

Leona Love Thy Neighbor, Too

A Comedy in Two Acts

By Gary Ray Stapp

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DEDICATION

*To Kim, my wife, my critic, and my encouragement.
Thank you for motivating me to continue with Leona's story.*

STORY OF THE PLAY

Champion marigold horticulturist, neighborhood snoop, and generally nasty human being Leona Crump is back! Nine years earlier, she was tricked into selling her home and nearly ousted from her neighborhood as the result of an elaborate charade instigated by her friends and foes. But now, finally, her old house is on the market, and Leona is determined to move back home. Unfortunately, the real estate agent has been instructed to never sell the house back to Leona. Reluctantly, Leona partners with her estranged sister Francine (who has her own agenda), and the two of them pounce on the opportunity of a decade. But just as Leona begins to enjoy the fruits of her victory, Albert, her ex-husband, shows up and, with the help of neighbors Judy and Paul and their six children, they turn Leona's world inside out. Determined to again reign as queen of the cul-de-sac, Leona brazenly plots to choose replacement neighbors that will fit her idea of utopia. That is, until a reformed mafia family shows up wanting to buy Leona's house. Suspecting yet another charade and conspiracy, Leona goes off the deep end leading everyone to wonder: Is she really the neighborhood witch, or just slightly, but hilariously, misunderstood? (*Meet Leona and friends in "Love Thy Neighbor," the original play by Gary Ray Stapp.*)

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Rebel's Bluff Troupe, Mt. Vernon, Missouri, February 19, 20, & 21 2016, directed by Kerry Green. Cast and crew: Lana Moore, Sherie Thrasher, Rebecca Fursman, Natasha Varberg, Adam Rogers, Sam Logan, Joseph Mattocks, Landon Logan, Emily Owens, April Mieswinkel Albers, Eric S Garner, Bryston Pryer, Hannah Varberg, Conner Moore, Emma Moore, Zoe Gabrielson, Kyleigh Nordyke, Emmaline Albers, Garrison Nordyke, Joe Mattocks, Cindy Green, Charlotte Cole, John Typaldos, Sharlia Bledsoe, Steve Snyder, Mike Tebow and Bridgett Schmutz.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 6 w, 1 boy, 1 girl, 4 extra children, doubling possible.)

LEONA CRUMP: In her 60s, all brass and sass, and dripping with sarcasm. She is a sour, judgmental neighborhood snoop and champion marigold horticulturist.

ROSE BUSH: In her 50s, give or take 10 or 20 years. A successful, eccentric real estate sales lady whose trademark is a rosebush, but with a few barbs of her own.

FRANCINE ENGHOUSER: Leona's nicer younger sister, late 50s, on a slightly higher rung of the social ladder than her sister and less nose-y. She is a quiet romantic.

JUDY HARRISON: In her 30s, mother of six and counting, a sweet, naïve neighbor with a big heart for animals.

PAUL HARRISON: Judy's husband. Formally a friendly antagonist of Leona, but now a self-reformed smart-ass, sort of. He has his hands full with his big family.

ALBERT CRUMP: Leona's ex-husband. A retired career soldier, he's still a man on a mission: winning Leona's heart.

GEORGE: A mailman in his 50s or so. Easy going, but quick to swap punches with Leona. He is embarking on a second career as a marriage counselor.

ROCKY: In his 50s, a pen pal and reformed mobster heavy-man now paroled and taking care of family business. He speaks in his own version of an Italian dialect. *(Can double as Sam Jackson.)*

GERT: In her 80s. A mobster momma. *(Can double as Ida Jackson.)*

IDA JACKSON: A perky, enthusiastic homebuyer of any age. *(Can double as Gert.)*

SAM JACKSON: Ida's husband. A cautious, quiet homebuyer of any age. *(Can double as Rocky.)*

PAUL JR: A boy of eight, the misbehaving leader of his five other siblings. *(2 speaking lines.)*

MARSHA: A girl of seven, a sibling of Paul Junior. *(5 speaking lines.)*

EXTRAS: Four other small children, six years and younger. *(Nonspeaking.)*

SETTING

The living/dining room of Leona's original home, which sets on the west side of a three-house cul-de-sac in a mid-scale neighborhood somewhere in the Midwest. The room has been "staged" to sell: furnished with a tasteful, modern sofa and chair, and coffee table (SR), and a dining room table with two chairs (SL). At DSR is a sitting chair and a coat rack. DSL is a small table and a telephone and wastebasket. On the walls are a several nice generic, abstract paintings. Placed upon the coffee table and dining table are stylish items of décor. Nothing personal.

There are three entrances and an imaginary front window in the floorplan. SR is the front door, set within a covered exterior porch complete with a trellis of ivy that obscures the neighborhood beyond. SL is the entry into the kitchen. USC is an archway that frames a hall that leads to the bedrooms and bathrooms and remaining areas of the house. DSR (Or DSC.) is the imaginary window of the fourth wall that overlooks the implied front yard, giving the audience a full view of the spying that takes place there. Center stage is essentially open to allow for movement and a visual separation of the living and dining areas.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: It is a peaceful midmorning. SFX: Birdsong. The room is well lit, the front door stands open, and an "Open House" sign stands against the wall of the front porch. A briefcase sits on the floor beside the table. A quiet beat.)

ROSE: (OS.) Ms. Enghouser, isn't the master bath just a lovely shade of blue?

FRANCINE: (OS.) I don't like it.

ROSE: (OS.) It is dreadful, isn't it?

(FRANCINE ENGHouser enters USC from the hallway. She is attired in a designer dress complete with hat and gloves. ROSE follows her inside. She wears her standard "real estate" pantsuit.)

ROSE: (Cont'd.) Buuut, nothing a tiny little bit of paint won't fix.

FRANCINE: I don't paint, Mrs. Bush.

ROSE: Not a problem, Ms. Enghouser. Paul, your neighbor to the south, he's a painter. And a schoolteacher!

FRANCINE: (With distaste.) I see. Those who can, do, and those who can't, teach.

ROSE: Pardon me?

FRANCINE: Never mind. You wouldn't understand.

ROSE: If you say so, Ms. Enghouser. Say, would it be alright if I call you Francine?

FRANCINE: No.

ROSE: No?

FRANCINE: No.

ROSE: It's just that Ms. Enghouser is so formal, and you're certainly welcome to call me Rose.

FRANCINE: I'd prefer not.

ROSE: Not to which? Francine or Rose?

FRANCINE: Neither. We are not friends, Mrs. Bush. We are merely participating in a potential real estate transaction in a client-agent relationship.

ROSE: Of course, Ms. Enghouser.

FRANCINE: You being the agent and I the client.

ROSE: Yes—I know. So, Ms. Eng-hou-ser—*(With an un-genuine smile.)* what do you think of this marvelous little home? A gourmet kitchen with stainless steel appliances and Brazilian granite counters. A master bedroom retreat with an en suite bath complete with a spa shower and a bidet. That's something you don't see every day! The whole house has been very nicely modernized, don't you think?

FRANCINE: *(Sighs.)* It's rather bland.

ROSE: It's a blank pallet. Awaiting your exquisite flare for decorating, I'm sure.

FRANCINE: Yes, well, anything would be an improvement. But I do find that I am drawn to this neighborhood. *(Walks to window, 4th wall, and looks out.)*

ROSE: It is a lovely neighborhood. *(Joining HER.)*

FRANCINE: And what is the name of this little street again?

ROSE: Coriander Lane. It's a lovely little three house cul-de-sac right off Saffron Drive, which whimsically winds its way across to Basil Way that connects you quickly to our lovely neighborhood shopping mall.

FRANCINE: Coriander, Saffron, and Basil? How quaint. *(Frowns.)*

ROSE: Cute isn't it? All the streets in this subdivision are named for herbs and spices!

FRANCINE: Cute? No. But unimaginatively Midwestern.

ROSE: Yes, well. Uh...and where did you say you were moving here from?

FRANCINE: I didn't. *(Pause.)* And the schoolteacher lives there? *(Pointing.)*

ROSE: Yes, Paul. Oh, you'll like him. And—

FRANCINE: And who lives there *(Points.)* across the cul-de-sac?

ROSE: Uh...did I mention Paul is married? He has a lovely wife, Judy. She's so sweet, you'll like her.

FRANCINE: We'll see. And who lives there, across from here. The house with those deplorable marigolds lining the front fence?

End of Freeview

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