

Merry Christmas Caper

D.K. Oklahoma





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Merry Christmas Caper
By
D.K. Oklahoma

TIME: Morning. The Present. It is a few days before Christmas, just before the Senior Center will shut down for the holidays.

OCCASION: Minutes before the regular gathering of senior ladies who make little blankets and stuffed toys for children in custody at the Juvenile Detention Center.

SETTING - Senior Citizen Center sewing room.

One long worktable, angled near center; several smaller areas for sewing materials (perhaps a storage cabinet), maybe 2 other small tables or a book case for storage along the walls, five or six chairs. Ironing board with iron, sewing machine. (doesn't need to work)

Two doors lead OFF; one at back, one at side. The back one leads to the "hallway", the other to "the other room." There is also a fully visible little broom closet, with working doorknob and latch. When door is open, contents should be visible to all.

DETAILS - A colorful stuffed teddy bear and two partial bolts of nursery-print fleece material (different colors) are on the worktable, in clear sight of the audience. Also a little vase of limp flowers.

Assorted Holiday decorations in the room indicate the season.

HAND PROPS- include short pieces of material suitable for making baby blankets and stuffed toys, cloth, scissors, yardsticks, bag of stuffing, perhaps a cutting board or unfinished stuffed toys.

Each woman will have her own workbasket or tray to carry personal sewing items. Be creative, cluttered and colorful.

CAST

R.A. Thompson (45), Director of the Senior Center, pompous and patronizing. R.A. feels vastly superior to the older adults he/she "helps". A two-faced political appointee, R.A. wants to keep everything simple to make his/her director's job easier.

Miss Lucy Jones (80) Wears her glasses on a chain and a comfy, bright pant suit. Has a feisty manner and hearty voice. She is cheery, spunky and ready to fight the world if needed. Uses a lightweight walker.

Shirley Greencastle - (60-65) A widow who wears nice jewelry; low heels and hose and a nice dress, very attractive. Very naïve and a bit of a snob but likable. Lonely but doesn't know what to do about it. Devoted to the memory of her dear late hubby.

Bonnie West - (68) Dresses casually in slacks and sneakers. A warm-hearted lady, very likable. She is excitable and opinionated on certain subjects, like runaways and lawyers, but sweet natured and basically generous.

Feather Windsong - (72) Former Hippie who re-named herself. She happily recalls her past glory days and continues to wear long print skirts, sandals, and beads. She is devoted to causes. She is very frank and open about all things of a sexual nature. (Her real name is Ladonna Johnson from Big Bow, Okla.)

Harold X. Horton - (65-ish) custodian at the center. A nice looking, kindly bachelor, he has his eye on Shirley, although they are an unlikely couple; she is dressy he wears work clothing and a neat shirt. His manners are courtly.

Richard B. Dawson - delivery volunteer for Meals on Wheels. He is about 65, a former military man. Kind hearted, likable, definitely a can-do kind of guy with a secret.

Maria Christiano About 20, frightened, pregnant and dressed in lightweight clothing. She is very pretty and sweetly innocent.

Victor Christiano About 20; Maria's husband, very protective of her; innocent, resourceful and quick. Wears jeans and a shirt. Good looking and sweet.

At Rise

The room is dimly lit and empty. The side door opens and VICTOR enters furtively. He quietly crosses to the worktable, looks around and then picks up the two partial bolts of colorful patterned baby blanket material, one pink, and one blue. (Each bolt contains enough material to be used as a makeshift shawl later.)

VOICES OFF:

Garbled women's voices adlib outside the sewing room as workers approach from the direction of the "hallway".

VICTOR hears the voices in the hall and starts to leave, THEN hesitates and returns to grab a colorful teddy bear. He exits through same side door and shuts it behind him.

As soon as VICTOR exits, BONNIE, SHIRLEY and FEATHER enter via the opposite door, (leading from the hallway). They carry colorful sewing baskets, trays, boxes, etc. During the following, they turn on more lights and set up their spaces in the work center.

FEATHER and SHIRLEY wipe down the long table for the baby blanket-making group, chatting as they prepare the work area.

BONNIE I heard there was a fight at the pancake supper last night.

FEATHER Bonnie told me something happened, but that's all I know.

BONNIE You were there, Shirley, did you see it?

SHIRLEY I certainly did and it was a big bunch of nothing. Just the same, if that crazy Erika Best shows up around here today, I'm leaving! Fighting at her age!

BONNIE Darn it, I always miss the good stuff.

FEATHER What happened?

SHIRLEY Erika got mad over some dumb thing and kicked Buzz in the shins.

BONNIE She must have had a reason.

SHIRLEY He asked her to get the tray of syrup pitchers off the new carpet, in case something got spilled. That's all.

BONNIE She didn't hurt him, did she?

SHIRLEY Heavens, no! Erika's older than dirt. Besides, she had on sneakers.

BONNIE Well, that's good.

SHIRLEY She fell backwards doing the kick. Jo Beryl grabbed her or she'd have broken a hip. It probably hurt her more than it did Buzz.

FEATHER Sounds like Erika's off her meds again. Remember last summer when she got mad at Daisy and threw her new knitting bag across the room? It's the meds.

EVERYONE nods wisely.

BONNIE I miss all the good stuff.

R.A. enters. The women glance up but mostly ignore him. We get the definite feeling that they don't like the pompous director. He wears a rumpled business suit and tie.

NOTE: FOR CASTING PURPOSES THIS ROLE COULD BE CONVERTED TO FEMALE WITH APPROPRIATE MINOR CHANGES FOR GENDER.

R.A. (falsely jovial) Good morning ladies.

BONNIE (rolls her eyes, sighs) Hello, R.A.

R.A. Glad to see you already on the job.

SHIRLEY (not looking up) This is our regular blanket day.

FEATHER (very cool) Do you want something, R.A.?

R.A. No, but I do have an unfortunate announcement. I don't want to alarm you, but it seems that someone broke into this building over the weekend

The women are more interested, despite themselves.

SHIRLEY This building?

BONNIE My goodness.

FEATHER What did they take?

R.A. All of the holiday hams and most of the other canned goods.

BONNIE They stole our food?

R.A. All but the canned collard greens and lima beans.

SHIRLEY Well, that makes sense.

FEATHER You'd think they'd take the copy machine or the coffee maker.

BONNIE (TO R.A.) How'd they get in?

R.A. Evidently, thru the alley door by the kitchen.

FEATHER That alley is really dark at night. Was anything broken?

R.A. Just the lock. Harold can fix it. We're lucky they didn't vandalize the place.

BONNIE Well, stealing our food is bad enough.

SHIRLEY Maybe they were hungry.

FEATHER They had to be real hungry to want that many hams.

SHIRLEY (chuckles) But not hungry enough for lima beans!

BONNIE (totally sidetracked) What's wrong with limas? I kinda like 'em!

SHIRLEY Bleh. Taste like green chalk.

BONNIE Did you ever try 'em with rice and salsa... slow cooked with pork?

SHIRLEY There is no way you can fix lima beans that will make me like 'em. My mother used to make me eat them. Bleh.

BONNIE Sometimes, you got a closed mind, Shirley...

SHIRLEY On lima beans, I do. (She shudders.)

BONNIE A closed mind is the first sign of old age. (SHIRLEY sniffs and ignores this.)

R.A. (annoyed, interrupts the rambling) Okay, okay, ladies. I just wanted you all know about the break-in. If you notice anything else missing, let me know and I'll put it on the list for the insurance company.

FEATHER We'll keep our eyes open.

R.A. Well, that's settled. (rubs his hands together) (patronizing) Now, will our little project be finished on time today?

SHIRLEY Only six more blankets and three bears. We'll finish this afternoon. No problem.

R.A. Excellent. This is going to look so good on my, er... OUR annual report. The Board is always impressed with successful projects. This year, the senior center has an excellent chance to make me.... uh... to make US look good - and right before holiday bonus time. Yes, indeed...Thirty handmade baby blankets! Quite an accomplishment.

FEATHER AND thirty little teddy bears, don't forget.

R.A. (CONTINUES)... And thirty little bears for the dear tots.

FEATHER Someone has to think about those poor kids. It's almost Christmas.

BONNIE It's not their fault that their parents got into trouble.

SHIRLEY A nice warm blanket and a teddy bear are a real comfort, even to the older children. You should see them hang onto those bears.

BONNIE (nodding wisely) Oh well, you know, big kids are just little kids when trouble comes along.

R.A. (a jerk) Yes, indeed. So I'll just get out of your way for now. Carry on ladies!

R.A. struts out, shuts the hall door behind him.

BONNIE (mimics) Carry on ladies!

FEATHER I can't stand that man! I wish he'd "get out of our way" - permanently!

SHIRLEY Shhhhhh.

FEATHER (bitterly) Well, WE do all the work and he takes all the credit! A total establishment creep. You can't trust ANY of them.

SHIRLEY We know how you feel, dear, but keep your voice down. R.A. could take away your privileges here.

BONNIE Like he did Henry, just for smoking behind the garage

SHIRLEY And Rachel, for forgetting to turn out the lights in the ceramic room. Now they can't come to the center any more, even for lunch.

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