

Luau For King Lear

by Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The Peaceful Glen Memorial Players are about to mount a new production, but this time, it's a fight for their lives. It's not just the usual hand-to-hand combat between board members Duncan and Hope for the last donut. This time the company is about to lose their building. According to the late Archibald Donnelly's will, they could keep the building as long as they do "quality productions."

Oh, they have tried, in their own left-field way, to do the classics. "Isn't it true," family heir Blair Beesley asks, "that you did 'Twelve Angry Men' with five actors and seven store mannequins?" Board President Tamara sees an opening when she learns that Blair once minored in drama in college. "You will be our next director!"

So Blair chooses the Shakespearean classic "King Lear," unaware that the play will have a setting in the tropics! What Blair faces in the next few weeks are giggling teenagers, a cranky lady living in the basement apartment, a leading man with a slight "problem," food fights and teaching Hawaiian to her cast. All sorts of oddball community theater types come out of the woodwork in this riotous farce where your audience not only gets to see their performance but also what goes on behind the scenes. With a cast of twelve and two easy sets, this is the hilarious prequel to "Barbecuing Hamlet."

CAST OF CHARACTERS
3 men, 9 women

TAMARA LOGAN: Chic head of the Fine Arts Council, mid-30s.

HOPE HALLIDAY: Snappish 40-year-old woman on a diet.

DUNCAN O'TOOLE: Wise guy, around 40.

SARGE ABBOTT: Sarcastic handyman, in his 50s.

MARY BETH LUMPKIN: Mousy secretary in her mid-20s.

BLAIR BEESLEY: Insecure director, in her late 20s.

MRS. BLANKTON: Rather waspish lady in her late 50s.

CALLIE HAMPTON: Teenage girl, giggly at times.

ALEX ROCHESTER: Another teen girl, more serious than Callie.

THEODORA VAN HORNE: Flamboyant theatre type, 40 and then some.

OTIS HOCKWELL: Mild-mannered gentleman, around 50.

ELZBETH BEESLEY: Blair's upper-crust mother, late 50s.

(Also, LEO'S VOICE: Voice of a teenage boy; several lines, never seen.)

TIME: The present.

PLACE: The stage of the Peaceful Glen Memorial Players.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene 1: Council meeting.

Scene 2: The auditions.

Scene 3: Rehearsals.

ACT II

Scene 1: Just before the show.

Scene 2: The performance.

Scene 3: After the show.

SETTING

The play takes place in the theatre space being used by the Peaceful Glen Memorial Players. The building used to house a funeral home and still has an apartment on the lower level.

Most of the scenes only require a banquet table and folding chairs. For the performance of "King Lear," a rattan-style throne, tree cutout and side curtain are also needed.

ACT I
Scene 1
COUNCIL MEETING

(At RISE: There is a long table and several chairs, placed USC. As the LIGHTS come up, the area is a flurry of activity as HOPE is throttling DUNCAN, holding him down on the table. MARY BETH is hiding under the table, clutching a hammer, while TAMARA is yelling at Hope and trying to pull her off Duncan. SARGE, standing at the end of the table, has a hand in his mouth, having just had it bitten.)

TAMARA: Will you STOP this? Get OFF Duncan!

HOPE: *(To DUNCAN.)* You disgusting little creep! That was MINE!

DUNCAN: Somebody get her OFF me!

HOPE: I hope you gag!

TAMARA: Hope, you're choking him!

HOPE: That's the general idea.

DUNCAN: Hit her! Somebody! Find something heavy!

TAMARA: Sarge, will you HELP ME?!

SARGE *(Takes hand out of HIS mouth.)* I'm not getting near her again. *(HE sticks his hand under TAMARA'S nose.)* Look at the chunk she took out of my finger!

TAMARA: You can get shots later. Will you give me a hand?

(SARGE moves around to the front of the table.)

SARGE: No sir, may the best man win. *(As HE passes the table front, MARY BETH starts banging his feet with the hammer.)* Ow! Ow! HEY! *(HE hops away from HER on one foot.)*

MARY BETH: Get away from me, ALL of you!

TAMARA: Hope, will you STOP! *(With this last word, SHE yanks HOPE off DUNCAN.)*

(DUNCAN rolls over and takes in a deep breath. After a few asthmatic wheezes, he looks at HOPE.)

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DUNCAN: Man, I HATE it when you go on a diet!

(SARGE finds a small piece of cardboard on the stage and picks it up.)

HOPE: Don't blame me. I WARNED you, didn't I? And what did you do? You took the last donut! *(Right in DUNCAN'S face.)* The very last donut! And it was mine! MINE, I tell you!

DUNCAN: *(Averting HIS eyes.)* Try not to make eye contact, try not to make eye contact —

SARGE: Look at this, will you?

TAMARA: What is it?

SARGE: It's all that's left of the donut box.

TAMARA: You have got to be kidding? Where's the rest of it?

DUNCAN: Try looking between Hope's teeth!

HOPE: Why you ... ! *(SHE grabs his throat and forces HIM back on the table.)*

DUNCAN: Can't we tie her up or something?

(Again TAMARA tries to pull HOPE off DUNCAN. BLAIR, carrying a briefcase, ENTERS from SR, unseen by the others.)

TAMARA: Sarge, get OVER here!

SARGE: Listen, I already have one medical claim right here! *(HE holds up his pinky.)* And I'm going to quit while I still have— *(HE holds up the rest of his fingers.)* Not to mention— *(HE holds up a foot.)*

TAMARA: What are you talking about now?

SARGE: Mary Beth! She stole my hammer! *(HE points under the table.)*

MARY BETH: Get away from me! *(SHE holds up the hammer.)* I know how to use this!

BLAIR: Excuse me?

SARGE: Tell me about it! Fingers and toes, this group is sure hell on digits!

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DUNCAN: For God sake, somebody throw some meat at her!

HOPE: I warned you, I TOLD you!

BLAIR: Excuse me?

TAMARA: Hope, dear, I believe you're overreacting.

HOPE: Overreacting? Listen, Missie, I counted calories all day and made sure I could have three, count 'em, three donuts tonight. *(SHE lets go of DUNCAN to move closer to TAMARA.)* I'm suffering from withdrawal!

(DUNCAN takes the opportunity and races away from HOPE.)

DUNCAN: I'm not coming here again without a gun!

(HOPE chases HIM around the table and the two almost collide with BLAIR.)

HOPE: Come back here, you thief, I'm going to - *(THEY stop.)*

BLAIR: Hello?

(TAMARA and SARGE look at BLAIR.)

TAMARA: Oh, hello. I didn't see you there, we were - *(SHE shakes her head and changes the subject.)* May I help you?

BLAIR: I'm not sure now. I'm looking for the Fine Arts Council of the Peaceful Glen Memorial Players?

TAMARA: That's us.

BLAIR: I was afraid you'd say that. Oh, I'm Blair Beesley.

TAMARA: Beesley?

BLAIR: Yes, I'm Archibald Donnelly's granddaughter.

SARGE: Uh oh.

BLAIR: The man who bequeathed this building to your group?

TAMARA: Oh! Oh, yes, of course.

BLAIR: I hope I'm not interrupting anything.

HOPE: No, this is pretty much what we do here.

End of Freeview

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