

# AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR BRIDGET STANDS

By Frank V. Priore

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## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Bridey Stands was a true pioneer in America. Not only did she carve her own town out of the Pennsylvania wilderness, she did it her way. Bridey's Haven became exactly what the name of her town suggested - a haven from a colonial world dominated by men. This was the one town in all of America - in all the world - where the businesses were owned by women, not by men. And that was the law! She wasn't afraid to stand up to any man, even as powerful a man as General George Washington himself!

The general had a problem. He wanted to cross the Delaware but had no rowboats. Bridey Stands had plenty. She wanted him to sign a document that established the town of Bridey's Haven as its own country, totally separate from the United States of America. "Out of the question!" said George Washington. "Have a nice swim, General," said Bridey. He signed.

Even Bridey realized the 18th century wasn't quite ready for a country run entirely by women. So she hid the document under a fireplace stone in her inn, until the world could accept a nation controlled by women.

Now it is over 200 years later. The inn is still in existence, but it is in deep financial trouble. To make matters worse, Preston LaGrange, a local politician and greedy land developer, wants to turn the entire area into a big shopping mall. But Annie Meyers, the manager of the inn, is determined to fight off his machinations. Together with her cantankerous husband, her screwball staff, and three sisters who are the last remaining descendants of Bridey Stands, she is determined to stop Preston. When all hope seems gone, Bridey's secret document comes to light. It's a laugh-a-minute as they use it to establish The Republic of Bridey's Haven right under the nose of Preston LaGrange!

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(8 m, 10 w, 3 flexible, doubling possible)*

**ANNIE MEYERS:** Manager of Bridey's Haven.

**BOB:** Front desk attendant and switchboard operator.

**DORA ANDERSON:** Elderly lady, crossword puzzle fan.  
Mid-60s.

**PATTY:** Maid.

**MAX MEYERS:** Caretaker, Anne's husband.

**ALICE:** The mailperson - in her early 20s.

**PRESTON LAGRANGE:** Mayor, fire marshall and chief of  
police.

**BRIDGET STANDS:** Descendant of the original Bridey  
Stands.

**HELEN STANDS:** Bridget's sister.

**NADINE STANDS:** Bridget's sister.

**CAROL:** Owner of a food service company that supplies  
Bridey's Haven.

**SURVEYOR**

**TV REPORTER**

**CAMERA PERSON**

**1776 SEQUENCE:**

**MAGGIE:** Serving woman at Bridey's Haven, wife of Paul.

**BRIDEY STANDS:** Proprietor of Bridey's Haven.

**PAUL:** Manager and general handyman of Bridey's Haven.  
Maggie's husband.

**GEORGE WASHINGTON:** "Himself"

**AIDE #1 & #2**

**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

ACT I Late one fall afternoon.

ACT II The following morning.

ACT III Scene 1: One hour later.

Scene 2: Three weeks later.

Running time: 90 minutes.

## **SETTING**

The main lobby of Bridey's Haven, an eighteenth century inn located in Eastern Pennsylvania, near the spot where George Washington crossed the Delaware River. USC is the front desk of the inn. It is "L" shaped, with the left side meeting the UPS wall. There is an array of pigeonholes for mail and a hanging rack for room keys on the UPS wall behind and to the left (the short side of the "L") of the desk. Above the pigeonholes behind the desk is an old, slightly faded sign that reads: "Bridey's Haven." A cul-de-sac to the right leads to the front door of the inn. Behind this door is a changeable drop or set of flats that will have a summer scene of woods on it for most of the play and will change to the same scene of the trees and ground covered with snow for the 1776 sequence. A cul-de-sac to the left of the desk contains a stairway to the upper rooms which leads up and behind the front desk area, and a doorway in the extreme USL corner that leads to a kitchen area (offstage). There is a fireplace with two steps leading up to it (the lower step is removable) along the SR wall. The UPS end of the top step has a small metal wood holder with pieces of wood on it, and the DS end has a set of andirons on it. An old Revolutionary War era musket is mounted above the fireplace mantel, as is a powder horn of the same era. A few small, knickknack type, dainty statuettes are on the mantel. There are two old, upholstered chairs, one on either side of the fireplace. Two sections of the SR wall, directly behind the two upholstered chairs, should be hinged for quick removal. There is an old, round, wooden table with two chairs at it DSL. A large portrait of Catherine the Great is located on the SL wall at about the midpoint.

**NOTE: See back of playbook for props, costuming and production notes.**

**ACT I**  
**Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: DORA sits in the DS upholstered chair. She is avidly working a crossword puzzle in a magazine. A pile of crossword puzzle books are stacked over a foot high alongside the DS arm of the chair. She is absorbed in her work and appears not to be interested in anything else going on around her. BOB is behind the front desk. He has one elbow on the desk and is resting his head on his hand while he absently pages through a magazine. A telephone and a bowl of jawbreakers are near him on the desk. He casually takes a jawbreaker from the bowl and pops it into his mouth. ANNIE is seated at the table in the chair closest to the SL wall. A small stack of bills is on the table near her, as are three open cigar boxes. The front of each box is labeled "BILLS" in large letters. The tops are labeled: "Pay This Month," "Pay Next Month," and "Let Them Sue Us!" An open accounting ledger is in front of her. She takes a bill, looks at it, sighs, and makes a notation with a pen in the ledger, then puts the bill in the "Pay This Month" box. After a moment of consideration, she takes it out and moves it to the "Pay Next Month" box. No sooner does she do this, than she changes her mind again, picks up the bill from this box, looks at it, then with a snort, slams it into the "Let Them Sue Us!" box. She picks up another bill, considers it, makes a notation in the accounting book, then puts it in one of the three boxes. She continues to do this with the remaining bills. As she picks up the second bill, PATTY enters from the kitchen carrying a feather duster and quickly moves to the fireplace where she vigorously dusts everything. She moves to the front desk and begins dusting it. When she reaches Bob's elbow, he lifts it to the side, keeping his head on his hand and then replaces his elbow as she moves on. She dusts the open magazine, and then he lifts the magazine with his free hand to let her dust under it. She then dusts the phone, lifting the receiver to dust under it, then moves to the table, dusts all around the objects, then begins to dust the ledger book. Annie reaches up and catches the feather end of the duster in her hand.)*

ANNIE: Patty, dear, my account book is not filled with dust - only red ink. *(SHE releases the feather duster.)*

PATTY: I have a cleaning fluid that'll get out red ink stains in a jiffy, Mrs. Meyers ... *(ANNIE looks up at HER.)* Oh. I see what you mean. Sorry.

*(PATTY quickly moves to the large portrait on the SL wall. ANNIE can't help watching her as she begins to dust the portrait as if her life depended upon the removal of every last speck of dust on the painting.)*

ANNIE: Er, Patty. I think that painting has been dusted enough. Catherine the Great looks ... just great, dear.

PATTY: Yes, mum.

*(PATTY moves to the alcove USL and begins to dust unobtrusively. The PHONE rings. BOB suddenly perks up, straightens his tie, quickly cracks his knuckles and picks up the receiver.)*

BOB: *(In a charming voice.)* Good afternoon, Bridey's Haven, Handsome Bob speaking ... *(ANNIE looks up, rolls her eyes, slowly shakes her head at this.)* Why yes, Miss ... it is Miss isn't it? ... I just knew that; your voice sounds so young. I think we may have a vacancy on the 23rd. Please hold, Miss Cain, while I check. *(Presses the hold button, then drums the fingers of HIS free hand on the desk while humming.)*

ANNIE: Bob, we've got plenty of rooms available on the 23rd. We always have plenty of rooms available. Don't you lose that reservation with your antics.

BOB: *(Puts HIS free hand on his chest to feign surprise.)* Boss lady ... Oh ye of little faith! *(HE pushes the hold button again.)* Yes, I just happen to have one room remaining. It's a double, though ... Oh? One of your girlfriends will be vacationing with you? That will work out nicely then. How long will you be staying? ... A week. I see. Say, are those new sneakers you're wearing?

BOB: *(Cont'd.)* They look really good on you. And that perfume ... *(Sniffs the air loud enough to be heard over the phone.)* ... incredible! If you're wearing that when you arrive, you won't even have to give your name at the front desk. I'll recognize you ... What's that? ... You think you'd like to change your reservation to two weeks. Certainly. See you on the 23rd, Miss Cain. And may I say I will be looking forward to it. Bye now. *(Hangs up phone, looks at ANNIE, as HE spreads his arms out like "Fonzie" of the old Happy Days show saying "H-e-e-ey!")*

DORA: I need a seven letter word for "packaged meat."

ANNIE: *(With a significant glance at BOB.)* How about "baloney?"

DORA: "Baloney" ... *(Checks puzzle.)* Yes, I think that'll work.

BOB: *(As HE takes reservation book out from a shelf under the desk, and makes a notation.)* It works every time, Dora. Every time.

ANNIE: You are a piece of work, Bob.

BOB: But where would you be without me, boss lady? Eh?

ANNIE: A lot further in the red than I am. I have to admit that.

*(BOB goes back to reading his magazine. MAX enters from the stairs. He is dressed in clothes which have obviously seen better days. He has on a ratty, button-down sweater with a pocket on each side. A slim, folded magazine protrudes from one pocket of the sweater. PATTY, who progressed to dusting the banister, starts to dust Max's clothes. He seems to be enjoying this, and holds his arms up so that she can dust under them.)*

ANNIE: Er, Patty, I think that's quite enough dusting for the moment.

MAX: Don't stop her now, dear. Ten more seconds of this and I won't have to take a bath tonight.

ANNIE: *(To PATTY.)* Why don't you see if you could help the cook get supper started in the kitchen.

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