

SHAKESPEARE IN CRICKET COUNTY

by Eddie McPherson



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Shakespeare In Cricket County

A one-act hillbilly comedy

by Eddie McPherson

CAST OF CHARACTERS

COUNTY BUNCH:

ELKIN: Head of the country clan. Good old boy who is trusting and naive.

FESTER: Elkin's cousin who lives with him. He's a big, burly type who loves his ax.

GLENDA MAE: One in a set of identical twins who look nothing alike.

BRENDA MAE: The other twin. These girls are always happy. Always.

GRANDMA: Cantankerous and head over heels for Old-Man Bifford.

EDNA STUMP: Grandma's best friend who is also after the old man.

MR. BIFFORD: Cricket County's oldest living swinging bachelor.

WOMAN: Shows up in different disguises at the cabin door looking for a handout.

CITY BUNCH:

OSWALD: Smart and worldly. His heart is in the right place when it comes to taking care of his country cousins.

MIMI: Spoiled and self-centered.

PETE: Oswald's brother who does pretty much whatever Oswald says.

PETUNIA: Not quite as spoiled as MiMi and wants to protect her sister from the harshness of the country.

TRI-COUNTY THEATRE COMPANY BUNCH:

MRS. FEATHERRED: Prim and proper. The epitome of culture and class.

PATTY: Mrs. Featherred's nervous assistant.

ROMEO: An actor who takes his role very seriously.

JULIET: Quotes Shakespeare as though her life depended upon it.

PRODUCTION NOTES:**PROPS:**

Phone receiver; telephone; shotgun or rifle; rolls of play money; tin cup; nail apron; automatic stud finder; small ax; business card; two frilly bonnets; two baskets of “berries”; bag containing a beard, hat, and glasses; newspaper; hand-held mirror; tissues, cell phone; glass of water; purses; two scripts; jacket with paint on its back; jacket with holes in it; jacket covered with bright, colorful patches; old pair of overalls; two small burlap bags; garden hoe; pitchfork; chicken puppet; skunk puppet; deer head puppet; squirrel puppet; raccoon puppet; fish; leash; can of “mace”; banana; rope; shoebox; checkered tablecloth.

MRS. FEATHERRED’S JACKET: You will need to have three identical jackets: One with the paint on it (the paint is already on the jacket when she enters, but the audience doesn’t need to see this until she stands up after sitting in the “painted” chair); one with the holes in it (after it’s been washed down by the creek); and one with the bright, colorful patches all over it.

SET:

The set is a mountain cabin. The furniture is simple and rustic. The front door is Upstage Right, a large open window is beside the door. The door to the bedroom is Upstage Left and the backdoor is Stage Left. A table sits somewhere Stage Right covered with a red checkered tablecloth that is almost long enough to touch the floor.

Sound Effects:

Dog barking, car starting and tires squealing, hammering, cell phone ringtone.

NOTES

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, this play is a farce. 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!

SYNOPSIS

Mrs. Featherred's motives are simple: Introduce a bit of culture to the fine, simple folks of Cricket County. Then again, nothing is quite so simple in this neck of the woods.

Mrs. Featherred, after learning of the Taylors' recent inheritance, calls on Elkin Taylor and his "kin" to help her bring Shakespeare to Cricket County. Elkin agrees but misunderstands and thinks William Shakespeare himself will be paying a visit.

When Grandma Taylor's new love interest shows up at the Taylor cabin, he's mistaken for the great playwright and everything goes from confusing to downright haywire.

Misunderstandings, puns, one-liners, mistaken identity — it's all here.

SCENE ONE

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(At rise: OSWALD is extreme Stage Right or Left holding a phone receiver, its cord stretching to Offstage. ELKIN TAYLOR sits inside his newly constructed country cabin [main stage] cleaning a shotgun or rifle. ELKIN's phone rings. He puts down his gun and answers the phone.)

ELKIN: *(Awkwardly speaks into the phone.)* **Howdy there.**

OSWALD: **Hello, is this the Taylor residence?**

ELKIN: **Yes sir.**

OSWALD: *(Smiles.)* **It's Cousin Oswald.**

ELKIN: **No sir, I'm Cousin Elkin.**

OSWALD: **Yes, I ...**

ELKIN: **You can't talk to Cousin Oswald, he lives in the city.**

OSWALD: *I'm* **in the city.**

ELKIN: **You are? Tell Cousin Oswald we said "hey."**

OSWALD: *(Rolling his eyes)* **He's right here, let me get him.**

(Pause) **Hello, Cousin Elkin?**

ELKIN: **Cousin Oswald, we was just talkin' about you.**

OSWALD: **I just called to see if the new phone we ordered for you was working.**

ELKIN: **Seems to be. This is the first time we've ever used it.**

Wait 'til I tell Fester our new tele-phone works. He's down at the outhouse working on the second story.

OSWALD: **Cousin Elkin, you have indoor plumbing now. There's no need for an outhouse.**

ELKIN: **You didn't hear me good. I said *two-story* outhouse. Yes sir, we sure are livin' high on the hog now.**

OSWALD: **I guess it's not easy having money when you've been dirt poor your whole life. *(There's a knock at the door of ELKIN's cabin.)***

ELKIN: **Hold on, somebody's at the door. *(He puts the receiver down and answers the door. An old WOMAN stands there.)* Can I help you?**

WOMAN: *(Holding out a tin cup)* **Help a poor wider woman with**

1 **five younguns.**

2 **ELKIN: Why sure, I'll help.** (*Pulls a roll of cash out of his pocket*
3 *and hands it to her.*) **Just peel off what you need.**

4 **WOMAN:** (*She peels off most of the roll.*) **Oh, thank you, kind sir!**
5 **Thank you.** (*She hands him back a very small roll of cash as*
6 *ELKIN shuts the door and returns to the phone.*) **I'm back.**

7 **OSWALD: I sure wish you and your family would move here to**
8 **the city so we could help you keep an eye on your new-**
9 **found fortune.**

10 **ELKIN: We just ain't cut out for the big city, Cousin Oswald.**

11 **OSWALD: At least be careful. Word has spread pretty quickly**
12 **of you inheriting your Uncle Zeke's diamond and coal**
13 **mines.**

14 **ELKIN: I wouldn't worry none, cuz.** (*Knock at the cabin door*)
15 **Just a minute.** (*He answers the door again.*) **Can I help you?**

16 **WOMAN: There was a big fire just across the ridge! Me and my**
17 **husband have lost ever'thing.**

18 **ELKIN: You poor thing.** (*Presenting the cash*) **Here, just peel off**
19 **what you need.**

20 **WOMAN: Bless you, kind sir, bless you.** (*She hands back a much*
21 *smaller roll of money.*)

22 **ELKIN: It sure does my heart good to have the means to help**
23 **out my neighbor in need.**

24 **OSWALD: Elkin, are you there? Hello?**

25 **ELKIN:** (*ELKIN shuts the door and returns to the phone.*) **Now,**
26 **what was we talkin' about?**

27 **OSWALD: Elkin, you've got to be careful of scammers. They'll**
28 **be comin' out of the woodwork.**

29 **ELKIN: Don't worry none, I had the cabin sprayed.**

30 **OSWALD: I'm talking about people who will try and cheat you**
31 **out of your money.**

32 **ELKIN: Cousin Oswald, I can spot a dirty thief a mile away.** (*A*
33 *knock at the door*) **Hold on.** (*He answers the door.*) **Can I help**
34 **you?**

35 **WOMAN: There is children dyin' in Outer Mongolia.**

- 1 **ELKIN:** Them poor babies. Just peel off what you need. *(She*
 2 *does and hands him back a single bill.)*
- 3 **WOMAN:** Bless you, kind sir, bless you.
- 4 **OSWALD:** Hello? Hello? Who keeps knocking at the door?
 5 Hello?
- 6 **ELKIN:** *(Shuts the door and returns to the phone.)* I'm back.
- 7 **OSWALD:** Elkin, I think we need to pay you a visit
- 8 **ELKIN:** We'd love to have you. There's plenty of room in our
 9 new bigger cabin we've built.
- 10 **OSWALD:** We're catching the first plane out tomorrow. Don't
 11 trust anybody until we get there. *(He exits with his phone*
 12 *receiver.)*
- 13 **ELKIN:** Bye, Cousin Oswald.
- 14 **GLENDA MAE:** *(Entering and running to ELKIN)* Is that Cousin
 15 Oswald on the new tele-phone? *(Grabs the receiver.)* Hello?
 16 Hello? Ain't nobody there.
- 17 **ELKIN:** He done said bye. Don't fret none. Him and our city
 18 cousins are comin' to pay us a visit tomorrow.
- 19 **GLENDA MAE:** Glory be! *(Exits through the front door as FESTER,*
 20 *wearing a nail apron and carrying a stud finder, enters the same*
 21 *way.)* Brenda Mae! Brenda Mae! Guess who's a-comin'
 22 tomorrow.
- 23 **ELKIN:** Fester, how's work on the outhouse comin'?
- 24 **FESTER:** Just terrible.
- 25 **ELKIN:** What's wrong?
- 26 **FESTER:** This here new stud finder ain't workin' right.
- 27 **ELKIN:** Stud finder, huh? *(He holds it up to his chest and moves it*
 28 *around. It beeps.)* Seems to work just fine.
- 29 **FESTER:** Let me see that. *(He holds it up to himself and there's*
 30 *silence.)*
- 31 **ELKIN:** Sometimes the truth hurts, little cousin. *(There's a*
 32 *knock at the front door.)* Land sakes. This place is busier
 33 than Miller's pond on openin' day of duck season.
 34 *(Handing FESTER a new roll of money)* Fester, answer the
 35 door and tell 'em to peel off what they need. I'll go check

- 1 **on your progress.** (*He exits out the back door then we hear him*
2 *scream.*)
- 3 **FESTER:** (*Shouting*) **Oh yeah, and I ain't had time to finish the**
4 **back porch neither!** (*FESTER opens the front door. A dog*
5 *barks wildly Offstage.*) **Get back, Mudhole! Get back!**
- 6 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*Stepping inside*) **He's a friendly little**
7 **fellow, isn't he?** (*FESTER shuts the door.*) **Good morning, my**
8 **name is Ms. Featherred. I represent the Tri-County**
9 **Theatre Company. Are you Elkin Taylor?**
- 10 **FESTER:** **No ma'am.** (*Pause*)
- 11 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** **Um, can I see Mr. Taylor?**
- 12 **FESTER:** (*Looks at the door where ELKIN exited.*) **Not from here**
13 **you can't.** (*Pause*)
- 14 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** **Perhaps I could come in and wait.**
- 15 **FESTER:** **Whatever cranks your tractor. In the meantime let**
16 **me show you somethin' new.** (*He retrieves and holds up an*
17 *ax.*)
- 18 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*Jumps back.*) **Oh my, is that a weapon?**
- 19 **FESTER:** **No silly, it's a ax. You want to touch it?**
- 20 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** **No, thank you. I'll just sit and wait for**
21 **Mr. Taylor.** (*She sits in a chair away from FESTER.*)
- 22 **FESTER:** **I wouldn't sit in that chair if I was you.**
- 23 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** **Because it's not comfortable?**
- 24 **FESTER:** **'Cause I just painted it.**
- 25 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*Jumps up and pulls off her jacket, holds it*
26 *up and looks at the back, which is covered in paint.*) **Oh dear,**
27 **it's ruined!**
- 28 **FESTER:** **Don't worry, I can repaint it.**
- 29 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** **My jacket is a mess.**
- 30 **FESTER:** **I'll get my sisters to wash it for you.** (*Shouting through*
31 *the window*) **Glenda Mae! Brenda Mae!** (*GLEND A and*
32 *BRENDA MAE enter from the front door but aren't seen by*
33 *FESTER.*) **Come on in here, you heifers! I got a job for you!**
34 (*He slams the door and turns to see the twins.*) **It's about time.**
- 35 **GLEND A MAE:** **What you hollerin' about?**

- 1 **FESTER:** (*Wads up the jacket and throws it to BRENDA MAE.*) Go
 2 wash this here city lady's fancy jacket.
- 3 **BRENDA MAE:** Who's she?
- 4 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** I'm Mrs. Featherred from the Tri-
 5 County Theatre ...
- 6 **GLEND A MAE:** (*Circling MRS. FEATHERRED*) Whooooo-eeee ...
 7 look at them fancy city duds, will you? I'm Glenda Mae
 8 and this here is my identical twin sister, Brenda Mae.
- 9 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** But you look nothing alike.
- 10 **BRENDA MAE:** You're right about that, I'm just a sliiiiight
 11 prettier.
- 12 **GLEND A MAE:** We'll clean this here coat right up for you Ms.
 13 Feather Bed.
- 14 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Featherred.
- 15 **GLEND A MAE:** Come on, Brenda Mae.
- 16 **BRENDA MAE:** I'm a-comin', Glenda Mae.
- 17 **FESTER:** Stop by the outhouse and tell Cousin Elkin
 18 somebody's here who wants to see him. (*They exit through*
 19 *the front door.*) Would you like a fresh glass of goat's milk?
- 20 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** I'm not thirsty. (*FESTER sits opposite of*
 21 *MRS. FEATHERRED.*)
- 22 **FESTER:** I reckon we can sit and chew the cud 'til Cousin
 23 Elkin gets here.
- 24 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Thank you, but I'm not hungry either.
- 25 **FESTER:** Huh? (*Pause*) Oh, I almost forgot. (*Pulls out the roll of*
 26 *money.*) Here you go; Cousin Elkin said to peel off what
 27 you need.
- 28 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*Handing it back*) No, thank you. Do you
 29 think Mr. Taylor will be coming in soon? I have an
 30 important proposal to make.
- 31 **FESTER:** Let me see. (*Goes to the window and sticks his head out*
 32 *as ELKIN enters the front door.*) Cousin Elkin!?
- 33 **ELKIN:** What do you want?
- 34 **FESTER:** (*Still out the window*) There's a fancy city lady here
 35 wantin' to propose to you!

- 1 **ELKIN:** *(Calmly)* I'll be right there.
- 2 **FESTER:** **OK!** *(He brings in his head and sees ELKIN. He calmly*
3 *turns to MRS. FEATHERRED.)* Here he is.
- 4 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Mr. Taylor, it's so good to meet you. I'm
5 Mrs. Featherred from the Tri-County Theatre Company.
6 *(Hands him a business card.)*
- 7 **ELKIN:** *(Looking at the card)* Are you the one who wants to
8 marry me?
- 9 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** No, I only want to converse.
- 10 **ELKIN:** No ma'am, leastwise not until we court proper. *(Grabs*
11 *the roll of money from FESTER.)* Just peel off what you need.
- 12 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** *(Handing it back)* No, thank you. *(ELKIN*
13 *returns to his table and gun cleaning.)*
- 14 **ELKIN:** Fester, go fetch Mrs. Feather Bed a nice, cold glass of
15 goat's milk.
- 16 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** No, thank you, Mr. Taylor — I only have
17 a moment and I would like to ask you a most important
18 question.
- 19 **ELKIN:** OK, shoot.
- 20 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Would you say that William Shakespeare,
21 the genius of the theatre world, is not truly appreciated
22 here in Cricket County?
- 23 **ELKIN:** Well ...
- 24 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Imagine my utter astonishment when I
25 learned how this great man has been ridiculed simply
26 because he has been so misunderstood.
- 27 **FESTER:** Bless his heart.
- 28 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** And I know that a man with your
29 financial means must understand the importance of
30 bringing the works of Shakespeare to the
31 underprivileged people here in your little community.
- 32 **ELKIN:** He needs work, huh? What does this Shakespeare
33 feller have to offer out here?
- 34 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** You name it.
- 35 **FESTER:** Can he mend a broke fence?

- 1 MRS. FEATHERRED: Well ...
- 2 ELKIN: Can he plow a garden or help paint barns?
- 3 MRS. FEATHERRED: Could it be you dear, poor souls have
4 never heard of William Shakespeare?
- 5 ELKIN: I can't say that I have. Where was he raised?
- 6 MRS. FEATHERRED: Shakespeare is a legendary playwright
7 who grew up in Stratford-Upon Avon, England. (*Pause as*
8 *they stare at her*) He has been recognized as being a
9 prodigy. A genius. A phenomenon.
- 10 FESTER: Can't hold down a job, huh? Sounds like a lazybones
11 to me.
- 12 MRS. FEATHERRED: This is the very reason I want to bring
13 Shakespeare to these hills. To introduce his work and
14 thus enrich your lives with a bit of culture.
- 15 ELKIN: We'd be glad to give Mr. Shakespeare a shot at a
16 decent day's work, but I ain't sure he has any skills we
17 could use out here.
- 18 MRS. FEATHERRED: You see, William Shakespeare is one of
19 the world's greatest writers.
- 20 ELKIN: Great writer, huh? Then he must be the feller that
21 wrote *Don't Blame the Cow When the Milk Gets Sour*?
- 22 MRS. FEATHERRED: Well, no.
- 23 FESTER: Did he write *The Beginner's Guide to Frog Giggin'*?
- 24 MRS. FEATHERRED: No.
- 25 ELKIN: *My Darlin's a Moonshiner, But I Love Her Still*?
- 26 MRS. FEATHERRED: No, no, no!
- 27 ELKIN: No offense, ma'am, but we just rattled off the three
28 best books in the world, so this Shakespeare feller can't
29 be much.
- 30 MRS. FEATHERRED: William Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet, King*
31 *Lear, Othello, The Taming of the Shrew ...*
- 32 ELKIN: You tell Mr. Shakespeare not to give up — he'll write
33 somethin' worth readin' some day.
- 34 MRS. FEATHERRED: (*Standing*) Shakespeare wrote plays:
35 Stories that are acted out on-stage. There must be a way

1 I can help you understand. Perhaps if I showed you
 2 instead. That's it. Mr. Taylor, would you mind very much
 3 if I brought Shakespeare to you? Once you've seen his
 4 work firsthand, I think you'd be glad to bestow a
 5 reasonable endowment to this endeavor.

6 **ELKIN:** Oh, I thought you was askin' for money. You just tell
 7 me how we can help and we'll do what we can.

8 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Oh, thank you, Mr. Taylor! Thank you!
 9 *(The twins enter with a beat-up version of MRS.*
 10 *FEATHERRED's jacket that is now full of holes.)*

11 **GLENDA MAE:** Here you go, Mrs. Feather Bed. We washed the
 12 jacket for you down by the creek.

13 **BRENDA MAE:** But it don't seem city clothes hold up too good
 14 when you beat 'em against rocks.

15 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** *(Grabs it.)* It's ruined! This jacket is an
 16 original Donna Karan.

17 **GLENDA MAE:** Borrowed it from a friend, huh?

18 **BRENDA MAE:** Well, just tell Ms. Karan not to worry none —
 19 we'll mend it for her since we're the ones who messed it
 20 up.

21 **GLENDA MAE:** We're both handy with a needle and thread.

22 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** I will return tomorrow — can it be
 23 ready by then?

24 **BRENDA MAE:** Don't you fret; Donna won't even recognize
 25 her jacket when she gets it back. *(MRS. FEATHERRED*
 26 *heads for the door.)*

27 **ELKIN:** We'll look forward to meetin' this William feller
 28 tomorrow. How about ten o' clock?

29 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** You still don't understand — you are
 30 speaking of the *late* William Shakespeare.

31 **FESTER:** *(Shaking his head)* Well, we're not pressed for time in
 32 these parts; if he's a little late, it won't bother us none.

33 **ELKIN:** *(Opening the door; we hear the MUDHOLE barking.)* See
 34 you tomorrow, Mrs. Feather Bed.

35 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Perhaps I should go out the back way.

- 1 **ELKIN:** Sure thing. (*Heads for the back door.*)
- 2 **FESTER:** But Cousin Elkin ...
- 3 **BRENDA MAE:** We'll get started mendin' Ms. Donna's coat
- 4 right away.
- 5 **FESTER:** Cousin Elkin ...
- 6 **ELKIN:** Say bye, Cousin Fester ... (*She exits.*)
- 7 **FESTER:** But ... (*There's a loud scream Offstage.*)
- 8 **GLENDA MAE:** What happened?
- 9 **FESTER:** The back porch still ain't finished yet.
- 10 **ELKIN:** (*Runs to the door and looks out.*) Mrs. Feather Bed, are
- 11 you OK? (*MUDHOLE barks enthusiastically.*) Mudhole, get
- 12 off her, she's company! (*Everyone runs to the door and looks*
- 13 *out.*) Mudhole, sit! Sit, I said! (*Another scream Offstage*)
- 14 **BRENDA MAE:** Mudhole, don't lick her in the face — we don't
- 15 know where your tongue's been.
- 16 **FESTER:** She's up now!
- 17 **GLENDA MAE:** (*Waving wildly*) Bye, Ms. Feather Bed!
- 18 **BRENDA MAE:** Tell Ms. Karan we said howdy!
- 19 **ELKIN:** (*Laughing*) Look at her run! (*We hear the sound of a car*
- 20 *starting and tires peeling out.*)
- 21 **GLENDA MAE:** I told you we need to tie that mutt up when we
- 22 have company. Mudhole, go jump in the creek and cool
- 23 off! (*They close the door.*)
- 24 **ELKIN:** Listen, clan, we've all got to pitch in and clean the
- 25 cabin if we want this Shakespeare feller to feel at home
- 26 tomorrow. He'll be nervous enough with us watchin' his
- 27 play and all. I'll finish the back porch while Fester gets
- 28 back to work on the two-story outhouse.
- 29 **BRENDA MAE:** And me and Glenda Mae will get started on
- 30 mendin' Ms. Karan's jacket.
- 31 **ELKIN:** (*Opens the back door.*) Don't forget to jump. (*They exit out*
- 32 *the back door as GRANDMA and EDNA STUMP enter through*
- 33 *the front door. They sport frilly bonnets and carry baskets full of*
- 34 *berries.*)
- 35 **GRANDMA:** (*Talking to EDNA, laughing*) When he seen me

- 1 comin' up the road, he run to me like a scalded dog.
- 2 EDNA: It takes a dog to love a dog.
- 3 GRANDMA: Oh, hush up. You're just jealous 'cause you ain't
- 4 bein' chased!
- 5 EDNA: I'd have you know, I got chased last week.
- 6 GRANDMA: I'm talkin' about by a man, not a nearsighted bull.
- 7 EDNA: How do you know a man didn't chase after me?
- 8 GRANDMA: (*Setting her basket of berries on the table*) 'Cause this
- 9 is Cricket County, not Fantasy Island.
- 10 EDNA: I didn't see you dancin' with no feller at Elmer Tate's
- 11 barn dance last month.
- 12 GRANDMA: That's 'cause I was *behind* the barn smoochin'.
- 13 (*She takes off her bonnet, turns and hangs it on a hook on the*
- 14 *Upstage wall. While her back is turned, EDNA pours some of*
- 15 *GRANDMA's berries into her own basket.*)
- 16 EDNA: Now, that's a visual I hope I can shed.
- 17 GRANDMA: Well, I was. I smooched so long, my false teeth
- 18 went numb.
- 19 EDNA: And I say you're fibbin'.
- 20 GRANDMA: And I say you're jealous.
- 21 EDNA: At least I picked more berries than you did. (*When she*
- 22 *turns to hang up her bonnet, GRANDMA pours some of EDNA's*
- 23 *berries into her own basket.*)
- 24 GRANDMA: (*Returning to the basket*) I don't remember it bein' a
- 25 contest. I ain't goin' to fuss with you, Edna Stump, so
- 26 don't even try. (*Hammering is heard Offstage.*) Who's makin'
- 27 all that noise? (*She opens the door. When she does, EDNA pours*
- 28 *more berries from GRANDMA's basket into her own.*) Elkin
- 29 Taylor, quit it, you're givin' your grandma a headache!
- 30 ELKIN: (*Offstage*) Sorry, Grandma, but we got important
- 31 company comin' tomorrow!
- 32 GRANDMA: You keep up that noise, you'll be visited by the
- 33 Grim Reaper tomorrow. (*She slams the door.*)
- 34 EDNA: I'll just take these here berries and bake up one of my
- 35 famous berry pies this weekend.

- 1 GRANDMA: I'm makin' a cobbler out of mine. He sure does
2 like a tasty cobbler fresh out of the oven.
- 3 EDNA: (*Hands on hips*) Who's this "he" you keep talkin' about?
- 4 GRANDMA: Oh, nobody.
- 5 EDNA: You got them four eyes of yours set on some man. The
6 poor, poor feller.
- 7 GRANDMA: I ain't sayin' nothin' else.
- 8 EDNA: Well, it just so happens I got my eyes set on somebody
9 myself.
- 10 GRANDMA: You're only sayin' that 'cause I said it first, you ol'
11 bitty.
- 12 EDNA: I won't say who it is, but his initials is Bifford Laggy.
- 13 GRANDMA: (*With hands on hips*) Edna Stump, what you tryin'
14 to tell me?
- 15 EDNA: You may have smooched him behind the barn, but I set
16 in his lap on my front porch last night.
- 17 GRANDMA: Why you sneaky hussy, you. You done tryin' to
18 steal old man Biff out from under my nose.
- 19 EDNA: He ain't never had eyes for you.
- 20 GRANDMA: We smooched!
- 21 EDNA: I set in his lap! (*ELKIN runs in wearing a nail apron.*)
- 22 ELKIN: (*Standing between them*) Grandma, Ms. Stump, what's all
23 this caterwauling in here?
- 24 GRANDMA: (*To EDNA*) My grandboy here will tell you. Go
25 ahead, tell this ol' heifer who old man Bifford has eyes
26 for. Go ahead and tell her.
- 27 ELKIN: I don't even know the man, Grandma.
- 28 EDNA: He don't have to tell me 'cause I already know.
- 29 ELKIN: I swear, to be such good friends, you two fight like
30 bobcats in a gunnysack.
- 31 GRANDMA: We ain't friends no more — I'm done with her
32 underhanded ways.
- 33 ELKIN: Grandma, we got company comin' tomorrow and y'all
34 gotta be on your best behavior.
- 35 GRANDMA: You won't have to worry 'bout me tomorrow. I'll

- 1 be callin' on my Biffy with my fresh berry cobbler.
 2 EDNA: You go right ahead 'cause I'm goin' to call on him with
 3 my crisp berry pie tomorrow.
 4 GRANDMA: You wouldn't dare.
 5 EDNA: All's fair in love and berry-bakin'.
 6 ELKIN: If y'all don't settle down, I'm goin' to get Preacher
 7 Hobbs on the phone and tell him how y'all been behavin'.
 8 *(Picks up the phone receiver.)*
 9 GRANDMA: *(Rushing to him)* Don't you dare bother Preacher
 10 Hobbs.
 11 EDNA: Yeah, you can't do that!
 12 ELKIN: And what's to keep me from callin' him?
 13 EDNA: For one thing he might kick us out of the church choir.
 14 GRANDMA: And for another thing he ain't got no tele-phone.
 15 ELKIN: *(Hangs up the receiver, staring at the phone.)* It's about
 16 time Cricket County caught up with the rest of the
 17 modern world. Startin' with helpin' to begin this new
 18 feller's writin' career.
 19 GRANDMA: We promise we'll get along. See? *(They put their*
 20 *arms around one another.)* Edna, I sure do like that new
 21 bonnet of yours.
 22 EDNA: I'll let you wear it sometime.
 23 GRANDMA: I'll swap you somethin' for it.
 24 EDNA: OK, dear. What you say we join forces and go after
 25 Bifford together?
 26 GRANDMA: Good idea. And we'll let him decide who he wants
 27 to court.
 28 EDNA: May the best old woman win.
 29 GRANDMA: Oh, I will.
 30 EDNA: Bye, Elkin.
 31 GRANDMA: Be sure to tell Preacher Hobbs how good we're
 32 bein'.
 33 EDNA: Shall we go forth, Imogene?
 34 GRANDMA: We shall, Edna Stump. *(They exit arm in arm,*
 35 *carrying their baskets of berries, singing to the tune of "You Are*

- 1 *holding: A white beard, glasses, and hat and puts them on.)*
- 2 **PETE:** I'm telling you, this plan of yours won't work.
- 3 **OSWALD:** Reserve your judgment.
- 4 **PETUNIA:** Here comes Fester.
- 5 **MIMI:** (*Sarcastically*) Oh, goody, the hillbilly fun begins.
- 6 *(PETUNIA sneezes.)*
- 7 **OSWALD:** I'll go out on the front porch so I can make my
- 8 **entrance.** (*He exits quickly, sporting his disguise.*)
- 9 **PETUNIA:** My allergies are awful out here in the country. (*She*
- 10 *blows her nose.*)
- 11 **PETE:** (*Looking at his paper*) My stock is up! Yes! (*FESTER enters*
- 12 *as MUDHOLE barks outside.*)
- 13 **FESTER:** Get back, Mudhole! Get back! (*PETE rolls up his*
- 14 *newspaper and hands it to FESTER.*)
- 15 **PETE:** Here, use this.
- 16 **FESTER:** Much obliged, sir, but Mudhole can't read. (*Back to*
- 17 *the door*) Get back, Mudhole! Now get! (*Shuts the door.*) Oh,
- 18 I'm sorry, I didn't know anybody was ... Cousin Pete?
- 19 Cousin Petunia? Cousin MiMi? Well, butter my butt and
- 20 call me a biscuit!
- 21 **PETE:** Hello, Cousin Fester.
- 22 **FESTER:** (*Runs to the back door and yells.*) Cousin Elkin! Come
- 23 **quick! We got surprise company!** (*He slams the door and*
- 24 *runs back to PETE.*) What y'all doin' so far from the big
- 25 city?
- 26 **PETE:** Well, we ... uh ... we just ...
- 27 **PETUNIA:** We wanted to pay our favorite cousins a surprise
- 28 visit, that's all.
- 29 **FESTER:** Well, you sure did! Y'all won't believe what I've got
- 30 to show you. Are you ready? (*He presents his ax.*) Looky
- 31 here at this.
- 32 **PETE:** That's real ... nice, Cousin Fester.
- 33 **FESTER:** And it's brand new. Cousin Elkin gave it to me for
- 34 my birthday. You know, now that we're filthy rich and all.
- 35 **MIMI:** (*To PETUNIA, meaning to be heard*) He got the filthy part

1 right.

2 FESTER: We're doin' a lot of changin' to our place ever since
3 Uncle Zeke, rest his soul, left us his inheritance. We're
4 doin' work on the outhouse, the back porch, and we even
5 bought a second-hand tractor from Mr. Fronds across the
6 holler.

7 PETE: That's why we're here, Fester. You have got to be
8 careful. You don't want people to swindle you, do you?

9 FESTER: It all depends.

10 PETUNIA: On what?

11 FESTER: What swindle means.

12 PETE: It means people will try and take you for a ride.

13 FESTER: Hey, maybe we can take our new tractor.

14 PETUNIA: What Pete is trying to get at is a question: Has
15 anyone shown up recently that you've never met asking
16 for something?

17 FESTER: Well, yesterday this fancy city lady showed up
18 wantin' to introduce us to William Shakespeare.

19 PETE: That's what we're talking about. Was she asking for
20 money?

21 FESTER: Heck no, nothin' like that. She was askin' for
22 somethin' called an endowment.

23 MIMI: (*Looking at her cell phone*) At least I have a signal. I'm
24 expecting an important call, you know.

25 PETUNIA: Yes, dear, you've reminded us all the way up here.
26 You're waiting for a call that will inform you if you
27 landed the part in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

28 MIMI: This is the role that could really get my acting career
29 off the ground, you know. If I miss that call, it could ruin
30 my chances before I ever get started.

31 PETE: You should audition for a melodrama next time.

32 MIMI: You apparently don't care at all, bringing me out here
33 to this wretched place. (*Looking in the mirror*) My makeup
34 is atrocious. I at least want to look good if I get the call.
35 Fester, could you please show me your facilities?

- 1 FESTER: Yes ma'am, but you'll have to marry me first.
- 2 PETUNIA: She's looking for the lavatory.
- 3 FESTER: (*Looking around on the floor*) Don't fret none, it's got to
4 be around here some place.
- 5 PETE: Fester, she needs to use the ... (*Whispers in FESTER'S*
6 *ear.*)
- 7 FESTER: Oh, it's out back next to the new gunpowder shed I
8 built.
- 9 PETE: Gunpowder shed?
- 10 FESTER: Yes sir, we needed a dry place to keep our buckshot,
11 gunpowder, stuff like that secure.
- 12 PETUNIA: I think storing gunpowder is *insecure*.
- 13 FESTER: No ma'am, it's *in* the backyard. Just behind our new
14 two-story outhouse.
- 15 MIMI: (*Moving to the back door*) Petunia, if I don't return in ten
16 minutes call in the National Guard. (*She opens the door,*
17 *exits, and slams the door. We hear a tragic scream from MIMI as*
18 *MUDHOLE barks wildly.*)
- 19 FESTER: Oops, I think I forgot to tie Mudhole to the tree. (*The*
20 *back door reopens and ELKIN enters. He shouts behind him.*)
- 21 ELKIN: Mudhole, quit runnin' after our company! Cousin
22 MiMi, just play dead!
- 23 PETUNIA: (*Running to the door*) Oh my goodness!
- 24 ELKIN: (*Continuing to shout*) Mudhole, get her foot out of your
25 mouth — you don't know where she's been walkin! Don't
26 worry, Cousin MiMi, he'll bring it back to you soon as he's
27 done chewin' on it!
- 28 PETUNIA: (*In shock*) What?!
- 29 ELKIN: He took her shoe.
- 30 PETUNIA: Cousin Elkin, that shoe is a stiletto!
- 31 ELKIN: That's OK, Mudhole ain't picky about what he eats.
32 (*He slams the door and rushes over to PETE, picks him up, and*
33 *slings him around.*) Well looky who's here. Whoooo-eeee!
34 You are a sight for sore eyes! (*Moving slowly to PETUNIA*)
35 And would you look at sweet little Cousin Petunia?

- 1 **PETUNIA:** (*Putting her hand out and backing away*) **No, Elkin,**
2 **stay away. I have allergies.** (*She sneezes.*)
- 3 **ELKIN:** (*Chasing PETUNIA around the cabin*) **Come here and**
4 **give your Cousin Elkin some sugar!** (*PETUNIA stops as*
5 *ELKIN catches up with her. She sneezes in his face.*) **If that's**
6 **the way y'all give sugar in the city, I think I'll stay right**
7 **where I am.** (*There's a knock on the front door.*) **I hope that**
8 **ain't our special company.** (*He opens the door as OSWALD, in*
9 *his disguise, enters, staggering around.*)
- 10 **OSWALD:** **You got to help me! You got to help me!**
- 11 **PETUNIA:** (*She isn't a very good actor.*) **You poor, poor man.**
12 **Whatever could be the matter?**
- 13 **ELKIN:** **Are you all right, stranger? Fester, fetch some water!**
14 (*FESTER runs out the back door.*)
- 15 **OSWALD:** **It's gone!**
- 16 **ELKIN:** **What's gone?**
- 17 **OSWALD:** **Ever'thing! My home, my barn, my limousine ... I**
18 **mean my tractor! They was all blowed away by the great**
19 **cyclone! And if I don't get my hands on a lot of money**
20 **quick, I'll lose ever'thing!**
- 21 **ELKIN:** **You poor man.** (*Presenting a fresh wad of money*) **Even**
22 **though I ain't never seen you before and I never heard**
23 **about no cyclone hittin' Cricket County, here, just pull off**
24 **what you need.**
- 25 **OSWALD:** (*Coming out of character, taking off his beard*) **Ah-ha!**
26 **Just as I thought. Cousin Elkin, why are you giving out**
27 **money as though it were Halloween candy?**
- 28 **ELKIN:** **Cousin Oswald, what in tarnation are you doin' in**
29 **that getup?**
- 30 **OSWALD:** **Proving how easy it is to be taken for a ride.**
- 31 **ELKIN:** (*Excited*) **Come on, the tractor's outside.**
- 32 **PETUNIA:** (*Grabbing ELKIN'S arm*) **No, Elkin!** (*FESTER enters,*
33 *walks casually to OSWALD, and pitches a glass of water in his*
34 *face.*)
- 35 **ELKIN:** **Fester Taylor, what in the name of polecats are you a-**

1 doin'?

2 **FESTER:** You told me to fetch some water. *(We hear MIMI*
3 *scream and a dog barking Offstage. ELKIN runs to the back door*
4 *and opens it. MIMI runs in walking with one shoe. Her hair is a*
5 *mess. She crosses to OSWALD.)*

6 **PETUNIA:** MiMi, dear — what has that mutt done to you?

7 **MIMI:** Oh, Oswald — it was just dreadful! That beast of a dog
8 swallowed my stiletto with one gulp!

9 **OSWALD:** Here, sit down.

10 **ELKIN:** I'm real sorry 'bout Mudhole — he gets plum excited
11 when company comes a callin'.

12 **MIMI:** That's not the worst part! After he swallowed my shoe,
13 he came back for my cell phone! *(OSWALD and PETE can't*
14 *hold in their laughter.)* What are you two laughing at? I told
15 you I didn't want to come out here! It's a wilderness! A
16 wasteland!

17 **ELKIN:** We like it out here, too!

18 **MIMI:** I'm expecting that call about my audition. I've got to get
19 my phone back!

20 **PETUNIA:** Fester, go hunt the dog down and get that phone! I
21 don't care how you do it!

22 **FESTER:** *(Heading for the door)* Yes ma'am!

23 **ELKIN:** And while you're out there, tie that mangy mutt to a
24 tree.

25 **FESTER:** Yes sir. *(Opens the door and starts out.)* Oh,
26 Mudhooooole! *(He exits.)*

27 **ELKIN:** We don't want him attackin' Mr. Shakespeare.

28 **PETE:** Elkin, about that. What was Fester saying earlier about
29 being introduced to William Shakespeare?

30 **ELKIN:** This city woman showed up yesterday askin' for our
31 help to get this Shakespeare feller's plays put on out here
32 in Cricket County.

33 **OSWALD:** *(Suspiciously)* She did, huh? *(Pulling PETE Downstage*
34 *while everyone tends to MIMI)* This Shakespeare company
35 smells like a scam to me. We'd better stick around and

1 check them out.

2 PETE: What about MiMi?

3 OSWALD: Help me keep her calm. (*Back to the others*) Here,
4 Petunia, take MiMi to the bedroom to calm down.

5 MIMI: (*As she and PETUNIA exit to the bedroom*) If I don't land
6 this part, I'll be devastated! Devastated!

7 PETUNIA: (*Attempting to comfort her*) Yes, dear. It's all right,
8 dear. (*They exit into the bedroom. The sound of a car pulling up
9 is heard. ELKIN runs to the window and looks out.*)

10 ELKIN: There they are now. I've got to run down to the
11 outhouse and comb my hair! Y'all keep 'em company 'til I
12 get back. (*He runs out the back door.*)

13 OSWALD: (*To PETE*) This is the perfect opportunity to check
14 these people out. (*A knock is heard at the front door. OSWALD
15 answers the door.*)

16 MRS. FEATHERRED: Hello, is Mr. Taylor home, please? I'm
17 Mrs. Featherred.

18 OSWALD: Yes ma'am, won't you come in? (*She and her assistant,
19 PATTY, and ROMEO and JULIET enter. ROMEO and JULIET
20 are decked out in full costume.*) I'm Elkin Taylor's street-
21 smart cousin from the city. I am here to watch out for his
22 well-being.

23 MRS. FEATHERRED: That's nice of you, I'm sure. This is my
24 assistant, Patty Meltt.

25 PATTY: The first joke and I'm waiting in the car.

26 MRS. FEATHERRED: She's very sensitive about her name.

27 OSWALD: Come in Mrs. Featherred, Ms. ... Melt.

28 PATTY: (*Defensively*) It's spelled M-e-l-t-t.

29 MRS. FEATHERRED: And this is Robin who plays our Juliet
30 and Jack, our beloved Romeo.

31 JULIET: O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

32 ROMEO: Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

33 MRS. FEATHERRED: Not yet, wait until the performance. (*Turns
34 back to OSWALD*) They believe an actor should live his part.

35 OSWALD: How do we know you're not out to get my cousin's

1 money?

2 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Here's my card. You may call the number
3 if you'd like. I assure you we are only interested in
4 educating the fine people of Cricket County.

5 **PETE:** You'll have to excuse my brother; he's very suspicious.

6 **PATTY:** Though we do need financial backing ... *(She turns*
7 *back to the window and sees a chicken sitting on the sill. She*
8 *screams. The chicken disappears.)*

9 **OSWALD:** Is something the matter?

10 **PATTY:** I'm sorry, I'm afraid my nerves are a little on edge. I
11 must be seeing things. As I was saying, we are a non-
12 profit organization and aren't interested in ... *(She turns to*
13 *the window to see a full deer head staring at her. She screams as*
14 *the deer disappears.)*

15 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Patty, please control yourself.

16 **PATTY:** You didn't see it? *(They just stare at her.)* It was
17 huge ... it was staring at me with big ... what was I
18 saying?

19 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** *(During the following lines, PATTY sees a*
20 *skunk on the window sill. She turns away and closes her eyes as*
21 *though she's wishing it away. When she opens her eyes and turns*
22 *back to the window, she sees that a raccoon has joined the skunk.*
23 *She cries silently so as not to bring attention to herself.)* You
24 were saying how we aren't interested in financial gain.
25 We wish to begin our endeavor by bringing Shakespeare
26 to Cricket County. It will take some money and we know
27 Mr. Taylor is the man to help make this happen.

28 **PETE:** You know, Oswald, it doesn't sound like a bad idea.

29 **OSWALD:** I'll reserve my judgment, if you don't mind.

30 **PATTY:** We ... we wanted to bring the Taylors a ... a sampling
31 of Shakespeare today so they might experience the
32 impact of his influence themselves. *(The animals leave the*
33 *window sill.)*

34 **JULIET:** ... O happy dagger. This is thy sheath. There rust,
35 and let me die.

- 1 MRS. FEATHERRED: Not yet, dear. (*GLENDA and BRENDA*
2 *MAE run in with MRS. FEATHERRED'S jacket that now has*
3 *large, colorful patches all over it.*)
- 4 BRENDA MAE: Look, Glenda Mae, she's back!
- 5 GLENDA MAE: Howdy there, Ms. Feather Weight.
- 6 MRS. FEATHERRED: It's Feather ...
- 7 BRENDA MAE: Looky here, we patched up Ms. Donna's coat
8 that we messed up yesterday.
- 9 MRS. FEATHERRED: (*Taken aback*) That is *my* coat?
- 10 GLENDA MAE: How do you like that? Now that it's all patched
11 up, she wants it all for herself!
- 12 BRENDA MAE: We worked well into the night to finish it up
13 for you.
- 14 MRS. FEATHERRED: (*Taking it, reluctantly*) I appreciate it, I'm
15 sure.
- 16 GLENDA MAE: A lady can't go without her coat. 'Cause like
17 we say out here in the county: If at first you don't
18 succeed, 'gator wrestlin' ain't for you.
- 19 PATTY: Ladies, I'd like to introduce you to our Romeo.
20 (*ROMEO kisses GLENDA MAE'S hand.*)
- 21 MRS. FEATHERRED: And Juliet.
- 22 JULIET: O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore ...
- 23 BRENDA MAE: (*To JULIET*) Wait a minute, he ain't kissed *my*
24 hand yet. (*ROMEO kisses BRENDA MAE'S hand.*) O Romeo,
25 Romeo.
- 26 GLENDA MAE: (*Sticking her hand out for another kiss*) Romeo,
27 Romeo, Romeo!
- 28 MRS. FEATHERRED: Romeo, Juliet, why don't you have a
29 seat and review your lines for today's performance.
- 30 PATTY: I'll start setting up the chairs. (*She keeps a sharp lookout*
31 *for creatures at the window.*)
- 32 OSWALD: (*Pulling PETE Downstage while BRENDA and GLENDA*
33 *MAE carry on a private conversation and MRS. FEATHERRED*
34 *and PATTY begin moving furniture.*) So, what do you think?
- 35 PETE: They seem authentic.

- 1 **OSWALD:** With con artists it's hard to tell. Keep your eyes and
2 ears open.
- 3 **PETE:** Got it.
- 4 **BRENDA MAE:** (*Rushing over*) Glenda Mae, (*Pulling her away*
5 *from OSWALD and PETE*) Glenda Mae, that Romeo is
6 prettier than a bowl full of ham hocks.
- 7 **GLEND A MAE:** (*Looking lovingly at ROMEO*) I tell you what,
8 Glenda Mae, I'd let that rooster in my henhouse anytime.
- 9 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*To the twins*) Excuse me, but you're
10 standing in the performance area.
- 11 **GLEND A MAE:** No ma'am, we're standin' in the livin' room.
- 12 **PETUNIA:** (*Sticking her head out of the bedroom door*) Oswald,
13 could you run out and bring MiMi a pair of shoes from the
14 limo?
- 15 **OSWALD:** Sure, come on, Pete, we'll talk outside. (*PETE and*
16 *OSWALD exit out the front door.*)
- 17 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** I must look a fright. (*Turns to BRENDA*
18 *MAE*) Could you tell me where the powder room is,
19 please?
- 20 **BRENDA MAE:** Powder room? Oh, we got a brand new one
21 back behind the outhouse.
- 22 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Thank you. I'd like to powder my nose
23 before everything gets underway. If you'll excuse me. (*She*
24 *exits out the back door as MUDHOLE barks wildly.*)
- 25 **BRENDA MAE:** (*To PATTY*) Is that what city ladies do? Powder
26 their noses?
- 27 **PATTY:** Why yes, of course.
- 28 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*Sticks her head back in as MUDHOLE*
29 *continues his barking.*) Patty, perhaps you'd like to go with
30 me.
- 31 **PATTY:** Me?
- 32 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** You *are* my assistant, aren't you?
- 33 **PATTY:** (*Crossing to the door*) Well, if you insist. (*The door opens*
34 *wide as MUDHOLE continues barking.*) Oh my. (*PATTY*
35 *retrieves a can of mace from her purse as she and MRS.*

- 1 *FEATHERRED* exit.)
- 2 **GLENDMAE:** Don't worry, he's tied to a tree. *(We hear MIMI'S*
3 *ring tone Off-stage.)*
- 4 **BRENDA MAE:** Where in sam hill is that music comin' from?
5 *(MIMI flings open the door of the bedroom. She's wearing a pair*
6 *of worn overalls.) That's my cell phone! (She opens the back*
7 *door and yells through it.) Get over here, Mud Puddle! (She*
8 *runs out the back door. PETUNIA appears from the bedroom.)*
- 9 **PETUNIA:** Wait, MiMi! You can't be seen in public dressed
10 that way! *(Runs out behind her.)*
- 11 **BRENDA MAE:** By the way, his name is Mud *hole*, not Mud
12 *puddle!* If you're goin' to call somebody by its name, get it
13 right! *(Waves.)* Hey, Ms. Feather Weight! The powder shed
14 is right behind the outhouse!
- 15 **GLENDMAE:** Come on, let's go play with MiMi's makeup
16 'fore she gets back. Maybe she's got somethin' we can
17 powder our noses with.
- 18 **BRENDA MAE:** If she ain't, I got a bag of gunpowder right
19 here. *(She pulls a small, burlap bag from her pocket.)*
- 20 **GLENDMAE:** Bye, Romeo. Catch you later.
- 21 **ROMEO:** Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art
22 more lovely and more temperate ... *(GLENDMAE and*
23 *BRENDA MAE giggle.)*
- 24 **BRENDA MAE:** Say somethin' romantic back to him.
- 25 **GLENDMAE:** Hey, Romeo shall I compare thee to a stubborn
26 mule? I get a kick when I stand close to you. *(They giggle*
27 *again and exit. ROMEO and JULIET look at each other, shrug,*
28 *then go back to studying their lines. After a second, MR.*
29 *BIFFORD runs up to the window, peeps through it, looks around*
30 *wildly, disappears, then runs through the front door. He sees*
31 *ROMEO and JULIET and puts a finger to his lips.)*
- 32 **BIFFORD:** Shhhh, don't tell 'em where I'm a-hidin'. *(He crosses*
33 *quickly to the table and hides underneath it. As soon as he's out*
34 *of sight, GRANDMA and EDNA STUMP enter quickly.*
35 *GRANDMA carries a garden hoe while EDNA holds tightly to a*

1 *pitchfork.*)

2 **GRANDMA:** Where'd that rascal go? I know I seen him run in
3 here.

4 **EDNA:** Old Biff, you'd better show your face or you'll be in big
5 trouble, mister.

6 **GRANDMA:** (*Spots ROMEO and JULIET.*) Who are you?

7 **JULIET:** (*Standing*) Goodnight, goodnight! Parting is such
8 sweet sorrow / That I shall say goodnight 'til it be
9 'morrow.

10 **GRANDMA:** What you mean "good night"? It ain't even noon
11 yet.

12 **JULIET:** A thousand times goodnight.

13 **EDNA:** (*Nudging GRANDMA*) Look at them clothes they're a-
14 wearin' — I think they missed a turn on their way to the
15 loony bin.

16 **GRANDMA:** Loony, huh? Let me handle this. (*To ROMEO and*
17 *JULIET, shouting*) *We is lookin' for a old dumpy man with*
18 *a white beard. Have you saw him?*

19 **ROMEO:** I wish I were your bird.

20 **EDNA:** You're a-wastin' your time. You heard him — he's a
21 birdbrain.

22 **GRANDMA:** Maybe Biff run out the back way, let's go! (*They*
23 *run out the back door.*)

24 **JULIET:** (*Pointing in ROMEO'S script*) You said that line wrong,
25 see? (*MR. BIFFORD crawls out from his hiding place, stands and*
26 *speaks to ROMEO and JULIET.*)

27 **BIFFORD:** That was close. I keep tryin' to tell them two biddies
28 I like my women either young or rich. I swear them two is
29 so old they sat behind Moses in the third grade.

30 **JULIET:** What says he of marriage? What of that?

31 **BIFFORD:** (*Thinking she's flirting, he's quite flattered.*) I hate to tell
32 you this, dear, but I think you might be *too* young.

33 **ROMEO:** (*With arms out to BIFFORD*) Unfold the imagined
34 happiness that both / Receive in either by this dear
35 encounter.

- 1 **BIFFORD:** Sorry, son, but I don't wade that side of the creek.
 2 *(We hear MUDHOLE bark in the distance. ELKIN enters through*
 3 *the front door and yells behind him. His hair has been plastered to*
 4 *his head.)*
- 5 **ELKIN:** *(Shouting behind him)* Fester, you've got to let Mudhole
 6 know who's boss! *(FESTER screams.)* Lettin' him bite you on
 7 the leg won't do it! *(He closes the door and speaks to BIFFORD.)*
 8 Poor Fester. I think he forgot to pay his brain bill this
 9 month.
- 10 **BIFFORD:** I don't mean to sound hateful, boy, but I got troubles
 11 of my own.
- 12 **ELKIN:** Wait a minute, you're him, ain't you? *(ELKIN wipes his*
 13 *hand on his pants and shakes BIFFORD'S hand.)* It's real nice
 14 to meet you, Mr. Shakespeare, sir. I'm Elkin Taylor.
- 15 **BIFFORD:** I don't know what you're talkin' ... wait a minute,
 16 did you say your name is Elkin Taylor? *The Elkin Taylor*
 17 *who inherited his uncle's diamond and coal mines I heard*
 18 *about?*
- 19 **ELKIN:** Yes sir, Mr. William ... I mean Mr. Shakespeare, sir. If
 20 we like your play today, we're goin' to give some money for
 21 your cause.
- 22 **BIFFORD:** *(Putting his arm around ELKIN)* Please, call me Willy.
- 23 **ELKIN:** That's real nice of you ... Willy.
- 24 **BIFFORD:** *(Thinking it through)* Taylor ... Taylor ... Is Imogene
 25 Taylor by chance your ...
- 26 **ELKIN:** Grandma, yes sir.
- 27 **BIFFORD:** You don't say. *(Trying to contain his excitement)* And
 28 your dear, sweet grandma didn't happen to inherit any of
 29 good old Uncle Zeke's money, did she?
- 30 **ELKIN:** No sir, I'm afraid she didn't.
- 31 **BIFFORD:** *(Disappointed)* Oh.
- 32 **ELKIN:** Just a diamond mine or two.
- 33 **BIFFORD:** Oh! *(MR. BIFFORD'S eyes grow wide.)* Well, bless her
 34 precious heart.
- 35 **ELKIN:** So, Mr. Shakes ... I mean Willy, we sure are excited to

- 1 see one of your plays today.
- 2 **BIFFORD:** My what?
- 3 **ELKIN:** Ms. Feather Bed said we was goin' to see one of your
4 plays. She didn't tell you?
- 5 **BIFFORD:** Oh, of course she did. (*Takes his hat off and places it
6 over his heart.*) And I am mighty obliged to her for doin' so.
- 7 **GRANDMA:** (*Entering*) There you are, you old coot.
- 8 **ELKIN:** Grandma, you can't talk to Willy that way.
- 9 **GRANDMA:** Willy, huh? (*Turns to MR. BIFFORD.*) No wonder
10 you didn't want to tell me your middle name. That's
11 worse than Elkin's middle name.
- 12 **ELKIN:** Grandma, hush up, please.
- 13 **GRANDMA:** Sure thing, Dilbert.
- 14 **BIFFORD:** Dilbert? (*GRANDMA and BIFFORD burst out with
15 laughter.*)
- 16 **ELKIN:** That ain't funny a'tall. You'll have to excuse her,
17 Willy — she ain't used to havin' manners.
- 18 **BIFFORD:** I'm afraid I can't allow you to disrespect your
19 grandma that-a-way.
- 20 **GRANDMA:** (*Taken aback*) You can't?
- 21 **BIFFORD:** My dear, Ms. Taylor — how could I have been so
22 blind to your radiant beauty?
- 23 **GRANDMA:** Why, you old geezer. You've been playin' hard to
24 get this whole time.
- 25 **BIFFORD:** I'm a foolish, foolish man stringin' you along that
26 way. Will you ever forgive me?
- 27 **ELKIN:** Do y'all know each other?
- 28 **GRANDMA:** Let's just say we both know what the back of
29 Elmer Tate's barn looks like.
- 30 **ELKIN:** It sure is a small world. (*EDNA runs in.*)
- 31 **EDNA:** I can't find that no-good slacker for nothin'! (*She sees
32 BIFFORD with his arm around GRANDMA.*) What in sam
33 hill's goin' on here?
- 34 **GRANDMA:** I'll tell you what's goin' on. Willy here has done
35 made his choice in who he's goin' to court.

- 1 EDNA: (*Holding up her pitchfork*) Not so fast there, old goat.
- 2 BIFFORD: (*To EDNA*) I'm sorry, dear lady, but I'm afraid
- 3 Imogene here is mine. You know, as in *all* mine, *only*
- 4 mine, (*Pulls GRANDMA close to him*) *diamond* mine.
- 5 EDNA: (*Pulling up her sleeves*) OK, old woman, I done warned
- 6 you. Put 'em up. I'm ready to fight for my wrinkled-up
- 7 prune.
- 8 GRANDMA: I told you, that prune has done made his choice.
- 9 ELKIN: (*Standing between them*) Hold on one cotton-pickin'
- 10 minute. Both of you stop this foolishness. Y'all go on over
- 11 there and sit down. You can work all this out after our
- 12 company leaves. (*MRS. FEATHERRED enters carrying a bag*
- 13 *of gunpowder. MUDHOLE barks.*)
- 14 MRS. FEATHERRED: That was quite an interesting experience.
- 15 ELKIN: Ms. Featherweight, what you doin' with a bag of
- 16 gunpowder?
- 17 MRS. FEATHERRED: I must have picked it up with my purse.
- 18 ELKIN: Do you think we might need to get started?
- 19 MRS. FEATHERRED: (*Fanning her face*) Yes, of course.
- 20 GRANDMA: C'mon, Willy, we'll sit right over here away from
- 21 Bugs and Tweety. (*Points to ROMEO and JULIET.*)
- 22 BIFFORD: Bugs and Tweety?
- 23 GRANDMA: Loony Tunes.
- 24 EDNA: I'm sittin' over there too. (*MR. BIFFORD sits, with EDNA*
- 25 *and GRANDMA sitting on either side of him.*)
- 26 ELKIN: I'll get the rest. (*Rushes to the window.*) *Hey ever'body,*
- 27 *it's time!* (*FESTER appears at the window being pulled by*
- 28 *MUDHOLE, who is apparently now on a leash. As he's being*
- 29 *pulled, he looks into the window.*)
- 30 FESTER: Howdy there, y'all.
- 31 ELKIN: Fester, get in here!
- 32 FESTER: Mudhole got loose!
- 33 ELKIN: I told you to tie him up!
- 34 FESTER: *I'm tryin'!* (*MUDHOLE barks wildly and pulls FESTER*
- 35 *out of sight. MIMI then runs past the window.*)

- 1 **MIMI:** Fester, bring that mutt back here! He has my phone!
 2 *(She disappears. PETUNIA appears.)*
- 3 **PETUNIA:** MiMi, slow down! You're wearin' overalls! *(She*
 4 *sneezes and disappears. GLENDA and BRENDA MAE enter*
 5 *from the bedroom. They have been applying MIMI'S makeup.*
 6 *They have also applied gunpowder to their noses.)*
- 7 **GLENDA MAE:** We're here, Cousin Elkin.
- 8 **ELKIN:** What happened to y'all?
- 9 **BRENDA MAE:** Nothin', we was just powderin' our noses like
 10 ladies is supposed to, right, Ms. Feather Brain?
- 11 **ELKIN:** Do y'all want to see a play or don't you? Now sit down!
- 12 **GRANDMA:** Y'all look like you stuck your head in a stovepipe.
 13 *(PATTY runs in from the back door.)*
- 14 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Patty, where have you been?
- 15 **PATTY:** It was just awful. This creature ... this thing was
 16 chasing me around the yard. I couldn't get away!
- 17 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** Well, you're safely inside now; please
 18 have a seat.
- 19 **PATTY:** Yes ma'am. *(When PATTY turns to take a seat, we see a*
 20 *squirrel clinging to her back. MRS. FEATHERRED sees it,*
 21 *points, and screams. She starts hitting at it as PATTY dances*
 22 *around the stage.)*
- 23 **PATTY:** Get it off! Get it off!
- 24 **EDNA:** *(Approaching)* Ever'body stand real still. *(Everyone freezes*
 25 *as EDNA holds her pitchfork up in the air and points it to the*
 26 *squirrel. PATTY sees the pitchfork and screams and runs out.)*
- 27 **ELKIN:** *(Yelling through the window)* Try jumpin' in the creek!
 28 Squirrels hate the water! *(OSWALD and PETE enter through*
 29 *the front door. OSWALD holds a shoebox.)*
- 30 **OSWALD:** MiMi, I brought you some shoes.
- 31 **ELKIN:** Cousin Oswald, we're gettin' ready to watch the play.
- 32 **OSWALD:** *(Giving MRS. FEATHERRED a dirty look)* The play or
 33 the scam? Come on, Pete, we'll sit right over here. *(ELKIN*
 34 *crosses to the window.)*
- 35 **ELKIN:** *Fester!* *(FESTER crosses to the window heading in the*

- 1 *opposite direction.*) **I'm right heeeerrreeee!** (*MIMI follows.*)
- 2 **MIMI:** **Festerrrr!** (*PETUNIA follows.*)
- 3 **PETUNIA:** **MiMiiii!** (*Then PATTY follows, this time the squirrel is*
- 4 *on top of her head.*)
- 5 **PATTY:** **Ahhhh!** (*She disappears.*)
- 6 **ELKIN:** **Mrs. Feather Brain, maybe we should start without**
- 7 **them.**
- 8 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** **It's Feather ...** (*Sighs as she stands in the*
- 9 *middle of the room.*) **Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great**
- 10 **honor I introduce Tri-County Theatre Company's very**
- 11 **own *Romeo and Juliet*.**
- 12 **ELKIN:** **Ms. Feather Bed, maybe Willy would like to say**
- 13 **somethin' first.**
- 14 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*Confused*) **Oh. Well, if he'd like.**
- 15 **BIFFORD:** (*Caught off guard, he stands.*) **Uh ... well ... I'd like to**
- 16 **say it's good to be here this mornin' and I hope you like**
- 17 **this here scene from *Romilio and Jannett*.** (*He sits as*
- 18 *everyone applauds. BIFFORD takes a few bows and has a seat.*
- 19 *GRANDMA grabs his hand while EDNA pouts.*)
- 20 **MRS. FEATHERRED:** (*Confused*) **Thank you ... for that speech.**
- 21 **Romeo, Juliet, if you will.** (*Everyone applauds while ROMEO*
- 22 *and JULIET take Center Stage and everything grows quiet with*
- 23 *anticipation.*)
- 24 (*Author's Note: At the director's discretion, the scene could take*
- 25 *place uneventfully with everyone watching with great anticipation*
- 26 *— or — the following could take place in the background during*
- 27 *the performance: FESTER, MIMI, PETUNIA and PATTY run by*
- 28 *the window in the same order as before. A little later they run by*
- 29 *again with these changes: PATTY is first being pulled by*
- 30 *MUDHOLE, PETUNIA follows holding up FESTER'S ax, MIMI*
- 31 *follows with the squirrel around her neck, and FESTER follows*
- 32 *riding the deer. [This is done with the deer head going by with*
- 33 *FESTER holding on to its neck, leaning slightly forward.] Inside*
- 34 *the cabin, BRENDA MAE pulls out a banana, peels and eats it,*
- 35 *GLENDMA MAE keeps nodding off, ELKIN is playing with some*



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