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THE CLODS OF HOPPER

The Clods of Hopper

A laff-happy comedy lampoon
in two acts
by Tim Kelly



Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Contemporary Drama Service

PO Box 7710 • Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710

PRODUCTION NOTES

ONSTAGE

Sofa, sofa chair, chair and table, telephone and telephone table. Additional stage props as desired. For example, rugs, pictures, vases of flowers, extra tables and chairs, lamps. Maybe a fireplace.

Sign reading: "INTERMISSION" is set on floor behind sofa prior to Act One curtain.

BROUGHT ON:

Act One, Scene 1: Shoulder bag with notepad and pencil (LAURETTE), hypo (NURSE PEDICURE), pistol and holster (SHERIFF), Teddy bear and lollipop (BABY DARLEEN), revolver (CADWALLADER), beard (GRANDPAPPY), dolls (2) (WANDA), lipstick and hand mirror (SISTER WOMAN), leather jacket, beard (GRANDPAPPY).

Act One, Scene 2: Duster (GINGER), framed family picture (BIG MOMMA), vase, flowers, document, pen (SISTER WOMAN), doll "baby" (BIG POPPA, WANDA, SISTER WOMAN), medallion on chain (ALI SELTZER), suitcase (BABY DARLEEN), paper cup with water (NURSE PEDICURE).

Act Two, Scene 1: Ball (P.U.), veil (SISTER WOMAN), attache case with legal papers, eyeglasses (LAWYER FILCHPOCKET). Toy frog. Shopping bags (2), wedding license (GERTIE), picture (MISS RINGO), dolls (2) (WANDA), notepad and pencil (SHERIFF, LAURETTE).

Act Two, Scene 2: Tray with cups (optional) (ROXY), doll "babies" (WANDA), notepad and pencil (SHERIFF), straightjacket (NORMA LEE), basket of wash (CARSON), gumball machine (BABY DARLEEN), broom (GINGER), clipboard (VANESSA), notepad and camera (LAURETTE).

SOUND EFFECTS: Chirping of birds, running feet, crying baby (these can be done "live"), thunder, telephone.

COSTUMES: Modern, with a "Western" or "Cowboy" influence. Mentioned here are only those costumes that deserve special attention for plot purposes: NURSE PEDICURE should wear hospital whites, BIG POPPA wears a white suit or a rancher's outfit with much "padding" at the mid-section, P.U. wears either jeans and cowboy shirt or a Western suit, boots. Both BIG POPPA and P.U. wear cowboy hats, BABY DARLEEN wears a dress that makes her look like a young child.

As the "motorcycle mama", BABY DARLEEN wears a leather jacket, bandana, jeans or short skirt. NORMA LEE wears a hospital smock. CURBSTONE GERTIE wears a battered hat, coat with ratty fur collar. SISTER WOMAN wears something glamorous. In Act Two she wears black. CARSON wears jeans, motorcycle jacket and hat. ALI SELZTER can wear a bedsheet and turban or something that looks Arabic. SHERIFF wears a uniform or something like a uniform.

About Roxie the Robot

This is a good opportunity for some creative thinking. The robot costume can be simple or elaborate. For example, the actress might wear an apron over a black dress, a maid's cap, etc. -- but her face could be painted silver. Or ROXIE might wear a large painted carton to suggest the container for her mechanical insides, etc. Imagination is the keyword.

About the Chase

Director(s) may wish to elaborate on the chase sequence. That is extend it. Have SHERIFF chase BABY DARLEEN and CARSON around the sofa. Have NORMA LEE chase her victims around the room before driving them out, etc. As long as it keeps the audience laughing -- keep it going.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(and are they characters)

GINGER *(maid)*

LAURETTE PAGE *(television writer)*

VANESSA VAN SNEER *(a Clod neighbor... and regrets it)*

NURSE PEDICURE *(for grandpappy)*

BIG POPPA CLOD *(loves chocolate-flavored tabasco sauce)*

ALI SELTZER *(makes great shish-kabob)*

BABY DARLEEN *(Big Poppa's daughter, goes on a crime spree)*

SISTER WOMAN *(unscrupulous, but beautiful)*

P.U. *(Big Poppa's "no good" son)*

BIG MOMMA CLOD *(no sense of direction)*

CADWALLADER EARP *(he trusted the Clods -- the fool)*

CARSON MOUTHWASH *(motorcycle gang leader)*

GRANDPAPPY *(slow but eventually gets there)*

WANDA *(Baby Darleen's twin sister -- they don't look anything alike)*

"BILLY BOY" BONKERS *(sheriff)*

NORMA LEE *(cute but cuckoo)*

LAWYER FILCHPOCKET *(bingo addict)*

CURBSTONE GERTIE *(bag lady)*

MISS RINGO *(of Happy Acres, where things are hysterical)*

ROXIE *(robot -- doesn't do windows)*

OPTIONAL EXTRAS *(party guests)*

1 **SETTING FOR ACT I:** The main living room. Downstage Right is
2 the entrance into the study of Big Poppa Clod, the family
3 patriarch. Beside the entrance is a small table with a telephone.
4 Stage Right is an entryway that leads to other areas of the house.
5 Stage Left there are French doors that lead onto the unseen,
6 spacious grounds. A sofa is Downstage Right Center. There's a
7 chair to the Left of the sofa. Another chair, with a small table to
8 one side, is Downstage Left Center. To these basics, director can
9 add whatever stage dressing is needed to decorate the room.
10 For example: rugs, pictures, vases of flowers, lamps, other chairs,
11 tables. There might be a fireplace Upstage Center. The Clod
12 family is *fabulously* wealthy, so the room should reflect this.

13 NOTE: Another way to go with the room is to furnish it
14 with shabby odds-and-ends. Consequently, when anyone refers
15 to the family wealth, the room will look ridiculous. The decision
16 to go fancy or tacky is left to the resources of the individual
17 production.

18 Also, the setting works easily in stage drapes. The French
19 doors and the door to the study can be dispensed with, if
20 necessary. If this is done, characters will enter and leave the
21 stage in such a way as to suggest the doors are located Offstage,
22 out of audience view.

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ACT ONE
SCENE ONE

(*At rise: It's morning and the French doors stand open to a lovely day. Sound of chirping birds from offstage*) [NOTE: For an "absurd" touch in keeping with the style of the lampoon, members of the cast and crew can vocally "create" the bird effect.]

GINGER: (*From outside*) Y'all come along with me, Miz Page. Big Poppa Clod said I was to show you inside the minute you got here.

LAURETTE: (*From outside*) Thank you.

GINGER: You can call me Ginger. Everybody does.

LAURETTE: Thank you, Ginger. (*Ginger, a young maid, enters through the French doors and gestures toward the room*)

GINGER: This way. (*She takes a step back as Laurette Page, a young writer, enters and quickly surveys the room. She has a shoulder bag*)

LAURETTE: Nice room.

GINGER: It's last years. I'll tell Big Poppa you're here. (*She moves behind sofa*)

LAURETTE: Ginger -- (*Ginger stops, turns*)

GINGER: Uh-huh?

LAURETTE: I notice you call Mr. Clod -- "Big Poppa".

GINGER: Sure enough.

LAURETTE: I mean, er, uh -- isn't it a bit unusual for a maid to refer to her employer as "Big Poppa"?

GINGER: That's the only name he answers to.

LAURETTE: (*Fascinated*) Interesting. (*Laurette opens her shoulder bag and takes out a notepad and pencil,*

1 *begins to write*)
2 GINGER: Big Poppa says being rich is no reason to change
3 your name.
4 LAURETTE: Sensible.
5 GINGER: I'd like to change my name, though.
6 LAURETTE: What name would you like?
7 GINGER: Melanie.
8 LAURETTE: Why Melanie?
9 GINGER: I'm partial to melons.
10 LAURETTE: It's a good thing you're not partial to lemons.
11 *(Telephone rings, Ginger answers it)*
12 GINGER: Clod residence. *(Listens)* Who's calling? *(Listens)*
13 Happy Acres? *(Listens)* No, we haven't seen an escaped
14 lunatic. Thanks for calling. *(Hangs up as Vanessa Van*
15 *Sneer, a haughty neighbor, enters left)*
16 VANESSA: You there. Ginger.
17 GINGER: Hello, Mrs. Van Sneer. *(To Laurette)* She's our
18 neighbor.
19 VANESSA: I want to see that Clod and I want to see him
20 now.
21 GINGER: What about?
22 VANESSA: Not that it's any of your business, but work-
23 men have put tents on the lawn.
24 GINGER: For the Festival.
25 VANESSA: That's what I was afraid of.
26 GINGER: He's got no time now, Mrs. Van Sneer. *(Indicates*
27 *Laurette)* He's got a business appointment.
28 VANESSA: *(To Laurette)* If you take my advice, young wo-
29 man, you won't stay long in this house. No one in it is nor-
30 mal. That's why I'm leaving. *(She goes out French doors)*
31 GINGER: Mrs. Van Sneer doesn't like us. She's a snob. I'll
32 call Big Poppa. *(Ginger moves downstage right, stands*
33 *outside the study door, calls out as if she were hog-calling)*
34 Hey, Suey, Suey, S-u-u-u-eeeeeyyy! *(Laurette is stunned)*
35 LAURETTE: What on earth -- ? *(From inside the study*

1 *comes the powerful voice of Big Poppa answering)*
2 BIG POPPA: Suey, Suey, Suey, S-u-u-u-eeeeeyy!
3 GINGER: Hey, Big Poppa!
4 BIG POPPA: *(From inside, booming)* What do you want?
5 GINGER: It's that lady television writer you hired! The
6 one from Los Angeles.
7 BIG POPPA: Tell her to set! *(Laurette is aghast at the shout-*
8 *ing match. She forces a wane smile)*
9 LAURETTE: My, my, Big Poppa certainly does have a...
10 strong voice.
11 GINGER: Used to be the best hog-caller in these parts. Only
12 now that he's rich he don't call the hogs no more, but he
13 likes to keep in practice. Better set like he said.
14 LAURETTE: Yes, of course. *(She sits in chair left of sofa,*
15 *Nurse Pedicure, in uniform, dashes in right. She's in a*
16 *nervous state -- holds a hypo in the ready position)*
17 NURSE PEDICURE: Ginger, have you seen Grandpappy?
18 GINGER: No, I haven't, Nurse Pedicure. *(Introduces Laur-*
19 *ette)* This here is that writer lady from Los Angeles.
20 LAURETTE: Hello.
21 NURSE: You'll have to excuse me. I'm afraid Grandpappy's
22 run away again.
23 LAURETTE: That's Big Poppa Clod's father?
24 NURSE: That's right. He's always running away from
25 home.
26 GINGER: Grandpappy likes to be independent.
27 NURSE: Last time he got away, it took us five days to find
28 him.
29 LAURETTE: Where was he?
30 NURSE: He was working as a lifeguard in a carwash.
31 LAURETTE: Lifeguard in a carwash! Good gracious. *(She*
32 *writes)*
33 NURSE: Grandpappy! Grandpappy! *(She runs out the*
34 *French doors, exits calling offstage)* Grandpappy! Grand-
35 pappy!

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