

# **SOUND EFFECTS**

A Comedy in 3 Acts

By David Meyer

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

The Potter family has a chance to hit the big time because their homespun local radio show has become the latest rage. Two network executives and a national sponsor are coming to town for a dinner meeting to put together the "million-dollar contract."

Of course nothing goes smoothly. The family's agent/business manager, in his excitement to land the big deal, has made promises the Potters find hard to keep. When the executives show up for dinner, confusion reigns. Identities have been switched, actors are brought in to play members of the household, and uninvited guests show up.

The national execs demand to view a live performance of the radio show before any contracts are signed. What results is a fevered pitch of high comedy complete with the police riot squad, gunfire, and ill-timed screams. The show is a laughingstock, and all prospects vanish into thin air waves. The station owner comes to the Potter house to demand retribution. All appears lost until fate steps in and turns the tables.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(4 m, 6 w, 5 flexible, extras, doubling possible.)*

- PETER POTTER** - A meek, mild, bespeckled, bookish type with a bow tie. He plays rough, tough Marshal Matt Forces on the radio due to his deep, commanding voice.
- FLORA POTTER** - Attractive wife of Peter. Her radio character is the schoolmarm, Miss Peggy Stakes.
- ROSE POTTER** - Their teenage daughter who plays the part of Miss April Mae on the radio.
- WILLIE POTTER** - Their teenage son who plays the part of Buckboard Bob on the radio.
- DENNIS (DENISE) DRILLMAN (M/F)** - Sponsor of the radio show, a businessman with a sense of fairness. He is a bit awestruck to be meeting real stars of the radio.
- DALE OVERHILL (M/F)** - A pompous network executive, grumbling and impatient. He wants to do his job and leave. No nonsense type.
- NICK (NIKKI) DePAINT (M/F)** - Network executive, very much like Overhill. An overbearing stuffed shirt.
- RUSTY PIPER (M/F)** - Old friend of the family. Excitable, good-hearted, honorary uncle to the Potter children. He is out of his league with the network executives, dealing as agent/business manager for the Potters.
- PHIL DENDRUM** - Neighbor to the Potters. A big, husky man with a soft side and a soft voice to match. He is a plumber by trade and a part-time, correspondence-school attorney.
- RHODA DENDRUM** - Wife to Phil. A good friend and a good sport.
- PAIGE TURNER** - Younger sister of Flora who wants to be an actress. Stage-struck.
- GRANDMA** - Coral Springs is a feisty woman who gets her way with the sympathy ploy. The busybody mother of Flora and Paige.
- AUNT ANITA** - Sister of Grandma. Tough, demanding, no-nonsense drill sergeant type. She carries mace in the industrial size and isn't afraid to use it.

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**PERRY WINKLE** (M/F) - Unscrupulous radio station owner. Businessman who knows how to cheat a client. (Part can be doubled)

**MOOSE ARELLA** - Classmate of Willie. Big, slow, easy-going guy.

**EXTRAS:** If desired a number of extras can be used as police in Act III.

**SETTING**

All the action takes place in the modest living room of the Potter home. There needs to be an entrance to the kitchen on the SR wall and an entrance to a study USC. USL is a staircase going up and at SL is a front door. Sofas, chairs, end tables and a telephone can be arranged as desired. In Act II, more Western decor is added to the room.

**Time:** The present.

**Place:** The living room of the modest Potter home.

**SYNOPSIS**

Act I: Late afternoon.

Act II: Early evening, the next day.

Act III: Scene 1, a short time later.

Act III: Scene 2, several hours later.

**ACT I**

*(AT RISE: PETER POTTER is relaxing in his easy chair with his feet up. He wears glasses, a bow tie, smoking jacket and slippers. He has his pipe and a magazine but it appears he's dozing. A dual cassette tape player softly PLAYS a WALTZ. FLORA POTTER enters from the SR. She quietly goes to Peter and gently shakes him awake. She is wearing an apron, and has been busy working in the kitchen.)*

FLORA: *(Gently shaking HIM.)* Peter...wake up...you're falling asleep again.

PETER: *(Waking.)* Oh...sorry, dear.

FLORA: *(As SHE goes to tape player and turns it off.)* This seems to be a regular routine for you. Lately every afternoon you take a little nap.

PETER: I must be tired.

FLORA: Well, I woke you gently...I know how you hate to be startled. It's hard for me to get any work done around here with you sleeping in our living room.

PETER: I'll try not to, dear.

FLORA: Dinner will be ready shortly.

PETER: Great, I'm starving.

FLORA: *(As SHE exits SR.)* Now, don't go back to sleep... you'll be tossing and turning all night. You should be preparing for our show this evening. After dinner we won't have much time to get to the radio station.

PETER: I know, dear...I won't go back to sleep. Could you put the music on?

*(FLORA turns the tape player back on and exits SR. The soft sounds of the WALTZ are heard. PETER gets comfortable in his chair and looks at his magazine. After a few seconds the magazine falls open on his lap and he is dozing again. WILLIE enters USL. He rushes in slamming the front door. Peter jumps at the sudden sound; his magazine flying.)*

WILLIE: *(Excited.)* Hey, Pop! Pop!

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PETER: What? What is it? Is the house on fire?

WILLIE: No...no...I just heard -- it's great news -- listen...(HE turns off the tape player.)

PETER: (*Relaxing a bit.*) What earthshaking news do you have? Your high school mascot laid an egg?

WILLIE: It's an eagle, Dad, not a chicken.

PETER: Eagles lay eggs.

WILLIE: Dad, this is important!

(FLORA enters SR.)

PETER: Ah...a date for the prom?

FLORA: What's all the excitement?

PETER: Willie has a new date.

WILLIE: No, I don't.

FLORA: Good, because I like --

WILLIE: Mom! Listen...I just ran into Uncle Rusty.

PETER: Rusty? You see him all the time. He's our agent... business manager or something. (*To FLORA.*) Just what is Rusty Piper?

FLORA: You know what he is. He's one of our oldest friends -- and an honorary uncle.

PETER: Yes, he is...is that why we pay him ten percent of the humble salary we get at the radio station?

FLORA: Rusty's been a good agent and manager for us all these years.

PETER: And a good friend.

WILLIE: Mom! Dad! Please --

PETER: Sorry, son. What did Rusty have to say?

WILLIE: He's going to stop by later...here, or at the station...he's got a lot of details to work out.

FLORA: Details?

PETER: He doesn't want us to do *another* show! We already write and perform our Western show (*Proudly.*), "The Rustlers of Gopher Gulch."

FLORA: And we write and perform all the commercials for our sponsor.

PETER: We couldn't possibly do another regular show --

FLORA: Maybe it's a special.

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