

WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK!



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Norman Maine Publishing

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Norman Maine Publishing

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WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK!

COMEDY COLLECTION. In this humorous collection of three short plays, a host of zany characters seek to unravel the meaning of life. In "The Play god," characters discuss whether they believe in the existence of their creator, an all-powerful playwright who controls their every move. In "Checkmate," a college kid becomes obsessed with beating an old man at chess. And in "When Clowns Attack!" an overly optimistic father living in denial finds himself repeatedly attacked by a horde of clowns.

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

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THE PLAY GOD

(1 M, 2 F, 1 flexible)

PLAYWRIGHT: Playwright working on his next play; flexible.

TOM: One of the Playwright's characters who doesn't believe in the existence of the playwright; male.

BEE: One of the Playwright's characters who believes in the concept of an all-powerful playwright who controls her every move; female.

AGGIE: One of the Playwright's characters who isn't sure if the Playwright exists; female.

CHECKMATE

(3 M)

JACK: Average college kid majoring in engineering who becomes obsessed with beating the Old Man at chess; male.

OLD MAN: Expert chess player; male.

TOM: Jack's college roommate who also plays the Library Worker, Jack's Dad, and the Paramedic; male.

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(2 M, 2 F)

BOB: Overly optimistic father and husband in a constant state of denial who finds himself repeatedly attacked by Clowns; male.

CLOWN 1: Clown who plays the role of Nurse and Bob's Son; wears a nurse's uniform; male.

CLOWN 2: Clown who plays Bob's Daughter and Bob's Wife; wears a bandage over one eye; wears an overcoat; female.

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CLOWN 3: Clown who plays a Doctor and Bob's Daughter-in-Law; wears a doctor's medical coat; wears a robe; female.

NOTE: Whenever the Clowns play different roles, they keep their clown costume on and put their other costume over it to indicate their new character. For flexible roles, please change pronouns accordingly.

SETTING

THE PLAY GOES: A small table, chair, computer.

CHECKMATE: Park on a college campus. There is a small table and two chairs.

WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK!: An empty stage.

PROPS

THE PLAY GOES ON: Computer, drink.

CHECKMATE: Chessboard with pieces, photograph, several books, computer chess game or laptop,

WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK!: Three rubber chickens, cell phone, party ticklers, long skinny balloon, balloon made into a dog; balloon made into a giraffe, pushpin, umbrella, giant comb, giant baby bottle, 3 small colorful buckets, confetti,

NOTE: Any clown prop can be used in place of the umbrella, giant comb, and giant baby bottle.

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SOUND EFFECTS

CHECKMATE: Sound of a crash.

WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK!: Phone ringing,

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"SHE THINKS
THERE IS SOME
ALL-POWERFUL PLAYWRIGHT
CONTROLLING US..."

—TOM

THE PLAY GOD

(AT RISE: There is a chair and a small table with a computer on it. Bee and Tom are sitting on the floor.)

TOM: Nothing's happening.

BEE: That's weird.

TOM: Well, something needs to happen.

BEE: Maybe he's waiting for us to make it happen.

TOM: Who?

BEE: The playwright.

TOM: The playwright?

BEE: Yes. Tom, the playwright.

TOM: I don't believe in the playwright.

BEE: Then how do you think you got here?

TOM: Well, you know...evolution.

BEE: You mean the *theory* of evolution?

TOM: Yeah, that.

BEE: You mean the *theory* that is as likely as a monkey banging on a typewriter for an infinite amount of time would eventually produce "The Collected Works of Shakespeare"?

TOM: Uh...yeah.

BEE: You gotta have a lot of faith to believe in that.

(Playwright enters and sits at the computer. He doesn't notice Tom or Bee.)

PLAYWRIGHT: *(To himself.)* All right, let's see... *(Thinks.)* So far, I have Tom and Bee sitting on the floor. Now what? *(Gets an idea.)* Oh, I know. *(Types the following as he says it.)* "Tom gets up. *(Tom stands.)* He helps Bee to her feet. *(Tom helps Bee to her feet.)* They embrace. *(Tom and Bee embrace.)* They pull back for just a second and look into each others eyes. *(Tom and Bee look into each other's eyes.)* They kiss."

(Tom and Bee go to kiss.) No, wait! *(Tom and Bee freeze. Gets an idea.)* Oh, I know. "Bee slaps Tom!" *(Bee slaps Tom.)* Ha! I like it! Now, how about... "Tom slaps Bee back. *(Tom slaps Bee.)* And she falls to the floor." *(Bee falls to the floor.)* No, wait a second. It's just a slap. She wouldn't fall down. Backspace, backspace, backspace. *(Bee stands up.)* Okay, instead of Tom slapping her back, he says...

(Playwright types while Tom and Bee speak the following.)

TOM: "Hey, what was that for?"

PLAYWRIGHT: And Bee says...

BEE: "I saw you with that girl yesterday!"

PLAYWRIGHT: Okay, this is getting juicy. Of course, Tom has to deny it.

TOM: "What girl?"

BEE: "Aggie."

TOM: "Who's Aggie?"

PLAYWRIGHT: Okay, let's throw Tom a curve. Enter Aggie. *(Aggie enters.)* "And Bee says with contempt..."

BEE: "Hello, Aggie."

PLAYWRIGHT: Tom's in big trouble now! Okay, now what? I need a drink. *(Exits.)*

AGGIE: *(To Tom and Bee.)* Hey.

BEE/TOM: Hey.

AGGIE: *(Confused.)* Do you guys know what's going on?

BEE: I think I'm supposed to be jealous of you.

TOM: Hey, Aggie, let me ask you something: Do you think that if you put a monkey in a room with a typewriter for an infinite amount of time that eventually he would type the "Collected Works of Shakespeare"?

AGGIE: Uh, I don't know. I guess it's possible.

BEE: Of course, it's possible. Anything's possible. So, let me ask you this: Let's say you're walking along and all of a sudden you come across a pile of papers, and upon examination, you find that they are the "Collected Works of

Shakespeare." Would you assume that a Shakespeare or a monkey sitting at a typewriter for an infinite amount of time had just passed this way?

AGGIE: I really don't know.

TOM: Okay, here's the thing... (*Scoffs. Indicating Bee.*) She thinks there is some all-powerful playwright that is controlling us.

BEE: I didn't say *controlling* us. I just mean that he's in charge. What do you think, Aggie?

AGGIE: I guess there could be. But I wouldn't say yes for sure. I mean, how can I know? How can anyone know?

BEE: Well, how about if I ask him?

(Playwright returns with a drink and sits.)

PLAYWRIGHT: *(To himself.)* Now, let's see...what should I have Aggie say?

(Bee kneels down and puts her hands together as if praying.)

BEE: Dear Playwright, if you're out there, I hope you can hear me. I was just wondering if you could show us a sign of your existence. I mean, I don't need a sign. I believe in you, but my friends don't. Could you do something or send us some sort of message that proves you exist?

PLAYWRIGHT: Bee, Bee, Bee. You don't understand. I'm not going to do that. Let's see... (*Types.*) "Tom looks at Aggie and says..."

TOM: "Oh, that Aggie."

BEE: "So, you were with her!"

PLAYWRIGHT: (*Types.*) "Bee gets up and heads straight for Aggie. She raises her hand... (*Bee gets up and heads for Aggie, hand raised.*) ...and slaps her!"

BEE: But...I don't want to.

PLAYWRIGHT: (*Types harder.*) "And slaps her!"

(Bee reluctantly slaps Aggie.)

BEE: *(To Aggie.)* Oh, sorry!

PLAYWRIGHT: Wait! Backspace, backspace, backspace. Bee does not say, "Oh, sorry." She says something like...

BEE: "Take that, you heartless wench!"

TOM: All right! A cat fight!

BEE: Wait, I am sorry. I like Aggie. She's my friend.

AGGIE: I like you, too.

PLAYWRIGHT: Okay, fine. You can like Aggie, and Aggie can like you, but now Aggie's gonna say... *(Types.)*

AGGIE: "But Tom's just too much of a man to leave alone. I want him."

TOM: All right! This is getting good!

BEE: *(To Aggie.)* "You can have him."

PLAYWRIGHT: Oops. That doesn't work. If she says that, the story's over. Backspace, backspace, backspace. She needs to say... *(Types.)*

BEE: *(Fighting the words.)* "You...can...have...him."

PLAYWRIGHT: Oh, for heaven's sake, I just wrote the same thing again. Backspace, backspace, backspace.

BEE: No, that's what I want to say. You really can have him. I just want to be able to do what I want.

PLAYWRIGHT: Bee, you are really trying my patience. *(Types during the following conversation.)*

TOM: You know, Bee, if there were some creator, some all-powerful being out there, do you really think he would let you do whatever you want, I mean, if he can control everything?

BEE: Why not? If I were him, I'd let you do whatever you want.

TOM: If you did that, do you have any idea how much damage I could cause?

AGGIE: *(To Bee.)* Yeah, we'd destroy ourselves.

BEE: What do you mean?

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[END OF FREEVIEW]

"Now,
TO THE AVERAGE PASSERBY,
WE WERE JUST A COUPLE OF GUYS
PLAYING A GAME.
BUT FOR THE TWO OF US,
WE WERE LOCKED
IN A STRANGE MORTAL COMBAT."

—JACK

CHECKMATE

(AT RISE: Park on a college campus. The Old Man is sitting at a table. On the table is a chessboard with pieces lined up ready for a match. The white pawn has been moved out two spaces on the board. Jack jogs on, looks back, and catches a football thrown to him. Tom enters.)

TOM: Nice catch! (Jack tosses the ball back to Tom.) Go long!

JACK: I'm open!

(Tom passes the ball.)

TOM: Touchdown! And the crowd goes wild!

(Tom and Jack make crowd noises.)

JACK: (To audience.) Oh, hi. Hey, listen. I want to show you something.

TOM: Hey, Jack. Ball?

JACK: Oh, sorry. Go long. I'll meet you back at the apartment, okay?

(Jack throws the ball to Tom. Tom exits to catch the ball. Sound of a crash offstage. Jack winces.)

TOM: (Offstage, shouts.) I'm okay!

JACK: (To audience.) Thanks for waiting. That's my roommate Tom. We both go to the college here, and this is our park. I walk through it twice a day going to and from class. It's nice. (Remembers.) Oh, here's what I wanted to show you. (Pulls out a photograph.) I have this picture. (Points.) See? It's me catching a football right here in this very park. If you look real close, you can see a man in the background. He's just sitting there, staring at a chess set. I

don't even know his name. The thing is...this picture was taken a year ago. See that guy over there? (*Points to Old Man.*) That's him. He's in the exact same place in the exact same position. It's like he hasn't moved a muscle for a whole year! And now I am completely obsessed with him. I know...why am I obsessed with a harmless Old Man sitting in a park? Well, normally, I wouldn't be. I'm not the obsessive type. I'm just an average college student majoring in engineering. But every day since this picture was taken, I have walk passed the Old Man and he never moves! You know how when everything is still and then one thing moves, it catches your eye? Well, it's the opposite with him. Everything else is moving, and he just sits there...motionless. (*For the following, he acts out everything as he narrates.*) One day, I walked passed him real close. He didn't look up. I walked by him for a week...nothing! Once, I even tripped on purpose just to see if I could get a reaction...not even a twitch. It's like he's so focused on that chessboard that he blocks out everything else. Finally, I just walked right up to him and—I never noticed it before—he was playing the white pieces and waiting for someone to play the black. So I sat down. I thought maybe he'd jump up and start yelling at me, but he didn't even move. I was starting to think he wasn't even real. So I moved a black pawn. (*Old Man moves his arm up to move a piece and Jack is so startled, he falls out of his chair. Stands.*) It startled me just a little when he moved. Now, I'm not the greatest chess player in the world, but I'm not the worst, either. We played for about ten minutes, and then I guess I made a crucial error.

(Jack sits at the table and moves a piece. Old Man moves a piece.)

OLD MAN: Checkmate. (*Stands.*) Thank you. (*Exits.*)

JACK: (*To audience.*) And just like that, he was gone. He didn't even look me in the eye. I don't think he even knows

what I look like. All he saw were my hands moving the pieces. I figured that was it. That was the last time I'd see the Old Man. But the next day, he was back. (*Old Man enters, sits, and moves one white pawn.*) I sat down and we played again until –

OLD MAN: Checkmate. (*Stands.*) Thank you. (*Exits.*)

JACK: (*To audience.*) So that night when I got home, I asked my roommate, Tom, if he knew anything about chess.

(*Tom enters.*)

TOM: Yeah, I know a little. I know a seven-move checkmate.

JACK: You mean you can checkmate someone in seven moves?

TOM: Yeah, it's awesome. Here, I'll show you.

(*Jack and Tom move to the chessboard.*)

JACK: (*To audience.*) We set up a little chess set Tom had under his bed.

TOM: All right, you be white. White goes first. (*They play.*) Okay, first, I move this pawn. Now you go. The next move is the horsy.

JACK: I think that's called a knight.

TOM: Whatever. That's the next move.

JACK: (*To audience.*) Not knowing the name of the pieces wasn't inspiring much confidence, but he did know which way the pieces were allowed to move, so I played along.

TOM: And the seventh move...and checkmate.

JACK: Hey, that worked.

TOM: I told you.

JACK: (*To audience.*) I spent the next few minutes memorizing the seven-move checkmate. (*Tom exits. Jack walks away from the table. Old Man enters and sits at the table.*) The next day, I got out of class and rushed to the park to play the Old Man. I walked up to the table and sat down as I had the two days

before. His white pawn was already out. I started my seven-move checkmate. (*Moves a pawn.*) That's one. (*Old Man moves a piece. Jack moves a piece.*) That's two. (*Old Man moves a piece. Jack moves a piece.*) Three. This is gonna be great!

(Old Man moves a piece.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]

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"SOMETIMES CLOWNS HAPPEN."

-BOB

WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK!

(AT RISE: Clown 1-3 enter, sneak across the stage, and exit. Bob enters cautiously. Clowns 1-3 enter and attack Bob with rubber chickens. Bob is fast and is never touched by them. After a bit, Clowns surround Bob. Just when it looks like Bob is done for, the Clowns freeze. Bob looks up at the audience. The Clowns remain frozen. Bob steps forward, away from the Clowns.)

BOB: *(To audience.)* Hi. I'm Bob. As you can see, I have a very peculiar problem. Every night when I get home from work, I park my car in the parking lot and then, as I make my way to my apartment, I am attacked by clowns. *(Indicates Clowns.)* These guys. It happens every single night. It's not always rubber chickens. Sometimes, they try to get me with squirting flowers, or they throw juggling equipment at me, or they try to kick me with oversized shoes. The point is...they're always there, trying to get me with something, and I have no idea why. The good thing is I've always made it safely back to my apartment. They've never hit me, not with chickens, the shoes, the trick flowers, not one drop of water. I'm too fast for them, I guess. You'll see. *(Goes back to the same position as he was just about to be hit by the chickens. To audience.)* Here we go! *(Jumps out of the way and the Clowns run into each other and collapse on the floor. Bob exits. Clowns exit. Bob re-enters. To audience.)* I remember, one day in particular, the clowns were really vicious. They almost got me. I remember it so well because it was the day my daughter had a freak accident. She had gotten a temporary job at a winery. I was at work when I got the call. *(Sound of phone ringing. Answers cell phone. As a nurse, Clown 1 enters, wearing a nurse's uniform. As a doctor, Clown 3 enters, wearing a doctor's medical coat. As his daughter, Clown 2 is wearing a white bandage over one eye. Into phone.)* I understand. I'll be right there.

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CLOWN 1: *(As Nurse. To Clown 2.)* We were able to get a hold of your father. He said he would be right here. That was 45 minutes ago.

CLOWN 2: *(As Daughter.)* That's just like my dad.

CLOWN 3: *(As Doctor.)* You need to see the specialist as soon as possible, or I'm afraid you're going to lose that eye.

(Bob approaches the Clowns.)

BOB: *(To Clown 1, 3.)* Hi, I'm her father. *(To Clown 2.)* Are you all right, sweetheart?

CLOWN 2: *(As Daughter.)* I don't know. I don't feel so good.

CLOWN 3: *(As Doctor.)* Try to relax.

BOB: What happened?

CLOWN 1: *(As Nurse.)* Apparently, out at the winery, they had a bunch of non-alcoholic wine that had expired and fermented. Your daughter was assigned to empty all the bottles. The fermentation had caused such a buildup of pressure in the bottles that the corks were popping on their own.

CLOWN 2: *(As Daughter.)* There were corks flying all over the place.

CLOWN 3: *(As Doctor. To Bob.)* Your daughter reached down to pick up some of the bottles, and one of the corks went off right in her eye.

CLOWN 2: *(As Daughter.)* I think I might throw up again...

BOB: Throw up?

CLOWN 1: *(As Nurse.)* She's in quite a lot of pain. She's lucky that her eye is still attached inside the socket. The pain is making her nauseous. We've only given her ibuprofen because it's important that she does not fall asleep before she sees the specialist.

BOB: Specialist?

CLOWN 3: *(As Doctor.)* Yes, she's needs to see him right away. The specialist is in another town 30 miles away. I recommend that we transport her by ambulance. It will be

much more comfortable for her and there will be an EMT riding along with her. Plus, she needs to keep that eye as still as possible, and the ambulance will be much less bumpy.

BOB: Oh, no, that's okay. I can take her in our van, and that way, we can stop by and pick up her mother. We need to go to Kmart anyway.

CLOWN 1: (*As Nurse.*) Sir, I don't think you understand the seriousness of your daughter's condition. She could very well lose that eye. The ambulance will be paid for by workers' comp.

BOB: I understand. We'll drive carefully.

CLOWN 3: (*As Doctor.*) Sir, I wish you'd reconsider.

[END OF FREEVIEW]