

The Hitchin' Post

By Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Everybody knows that whatever you need, you can find it at Hurley Squonk's general store, the Hitchin' Post. Run by Hurley himself, who is always behind the counter, this sort of "everything store" not only carries a wide variety of items but also attracts some mighty strange folks.

There's Pinch Burdett, who spends all his time hawking his wife's jams and making up stories; Lyge Daugerfield, something of a "mamma's boy," and his fiancée Purdy MacKendrick, who're picking today to elope; Mrs. Bastrop, a feisty lady who got thrown out of the town's softball tournament; and Gloria, or "Glow Worm," a romantic teen who camps out at Hurley's magazine stand. And just after Sheriff Bumgarden has left the place, who should show up but Lyge's mother, the overbearing and pompous, Elmira Daugerfield.

As if this weren't more than enough for Hurley, two brothers, Roy and Earl, burst in to hold up the store! Only their pistol turns out to be a water gun, so they leave and come back with a sack in which they have another weapon, but only halfway through the holdup ... well, it gets a little confusing here.

Written by the same author who gave you "Barbecuing Hamlet" and "Frankenstein, Together Again!", this hilarious slice of life in a Texas town will keep you in stitches and make you want to come back again and again to visit Hurley's general store. Does it have a happy ending? Anything is possible at the "The Hitchin' Post."

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 5 w)

HURLEY SQUONK: A cranky storekeeper, middle-aged.

PINCH BURDETT: The town know-it-all, in his mid-30's.

PURDY MacKENDRICK: Slightly hard-headed, an eloping
20-year-old.

LYGE DAUGERFIELD: A not-too-sure 20-year-old
mamma's boy.

MRS. BASTROP: A feisty 50-year-old shopper.

SHERIFF BUMGARDEN: An overweight Texas sheriff.

GLORIA PINKHAM: A romantic teen, known as Glow
Worm.

ROY: A would-be robber.

EARL: Roy's partner in crime, not too bright.

TRUDY: Long-suffering secretary to Elmira.

ELMIRA DAUGERFIELD: Lyge's pushy, overbearing
mother.

Time - Summer, the present.

Place - The Hitchin' Post, a general store in Flat Rock,
Texas.

SETTING

The setting for this rural farce is Hurley Squonk's "The Hitchin' Post" general store, a sort of old-time mercantile store which carries practically anything. The interior of the store consists of three doors. The first door, SL, is the entrance to the store with large double doors opening inward, and double screen doors, rusted to the point of preventing anyone from seeing through unless they stand right up against them. There is a large picture window on the SL wall, just UPS of the doors, which is dusty and practically covered with old posters. The second door, USR, leads to a hall, storeroom and bathroom. The third door, located SR, leads outside to a rather surly indefinable dog.

The furniture in the store consists of a front counter, located USC, open at both ends and placarded with old advertising signs. On the counter is a very old cash register along with various small items, such as gum, pens, etc. Behind the counter are shelves overflowing with other items for sale, along with Hurley's notes, catalogs, books and a telephone. There is a large bulletin board, crowded with sales, car photos and wanted posters. On the SR wall is a magazine rack and more shelves, containing caps and clothing. On the SL wall are shelves with boxed and canned goods.

PROPS

Newspaper, hunter's vest, jar of jam, 4 cans of cat food, brown paper bag, purse, teen magazine, 2 bandannas, cap, water pistol, bottle of distilled water, attache case with note inside, phone, cloth sack, checkbook and pen, bullhorn, baseball, box of rice, little black book, gun and holster, Sheriff's hat, ring, broom and dustpan, bottle of pills.

SOUNDS

Several simple sound effects are called for including a vicious dog barking, a police car siren, a snake rattle, a metallic thonk, the Sheriff's voice over a bullhorn and his small voice over the phone.

ACT I

(AT RISE: As the LIGHTS come up, HURLEY is standing behind the counter reading a newspaper. Several feet away PINCH is leaning on the counter and staring at Hurley. After a long pause Pinch speaks.)

PINCH: Hurley?

HURLEY: *(Not caring.)* Hm?

PINCH: You got a dent in yore forehead.

HURLEY: You sound like you think that's a bulletin.

PINCH: You knew about it, then?

HURLEY: What do you think, it's just visitin' and waitin' to leap on the next passin' unblemished forehead the first chance it gets?

PINCH: It's just that I never noticed it before.

HURLEY: Sorry, I didn't send you an announcement. *(HE idly turns the page.)*

PINCH: Does it hurt?

HURLEY: It's all I can do just to stand here and talk to you.

PINCH: On account'a the dent?

HURLEY: Dent ain't got nothin' to do with it.

(A medium silence sets in like an early dew.)

PINCH: You know people will believe anything a total stranger will tell 'em.

(HURLEY looks up and over his shoulder as if trying to find who PINCH is talking to. He looks at Pinch.)

HURLEY: Go home.

PINCH: They will! A guy can talk to his wife until he is blue in the face and she won't have none of it. But some interloper passes by, tells her the moon was hung by elves and she's on the phone, quicker 'an a bolt a'lightnin', passin' it around as the gospel. You need any more jam?

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HURLEY: *(Drops HIS head and then looks up.)* It's my own fault; I saw you comin' and right then and there I could've locked up and gone home.

PINCH: Blue is canning today so I brought you some. *(HE reaches into his hunter's vest and pulls out a small jar of jam.)*

HURLEY: *(Resuming HIS newspaper.)* Put 'er down there. And tell her I says hi. *(PINCH puts the jar on the counter.)*

PINCH: That thing's even got a shadow.

HURLEY: The jam?

PINCH: That dent.

HURLEY: *(Irate.)* Can we set up a system where we BOTH know when you is changin' the subject! I don't ask for much, God knows, but that would shore be a blessin'.

PINCH: You don't like to talk about it much, do you?

HURLEY: Call it a relic of my wanderlust and misspent youth.

PINCH: How so?

HURLEY: You know how I got this dent here?

PINCH: Naw.

HURLEY: Me, neither. *(HE picks up his newspaper.)*

(LYGE and PURDY enter through the SL door.)

PURDY: Get in there, will you? Now, go on and ask the man!

LYGE: Well, give me a minute!

PINCH: *(Nudges HURLEY.)* Watch here, and I'll show you. *(HE shouts to LYGE.)* You know, if you can get enough wasps together they can build a condominium?!

(After a slight pause, LYGE turns to PURDY.)

LYGE: Maybe we ought to go on further down the road and-

PURDY: I can't WAIT!

LYGE: OKAY, you - *(PURDY glares at HIM.)* sweet thing. *(HE moves closer to the counter.)* Excuse me? *(HURLEY looks up.)* Can we use your bathroom?

HURLEY: We? BOTH of you?

End of Freeview

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