

Committee of Eight

Joyce Stern Greenberg





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COMMITTEE OF EIGHT

An Ensemble Musical Featuring Song Parodies
To Well-Known Music

By Joyce Stern Greenberg

CAST

In order of appearance:

PATTI: Welcomes the group, introduces accompanist, sings the opening. Loves old-time movies, concerned about her short term memory.

ACCOMPANIST

COOKIE: Co-chairperson of her college reunion committee. Spunky, enjoyed school, likes food, is an organizer and doesn't like to drive on the expressways. She and Mary were friends back in college and haven't seen each other in fifty-ish years. She and Sam may have dated once upon a time.

MARY: Co-chairperson of her college reunion committee. Likes to look good, always on a diet, likes to drive fast on the expressways. Looks younger than Cookie.

The following cast members are all members-at-large of the committee for the reunion entertainment:

FRANNIE: Was a good student, comes prepared with suggestions for the show. She and Annie have remained good friends since college.

ANNIE: Didn't get the greatest grades in college, quirky and has a good sense of humor.

SAM: Attending with his wife Judy, who probably dragged him to this meeting. A good sport.

JUDY: Moves well, like to shop and spend winters in Arizona. Was a fitness trainer for many years.

TRUDY: Still is a romantic, after all these years. Will not put on a bathing suit, no matter what!

Place:

A meeting room.

Time:

The present, in the afternoon.

Setting: *A meeting room with a four- to six-foot table, Up Center. A menu is on the table. A chair is next to the table at Right Center and a stool is next to the table at Left Center. Six other chairs are placed onstage, three on SR and three on SL. Piano may be onstage at either right or left. To set the tone for the show, hand out name tags when the audience enters and welcome them to the 'meeting.'*

PATTI: *(has big purse preset with props inside) Welcome everyone to the entertainment planning meeting for our upcoming reunion. I'm Patti, and I'm not really supposed to be up here. I was just helping out with the name tags. (checks text on phone) It appears as though our chairpersons are a little delayed. Oh, why don't I have you meet our accompanist? (to ACCOMPANIST) What's your name? (ACCOMPANIST responds) That's [insert name], everyone. Now please be sure to turn off anything that beeps. (looks at watch) Well, while we're waiting, I want to tell you...*

SONG: *Another Op'ning, Another Show [first 16 bars/last 16 bars]*

PATTI: *Reunion's coming, we'll greet old friends,
We'll see who's truthful and who pretends,
We'll plan some songs and some funny skits,
While classmates tell us [music stops] "We haven't changed a bit."
[music resumes]
The meeting now is about to start
But we're delayed and I've done my part,
Our organizers are almost here,
Then we'll get going very soon, that's clear!*

COOKIE: *(voice is heard from rear of theatre) Is this where the reunion meeting is taking place?*

PATTI: *Yes, yes, come on in. (remains onstage for the rest of the show)*

SONG: *I'm Late* [chorus/verse; chorus/verse]

(Music begins and COOKIE enters from the rear of the theatre, rushing in, carrying tote bag, looking around)

COOKIE: *I'm late, I'm late, for my very important date,
No time to say hello and smile, I'm sorry that I'm late.*

[Vamp]

*The toll roads [or highways] give me such migraines, so I drive city streets
But there's construction everywhere, it makes my day complete.
I know, I'm late, on that I'm very clear,
But at least I made it here, I'm sorry that I'm late.*

(COOKIE sits in chair, organizes herself as MARY enters, also from the back of the theatre, clearly in a tizzy due to her lateness)

MARY: *(Sets her bags down on table and breathlessly begins to sing.)*

*I'm late, I'm late for my very important date,
No time to say hello and smile, instead I'm late, I'm late.*

[Vamp]

*Love to drive at high speed, the toll road [or highway] can't be beat,
Received another ticket; that makes my day complete.
I know, I'm late, on that I'm very clear,
But at least I made it here, I'm sorry that I'm late.*

COOKIE: *(rises)* Mary? Mary Margaret McDonnell...*(with hesitation)*...is that you?

MARY: Yes, it's Mary Margaret McDonnell O'Connell now...*(looks at COOKIE)*
Cookie? Cookie Kugelman?

COOKIE: Yes. It's Cookie Kugelman Farfelstein now. Are you my new co-chairperson on the entertainment planning committee for the reunion?

MARY: Yes, I'm filling in for Betsy Nelson.

BOTH: Oh, that's great, what fun, etc.

COOKIE: You actually look the same as you did in college. How do you do it?

MARY: Well, I have a little secret. It's called 'nip and tuck.'

COOKIE: I'll have to remember that...now, let's get busy...

SONG: *I CAIN'T SAY NO* [1 verse 1 chorus]

VERSE

COOKIE: *Our class reunion is next year, I said I would help plan
A program after dinner has been served.*

MARY: *I told the chairman I would help out any way I can,
But if the group's too large I'll get unnerved.*

COOKIE: *I hope that I'll remember people's names,*

MARY: *My mem'ry sometimes will go up in flames.*

CHORUS

COOKIE and MARY: *We're just two gals who couldn't say no
To planning a show that we'll do...*

We'll always say, "Come on let's go," when we want to try something new.

COOKIE: *To catch up with you will be such fun,
Now what have you been doing all these years?*

MARY: *I've been in and out and up and down, life is always filled with shifting gears.
We're just two gals who can't say no to meeting with classmates we knew,*

COOKIE: *They never gave me a clue that I'd be working with you,*

BOTH: *We can't say no.*

COOKIE: It's so nice of all of you committee members to be here today. Look, there's Joan and Jean, etc.

MARY: And there's Kathy and Connie, etc.

COOKIE: Welcome, everyone. I guess we'd better get started with our planning. Do you have any ideas yet for the evening's entertainment? I brought some props and stuff.

(COOKIE and MARY start unzipping their tote bags)

MARY: I hope that you and I can do a number or two together, like the old days. I brought my yearbook and my old Northwestern tee shirt. *(takes shirt out of bag)* Oh, I bought a gorgeous outfit to wear for the reunion. It's *[describes an ornate outfit]* *(noticing COOKIE's impatience)* Which reminds me, what are you going to wear that night?

COOKIE: I haven't the slightest idea. I don't know what size I'll be by then.

MARY: (*holds up tee shirt*) Boy...I was thinner back then, wasn't I?

COOKIE: Weren't we all!

SONG: *I'm Not Accustomed to Your Face*

MARY: *I'm not accustomed to my waist,
It's more filled out instead of slim,
I'm not accustomed to the gray that creeps in every day
Upon my head...choose blonde instead.
I am an active working gal, also a grandma, mom and wife,
But when I come across a mirror, whose reflection do I see?
Looks just like my mother who is staring back at me.
The outer package might have changed, with a few things rearranged,
But inside, it's still me.*

COOKIE: I weigh more now too. And I do try to watch my weight. Wait...I wonder what they'll serve for dinner that night.

PATTI: There's a menu here from catering. (*gives to MARY*)

MARY: Oh good. (*gets the menu*) Here Cookie, take a look. (*gives menu to COOKIE*)

SONG: *What Kind of Fool Am I? [2 choruses]*

COOKIE: *What kind of food will be prepared deliciously?
I hope that I will have a choice of something that's salt-free.
And fried foods wouldn't do, [hands menu back to MARY, who sits down]
I've had to learn
Avoid the things that bring on symptoms of heartburn.
What if our classmates now are vegetarians,
If they're allergic or they're kosher...or...Libertarians
Then there are those who will be wanting gluten free,
Wish I could return to how it used to be.
[goes over to MARY and takes menu to peruse]
What kind of food will be prepared deliciously?
They have so many different choices that are tempting me.*

[hands menu back to MARY]

*Like when I have my list and go to shop
At Costco, love their foot-long hot dog...hits the spot
Back in the olden days, chopped liver was a treat,
Salami and pastrami were my fav'rite deli meats,
Now, yogurt, with no fat, steamed broccoli and kale,
Then my brownie with (low fat) ice cream
[spoken] After [sung] I get off the scale.*

MARY: Let's get started working on our program and forget about the food. What do you think about doing an Irving Berlin medley?

COOKIE: Irving Berlin is wonderful, but his music has been done so often over the years. How about a 50's rock and roll medley?

MARY: Mmm. I'm not so sure about that. I know. Maybe some of our classmates have an idea for a medley we use.

COOKIE: Do any of you have an idea for a medley?

FRANNIE: *(stands up in audience, raising her hand)* Yes, I'm Frannie and this is my friend, Annie. *(points at COOKIE)* Cookie, you and I had an American History class together.

ANNIE: *(ANNIE stands and waves)* We brought some ideas for the reunion show.

COOKIE: Well, come on up with your notes. *(they come up from audience, carrying big purses or totes)* Please give a copy to our accompanist and to us and let's hear what you have.

FRANNIE: This is a medley with a travel theme. *(gives copies to MARY and COOKIE)*

ANNIE: We all like to travel, so we thought it would be fun.

COOKIE: *(looks at list)* Hey, this looks good. It could be a musical journey. *(looks toward accompanist)* How about it.? *(s/he responds in the affirmative.)* Go for it, ladies!

SONG: *Sentimental Journey [first eight bars]*

FRANNIE and ANNIE: *We can take a reminiscing journey, trav'ling thru the U.S.A.
We'll recall songs on this special journey that we still enjoy today.*

SONGS: *The following songs are to be alternated between FRANNIE and ANNIE with COOKIE, MARY and PATTI joining in on "When The Saints..." and "Give My Regards..." The songs, which are not parodied, are all in the public domain, and are to be performed in the following suggested order. Perform the first eight bars and the last eight bars of each: "Chicago," "Swanee," "Way Down Yonder In New Orleans," "When The Saints Go Marching In," "Meet Me In St. Louis," "St. Louis Blues," "Give My Regards To Broadway."*

MARY: That was fun. Let's put that down as a definite possibility. We need someone to take notes for us today.

COOKIE: Why don't we have Frannie and Annie stay up here to help out?

FRANNIE and ANNIE: Sure, we'd love to/That would be great, etc.

COOKIE: Annie, would you be willing to take notes for us? (*MARY hands notebook and pencil to ANNIE*)

ANNIE: Oh, of course I'll do that.

COOKIE: Oh, I see there's another hand up out there. (*to MARY*) Oh, I recognize him. That's Sam. (*in a flirty manner, directed to him*) Well, hello Sammy. It has been a long time, hasn't it!

(*MARY nudges COOKIE to get back to the show*)

SAM: It sure has. This is my wife, Judy. She has an idea for the show (*they make their way onstage*) and I'm just the designated driver.

MARY: Come on up and let's hear your idea (*everyone onstage acknowledges them as they approach*)

COOKIE: (*to SAM, flirty*) Well, Sammy, what's your idea?

JUDY: (*draws SAM away from COOKIE and closer to MARY*) Mary, in the travel medley that Frannie and Annie did, it would be nice to include something about the lovely state of Arizona.

SAM: Right, it's great if you want to relax at the pool or the golf course. But there are some things that aren't so relaxing.

JUDY: Especially when you're trying to go shopping in Scottsdale or Phoenix.

SONG: *Standing On the Corner* [chorus/verse/chorus]

CHORUS

JUDY: *Standing on the corner, watching all the cars whiz by,
Standing on the corner, want to cross, but scared to try.*

It would be great if everyone drove golf cars,

Folks always rush, I don't see why.

Try standing on the corner, watching all the cars,

SAM: *Watching all the cars,* BOTH: *Watching all the cars whiz by.*

VERSE

SAM: *We had planned retirement, found a safe and clean environment.*

Such a perfect place, so we took off,

JUDY: *But found those same conditions of dust and car emissions*

Excuse me if I cough. [cough]

[spoken]

SAM: I hear you, Babe. If you think that's bad, listen to what else we've encountered.

CHORUS

SAM: *Standing in the driveway, as coyotes march on by,*

Standing with my golf club, [pause] as they leave, I breathe a sigh,

I hear that termites could also be a problem,

If I had them, no doubt she'd cry,

While standing in the driveway, as coyotes march,

JUDY: *As coyotes march,*

JUDY, SAM: *As coyotes march on by.*

[spoken, with music in background]

JUDY: In spite of all that, I still like going there in the winter. It's really too hot for me in the summer.

SAM: Yes, but it's a dry heat.

JUDY: Right! *[sing] Watching all the cars,*

SAM: *As coyotes march,*

EVERYONE: *As coyotes march on by.*

MARY: Annie, will you write that down? Maybe we can use it. (*ANNIE does so, reluctantly*) Sam and Judy, please join us here and we'll see what else we can come up with.

ACCOMPANIST: Folks, there has been some great music that was written for Broadway shows that were made into movies. How would you like to consider some of those songs?

COOKIE: What do you suggest?

ACCOMPANIST: How about this? (*theatre group selects three songs from Broadway shows that have been made into movies. COOKIE and MARY go into audience and have audience sing along with them*)

COOKIE: (*goes back onstage*) Those songs remind me of my childhood and the beginning of my love for the movies and the people IN the movies.

PATTI: (*waving, wanting to be recognized*) Cookie, I have something to share.

COOKIE: Yes? What is it?

PATTI: I also loved going to the movies as a child. Especially the musicals. And I loved the actors.

SONG: *Everything's Coming up Roses* [1 chorus with break after the bridge, then resume music after impressions]

PATTI: *Aren't they swell, aren't they great,
All those stars that you love or you hate,
Gable's glance, Grable's dance,
All the starlets who vie for their big chance.
Who they date, what they wear,
The world follows when they change their hair,
Glamour gals, charming guys,
And they all have their eye on the big prize.
Actors say lines that will make them well known,
Recognized by fans tho they'd be far from home
[music stops]*

[*spoken*] Let's see if you recall who said these quotes or what movie they're from.
(*other cast members onstage participate in guessing, as well*)

Here goes: *(in appropriate voice and attitude)*

"Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

(actors onstage respond accordingly after each impression) Judy Garland.

"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." Clark Gable.

"Why don't you come up sometime and see me...tall, dark and handsome."

Mae West.

(puts on glasses and fake nose)

"One morning, I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got in my pajamas, I'll never know" Groucho Marx in *"Animal Crackers."*

[resume "Roses" song]

Curtain up, light the lights, we've got nothing to hit but the heights,

We'll be swell, we'll be great, I can tell, mustn't wait...

To plan for the reunion night that's due,

Classmates, we'll have the time of our life, our Committee's for you.

MARY: That was great, Patti, *(to ANNIE)* Let's be sure to write that one down.

(in audience, TRUDY stands and waves, wanting to be recognized)

MARY: Yes, do you have an idea to share? Please join us.

TRUDY: *(as she is coming up with tote bag)* Thank you very much. Now I have a question for you that I'm sure everyone wants to know the answer.

MARY: And what is that question?

TRUDY: *(onstage)* Well, with all this talk about movie stars. I was wondering if that famous movie star classmate of ours will be coming to the reunion.

MARY: I was wondering the same thing.

TRUDY: I had a few classes with him.

ANNIE: So did I.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!