

STAR-SPANGLED CANTEEN

By Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF THE PLAY

While World War II rages, the Bugle sisters, Betty, Ruthie, and Sissy, turn their Grandpa Buddy's Seaside Hotel into the Star-Spangled Canteen where sailors and soldiers can relax, eat, and dance. Not only do they want to help the war effort, but they want to save the Seaside from the hands of ruthless businessman Skylar Schutt who intends to buy the Florida hotel for back taxes.

But when Schutt accuses Buddy Bugle of being a German spy, the girls -- with a little help from the Ladies' League for Coastal Defense -- declare all out war. And it isn't long before a platoon of spies surfaces! It seems everybody becomes suspicious of everyone else until a nighttime reconnaissance mission traps the real traitor.

Wise-cracking sailors ready to ship out, a hillbilly jug band, the hilariously patriotic members of the Ladies' League, a pair of heart-warming old vaudevillians, and the spunky "Bugle Girls" combine to make this a sure winner!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(10 m, 17 w, extras as desired)

BUDDY BUGLES: An old vaudeville star, about 62.
SKYLAR SCHUTT: Businessman, about 25.
CLARABETH SHAPELY: Skylar's "secretary," about 20.
BETTY BUGLE: Buddy's oldest granddaughter, about 21.
RUTHIE BUGLE: Another granddaughter, 19.
SISSY BUGLE: A third granddaughter, 15.
MARIAH: Housekeeper, about 50.
BOBBY BUGLE: Buddy's grandson, a soldier, 23.
HERMOINE WASHINGTON: Head of the Ladies' League for Coastal Defense, about 50.
GERTRUDE JEFFERSON: Another member, about 45.
MARGARET ADAMS: Another member, about 45.
ESTELLE LINCOLN: Another member, about 50.
LORETTA: A friend of the Bugle girls, about 19.
GAYLE: Another friend, about 19.
LEO McCOY: A hillbilly singer, about 40.
PATSY McCOY: His wife, about 40.
PEGGY McCOY: Their daughter, about 16.
CHARLIE CAMERON: A sailor, 20s.
WILLIE MAZOTTI: Another sailor, 20s.
STINKY SAILORS: Another, 20s.
B.J.: Another sailor, 20s.
BEULAH BENNS: Local law officer, 30s.
NAN GIBBONS: A freelance writer, 20s.
SAMMY SMITH: A civilian, 20s.
KITTY KRAMER: Sammy's bride, 20s.
FREDDY BUTTERS: Buddy's vaudeville partner, about 65.
BABS DONOVAN: A record company executive, 30s.
EXTRAS: Male and female service personnel.

Radio announcements (male voice) can be pre-taped.

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SETTING

The lobby of the Seaside Hotel, summer, 1943. The lobby is dominated by a French window USC. Through the open doors we see a terrace, railing, and the horizon beyond. A few palm trees can be seen stretching in the distance. An arched entrance USR serves as the main entrance to the hotel. Wing entrance SL leads to rooms, while wing entrances DSR lead to kitchen, dining room, and game room. Traditional hotel desk, complete with bell, mailboxes, and rotary dial phone, stands USL. Raised platform or small stage stands against wall, SR. Hanging behind stage is a poster of "Bugle and Butters," a vaudeville team. Small couch sits SL facing stage, with two chairs facing the couch at SC. Other chairs sit against the walls here and there as found in any lobby. Posters advertising war bonds should decorate the walls along with a large map of the world. Small flags dot the map indicating where Bobby has been stationed (U.S., England, North Africa).

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Lobby of the Seaside Hotel, summer, 1943.

Scene 2: Four days later.

Scene 3: The following night.

Scene 4: The following day.

ACT II

Scene 1: That night.

Scene 2: Later that night, 11:45 p.m.

Scene 3: The following night.

*NOTE: Song numbers are suggested throughout the play.
They may be changed at the director's discretion.*

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The lobby of the Seaside Hotel, summer, 1943. BUDDY sings and dances on the stage with a cane, just finishing an old soft-shoe number such as "A Bicycle Built for Two." SKYLAR SCHUTT leans against the lobby desk, while CLARABETH lounges on the couch selecting chocolates from a box of candy.)

BUDDY: *(Following verse, still dancing.)* Did I ever tell you I was in vaudeville?

SKYLAR: Yes, Mr. Bugle.

BUDDY: Bugle and Butters, the team to beat! If you don't laugh at their jokes, you'll be dazzled by their feet!

SKYLAR: Yeah? Well, I can see why you're a has-been.

CLARABETH: Shut up, Skylar! I like it!

SKYLAR: *(Grabbing chocolates from HER.)* Easy on the bon-bons, Baby.

CLARABETH: Hey!

SKYLAR: You'd use up all our ration points in a week if I let you! *(BUDDY starts to sing a second verse of the song but SKYLAR, impatient, claps loudly and makes CLARABETH stand up.)* Great, great! Now can we talk business?

BUDDY: The only business I know is show business!

SKYLAR: From the looks of things you ain't kiddin'! You ever get anybody to stay in this old rat hole?

BUDDY: Oh, once in a while. Folks lose their way sometimes on the way to Miami on account of that sign I hung up by the highway.

SKYLAR: What sign's that?

BUDDY: The one that says, "Welcome to Miami Beach."

SKYLAR: You can't do that! This is thirty miles north of Miami. We ain't near Miami Beach.

BUDDY: Nobody's said a thing yet.

SKYLAR: It's illegal!

BUDDY: I don't see how.

SKYLAR: Tell him, Clarabeth! You're my legal expert.

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CLARABETH: I am? Oh, yeah, I am! Well, when the party of the first part agrees to what the party of the second part is proposing, then the party of the third part has to...well, you know!

BUDDY: That serious, huh?

CLARABETH: I'm afraid so.

SKYLAR: Look, Pops, I own Skinner Mortgage and Realty Company in Miami. I also own the Miami Bongo Club and a couple of other places around town. I've been meaning to expand my horizons, and that's why I'm making you this offer.

BUDDY: But Mr. Skinner...

SKYLAR: Schutt.

BUDDY: Shoot what? Are you a hunter?

SKYLAR: My name's Mr. Schutt. Skylar Schutt.

BUDDY: Oh, pleased to meet you. (*Shakes SKYLAR'S hand.*)

SKYLAR: (*Cordially.*) The pleasure's all mine. (*Realizing what HE'S doing, he breaks off shaking hands, furiously.*) Would you stop all this nonsense and listen to me!

BUDDY: (*Cleans HIS ears with his little finger, then...*) All right, I'm listening!

SKYLAR: I'll give you a thousand bucks for this dump. Take it or leave it.

BUDDY: I'm afraid I'll have to leave it.

CLARABETH: We'll offer fifteen hundred!

SKYLAR: Clarabeth!

BUDDY: Oh, I can't sell for that much.

CLARABETH: Two thousand! (*SKYLAR puts his hand over HER mouth and shoos her behind him.*)

SKYLAR: I plead temporary insanity on the part of my secretary, Miss Shapely.

BUDDY: It's quite all right. And to be honest, it doesn't matter what price you offer, I just couldn't sell Seaside. I'd managed to save up a bit so when Freddy Butters, my vaudeville partner, was hurt in a car accident and we had to end our act, I could invest in a real honest-to-goodness business that would keep me in clover.

End of Freeview

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