

ATTACK OF THE LAKE PEOPLE

By Pat Cook

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**PUBLISHED BY
ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY**

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SYNOPSIS

"I wish just *once* we could have a family get-together without somebody getting tied up!" This plaintive request, yelled at the top of her lungs by Aunt Clarise, gives you a pretty good idea of how family reunions go for this particular gang. Peri has taken her husband Graham to the family lake house to finally meet the clan. And Graham was looking forward to it. That is, until he gets overcharged by the taxi service, takes a large swig from the Major's private stock and has a wax apple stuck in his mouth, only to be dislodged by a slap on the head. It's little things like this that make him start to feel nervous.

As if things weren't difficult enough, the Major, who runs the house, suddenly up and dies. This would normally be cause for much grief but in *this* case, thanks to a mystery-reading preacher, everyone starts suspecting everyone else of murder.

And there's plenty of suspicious characters around. There's cousin Stutz, who's been in more accidents than a stunt driver; Teddy, who sleepwalks, and her husband Dennis, the glad-handing insurance agent.

But guess who was the last one to see the Major alive? And who discovered him after he had passed on? And who becomes everyone else's prime suspect? That's right. Graham.

This eccentric rural slice of life is full of oddball characters, funny lines and quite a few twists and is brought to you by the same author of "Barbecuing Hamlet."

CHARACTERS

(5 m, 5 w)

BROTHER CLIFFORD: Nosy, middle-aged preacher and handyman.
PERI: Wife of Graham, in her mid-thirties.
GRAHAM: Peri's slightly nervous husband, in his mid-thirties.
BEULAH: Peri's mother, in her mid-fifties.
CLARISE: Sister to Beulah, quarrelsome fifty-five year old.
STUTZ: Clarise's rebel son, a man of many parts.
THE MAJOR: Patriarch of the house, a feisty man in his mid-seventies.
DENNIS: Glad-handing insurance man, husband to Teddy.
TEDDY: Clarise's daughter, whining woman in her mid-thirties.
DR. MIMI: Reticent physician and Scout troop leader.

Time: Summer, the present.

Place: A lake house somewhere in East Texas.

Synopsis of Scenes:

Act I

Scene 1: Summer day, mid-morning.

Scene 2: That evening.

Scene 3: Later that night.

Scene 4: The next morning.

ACT II

Scene 1: A few minutes later.

Setting

The lakefront house, now many years old, is as full of memories as it is of furniture. There are three doors utilized in this floor plan. The first door, leading to the porch outside, is located SR and UPS of the fireplace. The second door, which leads to the kitchen, is located USR, near the staircase, which leads upstairs. The third door, which leads to the dining room, is located SL. The furniture consists mainly of a rather rustic couch, which is situated near the fireplace. There is an old desk, with roll-away chair, located on the SL wall. Amid the clutter on the desk is a telephone, several books and an old radio. Around the room are various other chairs and odd tables. On one of the tables is a bowl of wax fruit.

Props

Telephone and radio on desk; bowl of wax fruit including an apple; tissue or handkerchief; suitcases; bottle of moonshine; rope or twine; fishing rod and tackle box; paperback mystery novel; dish towel; photo album; shotgun; sandwich; bandage for Stutz; cell phone; dirty white teddy bear; two coffee mugs; red bandanna; last will and testament; pillow; blanket.

SFX

Car horn, car crash, car engine, shotgun fire, phone static, motorcycle revving, snoring, insect whine.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: CLIFFORD is cleaning the fireplace. A HORN HONKING outside gets his attention. He dusts off his hands and moves to the door. Opening the screen, he looks out and waves.)

CLIFFORD: Hidy! Hey, Schyler! What? Naw, nothin's bitin' unless you count the skeeters. Schyler, put your brake on! *(A small CRASH is heard.)* When are you gonna get that thing fixed, anyway. *(HE changes his tone as if he is speaking to someone else.)* Hello, you need any help there?

GRAHAM: No, we had the wreck just fine, thank you!

CLIFFORD: Well, you watch your step comin' in, these old porch boards ain't exactly pristine. You got much luggage?

GRAHAM: We can handle it!

(PERI ENTERS through the door and wipes her forehead with a tissue.)

PERI: I didn't think we were ever going to get here.

CLIFFORD: You must be Peri.

PERI: Yes, that's right. And you are?

CLIFFORD: Everybody just calls me Brother Clifford. I'm sort of the main fixer-upper 'round the lake. I also run the bait shop.

PERI: Brother Clifford?

CLIFFORD: And I hold services on Sunday.

PERI: Preacher with a bait shop?

CLIFFORD: Some people cast their bread upon the water. If that don't work, they come see me. See, you generally work three, four jobs if you live around here. Sort of a case of "have to."

(The HORN HONKS again and the car drives off.)

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GRAHAM: *(Still OFFSTAGE.)* Hey!

PERI: *(Looks out the door.)* Graham, will you get inside?!
(GRAHAM ENTERS through the door, carrying two suitcases, and CLIFFORD shuts it.)

GRAHAM: He drove off with my change! *(HE puts the luggage down.)*

CLIFFORD: Wha'd you give him?

GRAHAM: A twenty. I have twelve bucks coming.

CLIFFORD: Oh, you'll never see him again. *(Puts HIS hand out.)* Ever'body calls me Brother Clifford.

GRAHAM: *(Shakes HIS hand.)* Graham.

(PERI moves slowly through the room, looking and remembering.)

CLIFFORD: *(Amazed.)* Twenty dollars. In one bill?

GRAHAM: Yeah.

CLIFFORD: Wow. I wish I could've seen that.

GRAHAM: They're spare around here, are they?

CLIFFORD: I'm a preacher.

GRAHAM: Ah.

CLIFFORD: You ever try to make a livin' outta a collection plate?

GRAHAM: Can't say I have. So you're here to welcome us?

CLIFFORD: No, I was cleaning the fireplace yonder.
(Points to the fireplace.)

PERI: Is Mother here?

CLIFFORD: She and your Aunt Clarise are down't boathouse, getting' some preserves. They should'a been back up here by now.

PERI: And the Major?

CLIFFORD: He's up in his room. *(HE moves to the stairs.)*
Can't think why he didn't come down. *(HE yells up.)*
Major?! Major!

MAJOR: *(OFFSTAGE.)* Whut?

CLIFFORD: You got company!

MAJOR: Ain't no skin off my nose!

CLIFFORD: They come all this way to see you!

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MAJOR: Show 'em a picture!

CLIFFORD: That ain't the Christian attitude!

MAJOR: This ain't Sunday, no shop talk!

CLIFFORD: What do you want me to tell them?!

MAJOR: Tell 'em to go home!

CLIFFORD: *(Gently, to PERI.)* He'll be down soon.

GRAHAM: I don't suppose he'll give me the twelve dollars
and get it back from that taxi driver later?

CLIFFORD: *(Laughs.)* Good one.

PERI: I haven't been here in so long. *(SHE runs her hand
over the couch.)* Had some great times when I was a kid.

CLIFFORD: I wouldn't be runnin' my hand over that—

PERI: *(Pulls HER hand back quickly.)* Ow!

CLIFFORD: That's genuine horsehair, you know.

PERI: *(Hand in HER mouth.)* I just remembered.

GRAHAM: You killed a horse just to make a couch?

CLIFFORD: Not me. 'Sides, the horse was already dead;
they just made a couch out of 'im. *(HE thinks.)* And they
never did find out what killed it, neither.

*(GRAHAM quickly grabs PERI'S arm and pulls her hand out
of her mouth.)*

PERI: Thank you. *(To BROTHER CLIFFORD.)* Has
anyone else arrived yet?

CLIFFORD: You're the first.

(GRAHAM picks up an apple from the fruit bowl.)

GRAHAM: This is my first time here.

CLIFFORD: Oh? You long have you two been married?

PERI: *(Sheepishly.)* Three years. I've been kinda holding
off allowing him around the whole family. *(SHE looks at
GRAHAM.)* I thought I'd introduce him to them in small
doses.

GRAHAM: Well, I have met your mom and Aunt Clarise.
(To CLIFFORD.) It's just the rest of them she's kept
hidden like there's some family curse.

CLIFFORD: You mean you haven't met the Major?

End of Freeview

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