

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR GRANDPA

A Farce by Michal Jacot

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*HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR GRANDPA is dedicated to Barb Hunter, who always laughs at my stories of Old Al, no matter how many times she hears them.*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR GRANDPA was first performed at Arenac Eastern High School, in Twining, Michigan, on December 2 & 3, 1994, under the direction of Barbara Hunter and Mike Flore. The cast was as follows:

Frankie	Jennifer Gingerich
Keith	James Kittner
Amber	Yvette St. Pierre / Denise Parkhurst
Grandpa	Ed Laclair
Mr. Skaminski	Andy Anderson
Mrs. Kelly	Heidi Cobb
Det. Nick Macy	James Caughel
Police Officer	Angela Teachout
Police Officer	Myron Stutzman

### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

A cantankerous grandfather, ill-tempered and paranoid, is determined to think that his grandkids, three young adults, are trying to kill him for their inheritance (\$642 and a postcard collection). Grandpa doesn't mind shouting it down the halls of the apartment building to alert whatever neighbors he can. So when Grandpa suddenly slumps forward, face down in the birthday cake at his surprise party, the grandkids realize it looks like murder and they are the suspects.

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### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(4 M, 3 W, 2 Flexible)*

**FRANCINE “FRANKIE” HARTLEY:** The youngest of 3 siblings, in her early twenties. The ‘jock’ type.

**KEITH HARTLEY:** The oldest of the 3, late twenties. Pessimistic.

**AMBER HARTLEY:** The middle of the 3, mid-twenties. Nice enough, but can be a bit spacey.

**WALTER “GRANDPA” HARTLEY:** The grandfather of Frankie, Keith and Amber. A crusty, crabby, sour, bad-tempered man of 96.

**ABNER SKAMINSKI:** Grandpa’s best friend, 78 years old, and the opposite of Grandpa. An old man who appreciates a good joke and a smile.

**MRS. KELLY:** An elderly neighbor.

**DETECTIVE NICK MACY:** One of New York’s finest, if you don’t count every other detective in the city. Fancies himself as tough, but is something of a bumbler.

**TWO POLICE OFFICERS:** Called to assist Detective Macy.

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**SETTING**

An average apartment living room, decorated simply but tastefully. DSR is the front door; there is an armchair up next to it. In the USR area there is what will be referred to as the kitchen archway that leads to an imaginary kitchen. On the USL wall is the bedroom archway; the actors will be able to step out into this archway, then turn SL or SR to exit. DSL is a sofa, and in the CS is a table with four chairs around it (two on the UPS side and one on either end). The table is decorated for a birthday celebration, with gifts and a pile of cards.

**PROPS**

**FRANKIE-** grocery bag, w/ cups, napkins etc, baseball bat, pills, Partridge family album

**AMBER-** cake, coffee cup, plates, ice cream

**KEITH-** pen, ice cubes in cloth, sunglasses

**GRANDPA-** cane

**MRS KELLY-** cassarole dish

**DETECTIVE-** wallet w/badge and notebook

**SET PROPS-**stack of cards, presents, knife, candles

**SOUND EFFECTS**

Loud crash offstage, Another crash, Doorbell rings

**ACT I**

*(AT RISE: An apartment in New York City in the summer. FRANCINE HARTLEY, AKA "FRANKIE," enters from the front door carrying a grocery bag. She was probably a tomboy when she was younger and is still a sports nut. She wears a baseball cap backwards and a baseball jersey. She is also carrying a baseball bat that she props up against the wall out of the way. She is humming "Happy Birthday To You" under her breath, probably not even realizing she's doing it. She takes Styrofoam cups, napkins and such from the bag and puts the items on the table. She rifles through the stack of birthday cards until she finds one in particular. She holds it up proudly.)*

FRANKIE: *(Reading envelope)* 'To Grandpa. With love, from Frankie.' *(SHE smiles, then makes a point of putting her card on the top of the pile. She walks toward the kitchen. As she does, AMBER HARTLEY enters from kitchen archway carrying a chocolate birthday cake.)* Hey, sis.

AMBER: Hi, Frankie. How did your game go?

FRANKIE: Great. We dusted 'em eighteen to two. I made a double-play unassisted.

AMBER: Great!

FRANKIE: Well, not so great. The guy I tagged out was going to take me out tonight. I think he got kind of mad at me.

AMBER: Uh-oh, better watch that male ego bruising or you'll never get a boyfriend.

FRANKIE: Hey, I could never be serious about a guy who can't play baseball better than me.

AMBER: Did you get everything?

FRANKIE: Everything but the candles for the cake.

AMBER: They didn't have birthday candles? You're kidding!

FRANKIE: No, they didn't have enough birthday candles. They only come ten to a pack, and the store only had nine packs in stock.

AMBER: I guess it's just as well. We don't want to risk setting off the smoke alarm.

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FRANKIE: I could run to the hardware and pick up a couple of flares.

AMBER: Very funny. We'll use what we've got. *(FRANKIE exits into kitchen. AMBER sets cake on table, humming "Happy Birthday." She looks through cards, smiling, then picks one out and reads it aloud.)* "To the best grandfather in the world. Love, Amber." *(SHE puts the card back in the pile, then puts it on top of the pile.)*

*(KEITH HARTLEY enters from bedroom archway. HE is a sullen, somewhat pessimistic fellow.)*

AMBER: *(Singing)* Hellooooo, Keith!

KEITH: *(Grunts)* Coffee.

AMBER: There's some made. I'll get a cup for you. *(SHE exits into kitchen. KEITH looks longingly at the cake. He starts to reach for it.)* And don't touch that cake! *(KEITH backs away, then looks at the cake again. After a cautious glance toward the kitchen, he reaches for it again.)* I mean it!!

*(KEITH gives up. He looks through the cards on the table, then chooses the same one FRANKIE chose before. He reads it aloud.)*

KEITH: "To Grandpa, with love, Frankie." *(Taking a pen, HE scribbles out the name and writes in) "To Grandpa, with love...Keith." (HE buries the card in the pile and sits on the couch. AMBER enters with a cup of coffee.)*

AMBER: Another rough night?

KEITH: You bet, Amberger.

AMBER: Must you call me "Amberger"? You know I hate that.

KEITH: You're my little sister. I have to do things that irritate you. I think it's a law.

AMBER: Did you get Grandpa a card?

KEITH: In a manner of speaking.

AMBER: Did you get him a gift?

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