?
22 **LOUISE:** The makeup girl. Do I know you?
23 **ZOWIE:** It's possible. I get around. Right now I'm on
24 temporary duty at "The Mustard Inn." *(LOUISE starts to*
25 *exit left, dragging the trash bag. She stops, studies ZOWIE.)*
26 **LOUISE:** I got a funny feeling I've seen you somewhere, and
27 I don't mean "The Mustard Inn."
28 **SALLY:** They say everyone has an exact double somewhere.
29 **LOUISE:** Who says?
30 **SALLY:** Y'know — humanity.
31 **LOUISE:** Is that a fact? *(She exits. Scoffs.)* Kids. Go figure.
32 **ZOWIE:** How much are they paying you?
33 **MANDRAKE:** We're volunteers.
34 **ZOWIE:** That lets me out. I don't volunteer for anything.
35 Life's too short. I'm not sure about "Teen Spirit" —

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