

THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF CRICKET COUNTY

by Eddie McPherson



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The Real Housewives of Cricket County

A hillbilly comedy

by Eddie McPherson

CAST

7 women, 6 men, optional extras

Polly Hunter: A Cricket County housewife who hosts the quilting party

Harold Hunter: Polly's husband

Bodean Snout: Another housewife

Chigger Snout: Bodean's husband

Hattie Freeman: Another housewife

Charles Ray Freeman: Hattie's husband

Imogene Taylor: Also known as Grandma Taylor

Fester Taylor: Polly's and Harold's nephew. Simple, young, and in love

Dora Lee Grit: Fester's love interest who can't wait to become a housewife

Gretchen Flat: Another housewife

Armen Flat: Gretchen's husband

Monica Northcutt: Highbrow housewife from the city

Reginald Northcutt: Monica's husband

Optional Extras: Other housewives and husbands who come to the quilting party (non-speaking roles)

SYNOPSIS

The simple housewives of Cricket County are in for a treat. Monica Northcutt from the city is moving in down the road and tries to teach them the ways to a healthy, happy marriage. They want so much to be like her that they organize a quilting party and invite Monica and her high-society husband to attend. They also invite their own husbands so they can learn from the Northcutts as well.

But when the three-year-old muscadine juice is mistakenly poured into the fresh drinking water, the truth about how the husbands and wives feel about one another comes out, and that can't be good. Or can it? Old-fashioned common sense is what the folks in Cricket County live by, and the Northcutts end up learning a few surprise lessons themselves.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The play takes place in a cabin in Cricket County. It's pretty old but has been kept up very nicely. The door that leads outside is Upstage Left. There's a large window to the left of it. Another door that goes to the rest of the cabin is Upstage Right. There's a wooden table that can be set aside for the quilting scene. The window that Polly looks out through in Scene 1 is the invisible fourth wall looking out over the audience. When the Northcutts are getting ready at their house for the quilting party, they stand in front of the permanent set and look into invisible mirrors. The lights should be taken off the set behind them, if possible, with a spot used on the Northcutts. This may be performed as dinner theatre, with the meal courses interspersed with the scenes.

PROPS

Stick, plastic whittling knife, binoculars, walkie-talkies (these could be homemade), hand mirror, two dolls wrapped in blankets, shoebox, note cards, handkerchief, toilet plunger, small toolbox, covered Cool Whip bowl, empty coffee cup, homemade scarecrow, necktie, large envelope and card, fur wrap, small potted flower, glass jug with a cork, two lawn chairs, piece of beef jerky, galvanized pail with ladle, small bouquet of wildflowers, paper cups, large quilt, small pad of paper and pencil, needles and thread, small radio, breath spray.

COSTUMES

The Cricket County men wear overalls and/or polyester pants pulled way up with ropes for belts. The Cricket County women wear gingham or simple cotton floral pattern dresses. Gretchen, Hattie, and Bodean wear camouflage for spying (could just be camouflage jackets thrown on over their dresses). Some might wear curlers or bandannas on their heads. They wear no makeup except for the quilting scene.

The Northcutts' clothes are sophisticated and formal.

For the quilting scene: Polly wears an ugly dress and *lots* of makeup. Gretchen sports a rather frumpy dress with lots of frills, bows, and doodads sewn to it. A large, tacky bow tied into her hair matches (or maybe shouldn't match) the ones on the dress. She wears sloppy makeup. Bodean is decked out in ugly and gaudy jewelry. Six or seven brooches are pinned to her dress, and brightly colored fishing lures dangle from her ears. Different styles of necklaces and bracelets clank against each other, and a belt buckle bearing a portrait of Johnny Cash wraps around her waist.

Hattie's dress is also tacky, but what really stands out (literally) on her is her hair. It's big and teased and frizzy. The actor playing Hattie may choose to wear a wig for this scene.

Grandma wears a floral print muumuu.

The men may wear the same clothes as earlier but add an ugly, oversized necktie. In addition, Chigger should wear camouflage pants and Harold needs a watch.

ONE LAST NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

I recently snuck into the back of a theatre where a Cricket County play was being staged. I was pleased overall with the show; however, there was one thing that made me squirm in my seat. The play moved too slowly. I wanted the action to race along at breakneck speed with one line butting up against another. Remember, these plays are farces. The entrances and exits should be quick. Allow the actor to begin speaking as soon as he or she enters, not when he or she reaches center stage. You can't imagine how minutes can add up when short pauses between lines are taken or slow entrances occur or a trip across the stage is slow when it's supposed to be quick. Enjoy the silliness and your audience won't even think about squirming the whole time your cast is on stage.

With that said, this show is written to last between forty-five minutes and one hour. Have fun!

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Scene 1

(At Rise: POLLY's and HAROLD's cabin in Cricket County. HAROLD enters with a stick and a whittling knife and sits at the table Stage Right. POLLY is standing Downstage past the table and looking out over the audience as though she is peering out the window. She holds a pair of binoculars up to her eyes.)

POLLY: Harold, git yerself over here and look at this.

HAROLD: Get away from that there window, woman!

POLLY: (Ignoring him and still looking) I can't believe my six eyes. Why, that little sneak. Whoooooee, there she goes. (She picks up a walkie-talkie and speaks into it.) Honeysuckle to Magnolia Blossom. Come in, Magnolia Blossom.

BODEAN: (She enters extreme Stage Left with her walkie-talkie. She's in a different location.) Go ahead, Honeysuckle.

POLLY: Child, you won't believe what I'm a-lookin' at outside my window.

BODEAN: Polly Hunter, what you gawkin' at?

POLLY: Well, I was watchin' Edna Stump walkin' up the dirt road past my house, and she stopped real suspicious-like, stood up against a big oak tree, and helped herself to a dip of snuff.

BODEAN: The dickens you say. She never seemed the type.

POLLY: You can't tell the size of turnips by lookin' at their tops. Better go. I need both hands on my binoculars. Honeysuckle, signin' off.

BODEAN: Over and out. (BODEAN exits as POLLY places the walkie talkie on the table where HAROLD sits.)

HAROLD: Who you talkin' to on that there walkie doohickey?

POLLY: My network. (Leaning in toward the window) There she goes again!

HAROLD: I don't think that's very neighborly, spyin' like that.

POLLY: I have to find my fun where I can. Like my mama always said, "When life gives you scraps, make a quilt."

HAROLD: It sure is embarrassin'.

POLLY: (Crossing to her husband) You know you love me.

HAROLD: I ain't got no choice. I've invested too much time in you to trade you in now.

POLLY: Lucky for you, cause they don't make 'em like this anymore. (She primps in a hand mirror.)

HAROLD: You're right about that. I tell ever'body I meet, I says to them, I says, "That woman of mine would give you the hair off her back."

POLLY: I love you too, my crazy little kudzu. (She hugs him from the back.)

HATTIE: (Offstage) Yoo-hoo! Anybody home?

- 1 POLLY: In here, Hattie! (*HATTIE, holding her own walkie-talkie,*
2 *enters with her husband CHARLES RAY. CHARLES RAY holds a*
3 *wrapped-up baby in each arm.*)
- 4 HATTIE: Ooo, child, I just heard the news. Where did it happen?
- 5 POLLY: (*Pointing out the window*) Underneath that giant oak tree
6 yonder.
- 7 HAROLD: You mean to tell me in less than five minutes all of
8 Cricket County has heard about Edna Stump dippin' snuff
9 under our oak tree?
- 10 HATTIE: (*Holding up her walkie-talkie*) What do you think these
11 things are good for?
- 12 POLLY: Don't mind him, Hattie. He don't understand the fine art
13 of adventure-livin'.
- 14 HAROLD: (*To CHARLES RAY*) Can you believe these women we
15 married?
- 16 CHARLES RAY: Well ...
- 17 HATTIE: Charles Ray, be careful 'bout what you say; I'm
18 a-standin' right here.
- 19 CHARLES RAY: (*Has it memorized*) I'm a happily married man. I
20 love my wife. I'm lucky to have her.
- 21 HATTIE: Now, sit down before the babies start to cry. (*CHARLES*
22 *RAY sits immediately. HATTIE turns to POLLY.*) Bless his heart.
23 The engine's runnin', but there ain't nobody drivin'.
- 24 POLLY: (*Laughs.*) The way you two go on at each other.
- 25 HATTIE: It's all in fun. He goes on about me too, don't you, honey?
26 Go ahead, say somethin' funny about me. (*He shakes his head.*)
- 27 HAROLD: Come on, Charles Ray, it's just for fun.
- 28 POLLY: Harold, you stay out of it.
- 29 HATTIE: Ain't that sweet? He can't think of one mean thing to
30 say.
- 31 CHARLES RAY: (*Suddenly*) She's so starved for attention, she
32 wouldn't go to a funeral unless she could be the corpse.
33 (*HAROLD laughs.*)
- 34 HATTIE: OK, Charles Ray, I think you made your point.
- 35 CHARLES RAY: (*His demeanor changes suddenly.*) I'm a happily
36 married man. I love my wife. I'm lucky to have her. (*He rocks*
37 *the babies quickly.*)
- 38 POLLY: Oh, Hattie. You got your hair teased.
- 39 HATTIE: Do you like it?
- 40 POLLY: I think you're a sight for sore eyes.
- 41 HATTIE: (*Flattered*) Much obliged.
- 42 POLLY: Harold, tell her she's a sight for sore eyes.
- 43 HAROLD: Huh? Oh, yeah. Hattie, you're a real eyesore.
- 44 POLLY: Harold!
- 45 HAROLD: (*Innocently*) What?

- 1 HATTIE: Well, I just wanted to drop by and see the famous snuff
 2 dippin' tree. Come on, Charles Ray, there's supper to cook,
 3 babies to bathe, and dishes to wash.
- 4 POLLY: That's a lot to get done in one afternoon.
- 5 HATTIE: Aw, shucks, Charles Ray don't mind. And after all that,
 6 he still has time to rub my feet. Let's go, Charles Ray, 'fore
 7 the babies start to cry. (*CHARLES RAY stands as HATTIE turns*
 8 *to POLLY.*) Now you let me know if there's anything else to
 9 report. My walkie-talkie is charged and ready to go.
- 10 POLLY: I will, I will.
- 11 HATTIE: 'Bye. (*She and CHARLES RAY exit. POLLY shakes her head.*)
 12 She sure does have that Charles Ray waitin' on her hand and
 13 foot.
- 14 HAROLD: He's henpecked.
- 15 POLLY: Maybe it's because he loves her. (*She picks up her binoculars*
 16 *and returns to her window.*) I'll just stand here and look out my
 17 window so I'll have somethin' to share on my eight o'clock
 18 report. Wait a cotton-pickin' minute. Who in sam hill is that?
 19 (*GRANDMA steps out with her own walkie-talkie and speaks into it.*)
- 20 GRANDMA: Metamucil to Magnolia. Come in, Magnolia.
- 21 POLLY: (*Grabs her walkie-talkie as she continues looking through the*
 22 *window.*) Go ahead, Metamucil.
- 23 GRANDMA: I was wonderin' if you wanted some of these frog legs
 24 I cooked up. My customers didn't order any a-tall today.
- 25 POLLY: Maybe later. Grandma Taylor, get over here quick! I just
 26 spotted somethin' through my binoculars that you got to see
 27 for yourself!
- 28 GRANDMA: Don't pop your girdle, child. Let me close up the
 29 diner and I'll be right over! (*She exits.*)
- 30 HAROLD: (*To POLLY*) What you gawkin' at now?
- 31 POLLY: Well, I really ain't sure a-tall. (*There's a knock at the door.*)
 32 Come in! (*FESTER runs in looking nervous.*)
- 33 FESTER: Howdy, Aunt Polly! Uncle Harold!
- 34 POLLY: Fester, what you doin' here so early in the afternoon?
- 35 HAROLD: Ain't you supposed to be at work?
- 36 FESTER: I had to close up the hardware store real quick-like.
- 37 POLLY: Fester, child, you look like you saw a ghost.
- 38 FESTER: Aunt Polly, I done been shot.
- 39 POLLY: (*Rushes to FESTER.*) What?!
- 40 HAROLD: (*Jumps up.*) I'll get the rubbin' alcohol!
- 41 POLLY: (*To HAROLD*) Grab my crochetin' hook — I'll have to dig
 42 out the bullet! (*Turns to FESTER.*) Was it a rifle or shotgun?
- 43 FESTER: (*Calmly, looking out to the audience in a daze*) It was a arrow.
- 44 ARMEN: But bow season's months away.
- 45 HAROLD: Where did you get shot? (*FESTER places his hand over his*

- 1 *heart and pats it. POLLY moves FESTER's hand and has a look.)*
2 **POLLY:** There ain't a bit of blood.
3 **HAROLD:** Fester, what are you tryin' to tell us?
4 **POLLY:** *(Grabs his shoulders and shakes him.)* Hurry up and get to
5 the tail of the dog, boy!
6 **FESTER:** I've done been shot by that there feller they call Cupid.
7 **HAROLD:** Cupid?
8 **POLLY:** *(Hands on her hips, frustrated)* Don't that just dill my pickle!
9 Fester — you done scared us half to ... *(Just sinking in)* Wait a
10 minute; did you say Cupid? I ain't believin' it. Fester's done
11 went and fell in love with a girl?
12 **HAROLD:** What's her name?
13 **FESTER:** Dora Lee Grit.
14 **POLLY:** Fester, are you sure this is real love?
15 **FESTER:** As sure as rats run the rafters.
16 **HAROLD:** Where did y'all meet?
17 **FESTER:** At the hardware store where I work.
18 **POLLY:** How long have you knowed her?
19 **FESTER:** What time is it?
20 **HAROLD:** *(Glancing at his watch)* Four o'clock.
21 **FESTER:** Half an hour. See, she walked in the hardware store
22 lookin' prettier than a store-bought doll. *(In one breath)* She
23 was in need of a toilet plunger, and I asked her if she believed
24 in love at first sight and she said no, so I said we don't have a
25 toilet plunger at this location but we do at our south location,
26 so she said OK I'll get one there, and then she left.
27 **HAROLD:** South location? But Fester, we only have the one
28 hardware store in Cricket County.
29 **FESTER:** Right.
30 **POLLY:** Harold, are you confused?
31 **HAROLD:** As a termite in a yo-yo.
32 **FESTER:** Well, I was thinkin' —
33 **POLLY:** Coulda fooled me.
34 **FESTER:** That Cupid feller must have reared back that string on
35 his bow like this right here *(Demonstrates)* and let go, causin'
36 that there arrow to catch me right here in this lonely heart of
37 mine.
38 **POLLY:** That don't explain where you sent her for that plunger,
39 Fester.
40 **FESTER:** I sent her here, hopin' she believes in love at second
41 sight. Ever'body knows you two has got the most perfect
42 marriage in all of Cricket County. You've got to help me know
43 what I should say to her.
44 **POLLY:** Calm down, child. Good heavens, we'll think of somethin'.
45 **FESTER:** But she'll be here any minute askin' for a plunger, and

- 1 I won't know what to say to her — my brain will get froze up.
 2 HAROLD: Son, your brain never thawed out.
 3 POLLY: All we got is that toilet plunger we bought thirty years
 4 ago.
 5 HAROLD: Polly, you go fetch the plunger while we talk man to
 6 man.
 7 POLLY: Man to man? Oh, you mean Fester. I'll be right back. *(She*
 8 *exits.)*
 9 HAROLD: *(Retrieving an old shoe box)* Fester, son, you just
 10 happened to come to the right place.
 11 FESTER: What you got in the box?
 12 HAROLD: Fester, this here is love poetry I wrote to your Aunt
 13 Polly back when we was courtin' over thirty years ago.
 14 FESTER: Gol-lee, Uncle Harold — that sure is a romantic notion.
 15 HAROLD: *(Pulls out an old yellowed card from the box and reads it.)*
 16 Listen to this: Your eyes look at me like two blue bowlin'
 17 balls covered in hog lard. *(To FESTER)* Her eyes always
 18 glistened like that. *(Reads from another card.)* Your breath
 19 comes at me smellin' like a gentle rose on a spring mornin'.
 20 FESTER: Spring mornin', that's real good, Uncle Harold.
 21 HAROLD: *(Another card)* Your golden locks of hair shine like a wet
 22 bird dog after pullin' itself from a slimy swamp. Your hips
 23 remind me of an hourglass except soft and timeless. "Your
 24 lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely" *(Song of*
 25 *Solomon 4:3, NIV).* That's straight from the Good Book.
 26 FESTER: Gol-lee.
 27 HAROLD: *(Reads from another card.)* Those who speak ill of you are
 28 never allowed to come near me because they're ugly and
 29 putrid in my sight. *(Wipes his forehead with a handkerchief.)* Now
 30 that's how you woo a woman, Fester.
 31 FESTER: You're a master at it.
 32 HAROLD: Remember, Fester, behind every romantic poet stands
 33 a good woman.
 34 FESTER: Yes, sir.
 35 HAROLD: Just make sure your wife don't find out about the good
 36 woman. *(Pause. FESTER stares at him.)* That was a little
 37 marriage joke.
 38 FESTER: Oh.
 39 HAROLD: Come on, I'll help you write these down on some note
 40 cards.
 41 FESTER: I'm much obliged to you. *(POLLY enters holding an old*
 42 *plunger.)*
 43 POLLY: Where you boys off to?
 44 HAROLD: Just lendin' that Cupid feller a helpin' hand. *(HAROLD*
 45 *and FESTER exit.)*

- 1 POLLY: But what do I tell that little girl when she gets here?
- 2 FESTER: (*Sticking his head back in*) Just tell her I think her golden
- 3 locks of hair shine like a wet bird dog after pullin' itself from
- 4 a slimy swamp. (*He disappears again.*)
- 5 POLLY: Now, why does that sound familiar?
- 6 DORA LEE: (*Sticking her head through the front door*) Excuse me?
- 7 POLLY: Come in, child. Come in.
- 8 DORA LEE: (*Entering*) Somebody gave me this here address—you
- 9 see, I'm in great need of a toilet plunger.
- 10 POLLY: Why, look at you. You're as pretty as Fester said.
- 11 DORA LEE: I beg your pardon?
- 12 POLLY: Yes ma'am, you sure look like the marryin' kind to me.
- 13 DORA LEE: Marryin' kind?
- 14 POLLY: I do approve of a girl a gettin' married. And do you know
- 15 why? 'Cause I'm married.
- 16 DORA LEE: Yes, ma'am.
- 17 POLLY: (*Getting dreamy-eyed*) I had always dreamed of that special
- 18 day all through my childhood. Gettin' proposed to by the
- 19 perfect beau. All the excitement of plannin' the weddin'—I
- 20 was registered at Dollar General. I had always dreamed of
- 21 havin' the ceremony in my mama and daddy's backyard
- 22 between the puppy's doghouse and the 1956 Ford tractor.
- 23 There was a patch of yard that the goats kept nice and
- 24 trimmed. Oh, it was the perfect day. (*Snapping out of her*
- 25 *reverie*) I'm sorry, honey, I'm gettin' all sentimental.
- 26 DORA LEE: That's OK. I think it all sounded real nice. So, how
- 27 much is it?
- 28 POLLY: How much is it?
- 29 DORA LEE: The toilet plunger.
- 30 POLLY: Oh. Uh, it's free. You're our tenth customer this week,
- 31 which means you win a free antique toilet plunger.
- 32 Congratulations.
- 33 DORA LEE: Gol-lee—I ain't never won nothin' in my life. Much
- 34 obliged. And thank you for the marriage talk. It really got me
- 35 to thinkin'. (*Turns and exits.*)
- 36 POLLY: You're welcome, honey. Remember that bein' a
- 37 housewife is the highest callin' in the world! (*She realizes she*
- 38 *just let DORA LEE go.*) Wait, come back! You got to fall in love
- 39 at second sight! (*But DORA LEE is gone.*) Fester's goin' to have
- 40 my hide.
- 41 GRANDMA: (*Offstage*) Polly, you home?
- 42 POLLY: In here, Grandma Taylor!
- 43 GRANDMA: (*Entering with a covered Cool Whip bowl*) There you are.
- 44 Here's your frog legs. You won't believe the news I heard on
- 45 the way over here. It seems a brand new couple has moved

1 to Cricket County.

2 POLLY: I knew it! I seen their fancy car drive up the dirt road
3 just minutes ago.

4 GRANDMA: The way I heard it, they're from the big city.
5 Somewhere way up north.

6 POLLY: Up north? That's practically another country. When did
7 you meet 'em?

8 GRANDMA: I ain't met 'em yet. I got the news on my walkie.

9 POLLY: I sure missed the scoop this time. (*GRETCHEN enters*
10 *extreme Stage Left or Right wearing camouflage and carrying her*
11 *walkie-talkie. She's somewhere down the road.*)

12 GRETCHEN: Sassafras to Metamucil. Come in, Metamucil.

13 GRANDMA: (*Into her walkie-talkie*) Metamucil here. Go ahead,
14 Sassafras.

15 GRETCHEN: Just wantin' to inform you the foreigners is headin'
16 y'all's way.

17 GRANDMA: (*Looking out the window*) I see 'em a-comin'! Metamucil
18 out. (*GRETCHEN exits. GRANDMA turns to POLLY.*) How do I
19 look? Is my girdle showin'?

20 POLLY: No, but your pantyhose is a little wrinkled.

21 GRANDMA: I ain't wearin' pantyhose.

22 POLLY: Then you look just fine. (*There's a knock at the door.*) Come
23 in. (*MONICA walks in, dressed to the nines. Her hair and makeup*
24 *are exquisite. Her handsome, well-dressed husband REGINALD*
25 *enters with her. POLLY and GRANDMA stare in awe.*)

26 MONICA: Good afternoon, ladies.

27 GRANDMA: (*Wide-eyed*) Tie me to an anthill and fill my ears with
28 jam. They're the prettiest things I ever saw.

29 POLLY: If that ain't true, then grits ain't groceries and eggs ain't
30 poultry.

31 MONICA: Excuse me?

32 POLLY: I'm sorry. Come in! Come in!

33 MONICA: I'm Monica Northcutt, and this is my husband
34 Reginald.

35 REGINALD: It's so very nice to meet you. (*He shakes their hands and*
36 *they swoon.*)

37 MONICA: We're moving into the house down the road.

38 GRANDMA: Oh, honey, we know, we know. You're moving into
39 the old Wilson place, your husband is in real estate, you're a
40 proud housewife who raised three young'uns, and y'all are
41 richer than clabbered cream.

42 MONICA: Have we met?

43 GRANDMA: No ma'am, but I don't go nowhere without my walkie.

44 POLLY: (*To MONICA, pushing GRANDMA to the side*) Don't mind
45 her. Welcome to Cricket County — we're so glad to have you

- 1 here. Won't you plant yourself?
- 2 MONICA: I beg your pardon?
- 3 POLLY: Won't you have a seat?
- 4 MONICA: Thank you, but I don't have time for idle chitchat.
- 5 GRANDMA: Did you hear that? Idle chitchat.
- 6 POLLY: That sure is some fancy talkin'.
- 7 REGINALD: We were wondering if we could borrow some tools.
- 8 Mine haven't arrived on the truck yet.
- 9 POLLY: Why, sure you can; just take the whole tool box. Around
- 10 here we believe in share and share alike. It's in the shed out
- 11 back.
- 12 REGINALD: Thank you so much. I'll get it. *(He bows slightly and*
- 13 *exits.)*
- 14 POLLY: *(To MONICA, trying to impress her new neighbor)* Now, if y'all
- 15 need anything a-tall while movin' in, just give us a call. My
- 16 Harold is a good handyman, and I can cook like there's no
- 17 tomorrow.
- 18 GRANDMA: Don't listen to her. When she cooks, even the
- 19 cockroaches eat out. You want a good meal, you stop by my
- 20 diner. I'll conjure up some of my Tuna Noodle Surprise.
- 21 POLLY: The surprise is that it glows in the dark and melts the
- 22 silverware.
- 23 GRANDMA: At least I don't burn my salads.
- 24 POLLY: At least flies don't go to my kitchen to commit suicide.
- 25 MONICA: Ladies, ladies, please! You mustn't squabble in front of
- 26 guests.
- 27 GRANDMA: She's right, Polly. We're actin' plumb ... *(Becoming as*
- 28 *proper as she knows how)* I mean, oh so silly.
- 29 POLLY: *(To MONICA)* What do people in the city talk about in
- 30 front of company?
- 31 MONICA: *(Pretending she's joking)* Usually the first thing that
- 32 happens is someone compliments my looks.
- 33 GRANDMA: *(Looking over the top of her glasses at MONICA)* Now that
- 34 you mention it, your face is like fine porcelain.
- 35 MONICA: Why, thank you. It's amazing what surgery can do for
- 36 us girls these days.
- 37 GRANDMA: You had to have surgery on your face?
- 38 POLLY: Did you get kicked in the teeth by a mule?
- 39 GRANDMA: Your doctors did a fine job patchin' you up.
- 40 MONICA: I had a face-lift.
- 41 GRANDMA: Yep, that's what a good kick from a mule can give
- 42 you.
- 43 MONICA: It's what women do where I'm from to keep their
- 44 husbands from roaming.
- 45 POLLY: I do declare, and all this time I've just been chainin'

- 1 Harold to the kitchen stove.
- 2 MONICA: It's called plastic surgery. I've had my nose raised, my
3 chin tightened, my tummy tucked, and my thighs trimmed.
- 4 POLLY: You must have one really mean mule.
- 5 MONICA: (*Impatiently*) It has nothing to do with mules. The
6 procedures are done by doctors who specialize in those sorts
7 of operations.
- 8 GRANDMA: Do you think they could do anything for me?
- 9 MONICA: Honey, I said they were doctors, not magicians.
- 10 POLLY: Grandma, quit foolin' yourself. (*To MONICA*) Bless her
11 heart, she's so old she can remember when the Grand
12 Canyon was just a ditch. But me, on the other hand ...
- 13 GRANDMA: (*To POLLY*) You listen here!
- 14 MONICA: Ladies! Ladies! How can you be friends if you dislike
15 one another so much?
- 16 POLLY: Dislike each other? Why, Imogene Taylor is one of my
17 nearest and dearest friends.
- 18 GRANDMA: We're real protective of each other out here in
19 Cricket County.
- 20 MONICA: You could have fooled me. (*FESTER and HAROLD enter*
21 *from the back of the house as REGINALD enters from outside*
22 *carrying a tool box.*)
- 23 FESTER: I thank you again, Uncle Harold. Aunt Polly, ain't my
24 little honey pie got here yet?
- 25 POLLY: She did, but she was in a hurry, honey. Don't fret none, I
26 put in a good word for you.
- 27 FESTER: Much obliged.
- 28 HAROLD: I'm tryin' to help Fester snag his nag like I snagged
29 mine.
- 30 FESTER: I even come up with a poem of my own. (*Clears throat.*) "I
31 don't smoke and I don't chew, and I don't kiss on girls who
32 does." I'm still workin' on the rhymin' part. Well, I'd better go
33 if I'm goin' to snag me that girl 'fore the week's done. I sure
34 hope she's into the simple stalker types. 'Bye, y'all.
- 35 POLLY: Good luck, Fester! (*FESTER exits. She turns to HAROLD.*)
36 Honey, I want you to meet our new neighbors. This is Monica
37 and her husband Rocky.
- 38 REGINALD: (*Shaking HAROLD'S hand*) Actually, my name is
39 Reginald.
- 40 HAROLD: Welcome to Cricket County, Oregano.
- 41 REGINALD: Reginald.
- 42 HAROLD: No, I'm Harold. Do y'all need any help movin' in?
- 43 MONICA: That won't be necessary. We've hired professional
44 movers.
- 45 REGINALD: It's been nice meeting all of you, but we still have

- 1 much work to do.
- 2 **GRANDMA:** *(To MONICA)* Now, you take care of that pretty face of
- 3 yours.
- 4 **REGINALD:** And thanks again for the tools.
- 5 **HAROLD:** Don't mention it, Oregano.
- 6 **REGINALD:** Reginald.
- 7 **HAROLD:** No, it's Harold. *(The NORTHCUTTS exit.)* I think he must
- 8 be hard of hearin'.
- 9 **POLLY:** *(To GRANDMA)* Did you see them pearls around her
- 10 neck?
- 11 **GRANDMA:** Did you smell that sweet perfume she was a-wearin'?
- 12 **POLLY:** Did you see that pretty husband of hers?
- 13 **HAROLD:** Wait a minute — what's that critter got that I ain't got?
- 14 **POLLY:** Nothin', honey. You got ever'thing he's got ... *(Pats his*
- 15 *stomach as she and GRANDMA have a good laugh)* and a whole
- 16 lot more.
- 17 **GRANDMA:** I sure would like to learn her beauty secrets.
- 18 **POLLY:** Me too. We should get all the housewives together for a
- 19 quiltin' bee and invite the Northcutts. We can pick that
- 20 citified brain of hers, and maybe she can learn us how to get
- 21 pretty and sophisticated like she is.
- 22 **GRANDMA:** I'm game, 'cause I'm tired of lookin' like this.
- 23 **POLLY:** Right, and we're tired of lookin' at it.
- 24 **GRETCHEN:** *(Off-stage)* Knock, knock.
- 25 **POLLY:** Come in, Gretchen. *(GRETCHEN enters, still wearing her*
- 26 *camouflage and holding her walkie-talkie and an empty cup.)*
- 27 **GRETCHEN:** *(Looks around as she speaks.)* Polly, I was wonderin' if
- 28 I could borrow a cup of sugar for my applesauce cake.
- 29 **GRANDMA:** You can cut out the act — she's done gone.
- 30 **GRETCHEN:** *(Becomes herself.)* I told you to hang on to her 'til I got
- 31 here. *(Into her walkie-talkie)* Sassafras to Kudzu — abort
- 32 mission. I repeat, abort mission.
- 33 **GRANDMA:** What did you want us to do, hog-tie her to a chair?
- 34 **GRETCHEN:** Just 'til I got here. *(HATTIE and BODEAN enter dressed*
- 35 *in camouflage and holding their walkie-talkies.)*
- 36 **HATTIE:** What happened, Imogene?
- 37 **BODEAN:** Why did we abort our mission?
- 38 **GRETCHEN:** She done went home.
- 39 **GRANDMA:** Oooo, you should have saw her. She was prettier than
- 40 a thirty-pound bass.
- 41 **POLLY:** The skin on her face was as smooth as a china doll.
- 42 **GRANDMA:** And she talks so fancy.
- 43 **POLLY:** She's had a face-lift, her nose raised, her chin tightened,
- 44 her tummy tucked, and her thighs trimmed.
- 45 **HATTIE:** Bless her heart. She didn't get kicked by a mule, did she?

- 1 GRANDMA: No, silly girl — she had all that done to make herself
2 look young and fresh.
- 3 POLLY: To keep her husband from roamin’.
- 4 BODEAN: Wouldn’t it be easier just to chain him to the stove?
- 5 POLLY: That’s what I said.
- 6 BODEAN: I want a face-lift!
- 7 GRETCHEN: I want a tummy tuck! I ain’t reached my back
8 pockets in years.
- 9 POLLY: All of you just hush up. This is Cricket County. There
10 ain’t no doctors within a million miles of here who can do
11 work like that.
- 12 GRANDMA: She’s right, but that don’t mean we can’t do other
13 things.
- 14 POLLY: We’re goin’ to invite the Northcutts to a quiltin’ party
15 right here this Thursday night, and all of y’all is invited too.
- 16 HATTIE: That will give me time to pouf my hair a little more.
- 17 GRETCHEN: Oh, this is goin’ to be so much fun!
- 18 BODEAN: Wait a minute, do we have to bring our husbands
19 along?
- 20 HATTIE: I never thought about that.
- 21 POLLY: They’ll never be able to carry on a decent conversation
22 with Oregon.
- 23 BODEAN: Bless their hearts. If you offered them a penny for their
24 thoughts, you’d get back change.
- 25 POLLY: But don’t y’all see? While we’re learnin’ from Ms. Monica,
26 the boys could be learnin’ from Oregon.
- 27 GRANDMA: That ain’t a bit fair! I ain’t got no husband. My Elrod
28 died thirty years ago.
- 29 POLLY: That’s OK, Grandma Taylor. You can come anyway.
- 30 GRANDMA: And make Ms. Monica think I’m too old to have a
31 walkin’, breathin’ ball and chain? No thank you.
- 32 GRETCHEN: But you’ve just got to come to the quiltin’ party — it
33 won’t be the same without your borin’ stories.
- 34 GRANDMA: *(Gets an idea.)* Oh, I’ll be comin’ all right — and I will
35 have a husband on my arm. *(She giggles under her breath.)*
- 36 POLLY: This is goin’ to be more fun than mud wrestlin’ in the bog.
37 Just think — after all these years, we’ll know what it feels
38 like to be beautiful and sophisticated like the rest of the
39 world!
- 40 GRANDMA: Goodness gracious, it’s been a long time since I’ve
41 had a better half. I’d best go practice. Metamucil checkin’
42 out. *(She exits, running.)*
- 43 POLLY: Then it’s all set. The First Tuesday Quilter’s Club will
44 meet on Thursday instead of Monday. *(The WOMEN clap with*
45 *glee as GRANDMA sticks her head back in the door.)*

GRANDMA: *(To GRETCHEN)* What do you mean, my stories is borin'? *(Bluegrass music plays as the lights fade to a quick blackout.)*

Scene 2

(Music out. At Rise: It's the following Thursday — afternoon of the quilting party. The cabin is empty at the moment. FESTER sticks his head inside the door.)

FESTER: Hello? Is anybody home? *(There's silence. He enters carrying a homemade scarecrow and sets it in a chair at Center Stage.)*

FESTER: *(Speaking to the scarecrow)* Here you go. Now, just sit yourself down in this here chair. There you go. You pretend to be that pretty Dora Lee I met the other day, and I'll pretend to be me. *(Takes his cards HAROLD helped him make and glances at the first one. He then holds the cards down at his side, stands up straight, and clears his throat.)* Pretty Dora Lee, your eyes look at me like two bowlin' balls covered in ... covered in ... I can't remember without lookin' at the cards. *(He looks.)* Covered in hog lard, that's it! I'd better keep these real close or I'll mess it up good. *(DORA LEE enters wearing a blue dress and carrying the plunger she had before.)*

DORA LEE: Excuse me. *(This startles FESTER. He drops his stack of cards causing them to scatter over the floor. He immediately hits the floor and scoops them up.)*

FESTER: Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't hear you come in.

DORA LEE: I went to the main branch but nobody was there, so I came to this one.

FESTER: *(Stands with his cards held against his chest.)* Oh yeah, the hardware store closes early on Thursdays.

DORA LEE: *(Holds out the plunger.)* I wanted to return this. I think its plungin' days is over.

FESTER: I'm real sorry you wasn't satisfied with your purchase.

DORA LEE: *(Sees the back of the scarecrow.)* I didn't know you had a customer.

FESTER: Who, him? That's just my buddy ... His name is, uh ... Buddy. We was just shootin' the breeze. What's that you say, Buddy? You got to go? *(To DORA LEE, as he points somewhere away from the scarecrow.)* Look over there! *(When DORA LEE turns away, FESTER takes the scarecrow and tosses it out the window or through the door. DORA LEE turns back. FESTER waves out the window or through the door.)* You come back to see us now! Tell Mrs. Buddy I said hey! *(He turns to DORA LEE.)* Well, this is the second time you seen me. Are you feelin' anything?

- 1 DORA LEE: Well ...
- 2 FESTER: (*Rushes Downstage and speaks to himself.*) OK, Fester, just
3 stay calm — you’ve got ever’thing you need right here. (*Holds*
4 *up the cards and speaks to the audience.*) Mr. Cupid, I hope you’re
5 close by, ’cause I’m as nervous as a tick on dip day. (*He crosses*
6 *to DORA LEE.*) I’m back.
- 7 DORA LEE: As I was sayin’, I was wonderin’ if I could get another
8 plunger.
- 9 FESTER: (*Takes the plunger and sets it on the table.*) I got somethin’ I
10 need to say to you.
- 11 DORA LEE: But my sink ain’t drained in days.
- 12 FESTER: (*Not hearing her*) Just sit yourself down in this here chair
13 and relax. (*He stands behind and to the left or right of her with his*
14 *cards.*) I have been admirin’ you from a distance, and now it’s
15 time to tell you how I truly feel about you.
- 16 DORA LEE: It is?
- 17 FESTER: (*Out of nowhere*) It’s your breath!
- 18 DORA LEE: What about my breath?
- 19 FESTER: (*Reading first card*) Your breath comes at me smellin’ like
20 (*Next card*) a wet bird dog after pullin’ itself from a slimy
21 swamp. I mean, (*Next card*) Your hips remind me of (*Next card*)
22 two blue bowlin’ balls covered in hog lard. (*She looks down at*
23 *her blue dress.*) What I meant to say was, “Your lips are ... (*Next*
24 *card*) never allowed to come near me because they’re ugly
25 and putrid in my sight.” That’s straight out of the Good
26 Book. I mean ... (*Throws the cards on the table*) Ah, heck, forget
27 them things! What I’m a-tryin’ to ask you is, would you like
28 to go on a date with me? Tonight? Here? At a quiltin’ bee
29 with all the Cricket County housewives?
- 30 DORA LEE: (*Harboring a poker face this whole time, she suddenly erupts*
31 *with a big smile.*) That’s the most romantic thing anybody ever
32 said to me. (*She gives him a big hug.*) My mama will be so
33 happy!
- 34 FESTER: Your mama?
- 35 DORA LEE: She was afraid I was goin’ to be a old maid. She’ll be
36 tickled to death to know I will soon become the next Cricket
37 County housewife!
- 38 FESTER: (*Taken aback*) Soon? Housewife?
- 39 DORA LEE: I won’t even need this here plunger no more since
40 you’ll be takin’ care of them kind of things once we’re
41 married.
- 42 FESTER: M-married?
- 43 DORA LEE: I’ll be sure and watch real close tonight so I’ll learn
44 how a good housewife is supposed to treat her husband.
- 45 FESTER: Hu-husband?

DORA LEE: I better run home and get ready. I'm much obliged to you for proposin' to me like this. You can pick me up at my house — it's the little white one over on Blueberry Hill. Until then, sweetheart. *(She blows him a kiss, giggles, and exits. FESTER stands facing the audience, wide-eyed.)*

FESTER: Propose? *(He looks around.)* Cupid, you rascal! What have you done to me? *(He pulls at his collar as bluegrass music plays and the lights fade to a blackout.)*

Scene 3

(Music out. At Rise: The NORTHCUTT residence. MONICA and REGINALD, lit with a single spot, are getting ready for the quilting party. She's looking into the full-length "mirror" as she puts on her jewelry and checks her makeup. He's putting on his tie and jacket.)

MONICA: I do dread this ... what kind of party did they call it?

REGINALD: I believe they called it a quilting party.

MONICA: I'm afraid to guess what that might be.

REGINALD: Just try to get through it. Hurry with your makeup or we'll be late.

MONICA: But I just finished my makeup.

REGINALD: That reminds me, I have a little surprise for you.

MONICA: A surprise for me? Oh, Reginald, you shouldn't have, even though I'm so glad you did! *(He hands her a fancy envelope. She smiles.)*

REGINALD: Open it. *(She opens the envelope and pulls out a large card. Her smile disappears.)* Do you like it? It's a gift certificate for your next face-lift.

MONICA: *(Disappointed)* But I had a face-lift last year.

REGINALD: *(Finishing his tie)* I know, honey, but Mr. Gravity has been working overtime. Are you excited?

MONICA: *(Puts on the fake smile she's used to wearing.)* Oh, yes, I love it. Thank you, dear.

REGINALD: Speaking of all that, when's the last time you had a Botox injection?

MONICA: It's been a while.

REGINALD: I can tell. If you're a good little wife, we'll speak to your doctor about it.

MONICA: Reginald, can I ask you a question?

REGINALD: Of course you can, sweetheart.

MONICA: *(Afraid to ask)* Do you ... do you love me?

REGINALD: *(Looks surprised)* Honey, how could you even ask me that? I think you're beautiful.

MONICA: But what if I weren't beautiful?

REGINALD: Don't you worry about a thing. As long as there's plastic surgery, you'll always be beautiful. *(He places a fur around her neck.)* Here you go. Are you ready for the dulllest evening of your life? I'll start the car. *(He exits. Soft music plays as MONICA turns to the mirror. She touches her face sadly. She shakes this off, stands up straight, adjusts her fur and puts on her fake smile again. She exits as the music swells and the lights fade to a blackout.)*

Scene 4

(Music out. At Rise: Back inside POLLY and HAROLD's cabin. A table with a quilt on top is at Center Stage. POLLY enters sporting a new dress with lots of frills, bows, and doodads sewn to it. A large, tacky bow in her hair matches the ones on her dress. She has applied a lot of makeup for the occasion. She carries a small potted flower and sets it on the table. NOTE: You may choose to have other housewives and their husbands sitting around attending the party as well.)

POLLY: *(To herself)* Maybe some music in the background will add a little atmosphere. *(She switches on an old tabletop radio.)*

RADIO ANNOUNCER'S VOICE: Welcome back to Swap and Shop on the air. We have our next caller. This is Swap and Shop, go ahead.

CALLER: Uh, yeah, if anybody out there's got some used pink plastic flamingos for sale, call me at 555- *(POLLY quickly switches off the radio.)*

POLLY: So much for that. *(Shouts.)* Harold, are you a-takin' care of the drinks, sweetheart?

HAROLD: *(Entering with a jug)* Got it took care of right here, sweet thing.

POLLY: *(Hands on hips)* Where's the glasses?

HAROLD: The last time we just passed the jug around.

POLLY: We ain't a-passin' around no jug with the Northcutts here. They'll think we ain't got no class a-tall.

HAROLD: But we ain't got no class.

POLLY: Maybe you ain't, but I've been practicin'. Look how good I can walk without slouchin'. And I've been practicin' some fancy talk, too.

HAROLD: Like what?

POLLY: I took the parsimonious mule into town yesterday and traded it in for a magnanimous bellwether.

HAROLD: Ooo-weee, that sure is some fancy talkin'. What does it mean?

1 POLLY: I just talk, I don't decipher.
2 HAROLD: Oh. I'll go fetch some drinkin' glasses. Ever'body is
3 goin' to enjoy my homemade muscadine juice.
4 POLLY: I don't remember you makin' any muscadine juice.
5 HAROLD: Yeah, honey, remember? I made it the other day when
6 you was laid up in bed with your broke ankle.
7 POLLY: Harold, that was three years ago.
8 HAROLD: My, how time flies.
9 POLLY: Don't you know what happens to muscadine juice that's
10 been corked tight for three years?
11 HAROLD: *(Uncorks and smells it, making a face)* It gets real sweet.
12 POLLY: Grandma calls it truth serum. One taste of that, and ever'
13 body will be sayin' the first thing that pops into their heads.
14 Go pump us a pail of well water; that will have to do.
15 HAROLD: Sure thing, my gully whopper.
16 POLLY: Thank you, my little pig knuckle. *(HAROLD exits. POLLY*
17 *checks her makeup in a hand-held mirror.)*
18 GRETCHEN: *(Enters wearing a really bad dress.)* Yoo-hoo! I shall
19 enter thy dwellin' and so converse with the likes of you all.
20 POLLY: Relax, Gretchen. She ain't here yet.
21 GRETCHEN: Darn, and I was practicin' all the way over here.
22 POLLY: Where's Armen?
23 GRETCHEN: Parkin' the pickup out back. I don't want the
24 Northcutts to know that old wreck belongs to me.
25 POLLY: That truck's in good shape.
26 GRETCHEN: I was talkin' about Armen. *(They laugh.)*
27 POLLY: Oooo, you look so pretty. But I thought you was goin' to
28 wear your red dress.
29 GRETCHEN: I ripped that one last week coon huntin'. *(Modeling)*
30 You like it?
31 POLLY: I always have.
32 GRETCHEN: Goodness, Polly — you really caked on the war
33 paint.
34 POLLY: Well, it is a special occasion.
35 GRETCHEN: Kind of reminds me of the circus that came through
36 last year.
37 BODEAN: *(Off-stage)* Hurry up, Chigger. I ain't goin' to be late
38 because of you. *(BODEAN enters. She is decked out in the gaudiest*
39 *jewelry in existence. Since she couldn't decide which jewelry to wear,*
40 *she used it all. Six or seven brooches are pinned to her dress; bright*
41 *colored fishing lures dangle from her ears; different styles of*
42 *necklaces and bracelets clank against each other, and a belt with a*
43 *large buckle bearing a portrait of Johnny Cash wraps around her*
44 *waist.)* Hello, ladies. I — am — here ... I ain't ... I mean, I isn't
45 late, am I?

- 1 POLLY: You ain't late, but the Northcutts ain't here yet, so you
 2 can quit the fancy talk. (*Referring to the jewelry*) And what in
 3 sam hill is all this?
- 4 BODEAN: I couldn't decide which accessories to wear, so I wore
 5 all of it.
- 6 GRETCHEN: It must weigh a ton.
- 7 BODEAN: I got a strong back. (*CHIGGER enters carrying a couple of*
 8 *lawn chairs.*) Chigger, did you get the fly swatter?
- 9 CHIGGER: I ain't had time. I was a-gettin' these here chairs.
- 10 GRETCHEN: (*Taking the chairs*) The fly swatter is in the back seat.
 11 And be careful! Them are your best camouflage pants.
- 12 CHIGGER: Yes, dear. (*He exits.*)
- 13 GRETCHEN: Your house looks spotless.
- 14 POLLY: Much obliged. Cleanin's been a breeze since Harold built
 15 me that four-wheel-drive vacuum cleaner.
- 16 BODEAN: I can only dream of such things.
- 17 POLLY: I thought maybe we could put all the men on this side of
 18 the room so we can talk about 'em and they can't hear us.
 19 (*ARMEN enters chewing on a piece of beef jerky.*)
- 20 GRETCHEN: Armen Flat, what is that you're a-gnawin' on?
- 21 ARMEN: Beef jerky. I found it in the back of the pickup under a
 22 sack of fertilizer.
- 23 GRETCHEN: Don't you let them city slickers see you with that.
 24 Now, sit down over here while we get ever'thing ready.
 25 (*ARMEN sits in a lawn chair. HAROLD enters with a pail with a*
 26 *ladle inside.*)
- 27 HAROLD: Honey, I got some fresh spring water.
- 28 POLLY: (*Looking inside the bucket*) There sure ain't much in there.
- 29 HAROLD: The pump needs primin'. I'll fetch some more in a little
 30 while.
- 31 POLLY: Set it over there and get rid of that three-year-old
 32 muscadine juice.
- 33 HAROLD: Yes, honey. Armen, would you empty this for me while
 34 I fetch some glasses?
- 35 ARMEN: (*Standing and chewing on his beef jerky*) Sure thing. You
 36 want some beef jerky?
- 37 HAROLD: No thanks. I'll be right back. (*HAROLD exits.*)
- 38 ARMEN: Where do you want me to pour it? (*But HAROLD is gone.*
 39 *ARMEN looks around and sees the pail sitting on the table.*) Oh. (*He*
 40 *pours the juice in the pail of water. After he has emptied the jug, he*
 41 *sniffs it and makes a face.*)
- 42 HATTIE: (*Enters with CHARLES RAY. HATTIE's hair is bigger than*
 43 *ever. It's been teased and is very frizzy. The actor playing HATTIE*
 44 *may choose to wear a wig for this scene.*) Hello, ladies — so sorry
 45 I'm late, but Mr. and Mrs. Mozart was over at the house, and

- 1 time just got away, and —
- 2 BODEAN: Hush up, Hattie — they ain't here yet.
- 3 POLLY: (*To HATTIE*) Goodness gracious, I ain't never seen your
- 4 hair that big.
- 5 HATTIE: Well, it is a special occasion.
- 6 POLLY: Just be careful. You know what happened last year.
- 7 HATTIE: I remember.
- 8 POLLY: I still don't know how that crow built a nest in your hair
- 9 without you knowin' it.
- 10 HATTIE: Them crows is clever little devils. It could have been
- 11 worse, I guess.
- 12 POLLY: Yeah, it could have been a woodpecker.
- 13 BODEAN: And who is this Mr. and Mrs. Mozart you was a-talkin'
- 14 about?
- 15 HATTIE: I heard he was well-liked with the city crowds, so I
- 16 thought I would play like I knowed him on a personal level.
- 17 BODEAN: That ain't a bad idea. Can I know him too?
- 18 HATTIE: There's another feller you can know. Now, what was his
- 19 name? (*Snaps her fingers.*) Sigmund Fraud.
- 20 BODEAN: Sigmund Fraud. I do like that name.
- 21 POLLY: I ain't sure it's such a good idea to try and pass ourself off
- 22 in such underhanded ways.
- 23 GRETCHEN: I think it's fun to dress up for a change. After I got
- 24 dressed I called Armen into the livin' room, and then I set
- 25 down on the sofa so I could strike a pose for him in my new
- 26 dress. Armen, tell 'em what you said to me when you first
- 27 saw me sittin' there in my burlap dress.
- 28 HAROLD: I said, "Who left that giant sack of taters in the livin'
- 29 room?"
- 30 GRETCHEN: (*Slaps his shoulder.*) I meant after I got up and kicked
- 31 you in the britches with my steel-toed boot.
- 32 HAROLD: I said, "Sweet pea, you sure do look good in your new
- 33 burlap dress."
- 34 GRETCHEN: (*To the GIRLS*) See? Ain't he sweet?
- 35 BODEAN: (*Sarcastic*) As a lemon dipped in vinegar. (*FESTER runs*
- 36 *in dressed to the nines and holding a small bouquet of wild flowers*
- 37 *that are almost dead or wilting terribly.*)
- 38 FESTER: Howdy, ever'body — sorry we're late, but my pickup
- 39 went hot on me over on highway six.
- 40 POLLY: (*Looking around*) Fester, where's that sweet little Dora
- 41 Lee?
- 42 FESTER: (*He looks behind him.*) I must have left her in the truck.
- 43 BODEAN: In the truck?
- 44 GRETCHEN and POLLY: (*Together*) In the truck?
- 45 FESTER: Oops, I'll be right back. (*He runs out.*)

- 1 HAROLD: Poor boy. He's so simple he planted a dogwood tree
 2 once and expected a litter of puppies.
- 3 POLLY: He's just nervous, that's all.
- 4 HAROLD: He ain't never been on a date before.
- 5 HATTIE: I remember my first date with Charles Ray.
- 6 GRETCHEN: Where did he take you?
- 7 HATTIE: Deer huntin'.
- 8 POLLY: That ain't very romantic.
- 9 HATTIE: Oh, but it was. We was sittin' up there in that tree stand
 10 all night, with the full moon reflectin' off Charles Ray's glass
 11 eye. That's when it happened.
- 12 GRETCHEN: He leaned in and gave you some sugar?
- 13 HATTIE: He squirted me with some of his doe scent. He said he
 14 was marking his territory. *(She giggles as the LADIES remark*
 15 *"That's so sweet," "How romantic," "Awwww," etc. DORA LEE rushes*
 16 *up to the window.)*
- 17 DORA LEE: Has anybody seen my little dreamboat?
- 18 POLLY: He went back to the truck to get you.
- 19 DORA LEE: Much obliged. *(She disappears. FESTER enters with the*
 20 *flowers again. He calmly sets the flowers on the table, has a seat,*
 21 *crosses his legs, and looks out toward the audience.)*
- 22 POLLY: Fester, what are you doin'? Where's Dora Lee?
- 23 FESTER: She wasn't in the truck.
- 24 POLLY: Ain't you goin' to look for her?
- 25 FESTER: You think I should? *(DORA LEE appears at the window and*
 26 *points at FESTER.)*
- 27 DORA LEE: There you are, you little dickens, you. I'm a-comin' in.
 28 *(She disappears.)*
- 29 BODEAN: Fester, go hold the door for her.
- 30 FESTER: OK. *(He crosses to the door, places both hands on the door and*
 31 *leans on it.)*
- 32 POLLY: Fester, what are on earth are you a doin', boy?
- 33 FESTER: Holdin' the door. It was y'all's idea!
- 34 GRETCHEN: Good heavens, child. Is your yeast ever goin' to rise?
 35 *(She pushes FESTER aside and opens the door. There stands DORA*
 36 *LEE.)* Come on in here, honey child. You'll have to excuse
 37 Fester. The more you get to know him, the more you'll
 38 admire dogs.
- 39 POLLY: *(To DORA LEE)* Well, don't you look pretty as a picture in
 40 your little dress.
- 41 DORA LEE: Excuse my messed-up hair — I'm afraid the wind got
 42 to it.
- 43 BODEAN: But it ain't windy a-tall outside.
- 44 FESTER: It is if you're ridin' in the back of a pickup truck.
- 45 BODEAN: Fester Taylor, tell me you did not make that girl ride in

- 1 the back of your pickup.
- 2 **FESTER:** I know I ain't been datin' long, but even I know you don't
- 3 let a bird dog sit in your girlfriend's lap. Sheesh!
- 4 **POLLY:** (*Utter shock as CHIGGER re-enters with a fly swatter and takes a*
- 5 *seat near the other men.*) Fester Taylor, git on over there and sit
- 6 with the rest of the men — we girls are havin' a meetin'.
- 7 **FESTER:** (*As he crosses to have a seat, he speaks to DORA LEE.*) I'll be right
- 8 over here, pumpkin head.
- 9 **BODEAN:** Fester, don't ever call a girl pumpkin head. That's just
- 10 plumb rude.
- 11 **FESTER:** Sorry. (*Back to DORA LEE*) I'll be right over here, buffalo
- 12 butt.
- 13 **HATTIE:** (*Taking charge, speaking to the MEN*) Now listen good, fellers.
- 14 When the Northcutts get here, we don't want to be
- 15 embarrassed. We want them to think we're the classiest
- 16 housewives in all of Cricket County. (*The MEN think she's joking,*
- 17 *so they burst out in laughter.*) I'm serious! (*The MEN stop laughing*
- 18 *abruptly.*)
- 19 **BODEAN:** And we have all decided that the best way for us to look
- 20 good is for you men just to stay quiet.
- 21 **POLLY:** But if you get the urge to talk, say some romantic things to
- 22 us.
- 23 **ARMEN:** Romantic things? But I thought we was goin' to have fun
- 24 tonight.
- 25 **POLLY:** You're goin' to say romantic things to us and enjoy it.
- 26 **HAROLD:** Like what?
- 27 **GRETCHEN:** When Mrs. Northcutt gets here, be sure to tell me how
- 28 good I look in my homemade dress.
- 29 **ARMEN:** Make up your mind; you want us to be honest or nice?
- 30 **GRETCHEN:** Armen Flat, are you sayin' you think this dress makes
- 31 me look fat?
- 32 **ARMEN:** Honey pie, you're askin' the wrong man. I saw you before
- 33 you put it on.
- 34 **GRETCHEN:** Husband or no, I will not let you mess this night up for
- 35 us.
- 36 **HAROLD:** (*To the LADIES*) What makes you think we don't know how
- 37 to be romantic?
- 38 **POLLY:** Let us count the ways.
- 39 **GRETCHEN:** Armen proposed to me through a mouthful of pork
- 40 rinds.
- 41 **HATTIE:** Charles Ray requested the honeymoon suite at the Motel
- 42 Six.
- 43 **BODEAN:** On our first date, Chigger gave me flowers he stole from a
- 44 graveyard.
- 45 **DORA LEE:** Fester, ain't all this makin' you excited about our future?

- 1 **FESTER:** *(Pulling at his collar)* Future?
- 2 **POLLY:** *(To the MEN)* Now, Harold will give you men some fresh
3 spring water to drink. That should keep you good and busy
4 until our real company gets here.
- 5 **HAROLD:** *(Rising and dipping from the bucket into paper cups)* Here
6 you go, fellers. Nothin' like a nice cold drink of fresh well
7 water to make you forget your troubles.
- 8 **POLLY:** That's all we got for now, so go easy on it. *(The MEN throw*
9 *their heads back, gulping down the muscadine juice in sync, then —*
10 *again simultaneously — hold their cups out for more.)*
- 11 **HATTIE:** Goodness gracious — you ain't supposed to gulp it like
12 a herd of wild animals. Take small sips.
- 13 **BODEAN:** And hold your pinkies out while you do it. That shows
14 real class.
- 15 **POLLY:** Good gravy, they're goin' to embarrass us — I just know it.
16 *(HAROLD has dipped out a little more for each of them.)* Now, sip it.
17 *(The MEN, holding their pinkies out, throw their heads back together,*
18 *gulping it down again, then simultaneously hold their cups out to him*
19 *for more.)*
- 20 **CHIGGER:** That's the best well water I ever had.
- 21 **CHARLES RAY:** Got a real good flavor to it.
- 22 **ARMEN:** Nice and sweet.
- 23 **POLLY:** And stop gulpin'!
- 24 **BODEAN:** *(With hands on hips as she proclaims her universal truth.)* Men:
25 You can't live with 'em, and you can't throw 'em in the river.
- 26 **HATTIE:** *(Loudly)* I think I heard a car! *(POLLY rushes to the window*
27 *and peers out.)*
- 28 **POLLY:** It's them! Ever'body stand with your husbands and try to
29 look happy!
- 30 **DORA LEE:** But I ain't got a husband yet!
- 31 **POLLY:** Don't worry. What's a few weeks more or less?
- 32 **FESTER** *(Pulling at his collar)* A few weeks? *(There's a knock at the*
33 *door.)*
- 34 **POLLY:** Y'all quit drinkin' that well water and sit up straight!
35 Chigger, why are you scratchin' yourself?
- 36 **CHIGGER:** I'm the only one who knows where it itches.
- 37 **POLLY:** *(Picking lint off her dress)* Come in! Come in!
- 38 **MONICA:** *(Entering)* Thank you, Polly.
- 39 **POLLY:** Uh, ever'body, this is Ms. Monica and her handsome ... oh,
40 I mean, husband ... *(Snaps her fingers, trying to remember his*
41 *name.)*
- 42 **REGINALD:** Reginald.
- 43 **ARMEN:** It's very nice to meet you, Ms. Monica, Oregon.
- 44 **REGINALD:** *(Shaking ARMEN'S hand)* Reginald.
- 45 **ARMEN:** *(Points to himself.)* No, Armen.

- 1 **REGINALD:** I beg your pardon?
- 2 **ARMEN:** (*Points to himself again and speaks quite loudly.*) **Armen!**
- 3 (*Points to REGINALD.*) **Oregano!**
- 4 **MONICA:** (*Removing her fur as POLLY takes it and hangs it on the back*
- 5 *of a chair.*) **Excuse me, but Oregano is an herb.**
- 6 **ARMEN:** (*To REGINALD*) You go by Herb?
- 7 **GRETCHEN:** Armen, just give up. OK, now all the ladies sit right
- 8 over here and grab you a corner of the quilt. Ms. Monica, you
- 9 sit here right beside me.
- 10 **BODEAN:** I was savin' her a seat over here by me.
- 11 **HATTIE:** There's a perfectly good seat by me.
- 12 **MONICA:** Ladies, ladies, please. I'll sit here in the middle.
- 13 **POLLY:** (*To REGINALD*) Herb, you sit over there with the men and
- 14 help yourself to some fresh well water.
- 15 **CHIGGER:** And hold your pinky out like this when you drink it.
- 16 (*The LADIES pantomime a conversation. HAROLD hands*
- 17 *REGINALD a cup and REGINALD has a seat and takes a sip. He*
- 18 *coughs uncontrollably.*)
- 19 **REGINALD:** That is well water?
- 20 **HAROLD:** (*Who hasn't had any and doesn't realize they are drinking the*
- 21 *muscadine juice*) **It's from way down deep in the ground,**
- 22 **where the water is sweeter.**
- 23 **REGINALD:** (*Licking his lips*) **That's not too bad.** (*He drinks it all. The*
- 24 *MEN pantomime a conversation. The LADIES now each hold a*
- 25 *portion of the quilt in their laps.*)
- 26 **BODEAN:** Ms. Monica, we've heard so much about you. All your
- 27 face lifts and tummy tucks and ever'thing.
- 28 **MONICA:** Actually, it isn't polite to bring it up at a party.
- 29 **POLLY:** (*Giving BODEAN and GRETCHEN a look*) Of course it ain't,
- 30 Bodean. (*Introducing the LADIES*) Mrs. Monica, this is Bodean,
- 31 Hattie, Gretchen, and Fester's little lady-friend, Dora Lee —
- 32 soon to be Cricket County's next little housewife.
- 33 **DORA LEE:** I feel so lucky to be here with all of you tonight.
- 34 Fester is the man of my dreams.
- 35 **MONICA:** How long have you two known one another?
- 36 **DORA LEE:** Since two days ago.
- 37 **MONICA:** Oh my, wasn't that impetuous?
- 38 **DORA LEE:** No ma'am, it was Tuesday.
- 39 **GRETCHEN:** Fester's a fine boy.
- 40 **POLLY:** Speakin' of mules.
- 41 **MONICA:** Were we?
- 42 **POLLY:** I took the parsimonious mule into town yesterday and
- 43 traded it in for a magnanimous bellwether.
- 44 **HATTIE:** What in sam hill?
- 45 **MONICA:** Polly, you just said you took your frugal mule into town

- 1 yesterday and traded it for an unselfish trendsetter.
- 2 **POLLY:** I did?
- 3 **BODEAN:** *(Attempting to change the subject)* Uh, Hattie, I understand
- 4 Mozart paid you a visit the other day.
- 5 **HATTIE:** What? Oh. Yes, him and his wife stopped by to chew the
- 6 cud for a few hours.
- 7 **MONICA:** Mozart? Are you referring to the famously prolific
- 8 composer?
- 9 **HATTIE:** Well, I ain't too sure of his religious background.
- 10 **MONICA:** Don't you know that Mozart is dead?
- 11 **HATTIE:** *(Snaps her fingers.)* That's right, he said he wasn't feelin'
- 12 too good. Bless his heart, I told him to go to the doctor. *(The*
- 13 **LADIES** pantomime a conversation as our attention goes to the **MEN**
- 14 *who, except for HAROLD, continue to drink the muscadine juice.)*
- 15 **CHARLES RAY:** Hey, fellers, did y'all get a load of Hattie's hair? I
- 16 told her she should sue her beautician.
- 17 **CHIGGER:** Beautician? She needs a mechanic. *(The MEN laugh.)*
- 18 **ARMEN:** That ain't nothin' — my wife made herself a new dress.
- 19 *(The MEN look GRETCHEN's way.)*
- 20 **MEN:** *(Except HAROLD)* Bless her heart.
- 21 **ARMEN:** But I still love her. She's the excess baggage in the
- 22 airport of my life.
- 23 **FESTER:** That's real good. I'm goin' to write all this down *(He pulls*
- 24 *a small pad of paper and a pencil from his pocket and writes.)*
- 25 Excess baggage of my life.
- 26 **CHIGGER:** My Bodean told me she wanted more freedom, so I
- 27 extended the kitchen. *(The MEN laugh.)*
- 28 **REGINALD:** The way I see it, you must keep your woman on a
- 29 short leash. Remind them often who the boss is.
- 30 **MEN:** *(Shouting)* Amen!
- 31 **POLLY:** What you boys talkin' about over there?
- 32 **FESTER:** *(Standing)* How we should keep our women on a
- 33 short —
- 34 **MEN:** *(Ad lib)* Fester! That's enough of that. Hey now. *(Etc. One of*
- 35 *the MEN pulls FESTER down in his seat.)*
- 36 **GRANDMA:** *(Entering and pretending to shout to a husband through the*
- 37 *door.)* Horace, you just stay out there and sit a spell. I'll check
- 38 on you in a bit!
- 39 **POLLY:** Grandma, who you yellin' at?
- 40 **GRANDMA:** Oh, that old ball and chain of mine. He ain't feelin'
- 41 too good, so he's goin' to keep y'all's mule company for a
- 42 while. *(GRANDMA turns to the HOUSEWIVES and gives them a*
- 43 *wink, inviting them to play along with her charade.)* Why don't
- 44 y'all say howdy to my husband who is sittin' out there under
- 45 the tree?



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