

A CRICKET COUNTY CABIN MAKEOVER

by Eddie McPherson



CHRISTIANPUBLISHERS

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Christian Publishers. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Christian Publishers. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Christian Publishers.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Christian Publishers.

A CRICKET COUNTY CABIN MAKEOVER

By Eddie McPherson

A One Act Christmas Comedy

By Eddie McPherson

When the country clan discover what their city counterparts are up to, they decide to spring a little Christmas su-prise of their own! Through the bungled misunderstandings, an interior designer with ulterior motives, not to mention illness, thievery, and rasslin' bears, gentle country realizations of God's love expressed unconditionally to family leave the clan and audience alike with somethin' to ponder.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 female, 8 male, 1 either)

COUNTRY BUNCH:

ELKIN (m).....Wise but still naive. (79 lines)

GRANDMA (f).....The matriarch of the family. (93 lines)

FESTER (m) Simple-minded and a sweetheart of a country boy. (51 lines)

GLEND A MAE (f)Never goes anywhere without her twin
Brenda Mae. (34 lines)

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

BRENDA MAE (f)Never goes anywhere without her twin
Glenda Mae. (40 lines)
SHERIFF (m).....Is bothered he has to do any work.
(26 lines)
STRANGER (f)The chicken thief—or is she? (13 lines)

CITY BUNCH:

OSWALD (m).....Leader of the city clan. (138 lines)
PETE (m)Always walking in his brother, Oswald's,
shadow. (81 lines)
MIMI (f).....No one loves Mimi more than Mimi.
(73 lines)
PETUNIA (f)Snooty but has a heart. (76 lines)
NILES (m)The chauffeur. (15 lines)
HERBIE (m)Interior designer. (45 lines)
CAMERAMAN (f/m)(Non-speaking.)

OFF STAGE VOICES: *(These characters are never seen and may be played by one male and one female, if they are adept at changing their voices, or their lines may be prerecorded by cast members.)*

PEARL (4 lines)
JIMMY RAY (4 lines)
MS. CHIGGERWIG (4 lines)
MYRTLE (5 lines)
CORELLA (2 lines)
BUBBA ROY (2 lines)
BIG POLLY (3 lines)

(ALL LINE COUNTS ARE APPROXIMATE)

DURATION: 45 minutes

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET: The Taylors' cabin in Cricket County is the main setting. Though it is old, it's still neat and clean. Stage Right is a door that leads outside; beside this door is a window with an old valance, perhaps of patchwork. Center Stage is a door that leads to a couple of extra rooms, and Stage Left there is a door that leads to the back yard. Wooden chairs are placed about, along with a wooden table and old sofa. A standing lamp with a large shade stands against the back wall. A deer head hangs somewhere on the wall. An old-fashioned candlestick phone sits on a small table. A small waste basket should be placed by one of the chairs. A full-sized Christmas tree stands against the Upstage wall. It may be decorated sparsely and simply with strings of popcorn, cornhusk angels, apples, etc.

A furry black or brown rug covers a "trap door" in the floor. You can build your trap door out of anything from wood to cardboard. Have it hinged so that when it opens up, the audience sees the back of the trap door. If you want light to illuminate from it when it's opened, rig a string of Christmas lights underneath the lid.

For the car scene, place six chairs at extreme Stage Right or Stage Left, arranged minivan-style with two in the front, two in the middle, and two in the back.

When Herbie redecorates the cabin, have everything ready to hang with ease during the car scene. He can hang curtains, put classic "paintings" on the wall, put a fancy tablecloth on the table, add a nice vase of flowers on the table, etc. The Christmas tree can be glitzed up with sparkling ornaments. All the decorations need to look out of place in a rundown cabin.

SOUND EFFECTS: Recorded Christmas music, chickens clucking, bear growling, bear yelping and running away, squealing tires, and a recording of Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus (perfect to play when they open the trap door, revealing the treasure). When the actors Off-stage are calling the Sheriff, don't use mics on them so they will have an appropriately distant sound.

COSTUMES: The city bunch wears “preppy” clothing depicting their wealthy status. Mimi wears sunglasses to start. The country bunch wears flannel shirts, blue jeans, cotton or gingham dresses, overalls, etc. Grandma eventually needs an apron. Fester needs a watch. When Herbie disguises himself as a woman, use a granny dress and gray wig. The Sheriff wears a bathrobe and shower cap when he first appears, and he wears pajamas after that. He should wear a sheriff’s badge with both of these getups. When Brenda Mae and Glenda Mae are camouflaged, they may wear camouflage shirts and pants, as well as camouflage face paint. Everyone who enters from outside wears some type of jacket or coat. Herbie’s shirt and the Stranger’s worn-out coat need a few feathers attached.

PROPS

- ☐ Candlestick phone (or an old rotary phone)
- ☐ fashion magazine
- ☐ fancy glass and straw
- ☐ letter
- ☐ bag of hillbilly clothes
- ☐ axe
- ☐ mushroom
- ☐ lock
- ☐ curtain valance (or curtain) on a rod
- ☐ bolster (a long cushion)
- ☐ baby’s blanket and bonnet
- ☐ tablecloth
- ☐ lampshade
- ☐ quilt or blanket
- ☐ ice pack
- ☐ thermometer
- ☐ couple of suitcases
- ☐ blanket or sheet to cover the suitcases
- ☐ steering wheel
- ☐ rubber ducky
- ☐ burlap bag
- ☐ potato chip bag
- ☐ measuring tape

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

- ☐ pencil
- ☐ key
- ☐ various pieces of mail
- ☐ two handkerchiefs.
- ☐ A fake TV camera may easily be made from a medium-sized box. *(Cut a hole into one of its sides, insert a short Pringles can into the hole for the camera lens, and paint the whole camera black. It should be large enough to rest on the cameraman's (or camerawoman's) shoulder.)*

SCRIPTURE PERMISSION: Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

**To Dad, who gave me the greatest
gift: he believed in me.**

AT START: *The scene opens at the Taylors' cabin in Cricket County. OSWALD, PETUNIA, and PETE are looking frantically around behind curtains, underneath chairs, in the Christmas tree, etc. as upbeat Christmas music plays. It's obvious they are looking for something important. In contrast, MIMI sits in a chair, reading a fashion magazine and sipping from a fancy glass.*

OSWALD: That door and key have got to be here somewhere. This cabin's not *that* big.

MIMI looks up and notices the audience. She clears her throat and, when the OTHERS all turn to her, she points to the audience. OSWALD sports a big smile, speaking to the audience.

Oh, hello. Sorry, we didn't see you there.

PETE: *(Waves.)* Merry Christmas!

OSWALD: Pete, I got this. Turn that off.

PETE turns off the Christmas music and OSWALD turns back to audience.

If you're here to see the Taylors, they're not home right now.

PETUNIA: *(To audience.)* They're at the annual *(Hillbilly accent.)* Christmas hog-callin' contest clean on the other side of Cricket County. *(Pretends to spit.)*

OSWALD: Petunia, I got this. *(Back to audience.)* They're at the annual Christmas hog-calling contest on the other side of Cricket County.

PETUNIA, with both hands on her hips, gives OSWALD a hard stare. OSWALD continues to speak to the audience.

You're welcome to stick around until they return. But promise me you won't tell them what we're up to.

PETE: It's a surprise.

OSWALD: *(Scolding.)* Pete!

PETE: What?

OSWALD: I got this.

1
2 *PETE throws up his hands in frustration and return to his task.*
3 *OSWALD turns back to the audience.*

4
5 You see, it's a surprise.

6
7 *PETE and PETUNIA exchange frustrated looks.*

8
9 It's our surprise Christmas present to them.

10 **MIMI:** Though I don't know why we get them anything at all.

11 **OSWALD:** Mimi, what are you doing?

12 **MIMI:** *(Looking at her magazine.)* What do you mean?

13 **OSWALD:** Why aren't you helping us look?

14 **MIMI:** I'm too pretty for manual labor. This one fact, many don't get.

15 Mimi Tippinheimer does *not* sweat.

16 **OSWALD:** Mimi, shhhh! We have company. *(Referring to the audience.)*

17
18 **MIMI:** *(Takes off her sunglasses.)* I don't care if they hear me. *(To audience.)* I said, I'm too pretty for manual labor. *(Returns to her magazine.)*

20
21 **OSWALD:** *(To audience.)* I guess we had better explain what we're
22 doing. You see, we came up with the idea of putting our hillbilly
23 cousins on one of those home makeover shows to once and for
24 all spruce up their cabin and live in something they could be
25 proud of.

26 **MIMI:** He means so we as their family wouldn't be embarrassed by
27 their *(Clears throat.)* simplicity.

28 **PETE:** So, we invited a good friend of ours—

29 **OSWALD:** Pete, I'm telling this story.

30 **PETE:** Why can't I help?

31 **PETUNIA:** Oswald, let Pete help.

32 **OSWALD:** *(Sighs.)* Fine. Go head, even though you won't tell it as
33 well as I do.

34 **PETE:** *(Moving Center Stage.)* In case you haven't seen a Cricket
35 County play before, what happened years ago was this: we were
36 called up here to Cricket County all the way from the city to hear
37 the reading of our Uncle Zeke's will—

- 1 **PETUNIA:** Uncle Zeke was a hillbilly relative from our mother's side
2 of the family...
- 3 **PETE:** Petunia—
- 4 **PETUNIA:** Sorry. (*One more thing.*) And he was *rich*.
- 5 **PETE:** *Filthy* rich.
- 6 **OSWALD:** He owned coal mines—
- 7 **PETE:** Diamond mines—
- 8 **PETUNIA:** Oil fields—
- 9 **PETE:** All found right here on Cricket County property owned by
10 Uncle Zack.
- 11 **OSWALD:** Zeke.
- 12 **PETE:** That's what I meant. When the will was read, we thought
13 we were sure to gain millions since Uncle Zeke never married
14 and all he had were his nieces and nephews—
- 15 **OSWALD:** Including our hillbilly cousins, the Taylors.
- 16 **PETUNIA:** We found out that what we received was only a one-
17 time gift of five hundred thousand dollars while our hillbilly
18 cousins inherited all of his land worth millions.
- 19 **PETE:** Needless to say, we were disappointed to the max.
- 20 **OSWALD:** It was then and there that we city cousins decided we
21 would figure out a way to get our hands on some of the hillbillies'
22 millions—
- 23 **PETUNIA:** Which rightfully *should* belong to us anyway.
- 24 **PETE:** Every Christmas since the reading of the will, we have
25 visited our cousins, attempting to sneak—uh, I mean *seek*—
26 some of their money.
- 27 **OSWALD:** And this year we are at last confident that we will climb
28 higher on that wonderful ladder of financial riches we have
29 dreamed of since that first Christmas Eve spent with the
30 hillbillies.
- 31 **MIMI:** (*Unfolding the letter.*) A few weeks ago, we received a
32 mysterious letter from Uncle Zook—
- 33 **PETE:** Zeke. (*Snatches the letter from MIMI.*) We say “mysterious”
34 because the man's been dead going on fifteen years.
- 35 **OSWALD:** (*Snatches the letter.*) So we figured it was a letter sent
36 from our dear old uncle's estate.

- 1 **PETUNIA:** (*Snatches the letter.*) The letter states that,
2 unbeknownst to anyone in Cricket County, Uncle Zeke hid tons
3 of gold from his gold mine underneath his old cabin.
- 4 **MIMI:** (*Points to the floor.*) The cabin our hillbilly side of the family
5 now live in.
- 6 **PETE:** And because our country cousins have never said anything
7 about it, we figure they don't know about the gold.
- 8 **OSWALD:** Apparently the gold is hidden somehow underneath this
9 very cabin.
- 10 **PETUNIA:** Supposedly there's a secret way to get down there.
- 11 **OSWALD:** Through a secret door of some kind.
- 12 **MIMI:** And, according to the letter, there's a secret key right here in
13 the cabin that unlocks the hidden door.
- 14 **PETE:** (*Proudly holds up the letter that is now in his procession.*)
15 Listen to this clue:
16 "The leader of the family, the key does hide,
17 Beautiful cotton on the other side."
- 18 **MIMI:** (*Grabs the letter and reads.*)
19 "For supper and breakfast, folks will buy it,
20 But grass and leaves make a sensible diet."
- 21 **OSWALD:** At last—millions of dollars in gold within our reach! All
22 we have to do is figure out the clue to the hidden key, unlock the
23 secret door, and *voilà*—instant riches!
- 24 **MIMI:** Like Oswald was saying, we put our cousins on a home
25 makeover show, tell them they have to leave for several days
26 while the makeover is being done, and while they are out of our
27 way, we uncover the hidden treasure.
- 28 **HERBIE:** (*Rushing through the middle door.*) Wow. That is the only
29 word I can think of to describe how I feel right now. Wow.
- 30 **PETUNIA:** (*To audience.*) This is Herbie Hayes, the host of the
31 highly rated home makeover show *Handy Herbie's Home*
32 *Makeover Hour, Holiday Edition*. He's been looking the house
33 over. (*To HERBIE.*) Is that a good "wow" or not-so-good "wow"?
- 34 **HERBIE:** (*Looking around.*) If it were a good "wow," I would be
35 saying it like this: (*Big smile.*) Wow! But notice how I'm saying
36 "wow." (*Big frown with wide eyes.*) Wow.
- 37 **OSWALD:** Uh-oh. Soooo, what exactly does that mean?
- 38 **HERBIE:** Do you *really* want to know what I think?

- 1 **OSWALD:** Uh, I'm guessing it's not so good.
- 2 **HERBIE:** Do you really, *really* want to know what I think?
- 3 **PETE:** (*Impatient.*) Yes!
- 4 **HERBIE:** Burn it to the ground.
- 5 **MIMI:** Great idea! The gold will be *much* easier to find!
- 6 **PETUNIA:** (*Approaching HERBIE.*) Just a minute here. I have seen
- 7 you work magic on your TV show.
- 8 **HERBIE:** Magic yes, miracles, no.
- 9 **OSWALD:** Look at this makeover as your crowning jewel.
- 10 **PETE:** If you could make this cabin look good, your TV ratings
- 11 would soar!
- 12 **HERBIE:** I have the highest ratings of anyone.
- 13 **MIMI:** It could make you an international star.
- 14 **HERBIE:** I'm already an international star.
- 15 **PETUNIA:** We'll share some of the gold with you.
- 16 **HERBIE:** Deal!
- 17 **OSWALD:** Petunia!
- 18 **HERBIE:** Too late. I said "deal," so let's not beat a dead horse. Yes
- 19 sir, that poor horse is kaput. When can I get started?
- 20 **OSWALD:** OK, OK, we will share a *small* percentage of what we
- 21 find.
- 22 **PETE:** We will get our country cousins out of the way as soon as
- 23 possible.
- 24 **ELKIN:** (*Off-stage.*) OK, Grandma, I'll be in the cabin.
- 25 **OSWALD:** (*Surprised.*) It's them! They're back early.
- 26 **PETE:** Herbie, hide until we reveal our surprise.
- 27 **OSWALD:** (*Hands HERBIE a bag.*) Here. Go in the back room and
- 28 change into this.
- 29 **HERBIE:** (*Looking at the bag.*) But what is—
- 30 **OSWALD:** Go!
- 31
- 32 *He pushes HERBIE through the door that leads to a back room of*
- 33 *the cabin just as ELKIN bursts through the front door.*
- 34
- 35 **PETE:** (*Over the top, rushes to ELKIN and gives him a big hug.*)
- 36 Elkin! It's so good to see you again. It's been so long! Noooo, of
- 37 course we're not doing anything sneaky!

- 1 **ELKIN:** *(Confused, but hugs him back.)* Uh, good to see you too,
2 Cousin Pete.
- 3 **OSWALD:** Elkin, you guys didn't stay at the hog-calling contest
4 very long.
- 5 **ELKIN:** Nope. When we got there we saw a sign that said,
6 "Seventeen and under ain't permitted," and there was only five
7 of us, so we turned around and came back home.
- 8 **MIMI:** *(Rolls her eyes, saying sarcastically.)* And the hillbilly fun
9 begins.
- 10 **ELKIN:** I do declare if y'all don't look like the cat that done
11 swallowed the gopher.
- 12 **OSWALD:** *(Big fake laugh.)* Ha, ha! Cat that swallowed the gopher.
13 That's a good one. How do you come up with such witticisms?
- 14 **ELKIN:** Witty-cisms?
- 15 **OSWALD:** Yes. You know, wisecracks, jokes.
- 16 **ELKIN:** Ohhhh, jokes. *(Laughs along with him.)* Well, they just
17 come to me. I got another funny one. A hamburger walks into a
18 tire shop and the man behind the counter says, "Sorry, sir, we
19 don't serve food here."
20
- 21 *He laughs, but the others just stare. After a second OSWALD bursts*
22 *out with laughter, and then leads the others to do the same.*
23
- 24 **OSWALD:** Ha ha! We don't serve food here!
- 25 **MIMI:** *(Not amused.)* Why would they serve food in a tire shop?
- 26 **PETE:** *(Big eyes to MIMI.)* Get it, Mimi? They don't serve food. A
27 hamburger was the customer!
- 28 **ELKIN:** *(Still laughing.)* I got a million of 'em. Seems there was this
29 farmer—
- 30 **OSWALD:** *(Stops laughing abruptly.)* Save it 'til we need a laugh.
31
- 32 *He pats ELKIN on the back as FESTER enters holding his axe.*
33
- 34 **FESTER:** *(Yelling over his shoulder.)* OK, Grandma, see you in a
35 minute, but be real careful—they teeth looks sharp!
- 36 **ELKIN:** What's Grandma doin'?
- 37 **FESTER:** Nothin' much, just wrestlin' a black bear.
- 38 **OSWALD:** What?

1 **PETUNIA:** Isn't that dangerous?

2 **FESTER:** Yeah, for the black bear.

3 **ELKIN:** (*Shouting through the front door.*) Grandma, how many
4 times have I told you to leave them poor bears alone?

5

6 *ALL run to the door, standing behind ELKIN and peering out.*

7

8 **FESTER:** Put him in a chokehold, Grandma! There you go!

9 **ELKIN:** Fester, don't egg her on.

10 **FESTER:** You're right. (*Shouts.*) Play dead, black bear! Play dead!

11 **OSWALD:** Look, she's got him pinned down.

12 **FESTER:** Yep, that bear's had it now!

13

14 *Off-stage there's a loud growl and then the sound of a bear yelping*
15 *and running off. EVERYONE calms a little.*

16

17 **ELKIN:** OK, it's over. Whew!

18 **FESTER:** Ha ha, look at that bear run.

19 **ELKIN:** Grandma, pull yourself together and get in here! (*He closes*
20 *the door.*)

21 **PETUNIA:** (*Hand to her chest.*) That scared me to death.

22 **OSWALD:** Does Grandma Taylor wrestle bears often?

23 **ELKIN:** Not like she used to. She's down to one a week these days.

24 **FESTER:** It wouldn't be a bad idea to catch and skin one so we
25 can make a new rug. This one's been here since Uncle Zeke
26 lived here over fifteen year ago.

27

28 *Pulls up on the rug, revealing a door in the floor, but FESTER*
29 *doesn't see it. OSWALD quietly grabs PETE and points to the trap*
30 *door.*

31

32 **PETE:** Hey, look—a hidden door!

33 **OSWALD:** Shhhh!

34 **ELKIN:** What was that, Cousin Pete?

35 **OSWALD:** (*Taking the rug and covering the trap door.*) Uh, he said,
36 hey look, his knee's sore.

1 **PETE:** My knee's not sore.

2

3 *OSWALD kicks him in the knee.*

4

5 Owwww!

6 **OSWALD:** Pete, you need to get that knee looked at.

7

8 *GRANDMA enters looking a little disheveled and yells over her*
9 *shoulder.*

10

11 **GRANDMA:** Glenda Mae! Brenda Mae! For the last time, that is
12 *not* a baby bear, it's a skunk! Now get away from it 'fore you
13 come in smellin' like Fester's socks.

14 **ELKIN:** Them twins ain't right, Grandma.

15 **GRANDMA:** I declare, they're slower than erosion.

16 **ELKIN:** They keep tryin' to make pets out of them dumb skunks.

17 **FESTER:** Like the time they took one to school for show and smell.

18 **OSWALD:** Grandma Taylor, are you OK?

19 **GRANDMA:** 'Course I'm fine. Good Lord ain't made a bear yet I
20 can't out-wrestle.

21 **ELKIN:** Grandma shore is good at wrestlin' them varmints with her
22 bare hands. *(Laughs.)* Get it? "Bare" hands. She wrestles *bears!*

23 **OSWALD:** *(Annoyed.)* We get it, we get it. Bear and bare. Very
24 clever

25 **ELKIN:** *(Laughs.)* There I go makin' another witty-cism.

26 **GRANDMA:** Next time that beast shows up, I'm goin' to yank out
27 all his teeth and turn him into a gummy bear. *(Laughs.)* Ain't that
28 right, Moo Moo? *(Punches MIMI's arm.)*

29 **MIMI:** *(Rubbing her arm.)* Owwww.

30

31 *GLENDA MAE and BRENDA MAE burst through the front door.*

32

33 **GLENDA MAE:** Grandma, Grandma, we saw him, we saw him!

34

35 *GRANDMA runs to the window and peers out.*

36

37 **GRANDMA:** The dickens you say!

38 **MIMI:** Who did you see?

- 1 **BRENDA MAE:** The culprit that's been stealin' our chickens out of
2 our chicken coop!
- 3 **PETE:** Someone's been stealing your chickens?
- 4 **GRANDMA:** (*Sarcastic, to PETE.*) You catch on quick, city boy.
- 5 **ELKIN:** Done snatched thirteen of our best-layin' hens, as far as
6 we can tell.
- 7 **PETUNIA:** They're stealing your laying hens?
- 8 **GRANDMA:** (*Sarcastic, to PETUNIA.*) You catch on quick, city girl.
9 Stealin' 'em right out of the chicken coop.
- 10 **PETE:** Forgive me for saying so, but that's a terrible use of a coup.
- 11 **ELKIN:** What else you goin' to use a coop for?
- 12 **PETE:** I use mine to speed down the highway with the top off.
- 13 **FESTER:** You *drive* a chicken coop?
- 14 **PETE:** Mine isn't a chicken coupe, mine's an Audi.
- 15 **BRENDA MAE:** What does your belly button have to do with it?
- 16 **PETE:** I beg your pard—
- 17 **GLENDA MAE:** My belly button is an innie.
- 18 **ELKIN:** Mine's an outie like Cousin Pete's.
- 19 **OSWALD:** Are we really doing this? (*To the audience.*) Sorry. (*To*
20 *ACTORS.*) Can we get back to the story, please?
- 21 **GRANDMA:** (*Peering out the window.*) I don't see nobody out there
22 now. Y'all's screamin' must have sceered him off. (*To*
23 *OSWALD.*) Them chickens are our livelihood. We get two dollars
24 a dozen for the eggs.
- 25 **OSWALD:** Grandma, just like we have said before, there's no need
26 to sell eggs. You all are worth millions.
- 27 **GRANDMA:** Yeah, but who knows how long *that* will last. (*Takes*
28 *an apron off a nail and ties it on.*) Besides, we Taylors work for
29 our keep. Now, somebody keep your eyes peeled for that thief.
30 I've got to start supper.
- 31 **PETUNIA:** Can I help you, Grandma?
- 32 **GRANDMA:** You ever skinned a possum?
- 33 **PETUNIA:** No ma'am.
- 34 **GRANDMA:** Then you can't help me. (*Pulls a mushroom out of her*
35 *apron pocket.*) I'm startin' with this here mushroom. Baked
36 possum with mushroom gravy.
- 37 **BRENDA MAE:** Oooo, we're eatin' high on the hog tonight.

- 1 **GLENDAMAE:** Grandma always makes sure we eat our meat and
2 vegetables.
- 3 **OSWALD:** Mushrooms aren't vegetables, they're fungi.
- 4 **GRANDMA:** (*Looking closely at the mushroom.*) He's a fungi, huh?
5 (*Shrugs.*) I'm a fun girl, so we should get along just dandy.
6
- 7 *She starts to enter the back room where HERBIE is hiding.*
8 *OSWALD rushes over and stands in front of the door.*
9
- 10 **OSWALD:** Where are you going?
- 11 **GRANDMA:** Back room to take off my boots.
- 12 **OSWALD:** You can't!
- 13 **GRANDMA:** What?!
- 14 **OSWALD:** Uh—Pete's in there!
- 15 **GRANDMA:** (*Points.*) Pete's standin' right here.
- 16 **OSWALD:** Pete, when did you get back?
- 17 **GRANDMA:** Get out of my way.
- 18 **OSWALD:** But—
19
- 20 *Unseen by the COUNTRY BUNCH, HERBIE sticks his head*
21 *through the back door, already in his hillbilly costume. He waves at*
22 *OSWALD and gives him a thumbs-up, then disappears again after*
23 *slamming the door, causing the COUNTRY BUNCH to look at the*
24 *back door.*
25
- 26 **GLENDAMAE:** What was that?
- 27 **PETE:** (*Nervous.*) I didn't hear a door slam.
- 28 **BRENDAMAE:** Probably that chicken thief!
29
- 30 *BRENDAMAE heads for the back door, but PETUNIA beats her to*
31 *it.*
32
- 33 **PETUNIA:** Brenda Mae, you can't go out there!
- 34 **OSWALD:** (*Stepping aside.*) Grandma Taylor, go right in.
- 35 **GRANDMA:** You're as crazy as a Betsy bug. (*She exits.*)
- 36 **GLENDAMAE:** Hurry, Brenda Mae, 'fore he gets away.
- 37 **BRENDAMAE:** (*Referring to PETUNIA.*) She won't let me.
- 38 **PETUNIA:** It's freezing out there. You'll catch your death of cold!

BRENDA MAE: Now I ain't lookin' to be rude, Cousin Petunia, but you're makin' me madder than a two-legged dog buryin' a bone on a frozen pond.

HERBIE sticks his head through the front door and waves and gives a thumbs-up, again unseen by the COUNTRY BUNCH, then slams the door. The COUNTRY BUNCH looks around.

ELKIN: *(Heading to the front door.)* What was that?

OSWALD: *(Shouts to MIMI since she's standing close to the front door.)* Mimi!

MIMI runs over and stands in front of the front door.

MIMI: *(To ELKIN.)* You can't go out there!

ELKIN: Why not?

MIMI: The black bear could be out there.

ELKIN: That's OK. My rifle's on the porch.

MIMI: The black bear ate it.

BRENDA MAE: *(To PETUNIA.)* You better be glad I didn't get good and riled. *(She exits.)*

GLEND A MAE: You don't want to see her when she's good and riled. Like we say in the country... *(Pauses and thinks.)* Well, I can't think of anything right now, but when I do, I'll let you know.

PETUNIA: OK, you do that. Where's your husband?

GLEND A MAE: Elmer is ice-fishin' with the fellers while I have twin time with Brenda Mae. Later, gator. *(She exits.)*

OSWALD: *(Rushes to the front door and speaks loudly, giving HERBIE a clue where to hide.)* You're right, Elkin. Better use your rifle on that black bear. Lucky for us, black bears aren't smart enough to hide in our limousine. That's what I would do if I were a black bear. I'd probably hide in the limousine!

ELKIN stands and stares with a look of concern at OSWALD.

ELKIN: Grandma was wrong. Y'all ain't crazy as a Betsy bug. Y'all are as crazy as *thirty* Betsy bugs. Let's go, Fester.

- 1 *ELKIN exits through the front door. FESTER stops and turns.*
2
3 **FESTER:** Thirty Betsy bugs, nothin'. More like *twenty* Betsy bugs.
4
5 *Exits as the CITY BUNCH quickly converge at Center Stage.*
6
7 **PETUNIA:** What the heck is a Betsy bug?
8 **PETE:** Never mind. (*Rushes over and pulls the rug off the trap*
9 *door.*) Look at this door. The gold must have been hidden in the
10 cellar by Uncle Zeke.
11 **OSWALD:** What are you doing?
12 **PETE:** (*Bending down and looking.*) Just checking out the lock.
13 Yep, it's a lock, all right.
14 **PETUNIA:** And for every lock, there is a key.
15 **PETE:** (*Stands and starts frantically looking around.*) There's got
16 to be a key around here somewhere.
17 **OSWALD:** Pete, stop and think a minute. We have got to be
18 careful. We can't get crazy, or they'll think we're a Betsy bug.
19 **PETUNIA:** Listen. We simply explain that they must leave for five
20 days while we give their cabin a makeover. While they're gone,
21 we find the key and open the door.
22 **OSWALD:** We will get Niles to drive them to the city for five days.
23 **PETUNIA:** And have them return on Christmas Eve for the
24 unveiling of their new place.
25 **MIMI:** They're not going to want to go, I'm telling you right now.
26 **OSWALD:** What do you mean?
27 **MIMI:** They put on that boring, low-budget Nativity play every year
28 for the other hillbillies in Cricket County.
29 **OSWALD:** You have a point. They won't want to miss putting on
30 their play.
31 **PETUNIA:** (*Snaps her fingers with an idea.*) We simply set it up so
32 they present their play in the city.
33 **PETE:** For who?
34 **MIMI:** (*Correcting PETE.*) Whom.
35 **PETE:** Sorry. (*Mocking MIMI.*) For *whom*?
36 **PETUNIA:** We'll call some friends and pay them to watch it.
37 **OSWALD:** Bingo! (*Rubs his hands together.*) Well, guys, we've got
38 our plan. Now we put it into action.

1

2 *HERBIE sticks his head through the front door.*

3

4 **HERBIE:** Is the coast clear?5 **OSWALD:** Hurry and get in here.

6

7 *HERBIE enters dressed in his hillbilly costume and holding a curtain*
8 *valance and a bolster. MIMI points and laughs.*

9

10 **MIMI:** *(In a hillbilly accent.)* Well, tie me to a pig and roll me in the
11 mud! You're mighty purdy for a city slicker.12 **HERBIE:** *(Strutting into the room.)* I like to think I look good in
13 anything I wear.14 **PETE:** If that helps you sleep at night.15 **PETUNIA:** *(Crosses to HERBIE and takes the valance from him.)*
16 What's this?17 **HERBIE:** Valance for the window. Duuuuh. Wanted to give you
18 guys a taste of what I'll be doing in here.19 **MIMI:** *(Takes it from PETUNIA.)* I love and adore it. *(She rushes*
20 *over and takes the old valance down and puts the new one up.)*21 **OSWALD:** Mimi, what are you doing?22 **MIMI:** I want to know how it looks over the window.23 **PETUNIA:** I like it, I like it! Herbie, you are a true artist.24 **HERBIE:** *(He sets the bolster on a chair.)* And I'll just put this
25 bolster right here. Just finished stuffing it with goose feathers.26 **PETE:** *(Pointing to a few feathers on HERBIE's shirt.)* We can tell.27 **PETUNIA:** *(Referring to the bolster.)* The bolster looks good,
28 Herbie.29 **HERBIE:** *(Picking a couple of feathers off his shirt.)* Just imagine
30 what this room will look like when I'm finished.31 **PETE:** Hurry and take the valance down before someone comes
32 in.

33

34 *The bedroom door starts to open.*

35

36 **OSWALD:** Too late! *(He rushes over and grabs the doorknob and*
37 *pulls it shut.)* Herbie, hide.38 **HERBIE:** *(Panicked.)* Where?!

1 **PETUNIA:** (*Runs past him.*) Here, under the table!

2
3 **PETUNIA** pulls while **MIMI** pushes **HERBIE** over to the table and
4 forces him under it, then covers him with the tablecloth. They didn't
5 have time to change the valance back out, however. **OSWALD** lets
6 go of the doorknob and **GRANDMA** swings the door open, almost
7 causing her to fall.

8
9 **GRANDMA:** What in Sam Hill was *that* all about?

10 **OSWALD:** Sorry. The door must have gotten caught on a nail.

11 **GRANDMA:** Yeah, your *finger* nail. (*She stands there and looks at*
12 *everyone who is standing about, looking guilty about*
13 *something.*)

14 **GRANDMA:** What're you city slickers up to?

15 **OSWALD:** We beg your pardon?

16 **GRANDMA:** I didn't stu-stu-stutter. I *said*, "What y'all up to?"

17 **PETUNIA:** (*Fake smile.*) We were just hiding—uh, standing—
18 around, hoping you would come back in so we could spend
19 some quality time with such a sweet old lady.

20 **GRANDMA:** Who you callin' old? (*Points to the window where the*
21 *valance is hanging.*) And what in the world is that? (*Crosses to*
22 *the window.*)

23 **OSWALD:** (*Nervous.*) What, Grandma Taylor?

24 **GRANDMA:** (*Touches the valance.*) I ain't never noticed that
25 before. Them curtains is lookin' just awful. Need to take 'em
26 down and give 'em a good washin'. (*There's a sneeze*
27 *underneath the table. GRANDMA looks.*) What was that?

28 **OSWALD:** (*Standing close to the table.*) That was me. (*He*
29 *sneezes.*) My allergies are terrible this time of year.

30
31 *Moves away from the table as another sneeze comes from*
32 *underneath the tablecloth. GRANDMA looks that way.*

33
34 **GRANDMA:** God bless you. (*But she notices OSWALD has moved*
35 *away from the table.*)

36 **OSWALD:** Thank you.

37 **GRANDMA:** How did you—

- 1 **PETUNIA:** (*Rushes to GRANDMA.*) So, are you ready to hear
2 about your surprise?
- 3 **GRANDMA:** Su-prise?
- 4 **PETE:** Don't we want to tell them all at the same time, Petunia?
- 5 **GRANDMA:** Tell us all what at the same time?
- 6 **OSWALD:** That may be the best plan, to tell them all at the same
7 time.
- 8 **MIMI:** (*Ushering GRANDMA to the front door by her elbow.*) Why
9 don't you find the rest of your family so we can talk to everyone
10 at once? You know what they say...
- 11 **GRANDMA:** No, I don't.
- 12 **MIMI:** Uh, "man who eats crackers in bed wakes up feeling
13 crummy." (*She gently pushes her out and closes the front door.*)
- 14 **OSWALD:** (*Rushes to the table and lifts the tablecloth.*) Would you
15 stop sneezing?
- 16 **HERBIE:** It's dusty under here.
- 17 **PETE:** Hide in the bedroom.
- 18
- 19 *The back door opens and FESTER enters, holding his axe that's*
20 *now wrapped in a small blanket with a baby bonnet on its blade.*
21 *From a distance, it looks like a baby. OSWALD quickly drops the*
22 *tablecloth and moves away from the table, joining the others.*
23
- 24 **FESTER:** (*Talking to his axe.*) Come on in here where's it's nice
25 and warm.
- 26 **PETUNIA:** (*Pointing to the axe.*) Fester, where did you get that?
- 27 **FESTER:** What, this? I've had him for years.
- 28 **PETE:** For years?
- 29 **MIMI:** (*Shocked.*) For years?
- 30 **FESTER:** (*To PETE.*) Yes sir, it's my axe. (*Uncovers the end of it.*)
31 See?
- 32 **MIMI:** (*Relaxes.*) I almost had a heart attack.
- 33
- 34 *HERBIE sneezes. FESTER looks wide-eyed out to the audience.*
35
- 36 **FESTER:** Did y'all hear that?
- 37 **PETE:** Sneeze? What sneeze?

- 1 **FESTER:** (*With his finger in his ear.*) I could have swore I heard
2 somebody go, "Achoo!" (*Turning toward the table.*) And it came
3 from this direction right over here.
- 4 **OSWALD:** Uh, Fester, I'm a little worried about you.
- 5 **FESTER:** (*This stops him.*) Huh?
- 6 **PETE:** I see what you mean, Oswald. Fester, you're looking a little
7 pale.
- 8 **FESTER:** I ain't never felt better in my life.
- 9 **PETUNIA:** Now your voice sounds strange.
- 10 **FESTER:** (*High-pitched.*) It does?
- 11 **MIMI:** Like you may be coming down with something.
- 12 **FESTER:** (*Droops his shoulders.*) Now that you mention it, I am
13 feelin' a little poorly.
- 14 **OSWALD:** Sometimes when we're not feeling well, our hearing can
15 play tricks on us.
- 16 **FESTER:** I guess that makes sense.
17
- 18 *HERBIE sneezes.*
19
- 20 There it goes again. I think maybe I should go lay down. (*He*
21 *heads to the bedroom.*)
- 22 **OSWALD:** That's a good idea, Fester.
23
- 24 *HERBIE sneezes again.*
25
- 26 **FESTER:** (*Shoots quickly around to OSWALD.*) It's gettin' worse.
27 (*Holds his arm out to OSWALD.*) Take my pulse, will ya?
- 28 **OSWALD:** (*With his fingers on FESTER'S wrist.*) Your heartbeat is
29 a little irregular.
- 30 **FESTER:** Your finger's on my Mickey Mouse watch.
- 31 **OSWALD:** Sorry. Yes, Fester, I'd say you're coming down with
32 something, all right.
- 33 **FESTER:** Oh, no. Be honest with me. I'm gonna croak, ain't I?
34 Ohhhh, I hope I die peacefully like my granddaddy did, not
35 screamin' and yellin' like the passengers in his truck.
- 36 **PETUNIA:** Fester, don't say that. You're not going to die.
- 37 **FESTER:** I think I need to be by myself.
38

1 *FESTER drops his shoulders and slides his ax on the floor as he*
2 *enters the bedroom and shuts the door. PETE rushes to the table*
3 *and lifts the tablecloth.*

4
5 **PETE:** Herbie, hurry up—

6
7 *HERBIE starts to climb out, but the back door opens again.*
8 *BRENDA MAE and GLENDA MAE enter with camouflage paint*
9 *covering their faces. They might also wear camouflage overalls or*
10 *shirts and pants. PETE quickly drops the tablecloth.*

11
12 **GLENDA MAE:** I think there's some more in the bedroom. Wait!

13
14 *They see the CITY BUNCH, and as soon as they do, they step*
15 *quickly in front of the Christmas tree, hold on to one another and*
16 *stand very still.*

17
18 **BRENDA MAE:** What are we doin'?

19 **GLENDA MAE:** I want to see if they can find us, now that we're
20 camouflaged.

21 **BRENDA MAE:** OK.

22
23 *They stand there frozen for a second while the CITY BUNCH stares*
24 *at them.*

25
26 **PETUNIA:** Glenda Mae?

27 **GLENDA MAE:** *(Still staring straight out, not moving a muscle.)*
28 She ain't here.

29 **MIMI:** Brenda Mae?

30 **BRENDA MAE:** *(Frozen.)* She ain't here neither.

31 **OSWALD:** Girls, we can see you.

32 **GLENDA MAE:** *(Unfreezes and turns to them, disappointed.)* Darn
33 it! Our camouflage didn't do a lick of good.

34 **BRENDA MAE:** We was tryin' to disguise ourselves so we could
35 sneak up on the chicken thief. *(She accidentally bumps the table.)*

36 **HERBIE:** Ouch!

37 **BRENDA MAE:** *(To the table.)* 'Scuze me.

38 **HERBIE:** *(Under the table.)* No problem.

- 1 **GLEND A MAE:** *(Not batting an eye at this.)* Have y'all saw
2 Grandma?
3 **OSWALD:** She's outside looking for you guys so we can tell you
4 our surprise.
5 **BRENDA MAE:** *(Heading for the front door.)* OK, we'll go tell her
6 that we're not outside.
7 **MIMI:** But if you go out there, you *will* be outside.
8 **BRENDA MAE:** I don't follow.
9 **GLEND A MAE:** Don't pay her no mind, Brenda Mae. Them city folk
10 ain't got a lick of common sense. Like we say in the country,
11 "When you got a burr in your saddle and your knickers in a
12 knot..."
13 **BRENDA MAE:** "Don't come a-cryin' to Mama."
14
15 *They high-five one another and exit out the front door. The CITY*
16 *BUNCH runs back to the table and lifts the tablecloth.*
17
18 **PETE:** Hurry this time!
19
20 *HERBIE crawls out from under the table.*
21
22 **HERBIE:** About time. My back is killing me!
23 **GRANDMA:** *(Off-stage.)* Come on, moxie twins.
24
25 *Thinking quickly, PETE grabs the lampshade off the standing lamp,*
26 *pushes HERBIE against the wall, and places the lampshade on his*
27 *head. HERBIE freezes like a statue underneath the lampshade,*
28 *hands to his side. The front door opens and GRANDMA, ELKIN,*
29 *and BRENDA MAE and GLEND A MAE enter.*
30
31 Yeah, they're still in here. Fester!
32
33 *FESTER enters with a quilt wrapped around his shoulders, an ice*
34 *pack on his head, and a thermometer sticking from his mouth.*
35
36 **FESTER:** *(Weakly.)* I'm a-comin' to you real slow-like, Grandma.
37 *(Holds his hand out to her.)*

1 **GRANDMA:** *(Takes his hand.)* Fester, what in tarnation is wrong
2 with you, boy?

3 **FESTER:** I'm feelin' a might poorly, Grandma. I think I have a fever,
4 and it's causin' me to hear things.

5 **GRANDMA:** Well, I'll rub your neck with pumpkin seed oil later.
6 Come on in here for a minute, honey child.

7

8 *FESTER feebly joins the others.*

9

10 OK, city slickers, we are all here. What you got to tell us?

11 **OSWALD:** I'll let Petunia tell you.

12 **PETUNIA:** Are you ready?

13 **GRANDMA:** *(Irritable.)* We're ready. Get on with it!

14 **PETUNIA:** For Christmas, we are giving you a big surprise.

15

16 *They stare.*

17

18 Isn't that great?

19

20 *They stare.*

21

22 A great big surprise!

23 **GRANDMA:** *(Folding her arms, suspicious.)* What kind of su-prize?

24 **PETE:** Well, if we tell you, it wouldn't be a su-pri—I mean,
25 surprise—now, would it?

26 **MIMI:** But believe me, you will love it.

27 **GRANDMA:** Hush up, Moo Moo. *(Turns to OSWALD.)* We don't
28 want no surprise from you.

29 **ELKIN:** Grandma, be nice. *(Turns.)* That's mighty neighborly of
30 y'all, Cousin Petunia, and we're shore obliged to you.

31 **CITY BUNCH:** *(Ad lib.)* Good, great to hear, that's more like it, *(etc.)*

32 **OSWALD:** That's only *part* of the surprise. The second part is this.
33 We are sending you and your hillbill—uh, *country* family to the
34 city so you can perform your sweet little Nativity play to some of
35 our close friends there.

36 **GRANDMA:** The city? How in tarnation you plannin' on gettin' us
37 to the devil's playground?

- 1 **PETUNIA:** In our private limousine. We'll have our chauffeur Niles
2 drive you.
- 3 **GLENDAMAE:** (*Clapping her hands.*) That is soooo excitin'!
- 4 **BRENDAMAE:** (*Also clapping.*) Just think, Glenda Mae—we get
5 to ride in a private lemonade!
- 6 **GLENDAMAE:** Not a lemonade, silly—a kerosene.
- 7 **OSWALD:** Put those two words together.
- 8 **BRENDAMAE:** Kero-aid?
- 9 **OSWALD:** Flip it.
- 10 **GLENDAMAE:** Lemo-sene?
- 11 **OSWALD:** (*Gives them a thumbs-up.*) That's it!
- 12
- 13 *The CITY BUNCH clap.*
- 14
- 15 **ELKIN:** That ain't the excitin' part, silly willies. We get to do
16 Grandma's baby Jesus play in front of heathens in the big city.
- 17 **GRANDMA:** (*Looking suspiciously at the CITY BUNCH.*) What's
18 the catch?
- 19 **ELKIN:** (*Scolding.*) Grandma.
- 20 **GRANDMA:** There has to be a catch. With these folks, there's
21 *always* a catch.
- 22 **OSWALD:** There's no catch. Like we said, it's our Christmas
23 surprise gift to you from all of us.
- 24 **ELKIN:** Did you hear that, Grandma? We will get to do the Nativity
25 story you wrote for folks who ain't never heard about Jesus' birth
26 before.
- 27 **PETE:** (*Playing along.*) Oh, yes, that's right. Those poor, poor
28 infidels in the city.
- 29 **GLENDAMAE:** Now we *got* to go, Grandma.
- 30 **FESTER:** I will make the greatest sacrifice since I already have one
31 foot in the grave anyway.
- 32 **BRENDAMAE:** It will be like a mission trip, (*Hand up in the air.*)
33 preachin' the gospel to the heathen masses.
- 34 **GRANDMA:** But the folks right here at home is expectin' us to do
35 the play on Christmas Eve.
- 36 **PETUNIA:** You guys will be back in plenty of time to perform it here.
- 37
- 38 *GLENDAMAE and BRENDAMAE clap their hands wildly.*

- 1
2 **ELKIN:** What you think, Grandma?
3 **GRANDMA:** (*A little smile.*) Well, that does sound pretty excitin',
4 don't it?
5 **MIMI:** Then you'll do it?
6 **ELKIN:** (*Puppy dog eyes.*) Please, Grandma?
7 **FESTER:** (*Hand to his ear, a little cough.*) I think I hear the angels
8 callin' me to the pearly gates, Grandma.
9 **GRANDMA:** (*To FESTER.*) Hush up, Fester, or I'll make sure you
10 see the pearly gates *today*. (*Back to the CITY BUNCH.*) What
11 the heck. Let's go for it! Who knows? My little play might be as
12 famous as *The Christmas Caroler*.
13 **MIMI:** Carol.
14 **GRANDMA:** Huh?
15 **MIMI:** Carol.
16 **GLENDA MAE:** Who's Carol?
17 **BRENDA MAE:** I don't think I know a Carol.
18 **ELKIN:** I know a Gertrude.
19 **OSWALD:** Never mind. Petunia, if you would do the unveiling...
20
21 *PETUNIA runs over to the corner of the room and uncovers a couple*
22 *of suitcases.*
23
24 There's no reason you guys can't get started on your journey
25 right away.
26 **PETUNIA:** (*Taking the suitcases over.*) See? We already have your
27 bags packed. Fester, hold the door for me.
28 **FESTER:** Speakin' of doors, I think I might be standin' at death's
29 door right this very minute. (*Lifts his hand, closes his eyes, and*
30 *sings aloud.*) Shall we gather at the ri-ri-ver...
31 **ELKIN:** Fester, be quiet. You ain't dyin'. I'll get the door, Cousin
32 Petunia.
33 **GRANDMA:** (*Stopping PETUNIA in her tracks.*) Wait a cotton-
34 pickin', rosebush-prunnin' minute, missy. You mean you done
35 packed our clothes?
36 **MIMI:** That's right. As well as your costumes for the Nativity play
37 you'll be performing.
38 **OSWALD:** You're all set.

- 1 **GRANDMA:** Well, that done beats anything I ever saw in my forty
2 years on this earth.
- 3 **GLENDIA MAE:** (*To BRENDA MAE.*) Forty years?
4
5 *They both laugh.*
6
- 7 **BRENDA MAE:** Law, if she's forty, I'll be nine next June.
- 8 **GLENDIA MAE:** (*Standing near HERBIE.*) Grandma, come here.
9 You see anything peculiar about this here lamp?
10
- 11 *GRANDMA looks HERBIE up and down.*
12
- 13 **GRANDMA:** Like what, child?
- 14 **BRENDA MAE:** It looks... different.
- 15 **GRANDMA:** Looks fine to me, except one of its shoes is untied.
- 16 **GLENDIA MAE:** (*Snaps her fingers.*) That's what it is. Here, I'll fix
17 it. (*She bends and ties HERBIE's shoe.*)
- 18 **GRANDMA:** Wait a minute... (*She takes the lampshade off*
19 *HERBIE's head.*) A lamp don't wear shoes.
- 20 **ELKIN:** Look! It's a man!
- 21 **GRANDMA, BRENDA MAE, and GLENDIA MAE:** The chicken
22 thief!
- 23 **HERBIE:** (*Skittish.*) Uh... howdy?
- 24 **OSWALD:** Grandma, no. You don't understand.
- 25 **GRANDMA:** Oh, I understand just fine. (*To HERBIE.*) You run out
26 of places to hide outside, huh?
- 27 **HERBIE:** (*Hands up.*) You got it all wrong, lady. I'm an interior
28 designer.
- 29 **BRENDA MAE:** What's that?
- 30 **GRANDMA:** (*Pushing her sleeves up to her elbows.*) Just a fancy
31 word for chicken thief. Elkin, might as well call the law while I
32 keep my eye on this criminal.
- 33 **ELKIN:** Ten-four, Grandma. (*Cups his hands around his mouth and*
34 *shouts through the front door to Off-stage.*) Hey, Pearl!
- 35 **PEARL:** (*Off-stage.*) Yeah, what you want?
- 36 **ELKIN:** Could you call the sheriff for me, please?
- 37 **PEARL:** (*Off-stage.*) OK. Hey, Jimmy Ray?
- 38 **JIMMY RAY:** (*Off-stage.*) Yeah?

- 1 **PEARL:** *(Off-stage.)* Could you call the sheriff for the Taylors?
- 2 **JIMMY RAY:** *(Off-stage.)* OK! Hey, Ms. Chiggerwig?
- 3 **MS. CHIGGERWIG:** *(Off-stage.)* Yeah?
- 4 **JIMMY RAY:** *(Off-stage.)* Could you call the sheriff for the Taylors?
- 5 **MS. CHIGGERWIG:** *(Off-stage.)* OK. Hey, Myrtle!
- 6 **MYRTLE:** *(Off-stage.)* Yeah?
- 7 **MS. CHIGGERWIG:** *(Off-stage.)* Could you call the sheriff for the
- 8 Taylors?
- 9 **MYRTLE:** *(Off-stage.)* OK. Hey, Sheriff!
- 10 **SHERIFF:** Yeah?
- 11 **MYRTLE:** *(Off-stage.)* Taylors need you over to their place.
- 12 **SHERIFF:** *(Off-stage.)* I'm takin' a bath!
- 13 **MYRTLE:** *(Off-stage.)* Sounds like it might be important!
- 14 **SHERIFF:** *(Off-stage.)* OK, I'll be right there!
- 15 **MYRTLE:** *(Off-stage.)* He'll be right there!
- 16 **MS. CHIGGERWIG:** *(Off-stage.)* He'll be right there!
- 17 **JIMMY RAY:** *(Off-stage.)* He'll be right there!
- 18 **PEARL:** *(Off-stage.)* He'll be right there!
- 19 **ELKIN:** Much obliged! *(Turns to GRANDMA.)* He'll be right here.
- 20 **MIMI:** That's how you call the sheriff?
- 21 **PETUNIA:** Why don't you use the phone?
- 22 **GRANDMA:** Them there tele-phones is too high tech for me.
- 23 **PETE:** *(Holds up a candlestick phone, sarcastically.)* I see what
- 24 you mean.
- 25 **SHERIFF:** *(Enters wearing a bathrobe and shower cap and holding*
- 26 *a rubber ducky.)* This better be important, Imogene, 'cause this
- 27 robe don't protect much from the cold air.
- 28 **GRANDMA:** *(Points to HERBIE.)* I want you to lock that man up
- 29 right there!
- 30 **SHERIFF:** Who in tarnation is it?
- 31 **GRANDMA:** That chicken thief that's been on the loose, that's who.
- 32 **HERBIE:** *(To ELKIN.)* But I'm unoffending.
- 33 **ELKIN:** *(Shrugs.)* I'm Republican. What's your point?
- 34 **OSWALD:** He means he's innocent.
- 35 **SHERIFF:** Innocent, huh? Then what's them feathers doin' all over
- 36 your shirt?
- 37 **HERBIE:** I was stuffing a bolster.
- 38 **BRENDA MAE:** What's a bowl-stir?

- 1 **SHERIFF:** Just a fancy word for chicken, Brenda Mae.
- 2 **OSWALD:** Look, Sheriff, I can explain.
- 3 **PETE:** He's with us.
- 4 **SHERIFF:** Who's with you?
- 5 **PETE:** The chicken thief.
- 6 **OSWALD:** Pete!
- 7 **PETE:** I mean *Herbie*.
- 8 **SHERIFF:** If he's with you, then y'all must be chicken thieves too.
9 Like they say, birds of a feather flock together and make a awful
10 mess on the floor.
- 11 **MIMI:** Listen, Barney Fife, you have it all wrong. He came with us
12 from the city.
- 13 **SHERIFF:** Didn't know they had chicken thieves in the city.
- 14 **PETUNIA:** They don't.
- 15 **HERBIE:** I ain't no chicken thief.
- 16 **FESTER:** Shore does talk like us.
- 17 **SHERIFF:** Ever'body hush up. I'm in charge of this situation. You!
18 (*Points to HERBIE.*) Come with me!
- 19 **PETUNIA:** What?
- 20 **MIMI:** No!
- 21 **OSWALD:** Elkin, do somethin'.
- 22 **ELKIN:** I shore will do somethin'. Sherriff, get this low-down
23 chicken thief out of my sight.
- 24 **SHERIFF:** (*To HERBIE.*) Let's go, you.
- 25 **OSWALD:** Where are you taking him?
- 26 **SHERIFF:** To the county jail, which is really just a back room in my
27 house until we get a jail built.
- 28 **FESTER:** (*To HERBIE.*) Don't worry, mister. Maybe you'll get the
29 measles.
- 30 **HERBIE:** Measles?
- 31 **FESTER:** Then you can break out.
32
- 33 *SHERIFF takes HERBIE out.*
34
- 35 **GLEENDA MAE:** (*Brushing her hands together.*) The chicken thief
36 is caught at last.
- 37 **BRENDA MAE:** Now we can go to the big city and not worry about
38 a thing.

1 **GRANDMA:** *(Placing her hands on her hips, giving the CITY*
2 *BUNCH a look.)* Not worry 'bout a thing, huh? I ain't too shore
3 about that at all. Not at aaaallll.

4
5 *The COUNTRY BUNCH, following GRANDMA'S lead, put their*
6 *hands on their hips and give the CITY BUNCH a look that could kill*
7 *as the lights fade slowly to a blackout.*

8
9
10 **SCENE 2**

11
12 **AT START:** *It's a little later. The COUNTRY FOLK wear their coats*
13 *and scarves and hold their suitcases, standing at the door.*

14
15 **ELKIN:** I guess this is good-bye.

16 **FESTER:** We shore will miss y'all in the city, Cousin Oswald. Take
17 real good care of my axe for me whilst I'm gone.

18
19 *He hands OSWALD his axe that is still wrapped in a baby's blanket.*

20
21 **OSWALD:** Uh, no problem, Fester. How are you feeling?

22 **FESTER:** A little better.

23 **ELKIN:** Fester, you was talkin' for a minute there like you was about
24 to say your last words.

25 **FESTER:** Don't say that, Cousin Elkin. That shore does bring up
26 some bad memories.

27 **ELKIN:** What bad memory?

28 **FESTER:** My daddy's last words he ever spoke.

29 **GRANDMA:** What last words? "I love you, my son"?

30 **FESTER:** No, ma'am. "Fester, you're standin' on my oxygen tube."
31 *(He cries into a handkerchief.)*

32 **PETE:** We've arranged for some friends of ours to meet you as
33 soon as you arrive.

34 **PETUNIA:** So don't worry about a thing.

35 **MIMI:** *(Shouting toward the front door.)* Niles, we are ready for you
36 now.

37
38 *NILES enters rather stiffly and looks straight out to the audience.*

1
2 **NILES:** You called, ma'am?
3 **MIMI:** Yes. Please drive our country cousins to the city so they may
4 perform their "wonderful" Nativity play to the masses.
5 **PETE:** We will be here when you get back on Christmas Eve.
6 **GRANDMA:** (*Dripping with sarcasm.*) Oh, goody.
7 **ELKIN:** Sounds like a plan, Stan. Wait—before we leave, I know
8 you're dyin' to hear one more witty-cism. Let me tell you a joke
9 about a cat.
10 **OSWALD:** (*Heavy sigh.*) OK, tell us a joke about a cat.
11 **ELKIN:** Ah, just kitten. Get it? Cat? Just kitten? (*Waves as he*
12 *exits.*) See you later, alligators.
13 **FESTER:** (*As he exits, waving.*) After 'while, brown-spotted heifers.
14
15 *They exit. As soon as the door closes, HERBIE enters through the*
16 *back door, now disguised in a dress and wig.*
17
18 **HERBIE:** Psssst.
19 **OSWALD:** (*Rushing to him.*) Excuse me, ma'am. May we help
20 you?
21 **HERBIE:** (*Takes off his wig.*) It's me.
22
23 *They gasp. ELKIN re-enters through the front door as HERBIE*
24 *quickly replaces the wig. NOTE: If HERBIE is played by a woman,*
25 *have GLENDA MAE, BRENDA MAE, or GRANDMA re-enter.*
26
27 **ELKIN:** Oh, and one more thing...
28 **OSWALD:** (*Nervous.*) Yes?
29 **ELKIN:** (*Pointing to HERBIE, standing up straight and tall, taking*
30 *off his hat.*) Who's that there?
31 **MIMI:** Who, that? It's just—
32 **PETUNIA:** Just someone who is lost and looking for the main
33 highway. Isn't that right, sir— uh, ma'am?
34 **HERBIE:** (*Regular voice.*) Huh? I mean, (*Changes to a high-*
35 *pitched voice.*) I mean, yes, that's right. I am looking for the main
36 highway. I was out for a nice stroll and got lost in the woods.
37 **ELKIN:** You shore do look familiar. Have we ever met before?
38 **PETUNIA:** That's impossible. She's a total stranger.

1 **ELKIN:** *(Takes off his hat.)* If you don't mind me sayin' so, ma'am,
2 it would have been a honor knowin' you before.

3 **HERBIE:** *(Giggles.)* You are such a flirt, mister hillbilly man.

4 **ELKIN:** *(Clears his throat.)* Your daddy must be a fireman, 'cause
5 you make me turn red all over and go, "Whoo, whoo!" *(He quickly*
6 *drops his head, embarrassed.)*

7 **OSWALD:** Elkin, you don't want to keep everyone waiting.

8

9 *OSWALD rushes over and opens the front door, but ELKIN just*
10 *stands and stares at HERBIE.*

11

12 Elkin? Elkin!

13 **ELKIN:** *(Snapping out of it.)* Well, 'bye now!

14 **OSWALD:** See you later, alligator.

15 **ELKIN:** *(Points to HERBIE, trying to act suave.)* After 'while,
16 saltwater hammerhead. *(He exits as he continues staring at*
17 *HERBIE.)*

18 **MIMI:** I think I'm going to be sick.

19 **PETUNIA:** We have no time to lose. Herbie, how did you escape?

20 **HERBIE:** Just walked out the back door. I've got to get busy; I have
21 everything ready. I just have to put it up.

22 **PETE:** What if the sheriff comes back?

23 **PETUNIA:** *(Locking the front door.)* We simply lock the door.

24 **OSWALD:** Huddle, everyone. *(They form a semicircle at Center*
25 *Stage.)* Let's get our priorities in line. Our goal this year is to—

26 **PETE:** Get rich.

27 **OSWALD:** *(Scolding.)* Pete! Our goal this year is to obtain what is
28 rightfully ours. Leaving a key behind that will open the secret
29 door was Uncle Zeke's way of finally giving us what we have
30 coming.

31 **PETE:** Which is to get *rich*.

32 **OSWALD:** While Herbie fixes up the cabin, we search for the key,
33 hide the gold in the woods, then sneak back out one night after
34 Christmas and take it home.

35 **HERBIE:** While you work on that, I'll let my cameraman in. *(He*
36 *crosses to the front door.)* You can come in now.

37

1 CAMERAMAN enters holding a TV camera. As the CITY BUNCH
2 talk, HERBIE and CAMERAMAN walk around in the background as
3 HERBIE, in pantomime, explains to his assistant the shots they plan
4 to take of the house.

5
6 **MIMI:** Someone read the clue that was sent to us by Uncle Zack—

7 **PETE:** Zeke.

8 **MIMI:** Whatever.

9 **PETUNIA:** I have it right here. (*Bringing out the paper and reading*
10 *from it.*)

11 The leader of the family, the key does hide,

12 Beautiful cotton on the other side.

13 For supper and breakfast, folks will buy it,

14 But grass and leaves make a sensible diet.

15 **MIMI:** That makes no sense whatsoever.

16 **OSWALD:** Let's break it down. Read the first sentence, Petunia.

17 **PETUNIA:** The leader of the family, the key does hide.

18 **PETE:** The leader of the family... the key does hide.

19 **OSWALD:** (*Thinking aloud.*) The leader of the family. (*Snaps his*
20 *fingers.*) Elkin. He's the leader of the family. Or maybe Grandma
21 Taylor.

22 **MIMI:** But how could one of them have the key when they don't
23 know about the gold?

24 **PETE:** Maybe the word "leader" means something else.

25 **PETUNIA:** (*Thinking aloud.*) Leader, president, boss...

26 **MIMI:** (*Thinking aloud.*) Top, master...

27 **OSWALD:** Keep thinking, we'll come back to that. What's the next
28 part?

29 **PETUNIA:** The leader of the family, the key does hide,
30 *Beautiful cotton on the other side.*

31 **PETE:** Beautiful cotton on the other side.

32 **OSWALD:** There are plenty of cotton fields in Cricket County.

33 **PETE:** Maybe cotton is a metaphor.

34 **MIMI:** Wait a minute. These hillbillies are always referring to cotton
35 when they talk. They say things like, "Sometimes our hound dog
36 don't cotton to strangers."

37 **PETE:** Or, "Cousin Pete, get your cotton-pickin' feet off our dinnin'
38 table."

- 1 **PETUNIA:** *(Thinking.)* Cotton, cotton, cotton.
2 **MIMI:** *(To herself, as she walks around.)*
3 The leader of the family, the key does hide,
4 Beautiful cotton on the other side.
5 **OSWALD:** What's the last part?
6 **PETUNIA:** For supper and breakfast, folks will buy it,
7 But grass and leaves make a sensible diet.
8 **PETE:** What do folks eat for breakfast and supper out here?
9 **MIMI:** Grits?
10 **PETUNIA:** Ham hocks?
11 **OSWALD:** Grits and ham hocks?
12 **PETE:** Let's put it together. Leader. Cotton. Grits and ham hocks.
13 *(Snaps his fingers.)* Aha!
14 **OSWALD, PETUNIA, and MIMI:** What?
15 **PETE:** I got nothing.
16 **PETUNIA:** The last phrase: "But grass and leaves make a sensible
17 diet."
18 **OSWALD:** I don't think salads are very popular in Cricket County.
19 **PETE:** *(Has an epiphany.)* Head!
20 **OSWALD:** What?
21 **PETE:** Another word for leader is head. You know, like the head of
22 a family.
23 **PETUNIA:** That makes sense.
24 **MIMI:** *(Thinking.)* Head, head, head.
25 **PETE:** *(Snaps his fingers.)* Cottontail!
26 **OSWALD:** What?
27 **PETE:** Cottontail. We see them all the time out here. White-tailed
28 deer. Cotton on the other side. The backside.
29 **MIMI:** Head and cottontail. Head and cottontail.
30 **PETUNIA:** The head is on one end and the tail is on the other.
31 **OSWALD:** *(Snaps his fingers.)* And folks out here eat deer.
32 **OSWALD:** And deer eat grass and leaves. *(Thinking.)* Deer.
33 **PETE:** Deer.
34 **PETE:** *(They all begin walking around.)* Head... head...
35 **OSWALD:** Cottontail, cottontail.
36
37 *They are all now standing underneath the deer head.*
38

1 **MIMI:** The head hides the key...

2 **PETUNIA:** The deer head hides the key?

3

4 *They pause, look out at the audience wide-eyed, look up at the deer*
5 *head, look down at the trap door directly underneath the deer head,*
6 *then back at the audience with big smiles.*

7

8 **ALL:** *(Together.)* Bingo!

9

10 *HERBIE and CAMERAMAN look around, confused.*

11

12 **HERBIE:** Huh? *(Blackout.)*

13

14

15 **SCENE 3**

16

17 **AT START:** *At extreme Stage Right or Stage Left, six chairs are*
18 *arranged to make a car. ELKIN sits up front with NILES while*
19 *GRANDMA and FESTER sit in the middle and GLENDA MAE and*
20 *BRENDA MAE sit in the back. NILES holds a steering wheel,*
21 *pretending to drive.*

22

23 **GLENDA MAE:** What y'all want to sing?

24 **GRANDMA:** Keep your trap shut.

25 **GLENDA MAE:** I don't think I know that one.

26 **GRANDMA:** Goes like this. *(Sings to the tune of "Jingle Bells.")*
27 *Shut your trap, shut your trap, shut it all night loooong.*

28 **BRENDA MAE:** It's almost Christmas. Let's sing some carols.
29 *(Sings.)* O come, all ye faithful, joyful with a trumpet—

30 **NILES:** Joyful and *triumphant*.

31 **BRENDA MAE:** See there? Jiles likes my singin'. You sing
32 something, Mr. Jiles.

33 **NILES:** My name is Niles.

34 **BRENDA MAE:** *(Thinking out loud.)* My name is Niles. Don't think
35 I know that song, but hum a few bars and I'll see what I can do.

36 **GRANDMA:** Brenda Mae, you need to take a nap.

37 **BRENDA MAE:** I'm too excited to sleep, Grandma. Just imagine
38 us goin' to the city to perform your Nativity play.

1 **FESTER:** I might get famous; I do such a good job playin' the
2 shepherd.

3 **GRANDMA:** Why in Sam Hill you think you'll get famous, Fester?

4 **FESTER:** 'Cause I always play the shepherd here in Cricket
5 County, and I can't go nowhere without somebody sayin', "Ain't
6 you the one who plays the shepherd ever' year in the Cricket
7 County Christmas play?" and I say, "Shore am," and they say,
8 "Can I have your autograph?" and I say, "Shore can." When I get
9 real famous, I won't be poor no more.

10 **ELKIN:** Fester, you ain't poor.

11 **FESTER:** I must be, 'cause ever' time I go walkin' down the street,
12 folks point at me and say, "There goes Fester Taylor. His poor
13 family..."

14 **GLEND A MAE:** *(Points ahead.)* What's that up ahead?

15 **NILES:** Looks like someone walking on the side of the road.

16 **ELKIN:** Slow down, Mr. Jiles.

17 **NILES:** My name is *Niles*.

18 **BRENDA MAE:** We'll sing your song later. Let's see if they need
19 help.

20
21 *STRANGER enters holding a burlap bag. She wears a worn-out*
22 *coat that's covered in feathers. She stands on NILES's side of the*
23 *car. NILES "rolls" his window down.*

24
25 **NILES:** Excuse me, but are you all right?

26 **STRANGER:** I'm just walkin'. Ain't no law against walkin'.

27 **ELKIN:** Shore is a awful cold night to just be walkin', ma'am. Could
28 we take you somewhere?

29 **STRANGER:** Just pickin' up garbage on the side of the road.

30
31 *SFX: Chickens Clucking.*

32
33 **GRANDMA:** Sounds like your garbage might be alive.

34 **STRANGER:** Well, I best be goin'. 'Bye.

35 **GRANDMA:** Somethin' fishy is goin' on. *(To STRANGER.)* You
36 stay right there! Elkin, get out and check her out.

37 **ELKIN:** Why me?

38 **GRANDMA:** Cause you're the man of the family.

- 1 **ELKIN:** Fester's in the car too. (*ALL look at poor FESTER.*) You're
2 right. I'll go. (*He gets out and walks around to the front of the*
3 *car.*)
- 4 **STRANGER:** (*Hugging the bag.*) You can't have my garbage
5 collection, so don't ask.
- 6 **ELKIN:** Where did all them feathers on your coat come from?
- 7 **STRANGER:** I work in a piller factory.
- 8 **ELKIN:** There ain't no piller factory around these parts.
9
- 10 *SFX: Chickens Clucking..*
11
- 12 Sounds like you got chickens in that there bag. There's a chicken
13 thief been runnin' around Cricket County the last few days, and
14 we're missin' a lot of chickens.
- 15 **STRANGER:** Ain't my problem.
- 16 **GRANDMA:** Depends on what you got in your bag. (*Reaches for*
17 *it.*)
- 18 **STRANGER:** No!
- 19 **ELKIN:** (*Grabs the bag.*) Got it! (*He looks in it.*) Yep, this bag is full
20 of our chickens, all right. There's Gertrude and Daisy and
21 Winnifred.
- 22 **GRANDMA:** (*Points to Off-stage.*) Whose house is that over
23 yonder? (*Turns quickly and cups her hands.*) Corella, call the
24 Sheriff to hurry over to the Kudzu Curve.
- 25 **CORELLA:** (*Off-stage.*) OK. Hey, Bubba Roy, tell Sheriff to hurry
26 over to Kudzu Curve!
- 27 **BUBBA ROY:** (*Off-stage.*) OK. Hey, Big Polly, tell Sheriff to hurry
28 over to Kudzu Curve!
- 29 **BIG POLLY:** (*Off-stage.*) OK. Hey, Sheriff, they need you over at
30 Kudzu Curve!
- 31 **SHERIFF:** (*Off-stage.*) I'm watchin' *Dukes of Hazzard!*
- 32 **BIG POLLY:** (*Off-stage.*) Sounds important!
- 33 **SHERIFF:** (*Off-stage, frustrated.*) OK, OK!
- 34 **BIG POLLY:** (*Off-stage.*) OK, OK!
- 35 **BUBBA ROY:** (*Off-stage.*) OK, OK!
- 36 **CORELLA:** (*Off-stage.*) OK, OK!
- 37 **STRANGER:** (*To ELKIN.*) Give me my bag.
- 38 **ELKIN:** Might be your bag, but it's got *our* chickens in it.



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:
CRICKET COUNTY CABIN MAKEOVER
by Eddie McPherson.

For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:

CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS LLC
P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406
Toll Free: 844-841-6387 - Fax 319-368-8011
customerservice@christianpub.com