

CRICKET COUNTY CHRISTMAS CHARITY

by Eddie McPherson



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Cricket County Christmas Charity



**A comedy about
giving and receiving**

by Eddie McPherson

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The City Bunch:

OSWALD — Has decided to never ask for money from his country cousins ever again.

PETE — Oswald's brother. Is curious about this Creature that has suddenly shown up.

MIMI — Spoiled as always. Is excited about being thrown a surprise party.

PETUNIA — Is depressed that there's no one in the country to appreciate her high-fashion attire.

The Country Bunch:

FLOREEN — Runs Cricket County's beauty shop and taxidermy service.

GRANDMA — Matriarch of the country bunch. Wants a new hairdo.

FESTER — Naïve but has a big heart. Plays the "wise" shepherd every year in the Christmas play.

GLENDA MAE — Notices her newly acquired husband is acting stranger than normal lately.

BRENDA MAE — Has a brand-new job working in Flo's beauty shop.

ELMER CRICK — Glenda Mae's simple-minded husband. Is up to something very mysterious.

WINNIE WATSON — Warns everyone to beware of the Christmas Creature.

TALULLAH — A customer in the beauty shop.

NOTE: Winnie and Talullah may easily be played by the same actress if this better fits your needs.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis

Oswald Tippinheimer and his sophisticated family from the city finally resolve never to ask their rich hillbilly cousins for any of their inheritance worth millions. Their attempts to con at least a fraction of their money failed Christmas after Christmas. So this year no one is to mention a word about the inherited treasure. They will just enjoy a nice quiet Christmas in the country.

When the city folk arrive in Cricket County, their cousin Elkin overhears them talking and mistakenly thinks his cousins from the city are flat broke. So, without the Tippinheimers' knowledge, all of Cricket County pitches in to collect canned goods and used clothing to give to the now "poor" city dwellers. But that's not all they get. The one year Oswald and his family decide not to ask for money, each member of the Taylor clan secretly and gladly decides to give their city cousins every last cent of their rich inheritance, which makes themselves paupers once again.

In the meantime, a mysterious creature that resembles Big Foot is spotted around Cricket County, stirring up fear among the hillbilly residents. But where did it come from? It's a little strange that it showed up just as the city bunch arrived.

See how everything ties together in this next Cricket County installment where everyone is reminded this Christmas season, "Blessed is he who considers the poor. The Lord will deliver him in times of trouble" (*Psalms 41:1, author's paraphrase*).

Costumes

The country bunch wears flannel shirts, blue jeans, cotton or gingham dresses, overalls, etc. Floreen and Brenda Mae may wear smocks. The city characters wear preppy-type clothing. Everyone who enters from outside wears some type of jacket or coat, scarf etc. Grandma might wear a bouffant or beehive or granny bun. Talullah's hair needs to be teased or have some other type of unkempt look for the comedy to work. You'll need some type of monster/gorilla mask to pull out of the bag Elmer hides and to show up at the window at the end of the play. Fester wears a homemade shepherd costume in the last scene.

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Set

The play takes place in a beauty shop; however, this is Cricket County's beauty shop, so simple is OK. An ordinary wooden chair is OK to use for the "customer" chair. Simple Christmas decorations hang about. You may choose to hang vintage "hairdo" posters ('60s era would be perfect) on the walls. An easy way to find these is to Google "vintage hair ads" under the "image" icon, copy to a word document, and print. If you want to blow them up to poster size, office supply or stores like Wal-Mart and Target can do this without much cost. A free-standing shelf stands against the Stage Left wall and has a stack of towels, brushes, hairspray cans, etc., sitting on it. There is a door and window Stage Right. This door leads to the front of the shop. There is another door (or opening) Upstage Center that leads to the back room of the shop. A small table with soda bottles on it sits at Stage Right, and another small table for the Christmas tree and presents sits at Stage Left.

For the first scene in the car, four chairs (two in front and two in back) sit either directly in front of the permanent set (with the permanent set in darkness, if possible) or extreme Stage Right or Left. If you have a spotlight, use it for this scene. If not, isolate this area as much as possible with lighting.

Props

Something for a steering wheel, homemade bow and arrow, hairbrush, hand mirror, watches, knit cap, wig, toolbox, fake money, scissors, various soda bottles, handkerchiefs, tissues, towel, cell phone, key, scarf, tablet and pencil, rope, pocket dictionary, burlap bag or paper sack, small Christmas tree, "blood"-stained handkerchief, Bingo card, two cheap monster masks, and a fishing rod with a ribbon tied to it. The following gifts and homemade certificates should be wrapped and labeled for easy retrieval within the performance: From Flo to Oswald — A gift certificate to her beauty shop. From Fester to Pete — An earthworm collection (jar of dirt). From Fester to Petunia — a certificate for an oil field. From Grandma to Oswald — A gift certificate to the Cricket County Café and a certificate for coal mines. From Glenda Mae and Brenda Mae to Mimi and Petunia — each girl gets a package with an ugly cotton dress inside. Mimi's has a card with a poem attached. Petunia's has a card with a certificate for diamond mines inside. From Elkin to Pete — A

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picture of a rustic cabin and a certificate for an oil field. From Elkin to Oswald — certificate for an oil field.

Sound Effects

Christmas tunes played between scenes, creature growling, tires screeching.

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 aspect 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 add up when the actors take short pauses between lines 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 45 minutes and one hour. Have fun!

Unless otherwise marked, all Scripture is taken from *The King James Version*.

1 (PETE, OSWALD, PETUNIA, and MIMI are sitting in four
 2 chairs that represent their car. They're heading back out to
 3 Cricket County for Christmas. OSWALD [who is driving] and
 4 PETE sit up front and the GIRLS in back. OSWALD is in the
 5 middle of singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas.")

6 OSWALD: On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave
 7 to me, eight maids a-milking,

8 PETE: (*Singing*) Seven swans a-swimming,

9 OSWALD: (*Singing*) Six geese a-layin'

10 PETE and OSWALD: (*Singing together*) Fiiiive golden rings!

11 PETE: (*Singing*) Four calling birds,

12 OSWALD: (*Singing*) Three French hens,

13 PETE: (*Singing*) Two turtle doves,

14 OSWALD and PETE: (*Singing together*) And a partridge in a
 15 pair treeee.

16 OSWALD: (*Singing*) On the ninth day of Christmas —

17 PETUNIA: Stop! Please stop! No more Christmas songs,
 18 pleeeeeease.

19 OSWALD: Pete, I didn't know we brought the Grinch along
 20 on our trip.

21 MIMI: I agree with Petunia. Enough Christmas cheer
 22 already.

23 PETE: And the Grinch invited her buddy Scrooge.

24 MIMI: Please turn on the radio, Oswald.

25 OSWALD: I've been trying, but we're too high up in the
 26 mountains.

27 PETUNIA: Mimi, please. We're *all* bored and we're *all* tired.

28 MIMI: Well, aren't we Miss Snippety today?

29 PETE: Oswald, I think this should be the last time we drive
 30 all this way for Christmas.

31 MIMI: I agree. The only reason I ever agree to tag along year
 32 after year is that tiny bit of hope these hillbilly cousins
 33 of ours will *finally* give us some of their inheritance
 34 money.

35 PETUNIA: I concur. Besides, I miss those Christmas Eves at
 36 home, snug in my own warm bed.

37 PETE: (*Pointing*) Watch that squirrel!

38 OSWALD: (*Swerving*) Pete, don't yell like that. I saw it!

- 1 PETE: Sorry.
- 2 OSWALD: Would you listen to what you three are saying?
- 3 How selfish you sound?
- 4 PETE: (*Feeling a little guilty*) I'm sorry, it's just that —
- 5 OSWALD: It's just that these "hillbillies," as you call them,
- 6 Mimi, happen to be family.
- 7 PETUNIA: But it's just that —
- 8 OSWALD: Family who think we, their city cousins, hung the
- 9 moon.
- 10 MIMI: But it's just that —
- 11 OSWALD: Our humble cousins who have never asked
- 12 anything from us except to spend a little time with them
- 13 once a year at Christmas time. And all you can think
- 14 about is how you can get your greedy little hands on
- 15 some of our Uncle Zeke's inheritance that he did *not*
- 16 leave us, but he *did* leave *them*.
- 17 PETE: But they have millions!
- 18 OSWALD: It's *their* money, Pete.
- 19 PETUNIA: (*Pointing*) Watch that deer!
- 20 OSWALD: (*Swerves.*) I saw it!
- 21 PETUNIA: But Oswald, you've always been the first one of us
- 22 to try to get your hands on some of their fortune.
- 23 OSWALD: (*Admitting*) OK, fine, so I've been greedy in the
- 24 past, but this year I have had a change of heart. I'm
- 25 making a new proclamation. No more will I ever try to
- 26 con those sweet, loveable hill — I mean, country folks
- 27 out of their rightful millions. You three are my
- 28 witnesses.
- 29 PETUNIA: (*Points ahead.*) Watch out! (*OSWALD swerves and they*
- 30 *all jolt forward as the car comes to a sudden stop.*)
- 31 OSWALD: What in the world was that?
- 32 PETE: (*Looking behind them*) Where did it go?
- 33 PETUNIA: Was that what I thought it was?
- 34 OSWALD: It couldn't be ... there's no such thing.
- 35 MIMI: (*Hand to her chest, out of breath*) Oswald, what was it?
- 36 PETE: Maybe it was a bear.
- 37 OSWALD: Walking on two legs?
- 38 PETUNIA: It must have been eight feet tall.

- 1 MIMI: Oswald, get us out of here!
- 2 OSWALD: *(Trying)* The car won't start.
- 3 PETE: Hurry, lock the doors! *(They all sit quietly, looking*
4 *terrified. A low growl comes from somewhere.)*
- 5 MIMI: *(Squeaky voice)* What was that?
- 6 OSWALD: Shhhh. Quiet. *(They sit quietly. The growl occurs again,*
7 *a little louder.)*
- 8 PETUNIA: Mimi, I love you, and I'm sorry for any wrong I
9 have ever done to you.
- 10 MIMI: I've enjoyed all our times together.
- 11 OSWALD: Shhhh! *(He puts up his hand.)* Whatever it was, I
12 think it's gone.
- 13 PETE: Try the car again.
- 14 OSWALD: *(He does, and this time it starts.)* There. See?
15 Everything's OK. *(Pointing)* And look, we're at the
16 Cricket County line. *(WINNIE enters and stands beside*
17 *OSWALD.)*
- 18 WINNIE: Howdy. *(MIMI and PETUNIA scream and cling to each*
19 *other.)* Sorry 'bout that. I didn't mean to give you a sceer.
- 20 OSWALD: We didn't see you approaching.
- 21 WINNIE: The name's Winnie. This sure is a fancy lookin'
22 auto-mobile you got drivin' around these slush covered
23 dirt roads.
- 24 OSWALD: We've driven in from the city to visit our cousins,
25 the Taylors.
- 26 WINNIE: Well, I declare. Me and your Grandma Taylor go
27 waaaay back.
- 28 OSWALD: What are you doing walking around on such a cold
29 night holding a bow and arrow?
- 30 WINNIE: I was just on the hunt for somethin', but I better not
31 tell you what it is. Don't want you city slickers to get too
32 sceerd. But I'd get to somewhere safe real quick if I was
33 y'all. Merry Christmas to you and yours. *(When OSWALD*
34 *turns to PETUNIA, WINNIE exits.)*
- 35 PETUNIA: Oswald, ask her about that creature we saw.
- 36 OSWALD: *(Turns back.)* Miss ... Hey, where did she go? Hello?
- 37 PETE: She was standing right there.
- 38 PETUNIA: This is spooky! Get us out of here.

OSWALD: You don't have to ask me twice. (*OSWALD quickly puts his foot on the gas and all four get back in their seats as squealing tires are heard and the lights fade quickly to a blackout.*)

Scene 2

(*The scene is FLO's beauty shop. FLO is doing TALULLAH's hair. TALULLAH's chair faces the audience. Her hair is very big, either teased out or high on top of her head.*)

TALULLAH: Hurry up with my hair, Floreen. I can't wait to see what you've done to it!

FLO: Hold your horses!

TALULLAH: I wish you'd get yourself some mirrors in this place so a person can see herself.

FLO: I got mirrors, Talullah.

TALULLAH: I mean the *wall* kind.

FLO: What you think this is, New York City? Now, hush so I can finish you up and move on to my next customer.

TALULLAH: There ain't another soul within a mile of here.

FLO: Patsy Jo dropped off them two possums she run over the other day. She's wantin' me to stuff 'em so she can give 'em to Earl for Christmas. And honey, let me tell you, them are the ugliest two creatures I ever seen.

TALULLAH: Ugly, huh?

FLO: Oooo, child, they so ugly, they'd make a blind man cry.

TALULLAH: (*Laughs.*) My, my.

FLO: I wouldn't be surprised if death took one good look at 'em, sent 'em back, and they come bustin' through that front door right now. (*FESTER and ELMER burst in.*)

FESTER: (*With lots of energy*) Howdy, howdy, howdy!

ELMER: (*Follows FESTER's lead.*) Howdy, howdy, howdy!

TALULLAH: You're right, Flo. Them *is* the ugliest critters I ever saw. (*FLO and TALULLAH have a good laugh.*)

ELMER: Howdy, Miss Talullah. (*Elbowing FESTER, pointing at TALULLAH's hair.*) Fester, what's wrong with her hair? She looks like she's been wrestlin' a grizzly bear.

- 1 FESTER: Now, Elmer, hush up. That's why she come to a
2 beautician.
- 3 ELMER: Beautician nothin'. She needs a mechanic!
- 4 FLO: What are you two no-accounts whisperin' 'bout over
5 there?
- 6 FESTER: I was just tellin' Elmer how good Miss Tallulah's
7 hair was goin' to look when you're done with it.
- 8 FLO: What you mean? I just finished it.
- 9 FESTER: You just finished what?
- 10 FLO: Fixin' Talullah's hair.
- 11 FESTER: Miss Floreen, you yankin' my chain?
- 12 TALULLAH: How does it look, Fester? She ain't let me see it
13 yet.
- 14 BRENDA MAE: *(From Off-stage)* Miss Floreen?
- 15 FLO: Brenda Mae needs me. I'll be right back. *(Turns to*
16 *TALULLAH.)* Now, don't you peek at your hair 'til I get
17 back, missy. *(She exits to the back room.)*
- 18 TALULLAH: Quick, Fester, hand me that mirror right over
19 there so I can see my new hairdo.
- 20 FESTER: *(Pretending he can't find one)* Uh, I don't see no
21 mirror. They must've all broke.
- 22 TALULLAH: Then tell me right now how my hairdo looks!
- 23 ELMER: That's easy, Miss Tallulah. My cat coughs up better-
24 lookin' stuff than that hairdo. *(Points at her hair.)*
- 25 FESTER: I've saw better hair in my shower drain.
- 26 ELMER: Looks like Miss Flo cut your hair with a weed
27 whacker!
- 28 TALULLAH: Good heavens, give me that there mirror. *(She*
29 *grabs it from FESTER and looks in it.)*
- 30 ELMER: If your husband leaves you, I know a feller that
31 would be glad to court you no matter what you look
32 like.
- 33 TALULLAH: *(With no expression on her face yet, she yells.)*
34 Floreeeen!
- 35 FESTER: Now, don't go crazy, Miss Talullahh. *(FLO and*
36 *BRENDA MAE run in.)*
- 37 FLO: What in Sam hill are you a-screamin' about?
- 38 TALULLAH: My hair!

- 1 FESTER: Come on, Elmer. I can't stand the sight of blood.
 2 *(They head for the door.)*
 3 FLO: What about your hair?
 4 TALULLAH: I love it!
 5 FLO: I told you you would.
 6 BRENDA MAE: It's beautiful, Miss Talullah.
 7 ELMER: Did you hear that, Fester? It's beautiful.
 8 FESTER: *(Sarcastic)* Yeah, beautiful as a mud fence.
 9 BRENDA MAE: What you boys doin' here?
 10 FESTER: Uh, we just come to tell you somethin'. Well, 'bye.
 11 BRENDA MAE: Fester!
 12 FESTER: Yeah?
 13 BRENDA MAE: You ain't told me nothin' yet.
 14 FESTER: Elmer, what did we come to tell Brenda Mae?
 15 ELMER: I can't remember. *(Points at TALULLAH.)* The fungus
 16 distracted me.
 17 FESTER: *(To BRENDA MAE)* Oh, yeah. I'm supposed to
 18 remind you not to forget play practice tonight.
 19 BRENDA MAE: I'm the one who reminded you. *(GRANDMA*
 20 *enters wearing a towel on her head.)*
 21 GRANDMA: Whoooooeeee, it's really gettin' cold out there.
 22 FESTER: Let's go, Elmer.
 23 ELMER: Fester, what time is it?
 24 FESTER: You got a watch on your arm.
 25 ELMER: Oh, yeah. *(ELMER looks at his watch, stares at it for*
 26 *about five seconds, and then looks back up at FESTER.)* So,
 27 Fester, what time is it?
 28 FESTER: It's time that you learn how to tell time.
 29 ELMER: I got to go meet somebody.
 30 FESTER: You meetin' Glenda Mae?
 31 ELMER: Nope, I ain't meetin' Glenda Mae. Glenda Mae's my
 32 wife. I said I'm meetin' *somebody*. 'Bye. *(He puts on his*
 33 *knit cap and exits.)*
 34 GRANDMA: Who in Sam hill is that boy meetin' that's so dog-
 35 fired important?
 36 BRENDA MAE: *(Brushing out a wig)* Maybe he's just meetin' a
 37 friend.
 38 FESTER: That can't be it 'cause I'm the only friend he's got.

- 1 Well, I'll holler at y'all hens later.
- 2 GRANDMA: Fester Taylor, what have I told you about callin'
3 us hens?
- 4 FESTER: Sorry. That's what Cousin Elkin calls you when
5 y'all ain't around.
- 6 ELKIN: (*Enters through the front door carrying a toolbox.*) Thanks
7 a lot, dummy. Why don't you go slop a hog or somethin'?
- 8 FESTER: Speakin' of hogs, I got to go pick up that pig I
9 bought at the flea market for Grandma's Christmas
10 present.
- 11 GRANDMA: You got me a pig for Christmas, Fester?
- 12 FESTER: Who told you?
- 13 GRANDMA: (*Pleased*) Law, law. I sure could use a new pig. I'm
14 just about out of bacon over at the diner.
- 15 FESTER: You'll like this one, Grandma. I dressed him up in
16 yella overhauls.
- 17 GRANDMA: Why in the world did you dress a pig in yella
18 overhauls?
- 19 FESTER: 'Cause he split a seam in his blue ones. 'Bye. (*He*
20 *exits.*)
- 21 ELKIN: Floreen, I come to fix that leaky pipe of yours.
- 22 FLO: It's in the back room. Much obliged to you, Elkin. (*He*
23 *sees TALULLAH'S hair.*) Miss Talullah, your hair!
- 24 TALULLAH: (*Patting her hair*) Thank you, Elkin.
- 25 ELKIN: (*Staring at her hair*) That reminds me, did y'all hear
26 'bout that big messy explosion over at the coal mine? It
27 was somethin' awful. (*He exits to the back room.*)
- 28 GRANDMA: Well, Brenda Mae, how's your first week goin' at
29 your new job?
- 30 BRENDA MAE: Real good, Grandma. I only burnt two ears
31 and cut off old Clifford's beard by accident.
- 32 GRANDMA: You cut off ol' Cliff's beard? He's had that beard
33 for thirty years.
- 34 BRENDA MAE: Yeah, he wasn't too happy about it.
- 35 FLO: Sometimes my new girls get scissor happy.
- 36 TALULLAH: Imogene, what do you think of my hair?
- 37 GRANDMA: It looks like a chicken hawk's nest — but don't
38 worry, Floreen here will get you fixed up real good.

- 1 TALULLAH: What you mean, “fixed up”? I just had it done.
2 GRANDMA: In that case, it looks bee-yoo-tiful.
3 TALULLAH: Do you mean it?
4 GRANDMA: Yeah, I mean it. I think it’s purdy.
5 TALULLAH: How purdy?
6 GRANDMA: Open cascket purdy.
7 TALULLAH: (*Putting on her coat.*) That’s more like it. Got to
8 look my best for the Christmas play this weekend. (*She*
9 *hands FLO money.*) Here you go, Flo, and much obliged
10 for your magic touch.
11 FLO: See you on Sunday.
12 TALULLAH: ‘Byyyeeyeee! (*She exits.*)
13 GRANDMA: Have mercy, child. That woman sure likes big
14 hair.
15 OSWALD: (*Enters wearing a winter coat and sees GRANDMA.*)
16 Here she is. Merry Christmas!
17 FLO: Weeeell, merry Christmas! Get on in here out of the
18 cold. Y’all didn’t step on them possums out on the porch
19 did you?
20 PETE: (*Looks on the bottom of his shoe.*) Uhhhh, I hope not.
21 GRANDMA: (*To OSWALD*) I see you found my note.
22 OSWALD: Yes ma’am, we drove straight to your café, saw the
23 note, and here we are.
24 PETUNIA: (*To FLO*) You must be the proprietor of Flo’s
25 Beauty shop.
26 FLO: No, honey, I’m the owner. I’m beautician by day,
27 taxidermist by night.
28 GRANDMA: If she ain’t teasin’ hair, she’s stuffin’ sawdust
29 inside road kill.
30 MIMI: Yep, we’re back in Cricket County. (*Sarcastic, of course*)
31 So classy.
32 FLO: Imogene, ain’t you goin’ to introduce me?
33 GRANDMA: Sorry, Floreen. These are my kinfolk from the
34 city. Let’s see, this here’s Ozzy —
35 OSWALD: Oswald. Nice to meet you. (*Shakes FLO’S hand.*)
36 GRANDMA: That’s Peter, Petunia, and little Moo-moo ...
37 MIMI: She knows perfectly well my name is Mimi.
38 GRANDMA: These here are our kinfolk on Zeke Taylor’s side

- 1 of the family.
- 2 FLO: Well, welcome. I've heard so much about you.
- 3 MIMI: Don't believe a word of it.
- 4 BRENDA MAE: Howdy, cousins. Take off your coats and stay
- 5 awhile.
- 6 GRANDMA: Just 'til I get my hair done. Then we'll head on
- 7 over to the diner, and I'll cook you up a country supper.
- 8 OSWALD: Yes, ma'am.
- 9 BRENDA MAE: (*Holds up a pair of scissors.*) Does any of y'all
- 10 want a haircut?
- 11 PETUNIA: Brenda Mae, you're doing hair now?
- 12 BRENDA MAE: Yep, started just this week.
- 13 MIMI: (*Worried*) Good heavens! They gave *her* a pair of
- 14 scissors?
- 15 OSWALD: I didn't know you went to cosmetology school.
- 16 FLO: (*To PETUNIA.*) That's 'cause she didn't. I do all my own
- 17 trainin' right here in the shop. My girls practice by
- 18 cuttin' Fester's hair, then they move up to dogs and
- 19 then to people.
- 20 BRENDA MAE: This is what I want to do for a livin' now.
- 21 PETUNIA: That's wonderful, Brenda Mae.
- 22 BRENDA MAE: At least 'til that counter job opens up at
- 23 Dairy Hut. Now *there's* a career.
- 24 MIMI: (*Looking around*) So, where's your identical twin who
- 25 looks nothing like you?
- 26 GLENDA MAE: She's on her way over to pick me up. I told
- 27 her I'd help her cook supper for Elmer before play
- 28 practice tonight.
- 29 PETUNIA: How does Glenda Mae like married life?
- 30 BRENDA MAE: Fine. She's just cookin' and cleanin' her little
- 31 heart out.
- 32 OSWALD: But that's what she wanted, right? To be married
- 33 and set up housekeeping?
- 34 GRANDMA: Yep, that's what she wanted, that's what she got.
- 35 BRENDA MAE: But here lately Elmer's been comin' in late
- 36 and gettin' a cold supper, so she don't like that part of
- 37 married life.
- 38 FLO: Honey, there is two times a woman don't understand a

- 1 man: *before* marriage and *after* marriage.
- 2 PETE: Maybe he's out shooting big, scary creatures on the
3 side of the road.
- 4 PETUNIA: Why does Elmer come in late, Brenda Mae?
- 5 BRENDA MAE: He *says* 'cause he lost his watch, so Glenda
6 Mae says to him, "You can't tell time," and Elmer says
7 what he *meant* was 'cause he took his boat for a ride out
8 on the lake, and Glenda Mae says, "You don't have a
9 boat," and Elmer says what he *meant* was his truck had
10 a flat tire, and Glenda Mae says, "You don't have a
11 truck," and Elmer says what he *meant* was he walked to
12 the hardware store to buy dog food, and Glenda Mae
13 says, "We don't have a dog."
- 14 GRANDMA: Honey, we get the picture. I've always said men
15 was slim pickin's in Cricket County, and Elmer Crick is
16 the slim pickinest.
- 17 FLO: (*Standing behind GRANDMA, who sits in the chair. FLO puts*
18 *her hands on GRANDMA's shoulders.*) So, what we goin' to
19 do this week?
- 20 GRANDMA: I want you to make me beautiful for the
21 Christmas play on Sunday.
- 22 FLO: One Mission Impossible comin' up. Brenda Mae, can
23 you get Imogene warshed, please?
- 24 BRENDA MAE: Yes, ma'am. Come on, Grandma.
- 25 FLO: Make sure you take that nasty mop out of the sink
26 before stickin' her head in this time.
- 27 GRANDMA: (*To the CITY BUNCH*) Get y'all a sody pop while
28 you wait. I'm buyin'. (*She exits to the back room with*
29 *BRENDA MAE.*)
- 30 FLO: I'll throw these towels in the warshin' machine. I'll be
31 right back. (*She exits to the back with some towels.*)
- 32 PETE: (*Looking around*) Actually, a soda sounds pretty good.
33 (*PETE crosses to a line of soda bottles and sees that they have*
34 *been opened already and there are different levels of soda in*
35 *each one. He picks one up and starts to take a sip out of it.*
36 *OSWALD rushes to him.*)
- 37 OSWALD: Pete, you're not actually going to drink out of that,
38 are you?

1 PETE: Well, I'm not now.

2 PETUNIA: (*Looking at herself in the hand mirror*) I'll never know
3 for the life of me why I always wind up wearing my best
4 outfits when we come out here. There isn't a soul to
5 impress.

6 MIMI: (*Pointing at PETUNIA'S outfit*) Who are you wearing
7 today?

8 PETUNIA: Donna Karan. (*Pronounced "Karen."*) It cost me an
9 arm and a leg, and here I am in the middle of Cricket
10 County with no one here to appreciate it. Just my luck.

11 OSWALD: You're so spoiled.

12 MIMI: Speaking of unlucky, at least you didn't lose all your
13 money in a slot machine.

14 PETE: When did you play the slots?

15 MIMI: Before we left the city, when Oswald was gassing up
16 the limo.

17 PETE: How much money did you lose?

18 MIMI: All the cash I had with me — ten dollars. I still say that
19 machine was rigged.

20 OSWALD: (*Sits and crosses his legs.*) That's what you get for
21 gambling.

22 PETE: Oswald, don't look now, but your socks don't match.

23 OSWALD: (*Looking*) They sure don't, do they? Well, not to
24 worry, I have another pair just like them at home.
25 (*Laughs, but no one else does.*)

26 MIMI: A grown man who cannot dress himself. Well, you
27 have my pity.

28 OSWALD: It isn't my fault. All my clothes are here, there, and
29 everywhere. That's what happens when you move in
30 with your neighbors.

31 MIMI: Don't ask me to feel sorry for you when your beautiful
32 home is being redecorated for the third time.

33 OSWALD: And the last time, I might add. A week living with
34 my neighbors and their six kids got the best of me. Last
35 week the twins decided they wanted me to play dress-
36 up with them.

37 PETUNIA: (*Laughing*) I saw those pictures.

38 OSWALD: (*Worried*) What pictures?

- 1 PETUNIA: The ones of you in makeup. The twins posted
2 them on the Internet.
- 3 OSWALD: There are pictures of me wearing makeup on the
4 Internet?
- 5 PETUNIA: Don't worry. You look beautiful!
- 6 PETE: By the way, have any of you noticed my second BMW
7 has been missing in action?
- 8 MIMI: The one you promised you would give me when the
9 time was right?
- 10 PETE: Yeah, that one.
- 11 MIMI: What did you do with my car?
- 12 PETE: I sold it.
- 13 OSWALD: What? Why?
- 14 PETE: My friend Stan told me to put as much money as I
15 could in S.C. and C. stock. He said I'll make a killing.
- 16 MIMI: I'm about to do some killing of my own. You sold my
17 car!
- 18 PETE: *My car!*
- 19 PETUNIA: Pete, you and your get-rich-quick schemes.
- 20 PETE: S.C. and C. is good solid stock. (*ELKIN enters unseen by*
21 *the COUNTRY FOLKS, hears the next comment, and stops in*
22 *his tracks.*)
- 23 OSWALD: (*Sarcastically*) Well, isn't *this* just a peachy
24 Christmas? I'm homeless, Mimi lost all her money in a
25 slot machine, Petunia's upset that she's wearing Donna
26 Karan's clothing, and Pete had to sell his car to buy S.C.
27 and C. stock. Aren't *we* bringing Christmas cheer to
28 Cricket County? (*ELKIN'S eyes grow big at this news.*)
- 29 MIMI: Believe me, there won't be Christmas cheer at all
30 unless —
- 31 OSWALD: I know what you're about to say, and we are *not*
32 asking our country cousins for any of their inheritance
33 money and that is that. (*Sees ELKIN.*) Oh, hello, Elkin.
- 34 ELKIN: (*Pretending he's just coming in*) Well howdy, folks, and
35 merry Christmas to you and yours.
- 36 PETE: We didn't know you were standing there.
- 37 ELKIN: I just come in and didn't hear a sad, pitiful thing you
38 four was talkin' about just now. (*Wiping his eyes with a*

1 *handkerchief*) And let me tell you, I am mighty impressed
2 with how strong y'all are bein' in such a scary time as
3 this.

4 PETE: (*Privately, to OSWALD and MIMI*) He must have heard
5 about us seeing that monster out on the road.

6 OSWALD: Oh, that. Yes, Elkin, it *was* a pretty scary thing
7 that happened to us.

8 ELKIN: Why, of course it's scary. It would be to anybody. But
9 don't forget what the Good Book says: (*Charismatically,*
10 *with hand in air*) "Yea, though I walk through the valley
11 of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art
12 with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Psalm
13 twenty-three and verse four! And ever'boday said?

14 CITY FOLKS: (*Ad libbing*) Uh, amen?

15 PETE: Now, about this creature we saw ...

16 ELKIN: Creature?

17 PETE: Yes, that we saw on the side of the road on our way in.
18 Have you seen it?

19 ELKIN: Oh, that. Yeah, I've saw it.

20 PETUNIA: What in the world is it, Elkin?

21 ELKIN: (*Shrugs.*) Don't rightly know. It started showin' up
22 'bout a week ago. We call it the Christmas Creature,
23 seein' how it's showed up around Christmas time and
24 all.

25 MIMI: Oswald, I'm scared.

26 ELKIN: It's been scarin' people all over the county. Poor
27 Wida Samply was sloppin' her hogs when she seen it
28 behind her barn. Poor woman took off so fast she lost
29 her wig and run right out of her girdle.

30 OSWALD: How strange that it started showing up all of a
31 sudden.

32 ELKIN: Yep, shore is strange. But I guess a mysterious
33 creature runnin' round Cricket County is the *least* of
34 y'all's trouble right now.

35 OSWALD: What do you mean?

36 ELKIN: (*With a firm hand on OSWALD's shoulders*) And to be so
37 doggone brave about it. (*He wipes his eyes with his*
38 *handkerchief.*)

- 1 **PETE:** (*Peering out the curtain*) Now I'm curious about that
2 **thing.** Come on, Oswald, let's go take a look for
3 **ourselves.**
- 4 **OSWALD:** Might as well.
- 5 **MIMI:** (*Blocking the door*) You two can't be serious.
- 6 **OSWALD:** Just to pass the time until Grandma Taylor gets
7 **done with her hair.** (*He and PETE put on their coats.*)
- 8 **PETUNIA:** I am not going out there so some homegrown wild
9 **hillbilly creature can have me for Christmas dinner.**
- 10 **PETE:** Fine, then stay here and console Cousin Elkin.
11 **Something's really got him upset.**
- 12 **ELKIN:** (*Crying loudly and blowing his nose*) Y'all are the
13 **bravest souls I have ever knowed.** (*Finger in the air*) "Thy
14 **rod and thy staff they comfort me!"** (*Psalm 23:4, emphasis*
15 *added*).
- 16 **PETUNIA:** I think I'll go with you guys.
- 17 **OSWALD:** Elkin, tell Grandma Taylor where we are, will
18 **you?** (*They exit looking puzzled as ELKIN speaks to himself.*)
- 19 **ELKIN:** Just imagine, broke as they are and tryin' to pretend
20 **nothin's the matter.** (*GRANDMA enters with her hair*
21 *wrapped in a towel followed by BRENDA MAE.*)
- 22 **GRANDMA:** I shore will be glad when y'all get some hot
23 **water in this place.** My head is numb from the ears up.
- 24 **BRENDA MAE:** Sorry, Grandma.
- 25 **GRANDMA:** (*Noticing ELKIN*) What's wrong with you? Look
26 **like you just lost your best friend.**
- 27 **ELKIN:** Grandma, I got some bad news.
- 28 **GRANDMA:** Well, heavens, child, what is it?
- 29 **ELKIN:** I don't know how to say it.
- 30 **GRANDMA:** Try usin' your tongue.
- 31 **ELKIN:** Well, it seems our city cousins is flat broke.
- 32 **GRANDMA:** Broke?
- 33 **ELKIN:** They so poor, they're probably out there now fightin'
34 **squirrels for acorns.**
- 35 **BRENDA MAE:** That's crazy talk, Cousin Elkin. They can't be
36 **broke.** Our cousins live in big mansions in the city.
- 37 **ELKIN:** I reckon they don't no more. They don't know I
38 **overheard 'em talkin' a while ago and trust me, they's as**

1 broke as a preacher in hard times. I heard Cousin
2 Oswald say he was homeless, Cousin Mimi lost all her
3 money investin' in a slot machine —

4 BRENDA MAE: What's a slot machine?

5 ELKIN: I been thinkin' 'bout that. I reckon it's some fancy
6 name for a garden tiller. You know, a machine that cuts
7 slots in the ground to put the seed in.

8 GRANDMA: That makes sense. If they's broke, they're
9 probably havin' to grow their own food now.

10 ELKIN: That's what I thought too. Anyway, I heard 'em say
11 that Petunia had to borrow some clothes from a couple
12 friends of hers ... I think their names was Donna and
13 Karen, and Cousin Pete had to sell his car so he could
14 buy some S.C. and C. stock.

15 BRENDA MAE: What's S.C. and C. stand for?

16 ELKIN: I reckon it stands for sheep, cows, and chickens.

17 GRANDMA: I do declare. And they've come all the way back
18 out here to get their hands on some of our inheritance
19 money.

20 ELKIN: No, ma'am. That was the last thing Cousin Oswald
21 told ever'body. He says, "No matter what, we are *not*
22 askin' our country cousins for any money, and that is
23 that."

24 BRENDA MAE: (*Wiping her eyes with a tissue*) That's the
25 saddest thing I ever heard in my whole entire life.

26 ELKIN: It shore enough brought a few tears to these old
27 eyes. (*GLEND A MAE enters as she shouts back through the*
28 *front door.*)

29 GLEND A MAE: I heard that if the creature charges at you,
30 just play dead! (*She slams the door.*) They're out there
31 lookin' round for the Christmas Creature. Oh,
32 Grandma, I love what you've done to your hair.

33 GRANDMA: Honey, I'm wearin' a towel.

34 GLEND A MAE: Well, it shore does suit you. Brenda Mae, you
35 ready? I got to get home and cook Elmer some supper.

36 BRENDA MAE: Grandma is my last customer.

37 ELKIN: (*Still thinking about his cousins*) But what I'd like to
38 know is how could it happen to the nicest folks in the

1 whole world?

2 GLENDA MAE: What's wrong, Cousin Elkin?

3 BRENDA MAE: Go ahead and tell her.

4 ELKIN: Well, you see —

5 BRENDA MAE: Cousin Elkin overheard some bad news. Go

6 ahead and tell her, Cousin Elkin.

7 ELKIN: Well —

8 BRENDA MAE: You see, our city cousins, you know, the ones

9 from the city, well, it seems they are dirt poor.

10 GLENDA MAE: Poor?

11 BRENDA MAE: Poor.

12 GLENDA MAE: How poor?

13 GRANDMA: Instead of sittin' down to supper, they just read

14 recipes.

15 BRENDA MAE: They eat cereal with a fork to save milk.

16 ELKIN: Will y'all stop it with the corny country sayin's? This

17 is serious.

18 GLENDA MAE: I just can't believe my ears.

19 ELKIN: I wouldn't believe it either if I didn't hear it myself.

20 (*FLO enters.*)

21 BRENDA MAE: They're sellin' their houses, their clothes,

22 their cars.

23 GLENDA MAE: (*Starts to cry into a tissue.*) It makes me so sad.

24 FLO: Don't cry, Glenda Mae.

25 GRANDMA: (*Starts crying.*) Now, stop it. Ever'thing is goin' to

26 be all right.

27 FLO: (*Begins crying.*) Yeah, ever'thing's goin' to be all right.

28 Can I ask you all a question?

29 ELKIN: (*Crying*) Shore.

30 FLO: What in the world are we crying about?

31 ELKIN: (*Crying*) Our city cousins has lost all their worldly

32 possessions.

33 FLO: (*Crying*) They have?

34 BRENDA MAE: Ever last thing. (*EVERYONE wails loudly.*

35 *MIMI enters, shivering.*)

36 MIMI: (*Shouting back through the door*) Well, if that thing rips

37 your legs off, don't come running to me. (*She slams the*

38 *door and turns to EVERYONE. They abruptly stop crying.*) Is

- 1 anything wrong?
- 2 **BRENDA MAE:** (*Holding back her tears and bearing a fake smile*)
- 3 Not a thing, Cousin Mimi.
- 4 **MIMI:** (*Pulls out her phone and looks at it.*) I do wish I could get
- 5 a signal out here. How do you all live without contact to
- 6 the outside world? I mean, really.
- 7 **GLENDA MAE:** (*Crossing to MIMI and putting an arm around her*)
- 8 Cousin Mimi, it's going to be all right, I promise you.
- 9 **BRENDA MAE:** (*On the other side of her*) It ain't the end of the
- 10 world, and you have all of us here to help you through
- 11 this tough and troubled time.
- 12 **MIMI:** (*Holds up the phone, looking at it.*) It's really not *that* bad.
- 13 **ELKIN:** You're right. It ain't that bad a-taaaall. Lots of people
- 14 go through this kind of thing ever' day.
- 15 **MIMI:** (*Thinks they're talking about the phone service.*) But I don't
- 16 have a phone anymore.
- 17 **BRENDA MAE:** You be strong, now. The Lord will help you
- 18 through this difficult time.
- 19 **GLENDA MAE:** (*With her hand up in the air*) Psalm twenty-
- 20 eight: seven. "The Lord is my strength and my shield."
- 21 Amen and amen! (*PETUNIA, PETE, and OSWALD run in.*)
- 22 **PETUNIA:** We saw it! In the woods. We saw it!
- 23 **PETE:** (*Out of breath*) It was staring at us through the trees.
- 24 That thing must be ten feet tall!
- 25 **OSWALD:** There was something out there, all right. (*The*
- 26 *COUNTRY FOLK stare at the CITY FOLK for a few seconds,*
- 27 *then burst into tears, wailing.*)
- 28 **PETE:** (*To MIMI*) What's wrong with them?
- 29 **MIMI:** I told them I couldn't get phone service, and they all
- 30 just went to pieces.
- 31 **OSWALD:** (*Approaching the COUNTRY BUNCH*) Folks, it's OK.
- 32 It's not the end of the world.
- 33 **ELKIN:** Did you hear that? "It's not the end of the world," he
- 34 says. (*ELKIN wipes his eyes.*)
- 35 **GLENDA MAE:** But how in the world did you lose all your —
- 36 **ELKIN:** Shhhh. (*Turns to GLENDA MAE in private.*) Glenda
- 37 Mae, say somethin' nice 'bout Cousin Petunia's dress.
- 38 **GLENDA MAE:** OK. Cousin Petunia, honey, I shore enough

- 1 like that there borrowed dress you're a-wearin'.
- 2 PETUNIA: Why, thank you, Glenda Mae. It's Donna Karan's.
- 3 GLENDA MAE: Well, they shore sound like good friends to
- 4 me.
- 5 PETUNIA: (*Confused*) I beg your pardon?
- 6 GRANDMA: (*To OSWALD*) I tell you what, why don't y'all
- 7 drive that fancy car of yours over to the diner (*Hands*
- 8 OSWALD a key.) and let yourselves in, and I'll be there
- 9 soon as I'm finished up here. And help yourself to
- 10 anything in the kitchen. And I do mean *anything*. Eat
- 11 and eat and eat 'til your little tummies can't hold
- 12 another morsel. (*She cries again.*)
- 13 OSWALD: Well, OK, we appreciate it. We haven't eaten
- 14 anything all day. (*COUNTRY FOLK break out in another*
- 15 *round of wailing.*)
- 16 FLO: They haven't eaten anything all day!
- 17 ELKIN: Bless their hearts.
- 18 BRENDA MAE: (*Wiping her eyes*) They ain't eat nothin' all day!
- 19 GLENDA MAE: (*Hand in the air and her eyes closed*) The Lord
- 20 will be your strength and your shield!
- 21 GRANDMA, ELKIN, and BRENDA MAE: (*Together*)
- 22 Hallelujah!
- 23 GRANDMA: (*Ushering them to the door*) Now, don't forget what
- 24 I said. Y'all help yourself to anything a-tall. Now, run
- 25 along. (*She pushes them out.*)
- 26 GLENDA MAE: They shore are doin' a good job pretendin'
- 27 not to let any of this get them down.
- 28 BRENDA MAE: Cousin Elkin, what are we goin' to do about
- 29 it?
- 30 ELKIN: I tell you what we ain't goin' to do. We ain't goin' to
- 31 let them kinfolk of ours starve, that's for shore.
- 32 BRENDA MAE: Starve or go hungry either.
- 33 GLENDA MAE: We all have to pitch in and help 'em out.
- 34 GRANDMA: Let's put our heads together.
- 35 BRENDA MAE: Me and Glenda Mae's got plenty of old cotton
- 36 dresses and overhauls we don't wear no more.
- 37 ELKIN: Me and some of the neighbors can have a old
- 38 fashioned house-raisin', put up a cabin, and have 'em

- 1 moved in by Christmas Eve.
- 2 GRANDMA: I can hold a secret food drive over at the diner
3 and have folks donate canned goods.
- 4 GLENDA MAE: And we can have a county-wide yard sale.
- 5 GRANDMA: This is gettin' plumb excitin'. Hurry up with my
6 hair, Brenda Mae. I got a hundred things to do to get
7 ready. *(She exits to the back room with BRENDA MAE behind*
8 *her.)*
- 9 ELKIN: Now, it's real important our city cousins don't know
10 what we're a-doin'. They're a mighty prideful bunch.
- 11 GLENDA MAE: Yeah, we can surprise them on Christmas
12 Eve.
- 13 BRENDA MAE: We'll show them what family is really about.
- 14 FLO: *(Clapping her hands)* Oh, I ain't been this excited since I
15 didn't have to hold my breath to fit into my old corset.
- 16 BRENDA MAE: *(Looks at her watch.)* Look at that. I done lost
17 all track of time.
- 18 GLENDA MAE: I do need to get Elmer's supper started.
- 19 FLO: It won't hurt him to eat Spam for one night.
- 20 GLENDA MAE: Spam?
- 21 FLO: I forgot, you're still in your honeymoon stage.
- 22 GLENDA MAE: And lovin' ever' minute of it.
- 23 BRENDA MAE: *(Heading to the door as she wraps a scarf around*
24 *her neck)* You have to admit, Glenda Mae, that your first
25 year of marriage *has* been harder than you thought it
26 would be.
- 27 ELKIN: *(To himself)* Here, let me make a list of everything
28 we'll need for the surprise. *(He sits in a chair and starts*
29 *writing a list.)*
- 30 FLO: *(To GLENDA MAE)* Well, take it from 'ol Flo here, the
31 first ten years of marriage are the hardest.
- 32 GLENDA MAE: How long you been married?
- 33 FLO: Ten years.
- 34 ELKIN: *(Stops writing, looking up)* I know, I'll give 'em Blue,
35 that old bird dog.
- 36 FLO: I thought ol' Blue went blind.
- 37 ELKIN: That's just it. He would never know he got a new
38 owner.

- 1 FLO: You can't give your city cousins poor blind Blue. He
2 runs into trees! (*ELKIN sits and works more on his list.*)
- 3 FLO: (*To GLENDA MAE*) So how is ol' Elmer Crick working
4 out as a husband?
- 5 GLENDA MAE: Well, as you know, he's not the sharpest tool
6 in the shed, but he treats me good.
- 7 FLO: Brenda Mae said he's been gettin' home late for supper.
8 What reason does he give you?
- 9 GLENDA MAE: Well, for one, he stops off to take his boat out
10 fishin' after work.
- 11 FLO: He ain't got a boat.
- 12 GLENDA MAE: You got a point there. Oh, and he lost his
13 watch.
- 14 FLO: Elmer never learned to tell time.
- 15 GLENDA MAE: You got a point there. Oh, and he gets lots of
16 flat tires on his truck.
- 17 FLO: He don't have a truck.
- 18 GLENDA MAE: You got a point there. OK, I didn't want to
19 admit it, but between you and me, I think I know why
20 Elmer has been late to supper so much.
- 21 FLO: (*Sympathetic hand on her shoulder*) You do, honey?
- 22 GLENDA MAE: Yes ma'am, but you can't tell him I know
23 anything. (*She looks this way and that way.*) I think he's
24 been out lookin' for a secret Christmas present for me.
- 25 FLO: Glenda Mae Taylor, I ain't never saw somebody's head
26 stuck so far down in the sand. Listen, honey, it may just
27 be that Elmer is sneaking off and seein' another wo —
28 (*ELMER and FESTER enter. FESTER is holding to the end of*
29 *a rope, dragging the rest of the rope behind him.*)
- 30 FESTER: Miss Floreen, can I ask you a favor?
- 31 FLO: A favor? What is it?
- 32 FESTER: (*Pulls a pocket dictionary from his shirt.*) Favor:
33 Somethin' done or granted out of goodwill.
- 34 FLO: I know what favor means, knucklehead. I meant what
35 kind of favor.
- 36 FESTER: Oh. (*Hands her his end of the rope.*) Would you hold on
37 to my new pig for me?
- 38 FLO: (*Takes the rope and holds it up.*) Fester, there ain't nothin'

- 1 on the other end of this here rope.
- 2 **FESTER:** What? Don't that just fry your tater! (*Shouts out the*
3 *door.*) Pork Chop! Suuuu-eeee. Pork Chop, where you at?
4 Git yourself in here!
- 5 **ELMER:** (*Surprised to see GLENDA MAE*) Glenda Mae, what
6 you doin' here, sugar dumplin'? I thought you'd be
7 home makin' my supper.
- 8 **GLENDA MAE:** I stopped to pick up Brenda Mae. She's
9 helpin' me cook so we can make it to the church house
10 in time for play practice.
- 11 **ELMER:** Oh.
- 12 **GLENDA MAE:** Didn't you tell me you was goin' ice fishin'
13 this afternoon?
- 14 **ELMER:** (*Puts the bag he's holding behind his back.*) Huh? Oh,
15 yeah, ice fishin' this afternoon. Fester, you ready to go
16 ice fishin'?
- 17 **FESTER:** What you mean, ice fishin'? You told me you was
18 supposed to meet up with a woman.
- 19 **GLENDA MAE:** Woman?
- 20 **FLO:** Woman?
- 21 **ELMER:** Fester Taylor, you hush your mouth, son. I didn't
22 say woman, I said I got to meet up with a *worm*.
- 23 **FESTER:** You got to meet up with a worm?
- 24 **ELMER:** How you expect me to go ice fishin' without a
25 worm? I know I ain't smart, but at least I ain't dumb.
- 26 **GLENDA MAE:** (*Wrapping ELMER snugly with his scarf*) Honey
27 bunch, don't fish too long, now. Crawdad soup ain't
28 good a-tall if it gets cold.
- 29 **ELMER:** Okey-doke. (*Calling out*) Here, wormy, wormy,
30 wormy. (*He exits out the front door.*)
- 31 **FLO:** That shore is strange. (*GRANDMA rushes in with the same*
32 *hairdo she started out with. She's looking into a hand-held*
33 *mirror and speaks to BRENDA MAE, who is following her.*)
- 34 **GRANDMA:** Oh, Brenda Mae, I love it. It's just what I wanted.
- 35 **FLO:** Whoooo-eeee, Imogene, it is *you*.
- 36 **FESTER:** Grandma, I liked your hair better the other way.
- 37 **ELKIN:** (*Standing with his list*) Hush up, ever'body. I got
38 ever'thing worked out. After the play at church,

- 1 ever'body will sneak over here and throw a big surprise
2 party for the city folk!
- 3 FLO: That sounds like a good plan. (*WINNIE enters and is*
4 *surprised.*)
- 5 WINNIE: What's ever'body doin' in here? Don't y'all realize
6 that creature could attack at any minute? It's already
7 broke into three houses and sceered three cats up some
8 trees! Run! Hide! Save the children of Cricket County!
- 9 FLO: Winnie, I don't know what you're ramblin' about.
- 10 WINNIE: Where's them city folks at? Them sceerty cats run
11 back to the city, didn't they?
- 12 FLO: They're over at the diner. Why?
- 13 WINNIE: If they know what's good for 'em, they'll high-tail it
14 out of here reeeeeal quick-like! (*WINNIE runs out.*)
- 15 FESTER: (*Shouting out the door*) If you come across a
16 wanderin' pig, just hold on to him for me!
- 17 BRENDA MAE: She shore is upset 'bout that Christmas
18 Creature.
- 19 GLENDA MAE: Where in the world do you reckon that
20 creature come from?
- 21 ELKIN: We ain't got time to think about that. We got to focus
22 on the surprise.
- 23 FLO: (*Heading for the back room*) Let's go back here so we can
24 sit around my taxidermy table and do our plannin'.
- 25 GLENDA MAE: (*Excited*) Won't our city cousins be surprised,
26 Brenda Mae?
- 27 BRENDA MAE: They shore will, Glenda Mae. 'Cause like we
28 say in the country, "When God closes a door, he opens
29 up a window, until the flies start comin' in. Then he
30 might close the window and suggest somebody buy
31 some bug spray." (*ALL exit to the back room. After a few*
32 *seconds WINNIE re-enters and looks around.*)
- 33 WINNIE: It's about time ever'body got out of my way. (*She*
34 *crosses to one of the sodas and drinks out of one. ELMER sticks*
35 *his head in the front door.*)
- 36 ELMER: Is ever'body gone?
- 37 WINNIE: Get in here, Elmer.
- 38 ELMER: (*Entering quickly and crossing to WINNIE*) Glenda Mae

1 is startin' to ask a lot of questions, and that makes me
2 more nervous than a tick on dip day.

3 WINNIE: Simmer down, boy. If you keep actin' nervous,
4 you'll spill the beans for sure. Where's the sceery mask?

5 ELMER: I hid it in that holler tree out back.

6 WINNIE: Well, go get it. The creature needs to make another
7 appearance. We ain't got no time to lose. Now, keep
8 quiet so we can get our plan down. Now, listen ... *(She*
9 *whispers in his ear and then he whispers in her ear and then*
10 *she whispers again as the lights fade to a slow blackout.)*
11
12

13 Scene 3

14
15 *(It's the beauty shop on Christmas Eve after the Christmas*
16 *play. GRANDMA and FLO enter wearing their coats. They're*
17 *in a hurry. FLO carries a small tabletop Christmas tree.)*

18 FLO: Get on in here, Imogene.

19 GRANDMA: I'm comin' as fast as my new girdle will let me.

20 FLO: You still wearin' a girdle at your age?

21 GRANDMA: Honey, I'll be wearin' this thing when they put
22 me in my pine box.

23 FLO: Whatever for?

24 GRANDMA: 'Cause pine don't stretch.

25 FLO: I'll set the Christmas tree right over here, and
26 ever'body can put their presents they got for the city
27 bunch around it.

28 GRANDMA: Good gracious, Floreen, you thought of
29 ever'thing.

30 FLO: You don't reckon the city bunch suspects anything, do
31 you?

32 GRANDMA: I don't think so a-tall. *(FESTER and ELKIN enter.*
33 *FESTER is still wearing his shepherd costume after the church*
34 *play performance.)*

35 FESTER: Here they are.

36 GRANDMA: Y'all get on in here.

37 FESTER: Hey Grandma, how did I do with my shepherd part
38 in the play tonight?

- 1 GRANDMA: Fester, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas
2 without your "watchin' their flocks by night" scene.
- 3 FESTER: I reckon it was the best I ever did. (*Reciting loudly*
4 *from the play*) "And there were in the same country
5 shepherds abidin' in the field, keepin' watch over their
6 flock by night" (*Luke 2:8*).
- 7 GRANDMA: Not so loud, Fester. (*Rushing to the door*) I hope
8 ever'body gets here 'fore the city folk.
- 9 ELKIN: The twins is supposed to keep them at the church
10 house 'til ever'body gets over here.
- 11 FESTER: (*Posing in his costume*) Grandma, you want the wise
12 shepherd to keep a watch out for 'em?
- 13 GRANDMA: That's a good idea, Fester, but where can we
14 find one?
- 15 FESTER: I meant me.
- 16 FLO: (*Positioning the tiny tree*) Yeah, we want this surprise to
17 be perfect. (*FESTER moves to the window beside the front*
18 *door.*)
- 19 GRANDMA: Here, ever'body, hand me your presents you're
20 givin' the city folk.
- 21 ELKIN: I got mine and Fester's, Grandma. (*He hands her two*
22 *wrapped packages.*)
- 23 FLO: And all the donated canned goods is boxed up in the
24 back room.
- 25 GRANDMA: These here presents shore ain't very big.
- 26 FESTER: Sometimes big things come in small packages.
27 Take my brain, for example.
- 28 GRANDMA: Honey, somebody *took* your brain a long time
29 ago.
- 30 FESTER: What I mean is my brain is real big, you see. But it's
31 packed tight inside my noggin not leavin' much wiggle
32 room.
- 33 GRANDMA: My scarecrow's head out in the cornfield is
34 stuffed tight with straw, but it's still just a dummy.
- 35 FESTER: My point exactly, Grandma. Take baby Jesus, for
36 example.
- 37 GRANDMA: Beg your pardon?
- 38 FESTER: Well, he was to become King of Kings and Lord of

1 Lords. God's only son to save the whole world from
 2 their sins. But he came as a little bity baby. See what I
 3 mean? A great big God come to the earth in a tiny, tiny
 4 package.

5 ELKIN: (*Smiling*) You can't argue with him there, Grandma.

6 FLO: (*Handing GRANDMA a wrapped package*) Here's my
 7 present for them. A gift certificate for a lifetime supply
 8 of haircuts and hairdos right here in my private shop.

9 GRANDMA: Awww, it's the gift that keeps on givin'.

10 FESTER: (*Still looking out the window*) Here they come!

11 GRANDMA: What?! They're early! Ever'body hide! (*ALL hide.*

12 *GLENDA MAE and BRENDA MAE enter. ALL but FESTER*
 13 *yell.*)

14 ALL: (*Together*) Surprise!

15 BRENDA MAE: Ahhhh, that is so sweeet of y'all.

16 GRANDMA: Fester, you said it was the city bunch.

17 FESTER: No ma'am, I just said, "Here they come!" and you
 18 made the rest up on your own.

19 GRANDMA: Good heavens, keep lookin', and don't say, "Here
 20 they come!" like that.

21 FESTER: Yes, ma'am. I'm goin' to shade my eyes with my
 22 hand like I did in the play tonight.

23 GRANDMA: Glenda Mae, Brenda Mae, y'all was supposed to
 24 be keepin' the city folk at the church house 'til
 25 ever'body got here.

26 BRENDA MAE: Don't worry, Grandma. They won't be gettin'
 27 here any time soon.

28 GRANDMA: How do you know?

29 GLENDA MAE: We let the air out of all four of their tires.
 30 (*The TWINS high-five each other.*)

31 GRANDMA: Good thinkin'!

32 GLENDA MAE: By the way, has anybody saw Elmer?

33 ELKIN: He ain't with you?

34 GLENDA MAE: Naw. He told me he was goin' to wait for me
 35 outside the church house after the play, but when I
 36 went out there, he was plumb gone.

37 GRANDMA: Glenda Mae, ever'body in the whole county but
 38 you knows there's somethin' strange goin' on with that

1 boy.

2 GLENDA MAE: Grandma, he can't help it 'cause he's a little

3 simple-minded.

4 ELKIN: Simple-minded is right, Elmer was twenty years old

5 'fore he realized farm wasn't spelled E-I-E-I-O.

6 GRANDMA: But I'm talkin' *extra* strange. He's been actin'

7 real nervous lately, and all these excuses he's been

8 comin' up with for bein' late for supper ... things like

9 that.

10 GLENDA MAE: Between you and me and the fencepost, and

11 the mailbox if there happens to be one beside the

12 fencepost, and the snake that sometimes crawls up in

13 the mailbox 'cause they like dark places-

14 GRANDMA: (*Short*) Glenda Mae!

15 GLENDA MAE: Between us, I think he's just excited 'bout

16 givin' me my Christmas present.

17 FLO: Well, if you think that's what it is, I'm sure you're right,

18 honey. (*There's a knock at the door.*)

19 GRANDMA: Fester, why didn't you tell us somebody was

20 comin'?

21 FESTER: (*Still posing like a statue, hand shielding his eyes*) You

22 told me not to.

23 FLO: Is it who I think it is?

24 FESTER: Yes'm. (*ALL hide. There is another knock.*)

25 ELKIN: Somebody get the door.

26 FESTER: I will. (*He opens the door and ELMER rushes in with a*

27 *blood-stained handkerchief held up to his nose. ALL yell.*)

28 ALL: (*Together*) Surprise!

29 ELMER: Much obliged, ever'body, but it's just me.

30 GRANDMA: Fester, son, is your yeast ever goin' to rise?

31 GLENDA MAE: Elmer, what happened to your nose?

32 ELMER: I was runnin' and tripped over a tree in the front

33 yard.

34 FLO: Which one?

35 ELMER: The only front yard you got. It was hard to see

36 through the —

37 GLENDA MAE: (*Leads ELMER to a chair.*) Here, honey bunch,

38 sit right here. Let me look at it.

- 1 **ELMER:** It hurts real bad, Glenda Mae.
- 2 **GRANDMA:** It was hard to see through what, Elmer?
- 3 **ELMER:** Uh ... it was hard to see through all that fog out
- 4 there.
- 5 **GRANDMA:** There ain't a bit of fog!
- 6 **FESTER:** Somebody just drove up.
- 7 **GRANDMA:** Is it who I think it is?
- 8 **FESTER:** Who do you think it is?
- 9 **ALL:** *(Together)* The city folk!
- 10 **FESTER:** Bingo!
- 11 **FLO:** Ever'body hide! *(They do.)*
- 12 **FESTER:** No, I just found a old Bingo card in the windowsill.
- 13 See? *(Holds one up.)*
- 14 **ELKIN:** Fester, is that the city bunch or not?
- 15 **FESTER:** *(Holds up the card.)* Bingo!
- 16 **ELKIN:** Hurry up and hide! *(FESTER does. Everyone is hiding,*
- 17 *facing the front door. After a few quiet seconds, GRANDMA*
- 18 *speaks.)*
- 19 **GRANDMA:** Are you sure that was them, Fester?
- 20 **FESTER:** Yes ma'am, pretty sure.
- 21 **BRENDA MAE:** Then where the heck are they?
- 22 **ELMER:** Yes sir, that fog was thick as Fester's head.
- 23 **FESTER:** Shhhh, they should be comin' in any minute. My
- 24 shepherd eyes are sharp as tacks. *(The CITY BUNCH*
- 25 *appears at the backroom door unnoticed by the COUNTRY*
- 26 *BUNCH.)*
- 27 **GLENDA MAE:** It shore is takin' them a blue moon to get in
- 28 here.
- 29 **FLO:** Shhhh! Keep quiet. We don't want them to know we're
- 30 a-hidin'.
- 31 **OSWALD:** *(Whispering)* Who are we hiding from?
- 32 **ELKIN:** *(Without looking at OSWALD)* The city bunch.
- 33 **OSWALD:** Why are we hiding from the city bunch?
- 34 **GLENDA MAE:** 'Cause we want to surprise 'em. Now, hush
- 35 up.
- 36 **OSWALD:** I sure hope they don't see us in here hiding.
- 37 **BRENDA MAE:** Cousin Oswald, would you *please* put a lock
- 38 on it? *(A beat as she looks up at OSWALD.)* Cousin Oswald?

- 1 Uh, Grandma?
- 2 **GRANDMA:** What, honey?
- 3 **BRENDA MAE:** Looky. (*GRANDMA turns and sees PETE*
4 *stooping face to face with her.*)
- 5 **PETE:** Hello.
- 6 **GRANDMA:** (*Standing*) Where in Sam hill did y'all come from?
- 7 **OSWALD:** (*Pointing*) The back room.
- 8 **GRANDMA:** Well, don't that just burn your cornbread?
- 9 **FESTER:** (*Throws his arms up.*) Surprise!
- 10 **OSWALD:** What's this all about?
- 11 **FLO:** It's a surprise party for you.
- 12 **FESTER:** They was still surprised, though. Just like the
13 angels surprised the shepherds the night Jesus was
14 born. The angels yelled, "Surprise!"
- 15 **GRANDMA:** The Gospel accordin' to Fester.
- 16 **MIMI:** All I can say is there had better be presents associated
17 with this surprise party.
- 18 **GLENDA MAE:** Oh, there is, Cousins, there is.
- 19 **OSWALD:** What's the occasion?
- 20 **FESTER:** Ain't y'all heard? Y'all are poor as —
- 21 **ELKIN:** Fester, zip your lip. (*FESTER reaches up to his lips and*
22 *"zips" them and throws the "OK" sign to ELKIN.*) We just
23 thought it was high time our city cousins knowed how
24 much we appreciated them, that's all.
- 25 **BRENDA MAE:** Right, so y'all come sit right over here on
26 these here chairs. (*She and GLENDA MAE usher them to*
27 *some chairs where they take their seats.*)
- 28 **GLENDA MAE:** There we go. Are y'all comfortable?
- 29 **FLO:** Y'all shore did get y'all's flat tires fixed quick-like.
- 30 **PETE:** What flat tires?
- 31 **GLENDA MAE:** The ones we let the air —
- 32 **BRENDA MAE:** (*Grabs GLENDA MAE'S arm.*) Uh-oh, Glenda
33 Mae. We must've decompressurized the wrong tires.
- 34 **GLENDA MAE:** (*To OSWALD*) Oh, that's right. Y'all don't drive
35 a old red pick-up truck covered with rust spots, do you?
- 36 **OSWALD:** Uh, no, we own a black limo.
- 37 **GLENDA MAE:** (*Hits herself in the forehead.*) Duh!
- 38 **OSWALD:** But I don't understand what the occasion could be —



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