

AUNT OLLIE'S HOME AWAY FROM HOME

By Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Aunt Ollie has been having a hard time keeping her hotel open. First it was an inn, then a country club and then a lodge. "And that's just this year," she adds. Her brother, Earl, isn't much help either. Between his bragging and ongoing battle with Bertha, the cook, he is running a still "just to keep off the snakes." Ollie has one hope in keeping her "Home Away From Home" open with investor Judith Pomeroy. Unfortunately, before Judith can get a good look at the place, she accidentally gets a generous dose of Earl's recipe for moonshine. Add one UFO-logist, a psychology major, a fat sheriff and a conniving competitor and this hotel starts looking more and more like a nuthouse. Toad, the mule trainer, sums up the situation when he says, "This is startin' to get on my nerves," just after he gets stuck by lightning ... again!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 M, 5 W)

OLLIE: A congenial country woman in her mid-forties.

She's the brains and heart behind the business.

EARL: A rather argumentative man in his forties who tends to stretch the truth.

BERTHA: The cook, a feisty lady in her mid-thirties.

JUDITH POMEROY: A snooty upper-class lady, in her late forties.

AGATHA TRUNDLE: Judith's mousy secretary, in her mid-thirties.

TAYLOR BURNS: An inquisitive psychology major in her mid-twenties.

COY DINKINS: Something of a retiring scientist type, around thirty.

TOAD: A very country, very crusty mule trainer.

MAX PACKER: A hillbilly con-man, in his late forties.

SHERIFF HOLLOWAY: An overweight law officer.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

ACT I

Scene 1: Summer, the present, at Aunt Ollie's.

Scene 2: Two hours later.

ACT II

Scene 1: Two hours later.

See end of playbook for a complete list of **PROPS** and **SOUND EFFECTS**.

SETTING

The setting for this farce is the very rural, very out-of-the-way lodge somewhere in the deep South. The main room of "Aunt Ollie's" is a large, somewhat cluttered area. A large, well-used couch resides DSR near a large fireplace flanked by two windows on the SR wall. Near the couch is a large, wing back chair and coffee table, both as rustic as the sofa. A rather beaten "antique" dining table with six semi-matching chairs sits USL. There is a large desk near the SL wall on which rests a telephone. The rest of the room is rounded out with various other incidental chairs, end tables, plants, etc.

There are three practical doors to the floorplan. The first is the front door, SR. The second is on the UPS wall, which leads to the kitchen. The third door on the SL wall leads to the game room. A staircase, which leads up to the rooms, is located on the UPS wall.

The decor of the room is rather "woody" with stuffed animal heads and fish hanging on the walls amid pictures of fishermen and campers.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: OLLIE and EARL are standing over the couch, not moving. Ollie is holding a flyswatter and is just about to pounce. They both watch something intently. Finally, Aunt Ollie speaks.)

OLLIE: Why do they always go for the couch?

EARL: WeeeIII, that's the way it is with that type a'bug. Mainly the females. Especially when they's expectin'.

(OLLIE looks hard at EARL.)

OLLIE: You saw as much of this bug as I did, which was somewhere between briefly and not at all.

EARL: I saw the little darling, I did. Blue and green it was, almost fluorescent with a sort of biplane arrangement of wings, not so much top and bottom but with what you'd call stacked, you know, like the washer-dryer, and antennae purt' near an inch from the base of it's head stretching out ... *(OLLIE swats EARL.)* Hey! What'd you do THAT for?

OLLIE: Well, it just come to me I was enjoying the bug more'n I was you.

EARL: *(Moves to the front door.)* Hey, you want to let the little chigger run free and take your revenge out on me, you go right ahead.

OLLIE: Thank you, Earl, that's awful nice of you. Where's the shotgun?

EARL: Get that couch infested, fine, this is your establishment. I'm just yore brother. Ain't no skin off my nose.

OLLIE: *(Moves to the desk.)* Then I didn't hit you hard enough.

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(SHE picks up the receiver and dials the phone. She still holds the flyswatter.)

EARL: But I'm telling you, you let one of them go and they'll multiply like cats at a widow's house. We'll be overrun with 'em before the week's out, you mark my words.

OLLIE: You didn't see it, you don't know what it was and you don't know what you're talking about. *(SHE taps her foot, waiting.)*

EARL: *(After a slight pause.)* Locustus Carnivorosis. *(OLLIE glares at HIM.)* Real bloodsucker, too. I once saw one of 'em take hold of a Maple tree and, inside of an hour, the sap was gone.

OLLIE: I wish I had its luck. One ever gets hold of you, there won't be nothing left but your shoes. What is going on down at the station? *(Finally, SHE gets an answer.)* Oh, hey, Myrtle? This is Ollie.

EARL: *(Moves over to the couch.)* Seems like there was something I was supposed to do this morning? *(HE checks the couch and sits, stretching out.)*

OLLIE: Did the ten-fifteen get in on time? Good. Well, did you see our station wagon down there? Yeah, Bertha was supposed to pick up some folks. Oh, she did. The station wagon was there and what? *(SHE stares quickly at EARL.)* And smoke was coming out of the hood?

(Suddenly, the air is pierced by the horrific SOUND of an approaching badly-tuned automobile, which chugs loudly to a grinding halt. A HORN sounds.)

EARL: *(Snaps HIS fingers.)* Water pump! I was supposed to replace the water pump in the station wagon.

OLLIE: Well, what happened? Oh, Bertha rigged it herself? What? No, I think they just arrived. Either that or cyclone season started in already. *(SHE hangs up.)*

EARL: *(Not paying attention.)* You know, a car cannot go without water for more'n twenty miles, unless it's got a good tail wind. And a lot depends on the road grade, too. *(OLLIE picks up a vase and moves behind EARL. She thinks about it and shakes her head. She puts the vase back down.)* And if it's got a good douse when it started and found a ripe hill, I suppose it might make another ten mile, down hill, a'course. *(OLLIE gets another idea. She wriggles her fingers like a spider and slowly comes down on EARL'S head.)* I remember once I had this old Plymouth, you'd swear it didn't have no radiator at all, the way it pulled and ... *(HE feels HER fingers in his head. He quickly tries to brush her off and leaps to his feet.)* What in the blue blazes...!

OLLIE: *(Holds up HER hand.)* Locustus Carnivorosis. *(SHE reaches for HIS neck.)* Capable of squeezing the sap out of someone in less than an ... *(A car HORN sounds again.)* I can't believe they made it.

EARL: And you was worried.

OLLIE: Go outside and help with the luggage before I pick up this vase in earnest and clobber you.

EARL: Can't understand why people get so riled up early in the day, especially one that's gonna be as hot as this one. *(HE moves to the front door.)* Reminds me of the time fourteen, fifteen year ago ...

OLLIE: *(To HERSELF.)* I wonder if I can get him committed?

EARL: Now THAT was a heat wave. You could cook a waffle on your arm if you stayed out long enough. And the thing is ... *(HE opens the door and BERTHA bursts in reaching for EARL'S neck.)* What the ... !

(EARL ducks quickly and runs behind the dining table.)

BERTHA: *(Chasing HIM.)* I'm gonna KILL you, Earl!

EARL: What's got into you?!

BERTHA: Me? You try to drive outta town with a face full of smoke. Like I was in a pressure cooker that seats six!
(SHE chases EARL around the sofa.)

OLLIE: Bertha!

BERTHA: I'm gonna kill him! *(SHE grabs the vase.)* Come on, Earl. Take it like a man. You can pretend, can't you? I don't care if you ARE Ollie's brother.

OLLIE: *(Pulls the vase away while still holding the flyswatter.)* Hey! You hit him, it's just gonna make a mess. And I paid good money for this thing.

BERTHA: *(Moves closer to EARL.)* Come here, Earl. When I get through, there's gonna be two things to fix. The water pump and your face!

EARL: *(Backing away.)* You realize that you're just acting under the heat of the moment! You should let calmer heads prevail.

BERTHA: That's right. I want to prevail your head to a new locale. Make me drive that Stanley Steamer out there without so much as a warning. Five people thought I was spraying for mosquitoes! I'm gonna KILL you!
(SHE chases EARL through the kitchen door.)

(After THEY exit, OLLIE puts the vase down and moves to the door. She opens it.)

OLLIE: *(Yelling out.)* Hidy! Welcome to Aunt Ollie's Home Away From Home! Y'all git out and come on in! Come on. Roll down the window. Hi! Over here! That's right. Jist come on in. Don't worry about your luggage. Earl will be right out and git your bags for you. *(Suddenly, there is the SOUND of a loud muffled clang from the kitchen - the SOUND of someone getting hit over the head with a skillet. Sure enough, BERTHA emerges from the kitchen and holds up a large skillet triumphantly. OLLIE witnesses this and then turns back to her guests.)* Bertha will be right out and git your bags.

BERTHA: Oh sure! *(SHE drops the skillet on the dining table with a loud clank and moves to the front door)* I gotta cook the meals, drive the station wagon and now carry the bags. What does Earl do anymore?

OLLIE: *(Puts the swatter down.)* Is he conscious?

BERTHA: Is he ever? *(OLLIE glares at HER.)* Hey, I jist got him a glancing blow, but if he hadn't turned at the last minute I'da got him right in that fat nose a'his.

OLLIE: *(Back to the GUESTS.)* Come on in. That's right. Just open the doors. Don't worry, ever'things fine. That's right. Just git out of the car. Now ... *(A gang of dogs begin BARKING outside as if they were running up to the station wagon.)* Oh! No, don't!

(SOUNDS of two car doors slamming. OLLIE turns to BERTHA.)

BERTHA: I know, you don't have to tell me. Git the dogs off the guests. Cook the meals, drive the wagon, tote that barge, lift that bale.

OLLIE: Will you git out there before those dumb dogs lick the paint off the station wagon again?!

BERTHA: *(Moves to the door.)* Told you not to use water colors.

OLLIE: Have to, the way we keep changin' the name of this place.

BERTHA: I swear! *(SHE looks outside and yells to the guests.)* I'm coming! No! Don't put your hand outside the windows! Wait! *(SHE exits hurriedly.)*

(EARL enters from the kitchen, holding a wet towel on top of his head.)

EARL: She's a hostile little beast, ain't she?

OLLIE: *(Moves to the desk.)* It's your own fault.

EARL: Yeah, I know. I jist don't bob and weave as fast as I used to. Back when I was a prize fighter, they couldn't touch me.

OLLIE: Now, nobody WANTS to touch you. And you was never no prize fighter. *(SHE looks at some bills on the desk.)*

EARL: Well, I didn't never tell you about it on account'a I knowed you would worry. *(HE places the towel around his neck like an athlete and begins to move around in a boxer's attitude.)* Yep. "Oily Earl" they used to call me, fourteen fights and no one ever laid a glove on me. I was a clean fighter, too. Had to give it up though, after my fight with Clem MacElroy. I accidentally kicked his teeth in.

OLLIE: *(Looks at HIM.)* Clean fighter, huh?

EARL: Well, he wadn't wearing them at the time. I remember it now. He turned sudden like, those things come shooting out of his head right at me like a dental hockey puck. Yessir, for a man of sixty- eight, he was still purty spry. *(HE looks at OLLIE.)* Going over the bills again?

OLLIE: *(Tries to open a drawer.)* Purty grim. Dang this bottom drawer! But this trip ought'a help us out. I got a guy coming out here looking for an investment. Name of J. D. Pomeroy. *(SHE rises and points a finger at EARL.)* And we're gonna be real nice to him, ain't we?

EARL: *(Backs away.)* You're saying WE but you mean ME, don't you?

OLLIE: That's cause most of the trouble WE get in is usually due to THEE. I don't want none of your wild stories nor schemes foisted off on the unsuspecting but paying customers.

EARL: *(Feels HIS head.)* I think I may have a con-cussion, I'm feeling faint ...

OLLIE: Listen, if I have to, I'll romance this J. D. Pomeroy. And if that doesn't work, I'll tie him up and threaten him with a stick! But you behave yourself.

End of Freeview

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