

# THIS AIN'T HEAVEN, IT'S SHOOFLY

## By Craig Sodaro

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## CHARACTERS

*(7 males, 11 females, extras as desired)*

SILAS STEPCRUNCH	A shifty banker
WIDDER MCGOSH	A lazy lady
GRANDMAMMY MCGOSH	Her feisty mother-in-law
GRANDPAPPY MCGOSH	Grandmammy's better half
MASON MCGOSH	Widder's oldest boy
DIXON MCGOSH	Her middle boy
LINE MCGOSH	Her youngest
VERNA BEANE	A linguistics professor
DIXIE MAE MCGOSH	Owner of the Drop On Inn
PRUNELLA PRUNEPIT	A fearful guest at the Inn
DESMOND BOYD	Another guest
PHOEBE LU	Dixie's best friend
AUSTIN HEALY	Another guest
WITCH HAZEL	The local spell-caster
GABBI MCCHAT	Chairwoman of the Talent Show
COUNTESS VON SCHLUP	A performer
TRUDI DEE	Another
ELVIRA PLUNK	Another

## SETTING

Exterior of the Drop On Inn, a run-down hotel located somewhere in hill country some years ago. At right we see a portion of the Inn itself, with a door that stands open. At left is a tiny shack where Grandpappy and Grandmammy live. It only needs to be a flat representation behind which an actor or two can hide. A platform or small stage area is at center with a couple of polls in the back which holds a sign reading "Shoofly County Fair." A poster on an easel or hanging on a tree reads "Come One, Come All—Shoofly County Talent Show." A tree or a couple of bushes can fill the upstage area, if desired. Down right to center sits a cauldron or large pot set on logs so it looks like something is cooking inside. A few benches or hay bales sit here and there.

**NOTE** - Add balloons and streamers during Scene Two (played in front of the curtain) to give the stage a festive look for the fair.

## SOUND EFFECTS

Loud rock song, preferably something with screeching guitars.

Country song for final dance.

## OTHER EFFECTS

Lights flash/blackout according to script.

Strobe or flashing colored lights inside cauldron adds a nice touch.

Have the actress playing Witch Hazel lean over the cauldron so the light catches her face and actions.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE ONE                      Outside the Drop On Inn, one fall afternoon.

SCENE TWO                     On the road to the swamp, immediately after.

SCENE THREE                 Outside the Drop On Inn, the following night.

## COSTUME NOTES

Overall, the actors should wear country clothes, a la L'il Abner. Try to make sure the costumes are as colorful as possible. A few characters have special requirements:

SILAS should wear a dark suit, vest, and hat. He should look well-dressed if this were the nineteenth century.

WITCH HAZEL should wear black or purple, with lots of fabric pieces hanging from her sleeves and skirt or dress. She doesn't need a witch hat, but a wig with lots of hair would work well.

VERNA should look like a modern, professional woman.

PRUDENCE should wear tourist clothing, perhaps a T-shirt, shorts, a camera, and so on.

BOYD should dress similarly to Prudence as a tourist.

COUNTESS might have a feather boa and lots of jewelry befitting her title.

AUSTIN should wear "cool" clothes—perhaps a sweater over his shoulders tied at the neck, white shoes, and so on.

## PROP LIST

### FOR SILAS

Cigar  
Contract and check  
Wallet

### FOR WIDDER

Dusty rug  
Rug beater  
Scrap of paper and pen  
Broom  
Money  
Nail file

### FOR GRANDMAMMY

Cookies or snacks

### FOR GRANDPAPPY

Pitchfork  
Cookies or snacks

### FOR MASON

Branch with leaves  
Long fishing pole with hook  
Ugly monster mask  
Guitar or other rock instrument

### FOR DIXON

Branch with leaves  
Ugly monster mask  
Guitar or other rock instrument

### FOR LINE

Funny boxer shorts  
Branch with leaves  
Ugly monster mask  
Guitar or other rock instrument

### FOR VERNA

Briefcase  
Small recorder or recording  
phone  
Pen and notepad

### FOR PRUNELLA

Jar holding bug

### FOR PHOEBE

Bakery box holding a very flat  
cake  
Washboard  
Pig's ear - make this out of pink  
foam

### FOR AUSTIN

Small suitcase  
Comb

### FOR WITCH HAZEL

Torn piece of paper

### FOR GABBI

Clipboard  
\$10 bill

### FOR COUNTESS

Suitcase holding sausage links

### FOR TRUDI

Wig  
Pair of spoons

### FOR ELVIRA

Horn - any horn such as a  
trumpet, coronet, French  
horn, etc.

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## SCENE ONE

**SETTING:** Exterior of the Drop On Inn, a run-down hotel located somewhere in hill country. At right we see a portion of the Inn itself, with a door that stands open. At left is a tiny shack where Grandpappy and Grandmammy live. It only needs to be a flat representation behind which an actor or two can hide. A platform or small stage area is at center with a couple of polls in the back which holds a sign reading “Shoofly County Fair.” A poster on an easel or hanging on a tree reads “Come One, Come All—Shoofly County Talent Show.” A tree or a couple of bushes can fill the upstage area, if desired. Down right to center sits a cauldron or large pot set on logs so it looks like something is cooking inside. A few benches or hay bales sit here and there.

**AT RISE:** GRANDMAMMY and GRANDPAPPY sit in rockers in front of their shack. WIDDER beats a rug which SHE is holding. SILAS, chewing on a large cigar, tries to avoid the dust coming from the rug.

SILAS: You know, Widder McGosh, the Drop On Inn sits right in the middle of some powerful prime farmland.

WIDDER: So what's it to you, Silas Stepcrunch?

SILAS: How many folks drop by Shoofly County for their annual vacations? You get ten guests a week?

WIDDER: Wish there were that many!

SILAS: Hard to fill a larder on only ten rooms rented a week.

WIDDER: We gets by sellin' milk from Bessie 'n Grandmammy's brooms. She makes the finest brooms in Shoofly County!

SILAS: *(Under his breath)* She ought to! She's the biggest witch around.

GRANDMAMMY: I heard that, you miserable, no-account banker!

WIDDER: There ain't no privacy 'round this dump!

*(WIDDER stops beating the rug and moves SILAS down right.)*

Now, Mr. Stepcrunch, you was sayin'?

SILAS: A smart feller could raise a whole ton of taters or okra ... maybe even some rhubarb 'n a little cotton on this land. You know how high cotton is these days?

WIDDER: You know I cain't grow no cotton!

SILAS: Who says so? I am prepared to pay you generously fer the Drop On Inn. Why, on my person right now I've got my personal check fer ten thousand dollars. Twice what this dump ... I mean hostelry ... is worth!

WIDDER: *(Awe-struck)* Ten thousand!

SILAS: That's right. Mighty fine figure!

WIDDER: I ain't had that fine a figure since I was twenty!

SILAS: *(Whipping out a contract and a check)* Sign here 'n it's yours!

*(As SILAS hands check to WIDDER, GRANDMAMMY jumps up.)*

GRANDMAMMY: No dice, tootsie! C'mon Pa, there's trouble!

GRANDPAPPY: *(Cupping his ear)* What's that, Grandmammy?

GRANDMAMMY: Trouble, that's what!

GRANDPAPPY: *(Jumping up)* General Grant back? I'll skin him like we oughta have done in '65.

GRANDMAMMY: You let me handle this skinflint, Grandpappy.

GRANDPAPPY: *(Saluting)* Aye, aye, Captain!

GRANDMAMMY: *(To WIDDER)* You give me that there paper, woman!

*(GRANDMAMMY moves in on WIDDER who cowers behind SILAS.)*

WIDDER: No! No! You go on and shoo!

SILAS: That check ain't for you, you old buzzard!

*(GRANDMAMMY kicks SILAS, then chases WIDDER around SILAS. THEY use SILAS as a buffer.)*

Stop that! That hurt!

GRANDMAMMY: Buzzard my bunions! I'll show you a buzzard!

*(GRANDPAPPY sneaks up behind WIDDER and swipes the check.)*

GRANDPAPPY: Lookie here, Grandmammy!

*(GRANDMAMMY grabs the check. GRANDPAPPY exits behind their shack.)*

GRANDMAMMY: Now you both know my boy, Billy Josh McGosh, left this place to his daughter Dixie long as she wants to stay here in Shoofly County!

WIDDER: Your boy was plum crazy!

GRANDMAMMY: Yeah, for marryin' you he was! He was half-blind with grief when Dixie's mammy passed on to her eternal reward 'n he married you and took in yer three boys 'fore he ever knew how cold your blood runs. When he got his sight back 'n saw the likes of you, he up 'n died himself!

WIDDER: What?!

GRANDMAMMY: Folks say if looks could kill, you're guilty of murder!

WIDDER: I married 'n buried Billy Josh McGosh fair 'n square. But he skunked me out of what's due me.

GRANDMAMMY: You can groan 'bout it 'til the rest of yer hair falls out, gal, but Billy Josh's will is filed right proper at Slippery Sam's Law and Bail Bonds Office. One false step 'n you're booted out of this here place for good!

SILAS: Surely we can reach a compromise.

GRANDMAMMY: Sure can!

SILAS: I knew you were a reasonable woman, Grandmammy. Give 'n take is what makes this world go 'round, right?

GRANDMAMMY: Nope! Doin' it my way is what's gonna let you live a little longer, Stepcrunch.

*(GRANDMAMMY tears up the check.)*

Now go on 'n git!

SILAS: I don't have to git jest 'cause you say "git". You're nothin'!

*(GRANDPAPPY enters from behind shack with a pitchfork.)*

GRANDPAPPY: Grandmammy might be nothin' 'n I might be nothin', but gosh, darn ifn this ole pitchfork ain't somethin'! Is you a getting' or is I gonna poke more holes in you 'n a block of Swiss cheese?

*(SILAS backs right.)*

SILAS: Widder McGosh, see me at the bank.

GRANDMAMMY: Yeah, she'll fly over on her broom 'soon as she can get the lead out.

*(SILAS exits right.)*

WIDDER: *(Furiously)* Think you're pretty smart, ha?

GRANDMAMMY: I'm a whole lot prettier 'n a whole lot smart 'n you, Mavis, honey.

WIDDER: You want smart? I'll show you smart!

*(WIDDER is about to wallop GRANDMAMMY with the rug beater when we hear from off left . . . )*

MASON: *(Off left)* Soooooooooooooooooooooo!

Sooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

DIXON: *(Off left)* Oink! Oink! Oink!

LINE: *(Off left)* Grunt! Snort! Grunt! Snort! Grunt! Snort!

*(MASON, DIXON, and LINE enter left.)*

GRANDMAMMY: Why ifn it ain't the smartest hogs in the barnyard!

WIDDER: What're you boys doin'?

MASON: Lookin' fer Oafie, Ma!

DIXON: You know, our big Arkansas razorback.

LINE: Ate his way out of the pen.

WIDDER: I told you never trust nothin' from Arkansas! Even a pig!

MASON: How's come we heard screamin'?

DIXON: I'll bet Silas Stepcrunch was over here sparkin' you again, eh, Ma?

LINE: You really gonna hitch up with him?

WIDDER: I sure ain't! But he offered me ten thousand bucks fer this here dump.

MASON: Oooooooooooooo! That'll buy a lick 'o hair grease!

WIDDER: Yeah? Well, Grandmammy gone 'n tore up the check!

*(WIDDER takes out pen and scrap of paper and writes a message during next dialogue.)*

MASON: *(Moving to GRANDMAMMY)* Grandmammy?

GRANDMAMMY: Whatdaya want, Mason?

DIXON: How come you done somethin' like that?

GRANDMAMMY: *(Hands on hip)* 'Cause I felt ornery!

LINE: *(Frightened, as are MASON and DIXON)* Good enough for us!

WIDDER: Well, not fer me! Here, Mason, you take this here message to the swamp. First shack on the left.

MASON: You want me to go there?

WIDDER: Go on 'n git!

*(SHE swats MASON with the rug beater. HE runs off right.)*

'N you two boys round up that confounded razorback 'fore he eats up the squash!

DIXON: *(Moving around the stage)* Soooooooooooooooooooooo!

Sooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

LINE: *(Ibid)* Oink! Oink! Oink!

(VERNA, carrying a briefcase and holding a small tape recorder, enters down right.)

VERNA: (*Thrilled*) I can't believe my ears!

(MASON and DIXON move quickly to VERNA and study her. SHE records them.)

MASON: Oafie?

LINE: Nope! That ain't him!

MASON: (*Exiting right*) Soooooooooooooo! Soooooooooooooo!

LINE: Oink! Oink! Oink!

(THEY're gone. VERNA moves to WIDDER.)

VERNA: (*Excitedly*) Do they do that often?

WIDDER: (*Suspiciously*) Who wants to know?

VERNA: Professor Verna Beane. I'm an anthropologist at Belvedere University currently researching Hillbillicus Americanus.

WIDDER: What's that? Some kind of disease?

VERNA: I should hope not! Do you have a room for a few days?

WIDDER: You're gonna stay here in Shoofly?

VERNA: You are holding the Shoofly County Fair tomorrow, aren't you?

WIDDER: Such as it is.

VERNA: Then I'll stay two nights.

WIDDER: Why the last person to do that was a Mr. Jupson.

VERNA: He must have loved this rustic beauty ... the quaint charm of your Drop On Inn.

WIDDER: Nope. He died. Didn't find him 'til we changed the sheets.

Dixie! Dixie McGosh, get on out here!

(DIXIE enters right from Inn.)

DIXIE: Yes, Stepmammy?

WIDDER: We got a customer. Some professor studyin' diseases.

DIXIE: Why, pleased to make your acquaintance, Ma'am. I'm Dixie Mae McGosh, 'n my Pa built the Drop On Inn thirty years ago. It was a big resort 'til the Interstate went the other way. But we sure is pleased to have you here in Shoofly, even if you does have some kind of disease.

(VERNA has been scribbling down everything DIXIE has said.)

How come you're writin' down everything I say?

VERNA: Why, it's for an article I'm going to publish on your unique lifestyle.

DIXIE: *(Thrilled)* Are you from People magazine?

VERNA: *(Covering)* Well, close.

DIXIE: I'll tell you all about everybody in these here parts. What do you want to know first?

VERNA: Where's my room?

DIXIE: C'mon! I'll show you right up!

*(DIXIE leads VERNA into Inn. A moment later a scream is heard off right. PRUNELLA runs on right.)*

PRUNELLA: Widow McGosh!

WIDDER: What's rubbin' your corn shucks the wrong way this time, Miss Prunepit?

PRUNELLA: I found this in my room! *(holds up a small jar containing a bug)*

WIDDER: Why that there's just a l'il ole June bug.

PRUNELLA: It's not June! What's it doing in my room?

WIDDER: Can't read the calendar, I s'pose. But it won't eat much on account of it's a baby. Now when it gets full-growed, you'd better watch out!

*(WIDDER laughs and exits into Inn. From off left we hear Psssssst!)*

PRUNELLA: Who's there? Who is it, I say?

*(Again we hear Psssssst!)*

Are you friend or foe?

*(BOYD enters left.)*

BOYD: Friend, Miss Prunepit.

PRUNELLA: *(Coyly)* Oh, Mr. Boyd. How you frightened me!

BOYD: Sorry, Miss Prunepit. I would never do anything to frighten you on purpose.

PRUNELLA: Oh, it's not you, really. It's this place that scares me. If I'd have known what it was like, I would have gone to Niagra Falls.

But, no, I had to listen to my travel agent. She said this place was full of charm. All it's full of is June bugs!

BOYD: *(Hopefully)* At least you've gotten to meet a few interesting people, haven't you?

PRUNELLA: *(Taking the hint)* Only one. But maybe that will make the whole trip worthwhile.

BOYD: How about we take a little walk, Miss Prunepit? And then I'll check your room to make sure there aren't any bugs under the rugs.  
PRUNELLA: Oh, Mr. Boyd, you are so thoughtful!

*(BOYD and PRUNELLA stroll off left. DIXIE runs on from Inn. WIDDER, wielding a broom, follows her on.)*

WIDDER: Why, Dixie Mae! There's no teachin' you, is there? June bugs in Miss Prunepit's room!

DIXIE: I cleaned it jest last week, Stepmammy.

WIDDER: I don't want no excuses, you lazy no account. Why, ifn you worked half as hard as your stepbrothers, this place'd be turnin' a profit.

DIXIE: I does what I can!

WIDDER: Go on! All you does is sing them cornball songs.

DIXIE: I didn't know you hated my tunes.

WIDDER: You call them tunes? I thought your ball bearin's were goin' out!

DIXIE: But I jest gotta sing! *(Sings)* Oh, what's the world like without a song? It's like a cake that's done gone wrong! *(Speaks)* It keeps me happy!

WIDDER: Cain't you be depressed once in a while?

*(PHOEBE enters down left carrying a bakery box.)*

PHOEBE: Why, evenin', Dixie, Widder.

DIXIE: Howdy, Phoebe! You bring your cake fer the cake walk?

PHOEBE: Yeah.

DIXIE: Must be mighty nice ifn you put it in a box 'n all.

PHOEBE: Well, I followed that there recipe you gave me right to the letter. 'Cept I must have left out K-L-M-N-O and P.

DIXIE: Whatdaya mean?

PHOEBE: See fer yourself.

*(PHOEBE takes a large, but very flat cake from the box.)*

DIXIE: Why, that's right pretty.

WIDDER: *(With a laugh)* Shucks, looks like a hippo set on it.

PHOEBE: Nobody'll pick my cake.

DIXIE: Sure they will! We'll jest say it's a giant flapjack!

WIDDER: I'll put this thing in the kitchen, Phoebe Lou. You scoot home. Dixie's got a lot of cleanin' to do. *(takes the cake)*

DIXIE: Oh, Stepmammy, cain't I clean in the mornin'?

WIDDER: By mornin' them June bugs'll carry Miss Prunepit off fer their breakfast. Now c'mon in 'n clean. *(exits into Inn)*

PHOEBE: I sure don't know why you stick around here, Dixie Mae.  
The way that there hen pecks away at you, it's a wonder you got any hide left. And them step brothers of yours! Oooooee!

DIXIE: Oh, they ain't so bad.

PHOEBE: Fer baboons they ain't. But they belong in a zoo. You oughta git on the first train outta here! Go make somethin' of yourself.

DIXIE: *(Shyly)* I ain't got a lot to work with, Phoebe Lou.

PHOEBE: Shucks! You got plenty to work with!

DIXIE: What kin I do?

PHOEBE: *(Thinking)* Well, you kin ... well, surely you kin ... hmmm ... no, maybe you cain't.

DIXIE: The only thing I kin do is clean rooms, 'n I ain't no good at that!

PHOEBE: There you go, puttin' yourself down. You kin get a job cleanin' rooms at some fancy hotel in Cactus Corners.

DIXIE: But here I got a roof over my head fer nothin'. 'Sides, I wouldn't know how to act in Cactus Corners. That's a big city. They got stop lights!

PHOEBE: You jest ain't got no confidence, Dixie Mae. Widder 'n her boys got you thinkin' you're jest dirt under their feet.

*(AUSTIN HEALY enters left carrying a small suitcase. HE is well-dressed and wears sunglasses.)*

HEALY: Excuse me, ladies. Might I trouble you for a room?

PHOEBE: *(Flirting)* You sure might, stranger. What kind of room you got in mind?

HEALY: Something quiet.

DIXIE: Shucks, we got a room that's so quiet you can hear your eyelashes smack each other every time you blink.

HEALY: I'll take it. And, ah ... there's no press around here, is there?

DIXIE: Well, I got an iron ifn you need your seams touched up.

PHOEBE: I think this feller means newspapers, Dixie Mae.

DIXIE: Shucks, there ain't a newspaper in a hundred miles of here!

HEALY: I've died and gone to heaven!

DIXIE: Go on! This ain't heaven ... it's Shoofly County!

HEALY: Well, it's heaven to me.

DIXIE: Go on in 'n my stepmammy'll fit you to a bed jest fine.

HEALY: Thank you, ladies. A pleasure meeting you. *(exits into Inn)*

DIXIE: That feller sure is different from the boys in Shoofly County.

PHOEBE: That's the difference between leaky tug boats and a dreamboat!

DIXIE: Fancy him thinkin' this is heaven. Maybe he bought some of Farmer Frank's moonshine. I hear tell it makes people say the strangest things.

*(LINE and DIXON enter left.)*

DIXON: Sooooooooooooooooooooo!

LINE: Here, Oafie! Here, Boy!

PHOEBE: Who let you two outta your cages?

DIXON: What's she talkin' about?

LINE: I think she's makin' fun of us!

DIXON: *(Angrily)* That what you doin', Phoebe Lou?

PHOEBE: *(Innocently)* Me? Shucks, no, fellers. I never make fun of chimpanzees.

DIXON: *(Mollified)* Okay, then.

LINE: You seen our razorback, Oafie?

*(MASON enters right.)*

MASON: Any luck, fellers?

DIXON: Ain't seen snort nor wiggle of 'im.

PHOEBE: You talkin' about that big red-haired hog?

DIXIE: Uh oh!

MASON: What's that mean: uh oh?

DIXIE: You know that there pork 'n beans we et at lunch?

DIXON: Yeah, we knows it.

DIXIE: Well, the beans, see ... they was from the garden.

LINE: Yeah, and—

DIXIE: And the pork—

LINE: It was from the garden, too?

DIXIE: Not exactly. Stepmommy told me this mornin' to go butcher a hog fer lunch. So's I went out 'n said eenie meanie minie moe, you're the one who wants to go.

MASON: *(Agonized)* You ... you butchered ... Oafie?

DIXIE: I didn't think he was all that special to you.

DIXON: We ... ate ... Oafie?

LINE: No wonder it was so tasty.

PHOEBE: Dixie ... I think we'd better split!

MASON: That's the last straw, Dixie Mae!

DIXON: We're gonna get you!

LINE: Ready, aim, fire!

*(MASON, DIXON, and LINE dive for DIXIE and PHOEBE, but the GIRLS duck and the BOYS fall over. PHOEBE and DIXIE run right, chased by the BOYS. The GIRLS then head left, hiding behind a bush or tree or bales of hay. BOYS pass them by.)*

MASON: *(Pointing left)* They went thataway!

*(MASON, DIXON, LINE run off left.)*

PHOEBE: They're fixin' to tar 'n feather you.

DIXIE: I didn't know they named that dumb ole hog!

PHOEBE: Well, it fit right into the family, present company excluded.

DIXIE: What am I gonna do?

PHOEBE: Get outta here!

DIXIE: Where'll I go? How'll I get there? I got nothin' but one clean dress 'n eighty-five cents to my name!

PHOEBE: Look, I'm fixin' to head to Cactus Corners myself. Bus trip costs fifty dollars. I got an extra twenty-five, so I'll give it to you ifn you kin raise the other twenty-five. *(moves to poster near Inn)*

Looky here ... ifn you win the Shoofly County Talent Contest tomorrow night, you'll win \$28.50. You'll have enough fer the bus!

DIXIE: Talent show? But what'll I do?

PHOEBE: Why, sing, Dixie! Sing!

DIXIE: Gosh ... in front of people?

*(MASON, DIXON, and LINE enter left.)*

MASON: There she is!

DIXON: Ma! Ma! We found the murderer!

LINE: Now we're gonna lynch her!

*(WIDDER enters from Inn.)*

WIDDER: What's all this about murder 'n lynchin'?

MASON: She kilt Oafie!

DIXON: Kilt him dead!

LINE: Cooked him up in the beans.

WIDDER: Thought it tasted familiar.

MASON: I got a better idea than lynchin' Let's cook Dixie up in some beans!

WIDDER: Sheriff won't cotton to that, boys.

PHOEBE: Shucks, if you don't all give me to woolies!

WIDDER: Phoebe Lou, I told you to scam, didn't I?

PHOEBE: See you 'round, Dixie. Don't fergit what I was tellin' you.

See you at the fair tomorrow.

WIDDER: Go on 'fore I take a broom to ya!

*(PHOEBE runs off right.)*

Now, Dixie Mae ... you gity your corn shucks in there 'n clean out them June bugs or you're gonna be spendin' the night at the cemetery!

DIXIE: Oh, no, stepmammy! I'll go clean up. I hate the cemetery. It's so dead! (*rushes into the Inn*)

MASON: Ma, how come you let her off so easy?

DIXON: After she went 'n murdered Oafie!

LINE: In cold beans! (*bursts into tears*)

WIDDER: Knock it off! She ain't getting' off, boys. Dixie's the only thing standin' between me 'n ten thousand dollars ... and by tomorrow night our darlin' Dixie Mae's gonna be nothin' but a bad memory.

MASON: What you got planned?

WIDDER: You get that message delivered?

MASON: Sure did ... but that was a mighty spooky house. Who lives there?

(*WITCH cackles and enters right.*)

WITCH: I do, monkey breath!

DIXON: Ma! What's that?

LINE: She's uglier 'n you!

WIDDER: This, boys, is Witch Hazel. Be nice to her ifn you know what's good fer you!

WITCH: Whatdaya want, Widder McGosh? I'm missin' reruns of Bewitched!

WIDDER: We ... my boys 'n me ... need a spell.

WITCH: A spell 'o what?

WIDDER: Not on us ... on somebody else.

WITCH: Let's talk turkey. What kinda spell and on who?

WIDDER: Somethin' to make Dixie Mae vanish.

WITCH: Vanish, hmmm? From Shoofly County or the face of the earth?

WIDDER: How much they each cost?

WITCH: From Shoofly it'll cost \$22.30 plus tax. Face of the earth is five bucks extra, but she won't come back.

WIDDER: Twenty-five thirty!

DIXON: That's mighty steep, Ma.

LINE: (*To WITCH*) You got gall, gal!

WITCH: Say another word 'n you'll have warts from top to bottom.

WIDDER: (*Thinking*) Just from Shoofly's fine, Witch Hazel. By tomorrow night.

WITCH: (*Holding out her hand*) Cash in advance.

WIDDER: Boys?

*(WIDDER puts her hand out. BOYS back away.)*

I got fourteen dollars 'n ten cents. What you got, Mason?  
MASON: Nothin', Ma.

*(WIDDER whacks him on the head. HE hands her money.)*

WIDDER: Three bucks. Dixon?

DIXON: *(Scared)* I got seven bucks, Ma, but I was savin' 'em to buy hair lard.

WIDDER: You'll jest have to use bacon grease. Hand it over.

*(DIXON does so.)*

That makes twenty-four ten. Okay, Line!

LINE: No, Ma! I been hankerin' for some Hubbabubba.

WIDDER: You want Dixie Mae out of here or not? Hand it over!

*(LINE reluctantly gives her the money.)*

There you go, Witch Hazel, twenty-five thirty.

*(WIDDER hands WITCH money.)*

WITCH: Plus tax!

*(WIDDER gives WITCH a few more coins.)*

WIDDER: Plus tax!

WITCH: *(Handing over a torn piece of paper)* And here's your receipt.

A pleasure doin' business with you.

WIDDER: Wait a minute! I want to see the spell!

WITCH: Right here?

WIDDER: We paid, didn't we? Now we want it delivered.

WITCH: You drive a hard bargain, but a deal's a deal. Stand back so you don't get caught in the spell.

*(WITCH moves to cauldron or pot downstage right. Slowly SHE circles it as the lights dim or flash. A strobe coming from inside the cauldron gives a nice special effect. WIDDER, MASON, DIXON, and LINE hide here and there.)*

Round and rount the pot I go!  
Boil and bubble, hiss and glow.  
Eannie meannie cavatina

Make Dixie Mae a teenie weenie.  
When the clock strikes the hour of ten  
We don't want to see her again!  
Part her from this hallowed ground,  
Never let her come around.  
A memory she'll be around this shack  
Or Widder gits her money back!

*(WITCH cackles, runs around the cauldron three times as lights flash. SHE then runs off right. Blackout. When lights come up, WIDDER, MASON, DIXON, and LINE get up from hiding, see one another, scream, and run off in opposite directions. After a moment, PRUNELLA and BOYD enter right.)*

PRUNELLA: *(Nervously)* Did you see strange things here just a minute ago, Mr. Boyd?

BOYD: *(Smitten)* I didn't see anything but you, Miss Prunella. I may call you Miss Prunella, can't I?

PRUNELLA: Call me anything! But are you sure you didn't see a witch riding through the sky a moment ago?

*(VERNA enters from Inn. SHE is scribbling notes in a small notebook.)*

VERNA: *(Thrilled)* You saw it, too, then? It's part of this primitive culture's belief in supernatural phenomenon.

PRUNELLA: I'm going to kill my travel agent!

BOYD: Don't worry, Miss Prunella, I'll protect you.

*(GRANDMAMMY enters from behind her house. GRANDPAPPY follows her on.)*

GRANDMAMMY: There ain't no protection from Witch Hazel.

GRANDPAPPY: She kin turn you into a polecat quicker 'n you can say cat on a hot tin roof!

GRANDMAMMY: Go on 'n git, 'fore her spell starts workin'! Go on!

*(PRUNELLA and BOYD run into Inn.)*

VERNA: I'll become chairman of the department after I publish this.

But wait a minute! Who'll ever believe me?

GRANDMAMMY: Git!

*(VERNA races back into the Inn.)*

GRANDPAPPY: What're we gonna do, Ma? Poor Dixie Mae's gonna be banished tomorrow.

GRANDMAMMY: Pa, I jest don't know. Witch Hazel's the only one who kin take away one of her spells 'n she ain't gonna take it away unless ... *(snaps her fingers)*

GRANDPAPPY: Unless what?

GRANDMAMMY: *(Calling)* Mason! Dixon! Line!

GRANDPAPPY: Unless what?

*(MASON and DIXON enter from side THEY exited from.)*

MASON: You callin' us?

DIXON: *(Suspiciously looking around)* That crazy witch gone?

*(LINE enters wearing funny boxer shorts.)*

LINE: She scared the pants off me!

GRANDMAMMY: You afraid of a few silly tricks, boys?

MASON: That there were a genuine spell she done cast.

DIXON: Dixie Mae's gonna disappear.

LINE: Then Ma kin sell this dump to Mr. Stepcrunch!

GRANDMAMMY: You believe all that? Well, boys, you is the biggest suckers in the candy store! Witch Hazel done took ya!

MASON: Where to?

GRANDMAMMY: The cleaners!

DIXON: *(Sniffing his armpits)* I don't smell no cleaner.

GRANDPAPPY: She stole your cash!

GRANDMAMMY: She can't cast a spell. Come tomorrow night, Dixie Mae's gonna be right here, but your twenty-five thirty will be in the swamp.

LINE: You sure 'bout this?

GRANDMAMMY: I've lived in Shoofly all my life. That old bat ain't cast one decent spell in all these years.

MASON: Boys! We gotta get our cash back!

DIXON: Why, that ole fake!

LINE: Let's go get her!

*(MASON, DIXON, and LINE run off right.)*

GRANDPAPPY: But Witch Hazel will fix them boys fer good ifn they try somethin' with her.

GRANDMAMMY: Somebody ought to, Pa. They's long overdue fer a fixin'!

*(The curtain falls.)*

## SCENE TWO

**SETTING:** On the road to the swamp a short time later. Played before the curtain.

**AT RISE:** *MASON, DIXON, and LINE enter left, each carrying a leafy branch in front of himself as a disguise. When THEY talk THEY drop the branch below their faces.*

MASON: She oughta be comin' by here right quick.

DIXON: Good thing you knew a shortcut.

LINE: Yeah ... now we'll git our money back from that connivin' ole witch.

MASON: Would-be witch, you mean.

DIXON: Shhhhhh! She's comin'!

LINE: Let's hide!

*(THEY hold up branches to cover their faces as WITCH enters left counting money.)*

WITCH: Twenty-two ... twenty-three ... twenty-four! *(SHE halts and looks around suspiciously)* Fee fie foe fum ... I smell the blood of some dumb-dumbs.

MASON: Get her!

*(BOYS drop branches and surround WITCH. MASON swipes the money. DIXON and LINE each grab one of WITCH'S arms.)*

DIXON: Thought you'd swipe our cash, ha?

LINE: You ain't so big 'n powerful now that I'm up close.

WITCH: Stand back! I'm warning you!

MASON: Go on, witchy-poo! Cast a spell!

WITCH: When my arms are free, that's just what I'll do!

DIXON: Yeah, sure!

LINE: You're phonier than those warts on your nose!

WITCH: Why, you overgrown gnats! Doubt my powers, will ya?

MASON: What powers? Hocus pocus mumbo jumbo!

DIXON: We know all about you!

WITCH: You do, ha?

LINE: Sure! We're jest gonna get rid of Dixie Mae our own way 'n save our twenty-five dollars 'n thirty cents.

MASON: Nice doin' business with you, Witch Hazel!

*(BOYS exit left taking their branches with them.)*

WITCH: That so? Well, I got a special on revenge this week! Three spells fer the price of one! Eenie meanie cavatina ... you're gonna pay, you great big weenies!

*(Lights flash, thunder, blackout.)*

### **SCENE THREE**

**SETTING:** The same as Scene One, but now balloons and streamers decorate the back of the platform. A few benches or hay bales have been placed about, and extras, if desired, sit and stand here and there.

**AT RISE:** GRANDPAPPY and GRANDMAMMY are serving cookies or snacks to those on stage. WIDDER sits on bench filing her fingernails. VERNA, scribbling in her notebook, records all the activity. AUSTIN stands up left combing his hair. ELVIRA, TRUDI, COUNTESS, DIXIE, and PHOEBE stand or sit here and there. PHOEBE holds a washboard.

GRANDMAMMY: *(As SHE nears WIDDER)* Sure'd be nice ifn we could git some help, don't you think, Pa?

GRANDPAPPY: Sure 'nough!

WIDDER: Ifn you mean me, I'm a lady of leisure. As of ten o'clock tonight me 'n my boys'll be sittin' pretty.

GRANDMAMMY: Yeah ... pretty ugly!

WIDDER: And you two had better find some new shack. The Drop On Inn's gonna drop outta sight!

*(GABBI MCCHAT enters right with clipboard.)*

GABBI: Howdy, folks!

GRANDMAMMY and GRANDPAPPY: Howdy, Gabbi!

GABBI: I think I got all the acts listed here fer the Shoofly County Fair Talent Show. We got Countess Von Schlup with her trained sausage dogs, then Trudie Dee singin' a ditty, followed by Silas Stepcrunch doin' a magical act, Elvira Plunk on the horn, 'n Dixie Mae McGosh singin' a number. I got a note here a special singin' group's gonna finish up the show.

GRANDMAMMY: Who entered that there last act, Gabbi?

GABBI: Why, Witch Hazel.

GRANDPAPPY: Cain't wait to get a load of that!

WIDDER: I cain't wait to get a load of Dixie Mae warblin'. She cain't carry a tune in a slop bucket.

PHOEBE: Go on! Dixie's got first place in the bag! I feel it in my bones.

WIDDER: That's just your rheumatiz!

DIXIE: Go on, Phoebe. I ain't that good.

PHOEBE: Dixie's been practicin' up a storm.

WIDDER: *(Holding out her hand)* Thought it was gettin' wet in here.

PHOEBE: Show 'em what you kin do, Dixie! Let's have a song!

DIXIE: You give me a beat, Phoebe!

*(PHOEBE beats out an erratic rhythm on the washboard. DIXIE sings a stanza of some awful song. WIDDER covers her ears in despair, but GRANDMAMMY and GRANDPAPPY listen proudly. At the end of the stanza, VERNA claps enthusiastically.)*

VERNA: Bravo, young lady! The golden twang of classic bluegrass!

DIXIE: Oh, go on! There's nothin' but crabgrass around here.

VERNA: I meant your voice, my dear. If there were only some way to write down your phonetic patterns.

DIXIE: *(Spinning around)* Shucks, there ain't nothin' to this pattern. You kin sew it up in a night.

GRANDMAMMY: It were a right pretty song, Dixie.

*(AUSTIN is moving down to DIXIE.)*

GABBI: You'll sound real fine right before the new singin' group at the end.

*(Just as AUSTIN reaches DIXIE and is about to say something, VERNA pulls DIXIE and PHOEBE downstage.)*

VERNA: Girls, I was wondering. There's one bit of your mountain culture I haven't had a drop of yet, and my study wouldn't be complete without it.

PHOEBE: You mean Farmer Frank's moonshine?

DIXIE: That's pretty powerful stuff!

VERNA: I can take it! Point me in the right direction.

DIXIE: Shucks, Miss Beane ... you must be feelin' a whole lot better. You get rid of that there disease?

VERNA: Hillbillicus Americanus? I'm afraid it's contagious, ifn you all know what I mean.

PHOEBE: *(Moving away)* Gosh, then don't breathe on me!

*(DIXIE and PHOEBE lead VERNA off left.)*

GABBI: (*Calling after them*) Girls, the show starts real soon. Make sure that voice is back here in time, Dixie Mae!

(*GABBI exits into Inn. MASON, DIXON, and LINE enter right.*)

WIDDER: Well, boys, won't be long now. At ten our problems'll be over. Silas Stepcrunch is bringin' the papers to sign along with that check. I'm gonna find me a pen that works! (*exits into Inn*)

MASON: Gosh, boys, either of you think of a way to get rid of Dixie?

DIXON: I sure ain't.

LINE: Me, neither.

MASON: Well, you two dopes! You always leave me to do the thinkin'.

DIXON: That's 'cause you're so good at it.

LINE: Yeah ... so how we gonna do it?

MASON: I don't know.

DIXON: How come? Your brain quit workin'?

LINE: Pretty hard to quit when it never started!

MASON: Why you--!

(*MASON and LINE scuffle. DIXON pushes them apart.*)

DIXON: Cut it out, you two! Shhhhh!

MASON: I hear Dixie comin'!

LINE: Hide, fellers!

(*MASON, DIXON, and LINE hide by right side of Inn. DIXIE and PHOEBE enter left.*)

DIXIE: I sure hope that poor sick woman finds Farmer Frank's place.

PHOEBE: His moonshine might be jest the thing she needs to cure her miseries. Speakin' of miseries, you ready to depart this place?

DIXIE: I got my dress 'n my eighty-five cents packed. But I ain't gonna win that there prize, Phoebe.

PHOEBE: Sure you is! You jest gotta have confidence! Now, repeat after me: I'm a terrific singer.

DIXIE: I'm a terrific singer.

PHOEBE: I'm gonna win the \$28.50.

DIXIE: I'm gonna win the \$28.50.

PHOEBE: I'm headin' to Cactus Corners with Phoebe.

DIXIE: I'm headin' to Cactus Corners with Phoebe.

PHOEBE: And I'm leavin' the Drop On Inn forever.

DIXIE: Gosh, Phoebe ... I cain't say that.

PHOEBE: Yes, you can! You don't need this place or that there bunch of chimpanzees you live with. Now say it!

DIXIE: And I'm leavin' the Drop On Inn forever.

PHOEBE: Now, here's my lucky pig's ear. *(pulls pig's ear from her pocket and hands it to DIXIE)* You hang on to this 'n you'll win fer sure!

DIXIE: Why, Phoebe, I ain't never had as good a friend as you.

PHOEBE: So tell your best friend what you learned about that there Mr. Austin Healy.

*(DIXIE looks at AUSTIN. He waves at her.)*

DIXIE: All I know is he's from Nashville.

PHOEBE: You s'pose everybody from Nashville's that dreamy?

DIXIE: I bet! And they all drive real sharp cars. He's got a pretty little thing named after the front of your house.

PHOEBE: Front of my house?

DIXIE: Yeah! He calls it a Porch. C'mon, I'll show you.

*(THEY exit right. BOYS move downstage.)*

MASON: You hear that? Dixie Mae's gonna split ifn she wins this here contest.

DIXON: But she sings like a hippo with a toothache.

LINE: Maybe the judge'll be wearin' earmuffs.

MASON: *(Rubbing his hands together)* Not if the other acts don't do so good!

*(GABBI enters from Inn.)*

Say, Gabbi, who all's in the show?

GABBI: We got Countess Von Schlup and her trained sausage dogs, Trudi Dee singin' a song, Silas Stepcrunch doin' magic, Elvira Plunk on the horn, your adorable sister singin' a tune, 'n a new singin' act at the end. Got your tickets, boys?

MASON: Sure do! This is one show we don't want to miss.

*(GABBI moves left. WIDDER enters from Inn.)*

WIDDER: Say, boys, what're you up to?

DIXON: No good, Ma!

WIDDER: That's my boys!

*(MASON, DIXON, and LINE exit up right as SILAS enters down right. HE holds legal papers.)*

SILAS: Well, Widder McGosh, I've got the papers right here.

WIDDER: I'll sign 'em at ten.

SILAS: Might I inquire as to what changed Dixie Mae's mind?

WIDDER: Ain't exactly changed yet, but by ten it sure will be.

SILAS: You'll be a mighty wealthy woman ifn you pull this off, Widder.

WIDDER: Don't you worry 'bout nothin', Stepcrunch.

SILAS: Oh, I ain't worried a-tall! In fact, I got so much confidence in you that I got some boys lined up to tear this dump down tomorrow, eight a.m. sharp.

WIDDER: You sure is a mover, Stepcrunch.

SILAS: Didn't get where I am today by sittin' on my cornhusks.

*(GABBI jumps up on platform.)*

GABBI: Come one! Come all! The Shoofly County Fair Talent Show is about to commence!

*(PRUNELLA and BOYD enter from Inn.)*

PRUNELLA: Oh, Mr. Boyd, dinner and a show! How romantic!

BOYD: Did you enjoy the chittlin's?

PRUNELLA: I couldn't keep my mind on dinner, you silly man.

BOYD: Why that there was pig stomach. Mighty tasty the way they fried it up.

PRUNELLA: *(Horrified)* I ... ate ... pig stomach?

BOYD: Wasn't bad, now was it?

PRUNELLA: I'm going to kill my travel agent!

*(BOYD and PRUNELLA and ALL others find seats or stand about allowing the act on stage to be the center focus.)*

GABBI: Welcome, ladies and gents to the Shoofly County Fair Talent Contest. This year the grand prize is a whoppin' \$28.50. Runners up will win an eight ounce tin of chicken lips, courtesy of Farmer Frank's chicken house. Before we start the show, how about a joke? What do you call a zipper on a banana? *(After a slight pause)* A fruit fly!

GRANDMAMMY: You gotta do better than that, McChat!

GABBI: How about this one? Why did the cookie go to the doctor?

PHOEBE: 'Cause it was feelin' crummy?

GABBI: *(Deflated)* Look, 'fore you all laugh yourselves into a coma, let's get on with the show. Our first act features Countess Von Schlup and her trained sausage dogs, commonly known as Datsuns. Or is that a car? Anyway, let's have a big hand for the Countess! And you can throw in a couple of feet, too.

*(COUNTESS enters from Inn. SHE speaks with a thick accent. MASON follows her on carrying a suitcase which HE sets on a small table or stand at the center of the platform. HE quickly exits back into the Inn.)*

COUNTESS: Thank you! Thank you all! When I was a small girl in Bavaria, I live on a farm high in the alps. Very lonely. So my mamma, she bought me two little wiener dogs. I name them Fritz and Mitzi. I teach little wieners tricks. And what wonderful music they make together. I should like to now introduce to you Fritz and Mitzi! *(opens suitcase and screams)* Oh! Oh, no! Fritz! Mitzi! What a pity!

*(SHE bursts into tears, crying on GABBI's shoulder. From the suitcase, GABBI pulls a string of sausage links.)*

GABBI: Looks like your sausage dogs are just that! Sorry, Countess. Better luck next year!

*(COUNTESS grabs suitcase and exits angrily right.)*

Well, now, folks, that reminds me of a joke! What do lazy dogs do for fun? *(After a slight pause)* They chase parked cars!

WIDDER: What's so funny 'bout that?

GABBI: Oh, you had to have been there, Widder. Anyhow, we now got our second act, Miss Trudi Dee singin' that old favorite, "Ain't Got Time for a Two-Timin' Watchman Like You."

*(ALL clap. TRUDI, wearing a huge head of hair, steps up onto the platform. As SHE talks, a long pole appears from the house or behind a bush and a fishing line drops ominously to her head.)*

TRUDI: Well, thank y'all, Gabbi, and your jokes really is funny this year. But I ain't gonna be warblin' that number you said I was gonna sing, Gabbi. Instead, I'd like to sing somethin' that's dedicated to somebody real special in this here audience. It's called "I Deposited My Heart in Your Bank, so How Come I Can't Make a Withdrawl?" And I'll be accompanying myself on the spoons!

*(TRUDI takes a pair of spoons from her pocket just as the pole jerks up and her wig is suddenly ripped off.)*

Ahhhhhhh!

*(Screaming, TRUDI runs from the stage and exits down left. The pole and wig are quickly taken off.)*

GABBI: Excellent, Trudi! A little short, but excellent. And now we come to, Silas Stepcrunch, that banker with a canker.

*(SILAS mounts platform, but no one claps.)*

SILAS: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you one and all! I'd like to do a feat of magic tonight.

GRANDMAMMY: Easy for a heel like you!

*(ALL laugh.)*

SILAS: I need a volunteer from the audience.

*(No response.)*

Don't all raise your hands at once!

GRANDPAPPY: It's a Kamikazi mission, boys!

GABBI: All right, Silas ... in the interest of keeping the show moving, I'll do it.

SILAS: Excellent! And now for the great disappearing act. I need ten dollars, please.

GABBI: Ten dollars!

SILAS: Don't worry ... you can trust me!

*(GABBI hands SILAS a bill.)*

Thank you! Now, first we fold it like this ... then like this ... then like this! *(folds the bill into a smaller and smaller square)* Then, just to show that there's no hanky-panky goin' on, I'll put it into your own pocket, Gabbi. *(slips tiny bill into GABBI's vest pocket. HE steps a bit away from her.)* Then we say the magic words: Bibbity, bobbity, boo! Now, Gabbi, reach into your pocket and fetch the bill.

*(GABBI reaches into her pocket, but finds nothing.)*

GABBI: Wait a minute! It ain't here! Where's my ten bucks?

SILAS: *(Holding his hands up and open)* Don't look at me! I don't have it!

GABBI: *(Furiously)* Take out your wallet, Silas!

SILAS: Think I might have pocketed the dough, ha?

*(SILAS pulls out his wallet. HE looks through it.)*

Well, looky here!

*(SILAS holds up tiny folded bill.)*

GABBI: Ah ha!

*(SILAS opens the bill up.)*

Pretty good, Silas, pretty good!

SILAS: Thank you! Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

*(As ALL clap, SILAS slips bill into his wallet, then bows. GABBI, unaware she's lost her money, claps enthusiastically.)*

GABBI: *(As clapping dies, thinking)* There's somethin' mighty fishy 'bout that act. Anyway, let's git on with the show. How 'bout listenin' to Elvira Plunk on her horn playin' "You Cain't Make Meatballs Without Grindin' Your Beef!"

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