

# Bitsy and Her Friends

Ludmilla Bollow





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# BITSY AND HER FRIENDS

by Ludmilla Bollow

## CAST

BITSY: Tiny, aging. Vibrant and spirited.

ESMERELDA: Plays stringless violin. Speaks in strange voice.

LOUISE: Large, shy, and pregnant.

MELODY: Energetic TV reporter.

REBECCA: Former Broadway Dancer

WANDA: Older and flighty.

(Casting is flexible as to diversity, but not gender.)

## Time

Today.

*Setting: The garden of the Wyndham Estate, once a place of grandeur, now falling and fading.*

*At Rise: Lighting is dim as scene opens. Garden guests, in stilted and breezy manner, help stagehands set up scene as fast paced carnival music plays. Lights brighten on area that is both colorful and bizarre--maybe even cartoonish. Homemade artwork, crude and original, is displayed wherever possible. Distorted figures, made from various discards, are set up haphazardly. A mock tree has flattened tin cans dangling noisily. Strips of bright cloth, silver and gold paper, flutter from an old trellis. Large rock near a tree. Wind chimes tinkle. A cacophony of sound and movement.*

*ESMERELDA, in artsy cast-off clothes, sits on rock, playing a violin without strings.*

*LOUISE, wearing a large colorful smock and wide brimmed hat, paints at an easel with wild bold strokes. She's obviously pregnant.*

*REBECCA dances in from Right, wearing a glittery dance costume. She dances/carries a large stuffed doll, crudely made from bed pillows as her partner.*

*WANDA, an older woman in long nightgown, runs in from Left, flying a homemade kite on a long stick. Twirls about delightedly.*

*Movement and slight chaos prevail, setting in motion a certain wild creative beauty.*

*Things subside when BITSY enters through trellis. She is tiny, aging.*

*BITSY: (Wears a brightly embroidered purple kimono with winglike sleeves that she waves in greeting to assembled group) Good morning, ladies.*

ALL: *(In various tones)* Good morning Bitsy, Bitsy, Bitsy.

BITSY: Everything looks so lovely.

WANDA: You said we could decorate any way we wanted.

LOUISE: I'll be finished with this painting real soon —

BITSY: Wonderful, Louise! All the paintings-- art pieces, we can make. I am so excited—Our very first art show!

WANDA: I passed out flyers yesterday, all over-- to everyone I saw. Tacked them on trees. Fluttered them all about-- "Free Form Art Faire-- at the Wyndham Gardens".

REBECCA: I can teach them dancing, can't I? Did I ever tell you about the time I was in the chorus line-- in a real Broadway show?

BITSY: Yes, Rebecca, you told me. But I'm sure our visitors will want to hear it all over again. *(Speaks louder, because ESMERELDA has a hearing problem.)* Esmerelda, what lovely sounds you are playing today.

ESMERELDA: *(Plays faster and makes vocal sounds of a violin playing the scales.)* E-E-E-E EE--EE--EE--EE.

WANDA: I'm going to make more kites, let everyone who comes take a turn flying kites.

BITSY: You do that, Wanda. Now, I have something very exciting to tell all of you.

ALL: What? What? Tell us!

BITSY: Well-- I've been talking to the TV station! They heard about our art fair-- and they're going to come over here, in a little bit. We're all going to be on TV! *(They seem reluctant, disappointed. ESMERELDA retreats to rock and cowers.)*

LOUISE: I don't want to be on TV —

WANDA: Neither do I.

BITSY: But, it's to advertise our fair. You want people to come, don't you?

ALL: (*Reluctantly.*) Yes...

BITSY: I'll do all the talking.

LOUISE: (*Goes to easel, begins painting at furious pace.*) Know what? I mixed tomato juice with my paints today. Secret ingredient. Makes a delicious shade of pizza red.

BITSY: So it does. Ladies, if you do well on the TV show, after, we can all go on another hunting trip. Searching for cans, bottles-- whatever discards we can find, to decorate our garden.

LOUISE: Can we stop at McDonalds then too-- can we? Have a fast snack?

WANDA: And play in their playground?

BITSY: Well, they don't want us playing on their playground anymore. Because-- well, it's only for children.

WANDA: That's not fair!

BITSY: Life is not fair Wanda-- And when we're away from our House and Garden, we have to obey other people's rules. It's only here that we get to make our own rules.

REBECCA: And no one can ever make us leave here, because this isn't a public park.

LOUISE: And you own it, and we can stay here long as we want

.

BITSY: Yes...But, as I've told you before—

REBECCA: Tell us again—

BITSY: Some day the money is going to run out. Someday.... There's huge taxes on this place. (*Brightly*) But, I'm just going to live how I want, let all the bills pile up, not worry about a thing—till all the money's used up.

LOUISE: But no one knows when that will happen.

BITSY: No. We can never predict anything. But we can always expect surprises, just around the next corner. (*ESMERELDA waves bow frantically*)

LOUISE: Oh dear, I think they're here.

REBECCA: The TV people-- lots of them, marching right this way.

WANDA: With all kinds of machines and stuff.

BITSY: Now just calm down. I'll do the talking.

(*All of a sudden bright lights flood the area. MELODY MARKS comes forward, mike in hand. Young, energetic and somewhat synthetic.*)

MELODY: Hi, I'm Melody Marks-- WZTZ-TV-- I spoke with someone, a bit ago, about doing a little morning segment about this upcoming-- art fair? (*Looks about askance at the area and the women, not quite expecting all this.*) Guys you can film from over there-- Make sure to get it all!

BITSY: I'm the one who spoke to you on the phone, Miss Marks. I'm Bitsy Ballantine, owner of Wyndham Gardens, and organizer of the art fair.

MELODY: (*Hesitant*) I see. And this is where the fair will take place? All these 'items' are the art pieces?

BITSY: Oh yes, made by the women themselves-- from recycled discards.

MELODY: I see. Well, we're just going to do a short human interest interview, ask a few questions. Everyone act natural now, keep doing whatever you're doing. We'll get right on with it then. Ready to go?

ALL: Ready.

MELODY: I'll count down, then we're on the air. Five-- four-- three-- two-- one! (*All count with her.*) Good morning, I'm Melody Marks, your roving arts reporter, and today I'm talking with Bitsy Ballantine, owner of Wyndham Gardens. And next Sunday, July 14, there will be a "Free Form Art Faire" here-- And the flyer says "the whole wide world is invited!" Is that right Bitsy?

BITSY: Oh yes. Everybody in the whole world! It's free too, so poor people can come.

MELODY: Wonderful.

BITSY: We've been working for weeks, passing out hundreds of flyers, holding little parades —

MELODY: Well, you do have some very 'unusual' pieces here, put together by some very unusual ladies.

BITSY: Oh yes, truly spectacular ladies. The stories they could tell —

MELODY: But it's you we want to know about, Bitsy. How you came to own this special place.

BITSY: Well, you see I was living in my tiny room, alone, after years of cleaning offices, because some bad boys knocked me down. Some days I couldn't even get out —

MELODY: But, how did you become the landlady of this historic mansion and unusual garden?

BITSY: Oh that was real easy, and a whopping big surprise. These lawyers, they tracked me down, said I was the only living relative of Annabelle Wyndham and that I had inherited the whole big Wyndham estate. Everything!

MELODY: How wonderful! The American dream come true-- from dire poverty to owning this huge house and garden. Only in America can that happen!

BITSY: I never met her, but I thank Annabelle Wyndham every day I'm here. You know, she had the mansion so beautifully restored, years ago, even wrote poems about it. Planned to revive this garden too-- but, never got around to it, so, we're doing it for her, and —

## **END OF FREEVIEW**

**You'll want to read and perform this show!**