

Family Ties and Little White Lies

A Farce

by
Gary Ray Stapp

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DEDICATION

To my grandmothers, Eva Gertrude and Velma Lee.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Eddy, a struggling playwright, is in charge of taking care of the house, the kids, and the mother-in-law while his wife works the daytime shift at a fast-food restaurant. And boy, does he have his hands full! The house is a disaster, and as far as taking care of the children, what can he really do? Ten-year-old triplets and a teenage daughter are not meant for the inexperienced! Then there is his mother-in-law whose age seems to be affecting her mind, and a neighbor lady with opinions, but without manners. Toss in a couple of FBI agents and an unlikely mobster duo who are members of the notorious crime ring called Animal Kingdom, and believe it or not, a romance begins to bud. Oh, and don't forget the nanny -- the triplets have her tied up in a chair! There's no shortage of rope or chaos as Eddy and family turn the tables on the bad guys and find themselves just laughs away from exposing a family secret.

This play was originally produced by The Chamber Players Community Theatre in Garnett, Kansas, in February, 2006. It was directed by the playwright, Gary Ray Stapp, with the assistance of Linda Miller, and performed with the following cast:

*Eddy - Ken Amaya Mrs. Doyle - Wanda Taylor
Teddy Ray - Arthur White Tommy Ray - Nicholas Skiles
Timmie Ray - Amanda Moody Francine - Linda L. Umbarger
Velma - Denise Scheibmeir
Jenny - Sarah Edgerton / Jordan Kruse
Eileen - Susie Bubna Agent Smithe - Brandon Katzer
Agent Jones - Speed Elsasser
Rocky - Gary Rommelfanger
Dinkie - J.D. Kingery
Gertrude - Jackie Fursman*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 men, 5-6 women, 2 boys, 1 girl, 2 extras)

MRS. DOYLE: Professional nanny. (Can double as Gertrude.)
EDDY MILLIGAN: Struggling playwright and a summertime stay-at-home house-husband.
EILEEN MILLIGAN: Eddy's wife. Works at a fast-food restaurant.
VELMA: Eileen's mother who seems a little confused in her old age.
JENNY: Teen-age daughter with a penchant for play acting as other people.
TOMMY RAY: Ten-year-old son. Ornerly and mischievous. Leader of his siblings.
TEDDY RAY: Ten-year-old son. Will likely be an accountant when he grows up.
TIMMIE RAE: Ten-year-old daughter ... but wants to be a boy.
FRANCINE: A nosey neighbor. Never married, but has often tried.
SMITHE: A not-so-professional FBI agent.
JONES: A serious, by-the-book FBI agent.
ROCKY THE RHINO: A mobster heavy man. Mean and threatening type, but small in stature.
DINKIE THE DUCK: A mobster heavy man. Dumb as an ox and big as one too.
GERTRUDE: A little old lady. (Can double as Mrs. Doyle.)
TWO EXTRAS (or two audience volunteers)

CASTING NOTE: Ideally, the triplets should be played by children around ten years old. However, because the play is a farce, the triplets could effectively be played by younger teenagers of smaller stature, or perhaps, for the sake of exaggeration, even played by young adults dressed as kids.

(See end of script for props list.)

SETTING

Living room of the Milligans' middle-class home. It is a nice home, though one wouldn't think so at first glance as it has the appearance of having had a "tornado rip through it!" Clothes upon clothes are piled on the furniture and strewn about the floor, nearly hiding the fact that there's any carpeting at all. And amongst the disarray of laundry is a scattering of toys, newspapers, books, cups and plates, food wrappers and containers, and in the center of the floor standing among the mess is a pink plastic flamingo. In four words: A cleaning lady's nightmare!

The room has five entrances, one being a closet large enough for two or three people to enter into at the same time. USL is a two-step elevated platform with the closet door USL, and a couple of feet to its left and set at an angle is the front door entrance SL. SR of the closet is a small table with a telephone. USC is a continuation of the two-step platform where a computer nook is nestled between a modest staircase to the right and the closet to the left. The nook is furnished with a computer desk and chair, a computer with keyboard and mouse, and a bookcase stuffed with unfinished manuscripts and loose papers. The L-shaped stairs lead off to the upstairs bedrooms and are the USC entrance. USR sets an ironing board and iron and to its right is the back door entrance USR that leads to a fenced-in backyard. SR is a doorway that leads to the kitchen entrance SR. CSR is a swivel-type chair/recliner and to its immediate left in center stage is a sofa. DSL is a cluster of three bean bag chairs and a small TV with a video game player and three controllers.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Early evening, mid-summer.

Scene 2: The next morning.

ACT II

Scene 1: Fifty-eight minutes later.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: EDDY is seated at his desk in the computer nook USC. He is working on his play. The living room is a hideous mess. Suddenly, offstage we hear a scream of frustration, followed by another, but Eddy continues to peck at the keyboard, oblivious of the screaming.)

MRS. DOYLE: *(Offstage.)* OHHHH! UNTIE me this INSTANT!
You ... you ... ANIMALS!

(Offstage CHILDREN'S giggling.)

TEDDY RAY: *(Enters from kitchen SR playing a game boy with headphones on and crosses the room toward the closet.)* Eight thousand two hundred and forty-one, eight thousand two hundred and forty-two, eight thousand two hundred and forty-three *(Opens the closet door, walks in and closes it behind him.)*

MRS. DOYLE: AHHHHH!!! *(Loudest scream yet.)*

(TIMMIE RAE, dressed in a football uniform complete with pads and helmet, and TOMMY RAY burst through the kitchen door yelling and running through the room. They circle the couch, climb on it, wrestle, then race upstairs. EDDY continues to write, unaware of the commotion. MRS. DOYLE enters from kitchen with a hop and a scoot. She is tied to a kitchen chair with lots of rope.)

MRS. DOYLE: Mr. Milligan! Your children are barbarians! I have never ... never in my life been acquainted with the likes of those three brats! What have you to say about that?! *(No answer. SHE hobbles closer to EDDY.)* Mr. Milligan! Your children are little beasts! I demand you discipline them. Corporal punishment! And use a good-sized paddle, an inch thick! Make that two inches thick! *(No response. She hobbles up behind him.)* Mr. Milligan!

EDDY: *(Finally aware.)* Huh? Oh, Mrs. Doyle, how are things going with the children?

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MRS. DOYLE: *(Looks at HIM dumbfounded.)* Take a good guess!

EDDY: *(Notices HER predicament.)* Oh, Mrs. Doyle! Did the kids tie you up?

MRS. DOYLE: You're kidding me, right?

EDDY: Well –

MRS. DOYLE: Stop! I don't want to hear another word, Mr. Milligan. I am no longer speaking to you! Nor do I ever intend to speak to you again. *(Starts for the front door.)* Little angels, my foot! You, sir, are a liar!

EDDY: Excuse me, Mrs. Doyle?

MRS. DOYLE: There is no excuse for you, Mr. Milligan. I took this job on your word that I would merely be a daytime nanny to your three darling little triplets!

EDDY: Did I say darling? I meant mischievous.

MRS. DOYLE: Mischievous? They are monsters, Mr. Milligan. Terrorists could take lessons from those three!

EDDY: That's a little harsh –

MRS. DOYLE: Harsh?! Look at me! I'm tied to a chair! You can expect to hear from my attorney!

EDDY: Now, Mrs. Doyle, they're just playing a little game. Once you get to know them –

MRS. DOYLE: Know them? I don't want to ever see them again! *(Opens the closet door to get her sweater and TEDDY RAY jumps out at her with an umbrella and starts to "fence" with her while he counts.)* Ahhhhhh!

TEDDY RAY: Eight thousand three hundred and six, eight thousand three hundred and seven, eight thousand three hundred and eight

MRS. DOYLE: Oooooo! Get away from me!

EDDY: Teddy Ray! Leave Mrs. Doyle alone! Now!

TEDDY RAY: Eight thousand three hundred and nine *(Returns to the closet.)* Eight thousand three hundred and ten *(Throws a sweater out on the floor.)* Eight thousand three hundred and eleven *(Slams the closet door behind him.)*

EDDY: *(Picking up the sweater.)* I'm sorry Mrs. Doyle Teddy Ray is very protective of his "space."

MRS. DOYLE: Mr. Milligan, save your explanations! There is no reasonable excuse for that sort of behavior! Any sane, mature, responsible parent would know that!

End of Freeview

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