

CHRISTMAS AT THE CRICKET COUNTY CAFE

by Eddie McPherson



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Christmas at the Cricket County Café

A one-act comedy with heart

by Eddie McPherson

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Country Bunch:

ELKIN TAYLOR: Leader of the Cricket County clan. Level-headed.

FESTER: Naive and ready to change his “bumpkin” image.

GRANDMA TAYLOR: Runs Cricket County Café and is in a grumpy mood.

GLENDIA MAE: Trying to win her way into the world record books by plucking chickens.

BRENDA MAE: Her mind is preoccupied with winning the Miss Cricket County contest.

City Bunch:

OSWALD: Leader of the city clan.

PETE: Tries to keep the evening from falling apart.

PETUNIA: One of the few who is truly in the Christmas spirit.

MIMI: Just wants to get her money and go. Also serves as the play’s narrator.

JUDGE GALLOWAY: Stuffy. He’s a very important man.

MRS. GALLOWAY: The judge’s wife. She can’t believe she’s dining in such a “dump.”

Customers and/or visitors:

DOROTHY and WALTER: An elderly couple from Cricket County.

HARRIET and FRANCES: Old friends of Grandma Taylor.

MS. MARTIN: A lady from the city who stops to ask for directions.

LLOYD: A handyman from Cricket County. Good friend of the Taylors.

PASSERBY: Sticks his/her head into the café to ask Fester a question.

IVA LEE and BREEMAN COOPER: Another married couple from Cricket County.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

A NOTE ABOUT CASTING THE CUSTOMERS/VISITORS: It would be fun to have the same two actors play all the customers. After each visit, they could change costumes and return as someone else. For example, Dorothy and Walter may return as Harriet and Frances (the actor playing Walter could put on a dress and wig and play a lady). Of course, it would also work to have different actors play the roles.

PROPS: Small pad and pencil, two telephone receivers, menus, white dish towels, photocopies of pictures of Brenda Mae, roll of clear tape, box wrapped in brown paper, shopping bags, silverware, napkins, makeup bag, Bluetooth, MP3 player with headphones, sunglasses, magazine, laptop, laptop bag, purses, chef's hat, overcoats hanging on a coat rack, small cardboard box, envelope, fur wrap, rolling pin, ax, small triangle, wooden manger, undecorated Christmas tree, large fish net, pitcher of tea, glasses, straws, large brown paper bag, mustard and ketchup bottles, hatchet, box of Christmas decorations, feathers, rubber chicken, funny-looking hats, wet paper towel, hand towel, small hand-held bell, sign reading "Floor Show Inside," box of white confetti, empty box of "Cheer" laundry detergent, box labeled "Baby Jesus," envelope with piece of paper (for the will), tissues, bag with a shepherd's costume inside.

SET: The set is a country diner. The café is very old, but it's been kept up very well. The Upstage wall (the wall closest to your backstage) has a large window painted on it. The window is painted to make it look as though it's looking out on the street. "CRICKET COUNTY CAFÉ" is painted backward on the window. Red and white checkered curtains (matching the tablecloths) hang on either side of the window.

The door that leads to the outside is to the right of the window (right for the actors, not the audience). A small window is left of the large window. This is a real window that actors will appear behind. This smaller window looks into the kitchen. The door that leads into the kitchen is left of the small window. An undecorated Christmas tree stands somewhere in the café.

A jukebox is painted on the Stage Left wall (unless you have access to a real jukebox, which would be cool). On the Stage Right wall is a door that leads to three places: the men's room, the ladies room, and a storage room. You'll need two signs on the door — one that reads "Restrooms Inside" and another underneath that reads "Storage." You may choose to have a separate door beside the jukebox for the storage room. Either way will work.

SOUND EFFECTS: Ringing telephone and chicken clucking.

DEFINITION OF ASIDE: Aside means a character On-stage turns to the

audience, speaks to them, then turns back and becomes part of the action again. When Mimi performs her asides, you may choose to have the actors On-stage freeze, then return to normal when the aside ends.

COSTUMES: The country bunch wears flannel shirts, blue jeans, cotton or gingham dresses, overalls, etc. When Fester transforms into his “cool” look, he might wear all black. The city characters wear “preppy” type clothing. Oswald and Mimi wear full-length aprons over their nice clothes. The Judge and his wife wear formal attire. Mrs. Galloway dons a fur wrap of some kind. Everyone who enters from outside wears some type of jacket or coat. Brenda Mae’s costume for performing her “floor show” could be anything showy — such as a top hat and cane, or lots of feathers, or both, etc. Grandma dresses in bright green and red clothes with possible bubble light earrings and garland around her hem. She wears an apron from the waist down. Grandma might wear a bouffant or beehive or granny bun.

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

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

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1 *(The setting is GRANDMA TAYLOR's humble café that she has*
 2 *run for fifty years. MIMI, who is wearing a full-length apron*
 3 *over her high-priced city clothes, is taking an elderly couple's*
 4 *order. DOROTHY and WALTER, MIMI's customers, have been*
 5 *eating at the café every Christmas Eve since the doors were*
 6 *opened. MIMI's body language exudes boredom and frustration*
 7 *with her patrons.)*

8 **WALTER:** Let's see, I think I'll take the fried ham hocks
 9 covered in squirrel gravy. *(MIMI writes this down.)*

10 **MIMI:** *(To DOROTHY)* And you?

11 **DOROTHY:** Hubert, you know that gravy ain't good for your
 12 heart. *(To MIMI)* He'll have the boiled carrots instead,
 13 sweetie. *(MIMI crosses out his order and rewrites it.)*

14 **MIMI:** Boiled carrots.

15 **WALTER:** But dumplin', what's Christmas Eve ham hocks
 16 without squirrel gravy?

17 **DOROTHY:** Well, OK, but just because it's Christmas. *(MIMI*
 18 *scratches it out and rewrites the order.)* Your health ain't what
 19 it used to be, so you still got to eat some carrots. *(To MIMI)*
 20 Bless his heart, he works out over at Bubba's gym, but I
 21 swear his favorite machine is the vendin' machine.

22 **MIMI:** And what would you have, Mother Hen?

23 **DOROTHY:** I'm so undecided. *(To MIMI)* What would you have
 24 if you was me?

25 **MIMI:** Prime rib, but not from here.

26 **DOROTHY:** I think I'll try the crawdad stew with a side of
 27 biscuits. Or do I want the cornbread? Just surprise me.
 28 *(MIMI crosses out something on her pad.)*

29 **MIMI:** *(Aside, as the couple freezes)* You must be wondering how
 30 a refined, sophisticated debutante like myself ended up
 31 serving tables at a greasy spoon called the Cricket County
 32 Café on Christmas Eve. It's a nightmare that started years
 33 ago when our hillbilly cousins invited us out to Cricket
 34 County for the reading of Uncle Zeke's will. *(She freezes*
 35 *along with her CUSTOMERS.)*

- 1 **ELKIN:** *(He steps out with a telephone receiver as OSWALD steps out*
 2 *with his own receiver on the opposite side of the stage.)* **Cousin**
 3 **Oswald, we're goin' to read Uncle Zeke's will on Christmas**
 4 **Eve. Y'all come on out to Cricket County!**
- 5 **OSWALD:** **We're on our way!**
- 6 **MIMI:** *(She unfreezes as ELKIN exits and OSWALD freezes. Aside)*
 7 **We were all so excited about the reading of the will**
 8 **because Uncle Zeke, we found out, was a very rich man**
 9 **who owned oil wells and diamond mines. *(Freezes.)***
- 10 **PETE:** *(Steps out as OSWALD unfreezes.)* **You mean Uncle Zeke**
 11 **was rich?**
- 12 **OSWALD:** **In the millions.**
- 13 **PETE:** **What are we waiting for? Let's get to Cricket County!**
 14 *(OSWALD and PETE exit.)*
- 15 **MIMI:** *(Aside)* **And that's exactly what we did. But on that cold**
 16 **Christmas Eve at the reading of the will, we were very**
 17 **disappointed in what Uncle Zeke had left us. *(MIMI***
 18 *freezes.)*
- 19 **ELKIN:** *(Steps out holding up the will and reads.)* **I, Uncle Zeke**
 20 **Taylor, leave all the Country Cousins my many secret**
 21 **diamond mines and oil fields.**
- 22 **MIMI:** *(Aside)* **Can you believe it? They got the millions. Those**
 23 **nasty hillbillies inherited everything! It still causes**
 24 **shortness of breath when I think about it. Anyway, here it**
 25 **is, a few Christmases later, and lo and behold, we receive**
 26 **another phone call from the Cricket County clan. *(MIMI***
 27 *freezes.)*
- 28 **ELKIN:** *(Holding a receiver, ELKIN steps out as OSWALD and PETE*
 29 *step out on the opposite side of the stage.)* **It seems Buckshot**
 30 **Simms, Uncle Zeke's lawyer buddy, found what they call**
 31 **an a-mend-ment to the will. Accordin' to Willard, Uncle**
 32 **Zeke wanted somebody else to share in his inheritance too.**
 33 **Somebody *real* special.**
- 34 **OSWALD:** **You mean there's more to the will than we knew**
 35 **about? When do you want us there?**

- 1 ELKIN: I'm readin' the a-mend-ment right after Grandma's café
2 closes on Christmas Eve.
- 3 OSWALD: We'll be there no matter what!
- 4 PETE: But Oswald, you're supposed to take Judge Galloway
5 out to dinner on Christmas Eve.
- 6 OSWALD: (*Covering the mouthpiece*) I'll think of something. We
7 can't miss this opportunity. (*Back to the phone*) We'll be
8 there, Cousin Elkin — don't worry! (*PETE, OSWALD, and*
9 *ELKIN exit.*)
- 10 MIMI: (*Aside*) So, here we are again in this bumpkin of a place.
11 Oswald insisted we help out the Taylors here at the café
12 and clear the customers out as soon as possible so we
13 could hear the reading of the new will and make it back
14 home in time for Christmas. Believe me, only the thought
15 of oil wells and diamond mines would cause me to wear
16 an outfit this repulsive. I just hope my nerves make it to
17 closing time. (*She turns back to her customers as they unfreeze.*)
- 18 DOROTHY: (*To her husband*) And dear, do you want some of
19 that frog liver jelly on a biscuit for dessert?
- 20 WALTER: Hmmm, I ain't sure. (*To MIMI*) Do you recommend
21 the frog liver jelly, young lady?
- 22 MIMI: I think frog liver jelly is repugnant.
- 23 WALTER: That's good enough for me. Bring enough for the
24 both of us.
- 25 MIMI: The only thing I eat at Christmas is imported caviar.
- 26 DOROTHY: Well, throw some of that in the deep fryer. We'll try
27 anything once.
- 28 MIMI: (*Aside*) They must be kidding. (*End aside*) I'm afraid they
29 don't serve such delicacies in this horse trough. Now, tell
30 me what you want to eat, or hit the road.
- 31 DOROTHY: (*Shocked*) What did you say, young lady?
- 32 MIMI: You heard me — order your food or get out. I've got
33 other things I need to do.
- 34 WALTER: (*Standing*) Let's go, Dorothy — we don't have to take
35 this ugly behavior.

- 1 DOROTHY: (*To MIMI*) Just wait 'til I tell Imogene Taylor about
2 this! She'll have your job!
- 3 MIMI: She can have it! I never wanted to work here in the first
4 place. (*OSWALD enters and hears this last statement.*)
- 5 OSWALD: (*Also wearing an apron, he rushes to the customers.*)
6 Excuse me, is something the matter?
- 7 DOROTHY: We came to enjoy our annual Christmas Eve supper
8 ...
- 9 WALTER: And hear the Christmas story read just like we've
10 done for fifty years.
- 11 DOROTHY: But this ... this ... waitress wants us to leave, so
12 that's exactly what we're a-doin'. (*Angrily*) Merry
13 Christmas! (*DOROTHY and WALTER begin to exit.*)
- 14 OSWALD: Wait! Please don't leave! Mimi was just playing a
15 little Christmas joke. She wants you to stay. Mimi, tell
16 them you want them to stay!
- 17 MIMI: Get lost.
- 18 OSWALD: See?
- 19 DOROTHY: Good-bye! (*They exit.*)
- 20 OSWALD: (*Shouting after them*) We'll sing Christmas carols if
21 you'll come back! (*Sings.*) Deck the halls with boughs of
22 holly, fa la la la la, la la la laaa! (*He shuts the door and turns*
23 *to MIMI.*) Mimi, how many customers have left because of
24 your rude behavior?
- 25 MIMI: I lost count.
- 26 OSWALD: What are you trying to prove?
- 27 MIMI: This whole crazy scheme was *your* idea. The sooner we
28 rid the café of customers, the quicker we hear the reading
29 of the amendment and receive our deserved millions. I'm
30 just trying to do my part.
- 31 OSWALD: If Grandma Taylor finds out what you're doing, she'll
32 come after you with wild abandon.
- 33 MIMI: I am *not* afraid of Grandma Taylor.
- 34 OSWALD: That's OK, I'm afraid enough for the both of us.
- 35 GRANDMA: (*Off-stage*) Where's that Ozzy boy?

- 1 **OSWALD:** Speak of the devil. *(Shouting to the kitchen)* I'm in the
 2 dining room, Grandma Taylor! *(Turns to MIMI.)* Look busy.
 3 *(Hands MIMI a rag. GRANDMA enters dressed very Christmas-*
 4 *like but looking rather frazzled.)*
- 5 **GRANDMA:** Ozzy, have you saw Fester? He's supposed to stay
 6 in the kitchen today.
- 7 **OSWALD:** The name is Oswald, ma'am. Fester ran down to the
 8 post office. He said he was expecting a package.
- 9 **GRANDMA:** Where in sam hill is all my customers?
- 10 **OSWALD:** I'm sure they'll be pouring in at any minute.
- 11 **MIMI:** *(Has placed her hand towel around her neck like a scarf.)* You
 12 know, with the right brooch, this could make a nice
 13 accessory.
- 14 **OSWALD:** *(Snatching the towel)* You're supposed to wipe the
 15 tables with it.
- 16 **GRANDMA:** She ain't the brightest bulb on the tree, is she?
- 17 **MIMI:** I'll have you know I have *two* advanced degrees in
 18 fashion design.
- 19 **GRANDMA:** I have *two* pork rinds in the freezer, but that don't
 20 make me smart. Now if you're workin' for me, I'd better
 21 see work! The Christmas rush should have already started.
 22 I don't understand where my regulars are.
- 23 **OSWALD:** *(Covering for MIMI)* It's awful cold outside, Grandma
 24 Taylor. Perhaps everyone is staying home this year.
 25 *(BRENDA MAE enters and begins hanging pictures of herself*
 26 *around the café.)*
- 27 **GRANDMA:** Hogwash! My customers wouldn't stay away from
 28 my café on Christmas Eve for nothin'. They been comin' for
 29 the food and the Nativity and the readin' of the Christmas
 30 story for the last fifty years. *(To MIMI)* And why are you
 31 sittin' down? There's work to be done.
- 32 **MIMI:** But I'm so fatigued.
- 33 **GRANDMA:** I ain't interested in your medical symptoms. Let
 34 me give you a little advice, young city girl. The best thing
 35 about wearin' boots is that your socks don't have to match.

- 1 Now you ponder your pretty head on that for a while.
- 2 OSWALD: She will, Grandma Taylor — I promise.
- 3 GRANDMA: (*To BRENDA MAE*) Brenda Mae, child, what are
- 4 you up to with all this work that needs to be done?
- 5 BRENDA MAE: I'm puttin' up Miss Cricket County flyers.
- 6 GRANDMA: Land sakes alive. Ever'body's doin' somethin'
- 7 besides helpin' me out today! Look at that — the Christmas
- 8 tree still ain't decorated, and here it is Christmas Eve.
- 9 OSWALD: (*To BRENDA MAE*) So you're campaigning for Miss
- 10 Cricket County?
- 11 BRENDA MAE: (*Sarcastically*) No, I'm runnin' for Mr.
- 12 Greyhound. Of course I'm runnin' for Miss Cricket County.
- 13 And I'm goin' to win it this year. I decorated the diner
- 14 with all my posters so Grandma's customers will want to
- 15 vote for me.
- 16 OSWALD: How many years have you entered this contest? (*As*
- 17 *they talk, FESTER sneaks in through the front door holding a*
- 18 *box wrapped in brown paper. He tiptoes to the restroom door and*
- 19 *exits through it, unseen by anyone.*)
- 20 BRENDA MAE: It's my seventh year, and I ain't won it once.
- 21 MIMI: (*Sarcastically*) Imagine that.
- 22 BRENDA MAE: That's just what I thought. You'd think that
- 23 somebody with my beauty and charm would land it real
- 24 easy-like. But that dadgum Freda Grumble wins it ever'
- 25 year.
- 26 OSWALD: Freda Grumble?
- 27 BRENDA MAE: Somehow she always finds out who the judge
- 28 is goin' to be and then butters him up.
- 29 OSWALD: (*Feigning disbelief*) No.
- 30 BRENDA MAE: She surely does. She flirts and makes promises
- 31 and then once she gets the title, she drops him like a hot
- 32 potato.
- 33 OSWALD: Shameful.
- 34 BRENDA MAE: It sure 'nuff is.
- 35 GRANDMA: The only thing more shameful is a young lady

1 shirkin' her responsibilities at her dear old Grandma's
2 café.

3 BRENDA MAE: I'm sorry, Grandma — but campaignin' is hard
4 work. And this year I want to win the crown that I so
5 deserve. (*PETE and PETUNIA enter from outside.*)

6 PETE: Hello, everyone.

7 PETUNIA: Brenda Mae, we saturated the area with your
8 likeness so your constituents will clamor to the polls and
9 pull the lever that will successfully excel you to the
10 prominent status that you so desire.

11 BRENDA MAE: What did she say?

12 PETE: We hung up your pictures.

13 GRANDMA: (*To PETUNIA*) Heavens, child. When you talk, just
14 show us the baby, don't tell us about the labor pains.

15 OSWALD: (*To BRENDA MAE*) But if a judge decides who will be
16 crowned, why put up flyers?

17 BRENDA MAE: 'Cause nobody knows who the judge is. (*Flirty,*
18 *playing with OSWALD'S collar*) It could be *you* for all I know.

19 PETUNIA: (*Changing the subject, brightly*) This brisk winter air
20 puts me in a jolly Christmas mood.

21 MIMI: Please tell me you did not just use the word "jolly."

22 GRANDMA: Pete, would you git to the kitchen and warm up
23 the grill? I don't know where in the world that Fester has
24 gone off to.

25 PETE: OK. You know, working in a little café like this on
26 Christmas Eve puts me in the spirit too. (*He starts to exit to*
27 *the kitchen.*)

28 MIMI: If you are so much in the spirit, why don't you go ahead
29 and give me my Christmas gift? (*PETUNIA continues to put*
30 *up her pictures.*)

31 PETE: You know, I've been thinking about that, and I have
32 decided I'm not going to give you anything this year. (*Exits*
33 *to the kitchen, singing*) "Good King Wenceslas looked out on
34 the feast of Stephen ... "

35 MIMI: (*Turns to OSWALD.*) Oswald, I know *you* wouldn't be that

1 mean, would you?

2 OSWALD: Mimi, I would love to get you everything you ever
3 wanted for Christmas, but I don't know how to gift-wrap
4 Bloomingdales.

5 MIMI: (*Aside, slightly offended*) He didn't have to say that. It's
6 true, but he didn't have to say it. (*End aside as she hangs up*
7 *one of BRENDA MAE'S pictures.*)

8 PETUNIA: Mimi, you're hanging that upside down.

9 MIMI: Then *you* do it. I'm not sure why I agreed to undertake
10 such exertion anyway. (*Two ladies, FRANCES and*
11 *HARRIET, enter all bundled up.*)

12 GRANDMA: (*Extending a warm welcome*) Frances! Harriet! Git
13 yourselves in here and take a load off. I was wonderin'
14 when you two was showin' up for your Christmas Eve
15 supper.

16 FRANCES: (*Setting a load of bags down*) Sorry, Imogene, but we
17 was doin' some last-minute Christmas shoppin'.

18 GRANDMA: Momo, get our customers a couple of menus.

19 MIMI: My *name* is Mimi.

20 GRANDMA: (*Mocking tone*) Your *name* will be mud if you don't
21 git them menus. (*MIMI grabs a couple of menus as PETUNIA*
22 *straightens a few crooked pictures MIMI hung up earlier.*)

23 OSWALD: (*Ushering the ladies to the table*) Here you go, ladies.
24 Here's a nice table right over here by the kitchen.

25 HARRIET: (*Crosses to the table and looks around.*) Imogene, where
26 is ever'body? I figured this place would be crawlin' with
27 Christmas Eve regulars.

28 GRANDMA: I guess they're just runnin' a little bit late this
29 year. (*To MIMI*) Moomoo, you take this order and I'll go
30 check on Peter. And if that Fester shows up, he'd better
31 be wearin' his best suit.

32 PETUNIA: Why's that, Grandma Taylor?

33 GRANDMA: 'Cause I'm goin' to kill him. (*She exits into the*
34 *kitchen.*)

35 MIMI: (*Shouting after her*) And the name is Mimi!

- 1 **OSWALD:** (*Pulling MIMI aside*) Mimi, remember to be nice to
 2 these customers, or Grandma Godzilla will throw us out
 3 for good.
- 4 **MIMI:** (*Heavy sigh*) OK, OK.
- 5 **PETUNIA:** I'll play some Christmas tunes on the jukebox so it
 6 will feel more like Christmas.
- 7 **MIMI:** (*Crosses to the two LADIES and puts her hands on her hips.*)
 8 OK, you two, what will it be?
- 9 **FRANCES:** Merry Christmas, young lady.
- 10 **MIMI:** (*Fake smile*) Merry-Christmas-may-I-take-your-order?
- 11 **HARRIET:** (*Opening up her menu*) Well, let's see here. Oops, can't
 12 see anything without the old spectacles.
- 13 **FRANCES:** Oh dear, ever'thing on the menu looks so fattenin'.
- 14 **MIMI:** (*Short*) I'm just as sorry as I can be that we don't serve
 15 rack of soybean.
- 16 **OSWALD:** (*Reprimanding from a distance as he rolls silverware into*
 17 *napkins*) Mimi ...
- 18 **MIMI:** (*Puts on a fake smile.*) So what can I get for you?
- 19 **HARRIET:** It all looks so good. (*MIMI hums the "Jeopardy" tune.*
 20 *OSWALD rushes over and takes the pad from MIMI.*)
- 21 **OSWALD:** Mimi, I have an idea. Why don't you roll the
 22 silverware and I'll take these nice ladies' order?
- 23 **MIMI:** I don't do silverware.
- 24 **OSWALD:** Mimi, go! (*She stares at him as she crosses her arms.*)
 25 Pleeeaaase?
- 26 **MIMI:** (*Sighs heavily and grabs OSWALD'S silverware.*) I'm too
 27 good for this place. Why can't we just get our money and
 28 go? (*She plops down at a nearby table.*)
- 29 **OSWALD:** (*Smiles at the LADIES.*) Bless her heart, she's having
 30 one of those days.
- 31 **PETUNIA:** (*Looking at the numbers on the jukebox*) Here's a good
 32 Christmas song. (*A song plays on the jukebox, like "Dancing*
 33 *Queen" or another song with the word "queen" in it.*) Wait a
 34 minute, that's not right — I pressed the number for "Away
 35 in a Manger."

- 1 BRENDA MAE: I replaced all the Christmas carols with songs
2 about queens. You know, to get the patrons thinkin' about
3 the Miss Cricket County contest.
- 4 PETUNIA: But Brenda Mae, it's Christmas Eve.
- 5 BRENDA MAE: You're right, Cousin Petunia — that's somethin'
6 I should have done weeks ago.
- 7 FRANCES: Runnin' for Miss Cricket County sure enough
8 sounds like fun.
- 9 BRENDA MAE: Yes ma'am. I ain't had this much attention
10 since I used to sing off-key in the church choir.
- 11 HARRIET: I remember that 'cause you always sat by me ...
12 (*Covering*) I mean, really?
- 13 BRENDA MAE: Sure 'nuff, and then the preacher promised me
14 a two-week break from tithin' if I promised not to partake
15 in congregational singin'.
- 16 HARRIET: Brenda Mae, you have the voice of an angel.
- 17 FRANCIS: Stop fibbin' on Christmas Eve. We both know she
18 has the voice of _____. (*Names a good-*
19 *natured audience member.*)
- 20 HARRIET: Not even Brenda Mae is *that* bad.
- 21 BRENDA MAE: Anyway, I sure would appreciate you spreadin'
22 the word that I'm runnin' this year.
- 23 HARRIET: I'm sorry, Brenda Mae, but we can't do that.
- 24 FRANCES: Hush up, Harriet.
- 25 BRENDA MAE: Why in the world not?
- 26 HARRIET: 'Cause we're campaignin' for Freda Grumble.
- 27 BRENDA MAE: (*Grabs the menus from them.*) You can't be
28 serious.
- 29 OSWALD: So! (*Claps his hands, smiles, and speaks loudly.*) Have
30 you ladies decided what you want to eat?
- 31 FRANCES: I'm sorry, Brenda Mae, but Freda Grumble is my
32 late husband's brother's second cousin on his daddy's side.
33 I have to campaign for her.
- 34 OSWALD: I hear the fried pork chops are very good.
- 35 BRENDA MAE: You both done hurt me to the core. I can't

- 1 believe you had the nerve to walk into my grandma's café.
 2 You are the enemy and are not welcomed here.
- 3 **PETUNIA:** Brenda Mae, you don't mean it. (*Turns quickly to the*
 4 *ladies.*) I'm afraid the heat from the kitchen is getting to
 5 her.
- 6 **MIMI:** Be quiet, Petunia — it's just getting good.
- 7 **FRANCES:** But we can't leave! What about the food? The
 8 Christmas story? It's a tradition!
- 9 **BRENDA MAE:** (*Ushering them out of the café*) Why don't you run
 10 over to Freda's house and see if she'll feed you? (*They are*
 11 *out the door as BRENDA MAE shouts after them.*) And you
 12 should have went on a diet years ago!
- 13 **OSWALD:** Brenda Mae, do you realize what you just did?
- 14 **PETUNIA:** I don't want to be around when Grandma Taylor
 15 finds out.
- 16 **BRENDA MAE:** I don't care. This contest is the most important
 17 thing in the world to me, so Grandma will just have to get
 18 mad. If you will excuse me, I got to help Glenda Mae with
 19 her chicken. (*She exits out the front door.*)
- 20 **MIMI:** I should have known it was going to be a bad day when
 21 I woke up this morning and found my artificial flowers
 22 were dead.
- 23 **OSWALD:** As you would say, (*Exaggerated Southern drawl*)
 24 Grandma Taylor is goin' to have one hissy of a fit.
- 25 **PETUNIA:** Not if she doesn't know. It's up to us to keep up the
 26 Christmas cheer.
- 27 **MIMI:** (*To PETUNIA*) You can start by helping me with this
 28 silverware.
- 29 **PETUNIA:** All right. (*She sits to help. When she does, MIMI stops*
 30 *and begins doing her makeup. FESTER enters from the*
 31 *bathroom. He's now wearing all black clothing and dark*
 32 *sunglasses. A Bluetooth hangs from one ear and headphones are*
 33 *tucked in both ears with a wire that hangs attached to nothing.*)
- 34 **FESTER:** (*A little sheepishly, not knowing how they are going to*
 35 *respond to his new look*) Howdy, ever'body. I mean, what's

- 1 happenin'? Wait a minute, I messed up. Like, what's
2 happenin', dudes? Like, is ever'thing cool, man?
- 3 OSWALD: Fester Taylor, could that be you? (*FESTER, since he*
4 *can't see because of his sunglasses, walks into a table as he*
5 *crosses to ELKIN.*)
- 6 FESTER: Ouch! (*He turns and runs into a chair, knocking it over.*)
7 Ouch!
- 8 OSWALD: (*Helping FESTER move Center Stage*) Fester, be careful.
9 (*The phone rings backstage.*)
- 10 PETUNIA: Fester, take off those sunglasses before you kill
11 yourself.
- 12 FESTER: I can't take 'em off, Cousin Petunia. Sunglasses is
13 part of bein' cool.
- 14 MIMI: My heavens. I swear that hillbilly is two dishes short of
15 a picnic.
- 16 FESTER: Don't call me no hillbilly. I ain't a hillbilly no more,
17 I'm ... (*Lifts his sunglasses and looks at the magazine he's*
18 *holding*) what they call deb — you-nare.
- 19 OSWALD: Debonair? Fester, you look ludicrous.
- 20 FESTER: Thanks, Cousin Oswald. I was afraid y'all wouldn't
21 like it. (*MIMI laughs out loud.*)
- 22 OSWALD: (*Takes the magazine FESTER's holding.*) Let me see
23 that. (*Reads cover.*) Cool Dude magazine? Fester, where did
24 you get this?
- 25 FESTER: (*Looking PETUNIA'S way*) Well, you see, Cousin
26 Oswald ...
- 27 PETUNIA: I'm Petunia.
- 28 FESTER: (*Turning to OSWALD*) You see, Cousin Oswald, I was
29 gettin' tired of bein' called a country bumpkin, so I picked
30 up this magazine one day. And you know what this
31 magazine told me? It told me I can be noticed. That I can
32 stand out from the crowd.
- 33 MIMI: Believe me, you've always stood out from the crowd.
- 34 PETUNIA: (*Noticing the wire*) Your headphones aren't connected
35 to anything.

- 1 FESTER: Yeah they are; they're connected to my ears.
- 2 GRANDMA: (*Off-stage*) Go on, I say! Get out of my kitchen!
- 3 FESTER: (*Turns to OSWALD.*) Cousin Petunia ...
- 4 OSWALD: I'm Oswald.
- 5 FESTER: (*Turns to PETUNIA.*) Cousin Petunia, would you help
- 6 me explain my new look to Grandma, please? (*PETE comes*
- 7 *running out of the kitchen.*)
- 8 OSWALD: What's goin' on in the kitchen?
- 9 FESTER: (*Stumbling to PETE*) Grandma, I'm sorry — I'll get in
- 10 the kitchen right now.
- 11 PETE: What? Who are you?
- 12 OSWALD: Fester, this is Cousin Pete.
- 13 PETE: Fester?
- 14 OSWALD: That's right. He's cool now. What was Grandma
- 15 Taylor yelling about?
- 16 PETE: I spilled grease on the floor, broke her best mixing bowl,
- 17 and accidentally let one of her best stewing squirrels loose
- 18 out the back door. That woman gets upset over the
- 19 smallest things.
- 20 GRANDMA: (*Appearing at the kitchen window*) Somebody better
- 21 tell Fester Taylor to git his rump in here if he wants to see
- 22 New Year's. I just got a big order over the phone, and the
- 23 grill ain't been fired up one time.
- 24 OSWALD: (*Standing in front of FESTER*) We'll find him,
- 25 Grandma Taylor.
- 26 GRANDMA: I'll get this order started. By the way — Ozzy, get
- 27 my squirrel back in here! I can't make my secret gravy
- 28 without it!
- 29 OSWALD: Yes ma'am, Grandma Taylor. (*Turning back to the rest*)
- 30 Somebody talk some sense into Mr. Cool Dude before
- 31 Grandma puts him over her knee. Oh, I almost forgot —
- 32 Judge Galloway should be showing up any minute.
- 33 PETE: I still can't believe you invited him all the way out here
- 34 for Christmas dinner.
- 35 OSWALD: I need that job if I'm ever going to make a name for

- 1 myself in the legal world. Don't worry — I'm sure he'll
2 think this place is quaint.
- 3 **PETE:** But he's a big-time judge — an important man.
- 4 **OSWALD:** I'm not worried. I'll have him eating out of my hand.
- 5 **GRANDMA:** (*Off-stage*) I need my squirrel!
- 6 **OSWALD:** (*Yelling toward the kitchen*) Comin', Grandma Taylor!
7 (*He exits into the kitchen.*)
- 8 **PETE:** (*Looking FESTER up and down*) What's going on here?
- 9 **PETUNIA:** Fester is changing his image.
- 10 **FESTER:** What do I look like to you, Cousin Pete?
- 11 **PETE:** Well, if you really want to know ...
- 12 **PETUNIA:** Be careful, Pete.
- 13 **PETE:** You look very ... unique, Fester.
- 14 **FESTER:** Is unique anything like cool?
- 15 **MIMI:** (*To PETE*) What do you expect from someone who
16 thought the three wise men were firemen?
- 17 **FESTER:** Well, the Bible said they came from afar. Besides, that
18 was a long time ago. I'm grewed up now.
- 19 **MIMI:** It was last year.
- 20 **FESTER:** Look, here's somethin' else the magazine taught me.
21 (*He brings a laptop computer out of a bag he carries on his*
22 *shoulder, opens it, and sets it on the table. He sits down and*
23 *pretends to type on the laptop.*) Now, if a chick saw me
24 dressed like this and typin' on this here computer, she
25 wouldn't be able to resist. (*PETE, PETUNIA, and MIMI can't*
26 *help but laugh behind FESTER'S back. A city lady, MS.*
27 *MARTIN, enters from outside.*)
- 28 **PETUNIA:** Fester, here's your chance to try it out.
- 29 **FESTER:** (*Becoming suddenly nervous*) But I ain't had no practice
30 yet.
- 31 **PETE:** Shhhh, just give it your best shot. (*PETUNIA, MIMI, and*
32 *PETE rush to the corner to watch.*)
- 33 **MS. MARTIN:** (*As she carries on her conversation with FESTER,*
34 *FESTER never looks up from his laptop.*) Excuse me, I'm from
35 out of town, and I was wondering how you get to Madison

1 from here.

2 FESTER: Well, sometimes I walk and sometimes I take my
3 pickup truck.

4 MS. MARTIN: No, I mean, how should I drive there?

5 FESTER: From the front seat would be safest.

6 MS. MARTIN: Never mind. While I'm here, I was wondering if
7 I could get something for my sister?

8 FESTER: Depends on how much you want for her.

9 MS. MARTIN: Well ... uh ... merry Christmas.

10 FESTER: *(looking up for the first time)* Wait — ain't you noticed
11 anything about me?

12 MS. MARTIN: Yes, your train of thought doesn't have a
13 caboose.

14 FESTER: No ma'am, I'm on my laptop lookin' into buyin' some
15 stock.

16 MS. MARTIN: *(Turning to leave)* That's nice. Good night.

17 FESTER: That's what cool people do, you know: buy a heap of
18 stock.

19 MS. MARTIN: What kind of stock are you buying?

20 FESTER: Chickens mostly. Might buy a few cows while I'm at
21 it.

22 MS. MARTIN: *(Taken aback, responds sarcastically)* You're sitting
23 on a gold mine.

24 FESTER: Heck no, this chair ain't worth nothin'.

25 MS. MARTIN: *(Her sarcasm continues.)* Are you trying to tell me
26 that you're an entrepreneur?

27 FESTER: No ma'am, I'm a Taylor. Fester Taylor's my name,
28 coolness is my game. What's your game, you groovy chick,
29 you?

30 MS. MARTIN: I just so happen to be a psychiatrist. You know,
31 a head doctor.

32 FESTER: I read about that in my magazine. I bet you come
33 across your share of cuckoos in your line of work.

34 MS. MARTIN: And sometimes when I'm just asking for
35 directions.

1 FESTER: I know what you mean. I have this one friend that
 2 you could really study on. He's a few pickles short of a jar,
 3 he's about a bubble off plumb, his cheese has done slid off
 4 his cracker —

5 MS. MARTIN: (*Stopping him*) I get the picture.

6 FESTER: Bless his heart, I guess it wasn't all his fault. He was
 7 real poor as a kid. That family was so poor that when he
 8 was just a young'un, he didn't have a stitch of clothes ...

9 MS. MARTIN: (*Trying to leave*) Well, I guess I'd better just ...

10 FESTER: Finally, when he was fourteen, they bought him a hat
 11 and let him look out the window. (*MS. MARTIN slips out*
 12 *the door.*) 'Cause then again, ever'body can't be as cool as
 13 me. (*Looks around.*) Hey, where did she go? (*PETE*
 14 *approaches FESTER as PETUNIA speaks.*)

15 PETUNIA: She had to leave, Fester.

16 FESTER: (*To PETE*) How did I do bein' cool, Cousin Petunia?

17 PETE: I'm Pete. You did fine, Fester. Just fine. (*OSWALD*
 18 *appears at the kitchen window wearing a chef's hat.*)

19 OSWALD: Fester, you'd better get yourself in here at once!

20 FESTER: But I ain't broke the news to Grandma yet. She won't
 21 understand my cool ways.

22 OSWALD: I'll help you tell her. Come on! I know nothing about
 23 kitchen equipment.

24 PETE: Go on, Fester. I'll put your laptop up for you. (*Taps a few*
 25 *keys and closes laptop.*)

26 FESTER: (*Shakes the arm of an overcoat hanging on the coat rack*)
 27 I'm much obliged, Cousin Pete. (*Reluctantly yells to the*
 28 *kitchen.*) Comin', Grandma. (*He runs into the wall, finally*
 29 *finds the kitchen door, and exits.*)

30 PETE: (*Shouting after him*) And take off those sunglasses!

31 MIMI: (*Aside*) As you can see, things were beginning to get very
 32 interesting. Little did any of us realize just how much more
 33 interesting it *would* become. (*End aside. GLENDA MAE and*
 34 *BRENDA MAE enter from outside. GLENDA MAE is clutching*
 35 *a small cardboard box.*)

- 1 GLENDA MAE: Howdy, howdy, howdy!
- 2 MIMI: (*Aside*) See what I mean?
- 3 PETE: Merry Christmas, Glenda Mae. Aren't you supposed to
4 be helping Grandma Taylor in the café this year?
- 5 BRENDA MAE: Glenda Mae ain't got time neither, Cousin Pete.
6 She is workin' on somethin' *real* important.
- 7 GLENDA MAE: Somethin' that will get my name in the record
8 books and make me famous.
- 9 PETE: (*Approaching*) What's in the box?
- 10 BRENDA MAE: It's a live —
- 11 GLENDA MAE: Don't tell 'em, Brenda Mae — we might get in
12 trouble.
- 13 BRENDA MAE: Next to me winnin' Miss Cricket County, it's
14 goin' to be the most excitin' thing to ever happen in these
15 parts.
- 16 GLENDA MAE: I could even get on TV.
- 17 PETUNIA: If it's that important, then you've got to tell us.
- 18 GLENDA MAE: Nope. My lips are soiled.
- 19 BRENDA MAE: Glenda Mae, throw me the chicken! (*GLENDA*
20 *MAE pitches the box to BRENDA MAE and they exit to the*
21 *restroom.*)
- 22 PETE: (*Rushing to the restroom door*) Hey, come on — that's not
23 fair! (*Then turns to PETUNIA*) Did she just say *chicken*?
24 (*ELKIN rushes in through the front door with an envelope in his*
25 *hand.*)
- 26 ELKIN: Well, here it is! (*Moves to Center Stage.*) The official a-
27 mend-ment to Uncle Zeke's will!
- 28 PETE: (*Rushing to him*) That's it, huh? Can I see it?
- 29 ELKIN: Sorry, Cousin Pete — but the instructions clearly say
30 that it ain't to be read until *after* the café closes tonight.
- 31 MIMI: Can I touch it? I just want to touch it. Pleeeaaaase?
- 32 ELKN: (*Holding it above his head*) I'm just as sorry as I can be,
33 Cousin Mimi, but rules is rules.
- 34 MIMI: (*Pretends to cry.*) But I'm working so hard today, waiting
35 on irate customers and wiping icky stuff off dirty tables,

- 1 and all I want to do is touch it. (*She blows her nose.*)
- 2 **ELKIN:** (*Feeling sorry for her*) Well, OK — I guess it won't hurt
- 3 just to touch it real easy-like.
- 4 **MIMI:** Thank you, Elkin. (*Aside*) Works every time. (*End aside.*
- 5 *MIMI gently takes the envelope, then quickly runs to the other*
- 6 *side of the café.*) Just one look, that's all I want. Just one
- 7 teeny tiny look!
- 8 **PETE:** (*Rushes over and takes the envelope from her.*) Mimi, stop it.
- 9 We will wait like everyone else. (*He pretends to drop the*
- 10 *envelope by accident. He picks it up.*) Drat! Nothing fell out.
- 11 **ELKIN:** (*Crosses to PETE and takes the letter, folds it, and puts it in*
- 12 *his back pocket.*) Now, Cousin Pete — we'll all find out in
- 13 due time what the a-mend-ment says. All I know is
- 14 Buckshot said it's goin' to make somebody who didn't get
- 15 nothin' at the last readin' real happy this time.
- 16 **PETUNIA:** Buckshot?
- 17 **ELKIN:** He's Cricket County's only lawyer. He practices out of
- 18 a little room in the back of his taxidermy shop.
- 19 **MIMI:** (*Aside*) My nerves can't take it. Between you and me, I've
- 20 just got to find out how much we're getting out of this deal
- 21 — I've just got to. (*End aside*)
- 22 **ELKIN:** Where's all the customers? This place should be packed.
- 23 **PETE:** Uh, well, you see ... it seems ... Oh, look! Customers as we
- 24 speak. (*JUDGE GALLOWAY and his wife enter through the front*
- 25 *door.*)
- 26 **PETUNIA:** Finally! (*She rushes to them.*) Merry Christmas, and
- 27 welcome to the Cricket County Café. Table for two?
- 28 **JUDGE:** We're a little confused. We were given this address by
- 29 Oswald Tippienhimer. We're supposed to be eating Christmas
- 30 Eve dinner with him tonight.
- 31 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** Well, I sure hope this is a mistake. We can't be
- 32 eating *here*.
- 33 **PETE:** (*Rushing to them*) You must be the gentleman Elkin has
- 34 been looking for. Mr. Galloway?
- 35 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** That's Judge Galloway, young man.

- 1 JUDGE: Dear, it's Christmas — there's no need for formalities.
- 2 MRS. GALLOWAY: (*Moving around the diner*) George, why on earth
- 3 were our plans to eat at that lavish French restaurant
- 4 changed to this rancid place?
- 5 ELKIN: (*With pride*) You just got lucky, I reckon.
- 6 PETUNIA: You see, Mr. —
- 7 MRS. GALLOWAY: Judge!
- 8 PETUNIA: I'm sorry. You see, *Judge* Galloway, Oswald had a last
- 9 minute emergency.
- 10 PETE: Yes. You see, the poor, sweet lady who owns this café
- 11 needed help in order to cater to her horde of Christmas Eve
- 12 customers.
- 13 JUDGE: (*Looking around at the empty café*) Yes, this place is really
- 14 hopping.
- 15 ELKIN: Yes, well, everyone should be pouring in at any moment.
- 16 PETUNIA: And the poor old woman — everyone calls her
- 17 Grandma — just can't get around as well as she used to.
- 18 MIMI: Bless her heart, she can't see that well anymore. (*Sits and*
- 19 *begins applying makeup.*)
- 20 PETE: That's right. Her glasses are so thick that when she
- 21 looks at a map, she can see people waving.
- 22 PETUNIA: Out of the kindness of his heart, instead of turning
- 23 her away and leaving the helpless old granny high and
- 24 dry, Oswald decided to have *you* come here. That way he
- 25 wouldn't have to cancel the dinner with you that he's been
- 26 looking forward to for soooo long.
- 27 MRS. GALLOWAY: It's a good thing we had access to our
- 28 private helicopter. We never would have made it out here
- 29 otherwise.
- 30 JUDGE: Ah, it was no trouble at all, really. Actually, it was
- 31 quite adventurous. These mountains are rather high up,
- 32 aren't they?
- 33 PETE: It will mean a lot to Oswald that you went to all this
- 34 trouble.
- 35 MRS. GALLOWAY: It was either that or have *me* cook.

- 1 JUDGE: So I looked lovingly at my wife and said, "Let's eat out
2 tonight and give the smoke detector a rest." (*He laughs at*
3 *his own wit.*)
- 4 MRS. GALLOWAY: George, don't start with me — I am *not* in
5 the mood.
- 6 JUDGE: It wouldn't hurt you to just go with the flow
7 sometimes, (*Through his teeth*) dear.
- 8 PETE: (*Slapping his hands together*) I tell you what, why don't I
9 go tell Oswald you're here? (*He runs into the kitchen.*)
10 Oswald!
- 11 ELKIN: Welcome to our humble little diner. I hope you like the
12 vittles here.
- 13 MRS. GALLOWAY: Just find us a seat. My feet are killing me.
- 14 ELKIN: No wonder, ma'am. Your shoes look to be about two
15 sizes too small.
- 16 PETUNIA: (*Saving the moment*) Elkin, let's get them seated, shall
17 we? Here we are. The best seats in the house. (*JUDGE sits.*)
- 18 MRS. GALLOWAY: (*Standing behind her chair*) George, aren't you
19 forgetting something?
- 20 JUDGE: Of course — how silly of me. (*He stands, takes off his*
21 *coat, and sits again.*)
- 22 MRS. GALLOWAY: (*Pulls out her chair herself and sits.*) You don't
23 care about me anymore.
- 24 JUDGE: (*Looking at his menu*) Don't start that again.
- 25 MRS. GALLOWAY: (*Wiping a tear from the corner of her eye,*
26 *speaking to ELKIN*) He doesn't realize it yet, but when
27 George married me, he got a prize.
- 28 ELKIN: What was it?
- 29 PETUNIA: (*Scolding*) Elkin!
- 30 MRS. GALLOWAY: Sometimes I wonder if he'll love me when
31 I'm old and gray.
- 32 ELKIN: Of course he does.
- 33 PETUNIA: (*Attempting to lighten the mood*) Could I bring you
34 something to drink while we wait for Oswald?
- 35 JUDGE: Bring me some coffee, and make it bitter and too

- 1 strong. And when you bring it out to me, I want you to
 2 yell at me.
- 3 PETUNIA: I don't understand.
- 4 JUDGE: (*As he glares at his WIFE*) I'm feeling a little homesick.
- 5 ELKIN: Oh, I get it. Your wife makes terrible —
- 6 PETUNIA: Elkin!
- 7 JUDGE: So you say the old lady who runs this place is in poor
 8 health?
- 9 PETUNIA: Yes sir, she can just barely get around anymore.
- 10 GRANDMA: (*Off-stage*) Fester Taylor, you get back this very
 11 minute! (*FESTER runs in from the kitchen with GRANDMA*
 12 *behind him holding up a rolling pin.*) You know you can't run
 13 out on me, so don't even try! (*FESTER stands to the left of*
 14 *the JUDGE's table while GRANDMA stands right of it.*) You
 15 get out of them ridiculous clothes this very instant! There
 16 is tons of work to be done in that kitchen!
- 17 FESTER: But Grandma, cool people just don't do things like
 18 work in the kitchen at their grandma's café.
- 19 GRANDMA: I never thought the day would come when my very
 20 own flesh and blood would sass me this way. Now for the
 21 last time, you get in your regular clothes!
- 22 JUDGE: *This* is the poor old lady who is on her last leg?
- 23 GRANDMA: (*Turns sharply to JUDGE.*) You just hush up. This
 24 don't concern you!
- 25 MRS. GALLOWAY: You can't tell the Judge to hush up.
- 26 GRANDMA: (*Noticing the fur around MRS. GALLOWAY's*
 27 *shoulders*) And don't you know critters ain't allowed in my
 28 café? Take that thing outside.
- 29 MRS. GALLOWAY: This, dear lady, is a chinchilla.
- 30 GRANDMA: I don't care if it's a ja - jackrabbit — it ain't eatin'
 31 in my diner!
- 32 PETUNIA: Grandma Taylor, it's a fur. An accessory. That's a
 33 beautiful wrap, Mrs. Galloway. Does it keep you warm?
- 34 JUDGE: (*Continuing to look at his menu*) I didn't buy it to keep
 35 her warm, I bought it to keep her quiet.

- 1 MIMI: (*Looking up from her makeup, aside*) **Ouch.** (*End aside and*
2 *back to her makeup*)
- 3 MRS. GALLOWAY: You see how he talks to me?
- 4 ELKIN: (*Referring to the way FESTER's dressed*) **Fester Taylor,**
5 **what is all this about? It's way past Halloween.**
- 6 FESTER: I'm just tryin' to be cool, Cousin Elkin.
- 7 ELKIN: Then go outside. It's ten degrees out there. (*OSWALD*
8 *and PETE rush in from the kitchen. OSWALD still wears his*
9 *chef's hat.*)
- 10 PETE: (*To OSWALD, pointing to JUDGE*) **There he is, right over**
11 **there.**
- 12 OSWALD: (*Crossing to JUDGE's table*) **Judge Galloway.** (*JUDGE*
13 *risers and OSWALD shakes his hand.*) **It's so good to see you,**
14 **sir. How was your flight?**
- 15 JUDGE: Mr. Tuppenhimer, it seems you have gotten us here on
16 false pretenses.
- 17 OSWALD: What do you mean, sir?
- 18 JUDGE: You told me that your grandmother was so old that
19 she was a waitress at the Last Supper.
- 20 GRANDMA: Who said that?
- 21 OSWALD: You must have misunderstood me, sir. What I meant
22 was Grandma can't get around the way she used to.
- 23 GRANDMA: Says who?
- 24 OSWALD: Oh, and Judge, you brought your lovely wife.
25 (*FESTER'S trying to tiptoe out without being noticed.*)
- 26 GRANDMA: Fester, you git yourself back here! (*A chicken*
27 *clucking sound comes from the restroom.*)
- 28 MIMI: What was that?
- 29 PETUNIA: Look how lovely this is. Why not relax and enjoy a
30 nice Christmas Eve dinner? (*PETE rushes over and whispers*
31 *in PETUNIA'S ear.*)
- 32 JUDGE: That sounds just fine, young lady.
- 33 GRANDMA: Can you believe what these young'uns are comin'
34 to? Who would have thought my favorite grandson would
35 talk to his granny like he is?

- 1 ELKIN: Don't worry, Grandma — I'll talk some sense into
 2 Fester. Look, Fester, here's your ax. You know how much
 3 you like cuttin' firewood with it. *(To JUDGE)* This ax is
 4 very special to Fester. It's been in the family for two
 5 hundred years, and it's only had four new handles and two
 6 new heads.
- 7 FESTER: I don't play with axes no more, neither.
- 8 OSWALD: *(Nervous smile)* Well, now, isn't this cozy?
- 9 MRS. GALLOWAY: *(Referring to GRANDMA)* Not with Grandma
 10 Moses hovering over me.
- 11 PETE: *(To GRANDMA)* Did I hear the telephone ringing?
 12 *(PETUNIA rings a small triangle.)* It may be another take-
 13 out order.
- 14 GRANDMA: *(As she stands and heads for the kitchen)* Fester, I
 15 ain't done with you. If I have to get a hickory switch after
 16 you, I will.
- 17 ELKIN: I'll help you in the kitchen, Grandma. *(GRANDMA and*
 18 *ELKIN exit into the kitchen.)*
- 19 MIMI: *(Stands and pulls PETUNIA Stage Left.)* Petunia, I've just
 20 got to see what that amendment says we're getting. I've got
 21 a plan. Will you help me?
- 22 PETUNIA: Mimi, I don't know.
- 23 MRS. GALLOWAY: *(Referring to OSWALD's hat)* Must you wear
 24 that hat at the table?
- 25 OSWALD: *(Snatches it off.)* Sorry. *(They talk silently. MIMI and*
 26 *PETUNIA carry on a silent conversation.)*
- 27 PETE: Fester, it's not a good idea to talk to your grandmother
 28 that way. She practically raised you.
- 29 FESTER: I can't help it if she don't understand what it means
 30 to be cool. *(Enthusiastically shaking his finger at the air)* And
 31 if cool is what makes me happy, then that's what I'll be —
 32 and I don't care what anybody else says.
- 33 PETE: Fester, I'm over here. This just isn't like you. *(They*
 34 *continue to talk silently. BRENDA MAE and GLENDA MAE*
 35 *enter from the restroom area.)*

- 1 BRENDA MAE: Glenda Mae, why in the world did you let that
2 chicken loose in the bathroom?
- 3 GLENDA MAE: 'Cause we've got to keep her warm until it's
4 time to pluck her.
- 5 BRENDA MAE: That bird is goin' plumb crazy all cooped up in
6 there. Are you sure chicken pluckin' is the best way to get
7 your name in the world record book?
- 8 GLENDA MAE: You know good and well I'm the fastest chicken
9 plucker in all of Cricket County. This is the perfect way to
10 make a name for myself.
- 11 BRENDA MAE: We just can't leave that chicken flyin' around
12 in the bathroom. Besides, I got a lot more campaignin' to
13 do.
- 14 GLENDA MAE: Just until she has time to calm down a little.
- 15 BRENDA MAE: Come on, it's your turn to help me. *(They exit*
16 *out the front door as LLOYD enters carrying a wooden manger.)*
- 17 LLOYD: Merry Christmas to you, girls.
- 18 GLENDA MAE: We'd like to stop and chat a while, Mr. Lloyd,
19 but we're on important business right now. *(ELKIN enters*
20 *from the kitchen as he shouts back through the door.)*
- 21 ELKIN: Don't worry, Grandma, I'm sure they'll call back. Well,
22 howdy, Mr. Lloyd. Merry Christmas to you.
- 23 LLOYD: Merry Christmas, Elkin.
- 24 ELKIN: You fixed Grandma's manger — she'll be tickled to
25 death.
- 26 LLOYD: It was just a loose screw. She's sturdy as ever now. I'll
27 just put it over here with the rest of the Nativity. *(Looks*
28 *around the café.)* Where's Mary and Joseph?
- 29 ELKIN: That's funny, Grandma usually sets the Nativity up
30 over here by the jukebox.
- 31 LLOYD: *(Pointing)* Look at that plain ol' Christmas tree.
- 32 ELKIN: That's Fester's job, and I'm afraid he ain't quite been
33 hisself lately. As a matter of fact, ever'thing is a little crazy
34 this year.
- 35 LLOYD: *(Setting the manger beside the jukebox)* Well, you can't

1 have Christmas in Imogene Taylor's café without the
 2 Nativity set her daddy built.

3 **ELKIN:** I'll find it before the Christmas story is read. Would
 4 you like a cup of eggnog?

5 **LLOYD:** Thanks just the same, but I've got to be goin'. Me and
 6 the wife still got to deliver them gifts over at the children's
 7 shelter.

8 **ELKIN:** I was over there helpin' 'em out earlier.

9 **LLOYD:** The twins was supposed to help out this mornin', but
 10 they never showed up.

11 **ELKIN:** They're all wrapped up in contests and stuff.

12 **LLOYD:** Well, I'd better run. Merry Christmas to you and yours.

13 **ELKIN:** Merry Christmas. (*LLOYD exits. ELKIN turns back to the*
 14 *manger and begins to examine it.*)

15 **MIMI:** (*To PETUNIA*) Here's our chance. The letter is in his back
 16 pocket. I'll throw my purse down and when he bends over
 17 to pick it up for me, you grab the letter.

18 **PETE:** (*To FESTER*) So you think about what I said while I check
 19 to see if Grandma Taylor needs help in the kitchen. (*PETE*
 20 *heads for the kitchen. MIMI drops her purse, and PETE stops and*
 21 *picks it up.*) Here you go. (*He hands it to MIMI and exits.*)

22 **MIMI:** (*Sarcastically*) The first time all year he picked to be a
 23 gentleman.

24 **ELKIN:** (*Looking up from the manger*) I beg your pardon?

25 **MIMI:** Oh, nothing, nothing at all. Just go on with what you were
 26 doing.

27 **ELKIN:** I was just lookin' over this manger. It's supposed to go
 28 with the rest of the Nativity set, but I don't know where it
 29 is.

30 **MIMI:** Could you see if "Jingle Bells" is on the jukebox, Elkin?

31 **ELKIN:** Okey-doke. (*He bends over and MIMI points to the letter, but*
 32 *PETUNIA shakes her head, indicating she doesn't want to do it.*
 33 *MIMI tries to prod her over toward ELKIN, but PETUNIA won't*
 34 *budge. ELKIN turns back to the girls just in time for MIMI and*
 35 *PETUNIA to act innocent.*) I don't see "Jingle Bells," Cousin

1 Mimi.

2 **MIMI:** (*Sassy*) Of course you don't.

3 **PETUNIA:** That's a beautiful manger, Cousin Elkin. So authentic.

4 **ELKIN:** But it just ain't a Christmas manger without the baby

5 Jesus in it. My whole family ain't focused on Christmas

6 this year. Fester gettin' all stubborn. Brenda Mae and her

7 contest. Glenda Mae and whatever she's dabblin' in, and

8 to top it off, Baby Jesus is missin' in action.

9 **PETUNIA:** Maybe things will quiet down in a little while.

10 (*GLEND A MAE enters and heads to the restroom with a large*

11 *net.*)

12 **OSWALD:** Glenda Mae, could you bring us some menus, please?

13 **GLEND A MAE:** (*Points to the restroom.*) But I'm a little busy right

14 now ...

15 **ELKIN:** (*Crossing to OSWALD's table*) Glenda Mae, we have a

16 party of three. I'm sure this here gentleman and his

17 mother are hungry as a horse.

18 **GLEND A MAE:** (*Sighs.*) OK, Cousin Elkin.

19 **GRANDMA:** (*Appears at the kitchen window.*) Elkin, I need you in

20 the kitchen! Pronto!

21 **ELKIN:** Grandma, where's the Nativity set?

22 **GRANDMA:** Still in the attic, I reckon. I can't get nobody to set

23 it up for me. (*She disappears.*)

24 **PETUNIA:** Come on, Mimi. We'll see if we can find it.

25 **MIMI:** But I want my money. (*They exit to the kitchen.*)

26 **ELKIN:** Fester, I know you're cool and ever'thing, but I need

27 your help gettin' this place to look like Christmas.

28 **FESTER:** (*Crosses and talks to the coat rack.*) But Cousin Elkin,

29 can't you see that I'm just tryin' to do my own thang?

30 **ELKIN:** (*He taps FESTER on the shoulder. FESTER turns to him,*

31 *and ELKIN removes the sunglasses.*) Take a five-minute break

32 from doin' your thang and run to the storage room, fetch

33 that box of Christmas tree decorations, and bring it to me.

34 **FESTER:** (*Takes sunglasses and puts them back on.*) Sorry, Cousin

35 Elkin, but my magazine don't say nothin' about decoratin'

1 Christmas trees bein' a cool thing to do.

2 **ELKIN:** Fine. I'll decorate it myself. We got to get this place in

3 shape quick. After we decorate the tree, we'll see about

4 gettin' the Nativity set up. (*FESTER feels his way as he exits*

5 *to the storage room as ELKIN snatches OSWALD'S hat off his*

6 *head, puts it on, and exits to the kitchen. GLENDA MAE is*

7 *staring toward the restroom door.*)

8 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** (*Attempting to gain GLENDA MAE's attention*)

9 Excuse me. Excuse me. I must say, the service here is

10 terrible.

11 **GLENDA MAE:** How do you know? You ain't had none yet.

12 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** I don't need a menu. I'll start with some

13 caviar.

14 **GLENDA MAE:** (*Writing on a pad*) One roasted chicken comin'

15 up.

16 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** Why did you write down chicken when I

17 said caviar?

18 **GLENDA MAE:** 'Cause I know what chicken is.

19 **OSWALD:** Mrs. Galloway, I think they may be fresh out of

20 caviar.

21 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** Out of caviar? I am aghast!

22 **GLENDA MAE:** You're what?

23 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** Aghast! Aghast!

24 **GLENDA MAE:** (*Writing*) One glass of Alka Seltzer comin' up.

25 And for you, mister?

26 **OSWALD:** Glenda Mae, this gentleman isn't a mister. His title is

27 Judge. Judge Galloway.

28 **GLENDA MAE:** (*Taken aback, to JUDGE*) You mean to tell me

29 you're an honest-to-goodness judge?

30 **JUDGE:** Right now I'm famished.

31 **GLENDA MAE:** I'm pretty sure Oswald said Judge.

32 **MRS. GALLOWAY:** Young lady, my husband *is* a magistrate, a

33 justice of the peace. Now, please take our order.

34 **GLENDA MAE:** I surely will. (*She pours a glass of tea and sets the*

35 *glass in front of them with three straws.*) Here's y'all

1 somethin' to drink and three straws. I got to check on
2 somethin' in the kitchen.

3 OSWALD: (*Admonishing*) Glenda Mae ...

4 MRS. GALLOWAY: Young lady, what's this fly doing in this
5 glass of tea?

6 GLENDA MAE: Coolin' off. It's real hot in the kitchen. (*Tries to*
7 *leave again.*)

8 JUDGE: (*Looking his menu over*) Wait a minute, server. What's
9 the chef's surprise?

10 GLENDA MAE: Uh, she don't wash her hands. I'll be right
11 back. (*BRENDA MAE enters from outside carrying a large*
12 *brown paper bag.*)

13 BRENDA MAE: Glenda Mae, let me show you my costume for
14 the talent portion of the contest.

15 GLENDA MAE: Not now, I've got somethin' real important to
16 tell you. (*Pulls BRENDA MAE Downstage away from the*
17 *JUDGE's table.*)

18 BRENDA MAE: Glenda Mae, I ain't got time.

19 GLENDA MAE: It's about winnin' the contest.

20 BRENDA MAE: I got time.

21 GLENDA MAE: See that fancy city slicker sittin' over there
22 with Cousin Oswald?

23 BRENDA MAE: Yeah.

24 GLENDA MAE: Well, they just let it slip that that there feller is
25 an honest-to-goodness judge.

26 BRENDA MAE: The dickens you say?

27 GLENDA MAE: It's a fact. Cousin Oswald spilled the beans,
28 and then they tried to cover it up. But that's what they
29 said: judge.

30 BRENDA MAE: He's probably secretly goin' around checkin' on
31 the contestants. Now, don't let on that we know anything.
32 Just go back over there and act natural. I got a plan to
33 get that judge to remember who I am. (*She runs and exits*
34 *through the kitchen door. GLENDA MAE rushes back to the*
35 *table. She's visibly nervous trying not to give away what she*

- 1 *knows. She grabs mustard and ketchup bottles from another*
 2 *table and sets them on their table.) Here's your mustard and*
 3 *ketchup. Can I get you anything else?*
- 4 OSWALD: But Glenda Mae, we haven't ordered anything yet.
- 5 GLENDA MAE: Well, what are you waitin' for?
- 6 MRS. GALLOWAY: I don't have to take this.
- 7 JUDGE: Please sit down, Ramona.
- 8 OSWALD: Glenda Mae, we'll take the three turkey specials.
- 9 GLENDA MAE: We don't have no turkey. Fester never shot it.
- 10 OSWALD: Roast beef?
- 11 GLENDA MAE: The cow ran away 'cause Brenda Mae forgot to
 12 close the gate.
- 13 OSWALD: How about the chicken?
- 14 GRANDMA: (*Appearing at the kitchen window holding up a hatchet*)
 15 Glenda Mae, have you seen my chicken anywhere?
- 16 GLENDA MAE: No ma'am, she ain't in the bathroom!
- 17 GRANDMA: I didn't reckon she was in the bathroom. She's up
 18 and disappeared. (*GRANDMA vanishes.*)
- 19 GLENDA MAE: (*Turning back to her table*) There'll be a slight
 20 delay on the chicken.
- 21 OSWALD: Why don't you tell us what you *do* have?
- 22 GLENDA MAE: Well, Fester run over a possum this afternoon
 23 on his way to work.
- 24 MRS. GALLOWAY: Good heavens.
- 25 OSWALD: Just bring us out some rolls, Glenda Mae.
- 26 GLENDA MAE: And would you like them rolls in the form of
 27 biscuits or cornbread?
- 28 OSWALD: Biscuits.
- 29 GLENDA MAE: Cornbread would be easier.
- 30 OSWALD: (*Impatiently*) OK, fine — we'll take cornbread. Shoot
 31 — just dip a napkin in gravy. We're starving here!
- 32 GLENDA MAE: I'll be right back. (*She exits to the kitchen.*)
- 33 OSWALD: Judge Galloway, I've been working for the Grums and
 34 Tanner law firm for five years now. I just finished law
 35 school and passed the bar.



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