

HATCHET HOLLER

By Dan Neidermyer

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HATCHET HOLLER

A Hillbilly Comedy in Two Acts

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(EIGHT MEN AND ELEVEN WOMEN, SOME ROLES INTERCHANGEABLE)

THE ROOTER CLAN . . .

ELMER.....	Betsy-totin' Pa, not willin' ta let change come to Hatchet Holler 'nd miffed real bad at the Huyett clan, all of 'em. <i>(188 lines)</i>
SAMANTHAMAE	A saint in rags, workin' her fingers to the bone, 'nd mother already has thirteen with one more or less on the way. <i>(85 lines)</i>
SUNFLOWER.....	Just like her name implies, and the oldest of thirteen. <i>(18 lines)</i>
MOLLIE	The second of thirteen. <i>(25 lines)</i>
MILLIE.....	The third of thirteen. <i>(22 lines)</i>
PERCY.....	The only boy in the Rooter clan, 'nd of late, he's been acting mighty strange. <i>(35 lines)</i>
SCHMOO	One-third of the triplets, though they don't really look alike 'cause they're fraternal triplets. <i>(39 lines)</i>
SCHMEE	Another third of the triplets. <i>(38 lines)</i>
SCHMICK.....	The final third. <i>(23 lines)</i>
LULU.....	Currently, the littlest Rooter. <i>(6 lines)</i>

THE HUYETT CLAN . . .

WOLF A handsome prince in rags. Also, the oldest of the Huyett kids. (21 lines)

CHOAT So handsome 'nd so muscular, it simply takes yer breath away, or at least those who lay eyes on him. (17 lines)

OUTSIDERS . . .

CRAZY SALLY Ain't been right fer quite some time. (13 lines)

MIRANDA A representative of the Darke County Board of Education. (40 lines)

SARAH LYNN Another representative of the Darke County Board of Education. (16 lines)

FRANKIE A New York City small-time gangster. (46 lines)

DECKO Frankie's not-too-bright underling. (41 lines)

LAWMAN Darke County's sheriff. (7 lines)

THE ALIEN nuf sed. (4 lines)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

Scene 1: So dark we don't know where it is.

Scene 2: The backyard of the Rooter clan's ramshackle home.

ACT TWO

Scene 1: The backyard of the Rooter clan's ramshackle home.

Scene 2: Somewhere deep in the holler between the Rooter's ramshackle home and the Huyett swamp.

Scene 3: The backyard of the Rooter clan's ramshackle home.

THE PLACE

Hatchet Holler, so far back in the hills no one knows it even exists 'cept the two clans that have lived thar fer soon five generations.

THE TIME

Mid-August, this year.

SET

In one word, JUNK. Fill yer bare stage with whatever's handy: barrels, buckets, ladders, firewood, crates, a dog house, hammocks, anything that adds to the impression: "This place ain't been cleaned up in five generations!" And it's not about to be either.

COSTUMES

Most anything will do 'cause the Rooter 'nd the Huyett clans ain't heard of fashion yet. 'Nd it wouldn't matter if they did. They like their rags 'nd feed bags. Some hillbilly ideas; pigtails, tattered dresses, patched overalls, ragged shirts, soiled blue jeans, faded shirts, disheveled hair, plaid trousers, grungy shorts, unwashed skirts, grimy hats, and stained aprons . . . shoeless, shoeless, shoeless!

PROPS

PA	Betsy BB gun Old, very old handkerchief
SUNFLOWER	A basket of dandelions (dried flowers or anything to look like weeds)
CRAZY SALLY	Several notes
MOLLIE	Flashlight
MILLIE	Flashlight
PERCY	Flashlight

HATCHET HOLLER

MIRANDA

Notepad and pencil

SCHMICK

Rope

NOTES ON CHARACTERS

From time to time, several characters sing. They sing only a few phrases, usually quite loud, most often off pitch. The songs can be "made up" and most certainly do not call for a "singing voice" to get the job done!

Throughout the script, various noises are heard. These noises could be either live or pre-recorded from sound effects tapes. Or experiment and create your own!

Also, during Act Two, Scene 2, several characters utilize (supposedly) karate and alligator wrestling. This small bit of stage business is meant to hilariously entertain and should be directed as such. No special karate techniques or wrestling skills are needed by either the actors or the director. In fact, this action should be directed with laughter and excitement in mind rather than any display of pugilistic skill or talent. Turn this scene into great fun!

Hillbillies are backward. This is obvious. But the hillbillies in the rugged backwoods of Hatchet Holler are hilariously odd. This is why we like them. With this in mind, have heaps of fun creatin' each and every role!

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AS THE CURTAINS OPEN:

The stage is dark. The sounds of bullfrogs, crickets, and other night creatures of the mountain's forest eerily fill the darkness for several moments. Then, the sound of an exaggerated kiss. Dim light spills onto a corner of the stage, almost as if for a few moments the clouds have moved on. The dim light reveals SUNFLOWER ROOTER and WOLF HUYETT, every inch mountain hillbilly teenagers, standing, staring into each other's eyes. WOLF, in his ragged shirt and torn pants, thrift store rejects, holds SUNFLOWER'S hand. From offstage, near the two teenagers: the sound of several steps and the breaking of twigs, startling SUNFLOWER.

SUNFLOWER: Someone's comin'!

WOLF: (Dropping Sunflower's hand.) Time to get home anyways.

Pap goes around back this time of night now these days, lookin' fer possums.

SUNFLOWER: Wh . . .

WOLF: Here of late, maw's just-baked pies have been snitched from off'n the back porch at night. Pap thinks it's possums.

SUNFLOWER: Or Crazy Sally.

WOLF: Why her?

SUNFLOWER: Last week, ma caught her trampin' around in our rhubarb patch, pulling up our rhubarb. Then, she'd just stand there lookin' at it real strange like. A second later, she's be stickilit in her ears.

WOLF: Poor thing. This holler's no place for Crazy Sally.

SUNFLOWER: (Hurriedly, looking off in the direction of the sound of steps and breaking twigs.) I gotta go now.

WOLF: Just one more kiss, Sunflower.

SUNFLOWER: No, Wolf. If'en we get caught, even just bein' seen near each other, I'll get a lickin' so hard from Pa won't be able to sit down til next winter.

WOLF: Same here.

SUNFLOWER: Say, where'd you ever get da name "Wolf"?

WOLF: (With pride.) Mom named all of us Huyett kids. Named us for the first thing she saw right after we each was born.

SUNFLOWER: Yar mom saw a wolf in da swamp??!!

WOLF: Yeah, my pap!

From offstage, a bit closer: several more steps, trying to be secret about their movement, though still heard and frightening SUNFLOWER.

SUNFLOWER: We's bein' watched!

WOLF: Happenin' more often, here of late.

SUNFLOWER: (Exiting.) I gotta go.

WOLF: (Exiting.) Tomorrow night?

SUNFLOWER: (A stage whisper.) If'en I'm still alive. (And she's gone.)

WOLF: (A stage whisper.) Same here. (And he's gone.)

The moon is suddenly captured again. The stage goes dark. The sound of bullfrogs and crickets fill the darkness again.

Suddenly, a flashlight is clicked on.

MOLLIE: (Holding the flashlight under her chin, illuminating part of her face.) Shucks, Percy, we been traipsin' through this mountain all night fer nuthin'.

Another flashlight clicks on.

PERCY: (Holding his flashlight under his chin.) Ssh-hhhh. Ya ain't waited half long enuf.

Another flashlight clicks on.

MILLIE: (Holding her flashlight under her chin.) How much waitin' longer's enuf?

PERCY: Til we see 'em.

MOLLIE: Ya made all this up, Percy.

PERCY: A stick of gum says I didn't!

MILLIE: Nah, ya probly already chewed it once today.

PERCY: Ya'll see. Both of ya. It'll skeer ya right outta yer longjohns.

MOLLIE: If'en it doesn't show up, yer word's not worth hearin' ever again.

PERCY: Just wait. Ya'll see.

Unexpectedly, somewhere out in the dark, a whirring noise.

MILLIE: *(Frightened.)* What wuz that?!

PERCY: Ssh-hhhh.

Again, the whirring noise in the dark, a bit closer, a bit louder.

PERCY: *(Stage whisper.)* It's comin'. Lights out!

All flashlights click off at once. More whirring, now even closer, even louder.

MOLLIE: *(Stage whisper.)* What if'en it gets us?

PERCY: *(Stage whisper.)* Ya'll be its bedtime snack right before it hunkers down ta da swamp 'nd swallers fifteen lizards. Now shet yer tater trap.

The whirring noise becomes very loud, very huge, and very close.

MOLLIE and MILLIE scream bloody murder scaring off whatever it was. The noise stops.

PERCY: *(Clicking on his flashlight.)* Ya both skeered it away!

MOLLIE: *(Clicking on her flashlight.)* Who wants to be monster meat?

MILLIE: *(Clicking on her flashlight.)* Percy! What is "it"?

PERCY: I told ya both befer. It ain't human, 'nd it's not animal.

MOLLIE: Wut's left?

PERCY: *(Pointing his flashlight skyward.)* Out thar.

MILLIE: Meanin'?

PERCY: (*Spooky-like.*) We are not alone . . .

MOLLIE: (*Looking around.*) Thought we skeered it away.

PERCY: No, we ARE alone here. (*Points flashlight toward audience.*) We are not alone (*Points flashlight skyward.*) out thar.

MILLIE: Ya mean . . . ?

PERCY: Ouder space!

MOLLIE: Pa's gonna say, "Ya finally lost it, Percy."

PERCY: Not when I've already seen it.

MILLIE: YA . . .

MOLLIE: . . . DID?

PERCY: Sure I did, twice.

MILLIE: 'Nd ya never told Pa?

PERCY: He wouldn't believe.

MOLLIE: I don't know if'en I believe either.

MILLIE: The thought of bein' watched from out thar just kinda makes me feel kinda all creepy all over.

MOLLIE: What makes ya think we's bein' watched from out thar?

MILLIE: How else would they know we was hidden away in this hyar holler? No one else knows.

PERCY: They wanna take a bunch of us back with 'em.

MILLIE AND MOLLIE: (*Horried.*) NO!

PERCY: Ssh-hhhh.

MILLIE: (*Frightened beyond belief.*) Why they wanna do that?

PERCY: So's they can do weird experiments on our insides. See wut we's made of. Then figure out how they can make more of us. Nifty, huh?!

MILLIE: More of us?

MOLLIE: Why'd they want to make more Rooters? Thar's thirteen already! Not countin' Ma 'nd Pa 'nd the one maybe on the way.

PERCY: I dunno how they found us or why they wanna make more of us, must be yer hillbilly charm, Mollie.

MOLLIE: Ya'r makin' all this up!

PERCY: Ya'll see.

MOLLIE: No I won't, 'cause I'm dartin' back home in a hurry. (*Starts to exit.*)

Suddenly, the whirring noise, louder than before, right behind MOLLIE, scaring her just like PERCY claimed it would. Both MOLLIE and MILLIE scream triple bloody murder.

PERCY: *(Urging.)* Hide! *(They click off their flashlights and scurry to hide.)*

Foreboding silence. Followed by a high-pitched, cackling laugh.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

The backyard of the Rooter clan's ramshackle home. Next morning and PA'S shining Betsy, his BB gun, with an old, torn handkerchief and singing some ancient mountain tune louder than most people can stand. With every note off pitch!

MA: *(Entering and with great disbelief.)* Yer not thinkin' of goin' tonight, are ya really, Pa?

PA: Nope, Ma *(Pausing to spit shine a portion of Betsy.)* I'm not **thinkin'** of goin'.

MA: Thank my lucky stars! Fer once, Elmer, yer usin' the head given to ya since birth fer more than a bed 'nd breakfast fer cooties.

PA: I've decided I'm goin'.

MA: Wut's gotten inta ya, Pa? This time ya finally done took leave of yer senses.

PA: My decision's final, Samanthamae! No amount of sweet talkin' on yer part's gonna change wut's already made up, my mind!

MA: Ya just cain't go, Pa, object of all my dreams day 'nd night.

PA: Don't ya even start tryin', Ma, 'cause all yer purtty words 'bout me ain't gonna change a thing.

MA: Can't ya listen to reason, Elmer? Lizard Lips Huyett - he's one of them no account Huyetts from down in da swamp.

PA: Nothin' truer's ever been said in this end of the holler or the next three hollers over fer that matter.

MA: Why's ya gonna risk startin' everythin' back up again? Specially when things cain't stay da way they is.

PA: 'Cause at what Lizard Lips calls a concert tonight when he goes tryin ta hit one of them high notes when he's singin', me 'nd Betsy hyar (*Indicates his gun.*), the two of us got a meetin' with his backside. We'll kinda help him along to reach that high note, if'en ya know what I mean.

MA: 'Nd if'en Lizard Lips don't try to hit no high notes, then wut, Elmer?

PA: Shucks, Ma, don't talk so blamed foolish. What country sanger don't hit high notes every once in a while?

MA: Lizard Lips. He's a baritone.

PA: I don't care wut tone he is. Tonight the backside of Lizard Lips 'nd the front part of Betsy are gonna meet. 'Nd I'm doin' the introducin'!

MA: Wut ya got against Lizard Lips anyways, Pa?

PA: He's a Huyett. 'Nuf sed.

MA: Ya don't even know Lizard Lips, Elmer. He could turn out ta be a real nice feller.

PA: Yep, he could. But if'en thet was the case, why'd he go 'nd let hisself be born a Huyett.

MA: Did he have a choice? Just like yer young'uns?

PA: Kinda makes you feel real sorry for him right off the bat, doesn't it?

MA: 'Nd how're ya expectin' to get to Lizard Lips' concert tonight?

PA: Same way I git to everywhere else, day or night. Shoe leather express.

MA: Traipsin' down through da swamp? Ain't safe, Pa, not these days, not wif Crazy Sally takin' ta totin' a gun here of late. She jest might take ya fer a varmint of some kind, specially since last week she thought my rhubarb was a radio antenna.

PA: Only way to git to the other holler where the concert is, is through the swamp. I ain't scared. Of nuthin'. 'Nd specially of some old fool woman jest showed up hyar almost twenty years ago, sight unseen. Jest kinda dropped off like some unwanted cat wif sore eyes.

MA: But the swamp's Huyett territory, and ya know holler policy.

PA: Betsy'll be ridin' with me, Ma, shotgun.

MA: 'Nd if'en y'er suddenly ambushed in the dark of night?

PA: Pray for the Huyett who ambushes me, Ma. 'Cause when I git done with 'im, wut's left won't be worth pickin' up to bury.

MA: (*Shaking her head, worried.*) Wish I could talk ya outta goin' tonight.

PA: Wish all ya want to, Ma. 'Nd that's all it'll be. 'Cause I got some business to handle tonight. 'Nd it's gonna be handled. Lizard Lips' pap done made a fool outta me once too often now. Thet cain't go un-revenged.

MA: Makes no sense. No sense at all. Y'er riskin' what's gotta happen some day into the future.

PA: Over my dead body.

MA: Might come to that. (*Looking heavenward.*) Please, Lord, no.

PA: I got my pride, Ma, 'nd when somebody steps all over it (*His feet complementing his words.*), then whooshes me into the mud, (*His hands complementing these words.*) watch out!

SCHMOO: (*Entering real fast-like.*) Hey, Pa! Hey, Pa! Can it be?

PA: I don't know. Can it?

SCHMOO: Did I hear right?

PA: If yer ears was cleaned in the last year, I guess you might have.

SCHMOO: 'Bout you goin' to Lizard Lip's concert tonight?

PA: News sure travels fast in this holler. I jest sed I was goin' not ten minutes ago to yer Ma standin' hyar.

MA: Standin' hyar wastin' my breath when I should be out back shuckin' corn fer tonight's fixin's.

SCHMOO: Say it ain't true, Pa.

PA: I could, but then I'd be lyin'.

SCHMOO: Ya cain't go, Pa.

PA: My family sure is gettin' quick to tell me wut I can 'nd cain't do nowadays. Makes me think I dun up 'nd left doin' my job as Pa.

SCHMOO: Ya mustn't go, Pa. Please.

PA: It's decided, final, 'nd that means . . .

MA: A cow kick to his head wouldn't change it. Or hurt his head any either.

SCHMOO: It won't be safe. Not tonight. Not fer you, a Rooter, Pa, 'nd Lizard Lips, a Huyett. Them Huyetts'll be gunnin' fer ya.

PA: Betsy here'll make most everythin' about even.

SCHMOO: A BB gun, Pa? Y'er sure about that?

PA: Is Skunk Crik filled with bullfrogs, catfish, and green slime floatin' all over top?

SCHMOO: I'm real skeered fer ya, Pa.

PA: No reason to be, Schmoo. Me 'nd Betsy's gonna sit right up front, second or third row, so Lizard Lips is real close like.

SCHMOO: Never thought I'd live to see the day when my Pa'd actually git in a canoe wiffout a paddle, but I think I'm seein' it now.

MA: Yep, Schmoo, Pa's gonna shoot hisself tryin' to find out whut end the BB comes out of.

PA: Would you two quit yer belly-achin'? Me 'nd Betsy's goin' tonight. 'Nd that's all thar is to it. I don't wantta hear no more about it from any of ya.

MA: Yer gonna miss, Elmer, even up close in the second row.

PA: Doubtin' my aimin' ability, Samanthamae?

MA: Not when yer target's standin' still. Yer purtty good then. It's when wut yer shootin' at moves. That's a horse of a diffrent color.

PA: Not any more, it ain't. Last two days, I been practicin' behind the barn. On rabbits.

SCHMOO: Ya ain't been cruel to helpless little bunnies, have you, Pa? Please tell me that ain't true. Not about my Pa.

MA: It ain't. Bunnies move.

PA: But Lizard Lips won't.

MA: Where'd do ya come off sayin' that?

PA: Ya think Lizard Lips is gonna hop all over the place when he's singin'?

MA: Elvis did.

PA: Lizard Lips ain't no Elvis.

MA: 'Nd Pa, you ain't no John Wayne.

SCHMEE: (*Rushing onstage, lickety-split.*) Pa! Ma! Pa! Ma!

PA: What's itchin' ya so early in da mornin', Schmee?

SCHMEE: Any of you seen Mollie, Millie, 'nd Percy since you've been up?

PA: Wasn't particularly lookin' fer 'em.

MA: Probably still in bed. You know those three. They was born tired 'nd ain't caught up yet.

SCHMEE: They all three left the house late last night.

SCHMOO: You the momma of this clan now? Knowin' what every kid does 'nd when.

SCHMEE: They's got up in da middle of the night, right outta their beds, 'nd started headin' 'round back.

PA: Nature calls even at night too, ya know, Schmee.

SCHMEE: They didn't stop thar, Pa, none of 'em. Jest kept creepin' down toward the crik a ways. That's what I saw.

PA: Moon was out bright last night. Maybe they went out treein' 'coons or baggin' snipes or diggin' up night crawlers.

SCHMEE: Wiffout the dogs, a bag, or a shovel?

PA: Ya gotta understand, Schmee. Percy's strange at times. He's always been diff'rent from the rest of us Rooters ever since I knowed him which was not more'n two or three minutes after Ma welcomed him inta da holler.

SCHMEE: 'Nd Mollie 'nd Millie? They's strange too?

PA: Not quite so much as Percy, but lately, they're gettin' purtty close.

SCHMEE: Well, this mornin', they're all gone.

PA: What'd ya mean, "All gone?"

SCHMEE: Not to be found. Anywhere.

SCHMOO: Who's lookin'? They ain't hyar just means more to go 'round at the supper table.

MA: Why so worried, Schmee?

SCHMEE: 'Cause somethin' mighty funny's goin' on 'round these parts here of late.

SCHMOO: Haven't heard nobody laughin' though.

SCHMEE: Not laughin' funny, Schmoo. Somethin' Percy sed ta me two nights before last, over 'nd over again. *(Making herself all weird so she can imitate her brother.)* "Soon ya'll believe. Soon ya'll believe." That's all he sed. Jest stared right straight into my eyes, real weird like.

SCHMEE points toward the sky, imitating PERCY. With a puzzled look, PA stares upward, toward the sky. So does MA, even more puzzled. SCHMOO just looks bewildered.

SCHMEE: 'Nd once he sed, *(Again, weird-like.)* "We are not alone."

PA: Now ya know Percy ain't exactly a full bucket. Our family's lived alone up at this end of Hatchet Holler ever since before my grandpappy's time 'nd long before that even. Only other person ever wandered up hyar in all that time was Crazy Sally. 'Nd someone as crazy as her don't count as a person.

MA: Schmee . . . Mollie, Millie, 'nd Percy'll be home when they git hungry.

SCHMEE: If'en they come home, that is, Ma.

Entering, singing, a happy mountain ditty, and carrying a basket full of dandelions.

SUNFLOWER: *(Stopping her singing when she sees Ma.)* Found a whole field of dandelions, Ma.

PA: Ya've been gone so long this mornin', Sunflower, those dandelions coulda sprouted from a seed, growed up, bloomed yellor, 'nd gone back ta seed in da time it took ya ta pick 'em.

SUNFLOWER: The field's a long walk, Pa.

PA: I'm beginnin' to git my suspicions, Sunflower.

MA: *(Quickly.)* Well, brang those fresh-picked dandelions right away inta da house, Sunflower. Supper table's gonna be worth comin' ta tonight. *(Ma and Sunflower exit.)*

PA: *(Watching them exit.)* Somethin' funny goin' on, 'nd I thinkin' I know what it is. Singin' so early in the mornin', ya must be crazy.

SCHMOO: But ya were singin', Pa. I heard ya up hyar from way down in da holler.

PA: *(Starting to exit.)* I stands on wut I sed.

SCHMEE: Where's ya goin', Pa?

PA: There's a few rabbits out back behind the barn that need practicin' on.

SCHMEE: Don't nobody care three of our clans vanished in the night?! Without a trace?

PA: *(Stopping to comment.)* We're so far away from anythin', Schmee 'nd Schmoo, where can they vanish to? 'Nd besides, just in case the somethin' funny around here is what I thinks, Schmee 'nd Schmoo, the trap's still set?

SCHMOO: The trap's always set, Pa. First thing we check on after we gets up in the mornin' 'nd visits out back.

SCHMEE: Jest come from over thar, Pa, 'nd Schmoo's right. Trap's set. *(Demonstrates how it works from start to finish as she describes the trap.)* One step in the wrong place 'nd yer foot's in the rope 'nd yer whipped up toward the sky, real quick, hangin' upside down, faster than yar brain can work ta tell ya what happened to ya. Jest hangin' there, swangin' back 'n forth, wishin' ya wasn't hangin' there, swangin' back 'n forth.

PA: *(Exiting.)* Sure like to catch "just once" one of them Huyetts in that trap. That'd larn 'em a lesson, swangin' upside down awhile, 'bout snoopin' around these parts always watchin' us Rooters.

SCHMOO: Ya sure Mollie, Millie, 'nd Percy's gone?

SCHMEE: Purtineer.

SCHMOO: Somebody took 'em?

SCHMEE: Who'd want 'em?

SCHMOO: They snuck off then?

SCHMEE: Where'd they sneak off to?

SCHMOO: Maybe down to the Huyetts' place. They got the nicest-lookin' boys, especially the second oldest . . . all muscles.

SCHMEE: How'd ya know?

SCHMOO: I looked.

SCHMEE: *(Gasps.)* Ya know we ain't supposed ta be anywheres near the Huyetts' place.

SCHMOO: Nobody saw me. Not even da Huyett. He was swimmin' in da hole.

SCHMEE: Ya went all the way down thar?! Just to watch?

SCHMOO: Ain't but half a day's walk, even if yer slow about it. 'Nd it was worth ev'ry step.

SCHMEE: Not if'en Pa finds out.

SCHMOO: What I saw wuz worth Pa findin' out. 'Nd then some. Ya just cain't imagine how purtty he is, that second oldest Huyett. Ya gotta see fer yerself, Schmee.

SCHMEE: 'Nd risk a lickin'!

SCHMOO: Who'll know? Besides, shouldn't we look some more for Mollie, Millie, 'nd Percy?

SCHMEE: Wut good's that gonna do?

SCHMOO: If'en we don't find our kin, we might see theirs. Like I already sed, them Huyetts is real purtty to look at, believe me, Schmee, real purtty indeed, most everyone of 'em. All boys, 'nd most of the time they don't wear shirts.

SCHMEE: Schmoo! What're you sayin'?

SCHMOO: Why should Sunflower be da only Rooter picked?

SCHMEE: Ya ain't sposed to know that.

SCHMOO: Sunflower's got a secret, Schmoo can have a secret.

SCHMEE: Ya mean ya wish ya'd have a secret.

SCHMOO: Wishin' don't get it done, Schmee. 'Nd the way I figure it: let Pa wallop me fer lookin'. We Rooters is all girls anyways.

SCHMEE: Forgettin' Percy Rooter?

SCHMOO: Like Pa says, a person so crazy don't count.

SCHMEE: Don't talk that way 'bout kin.

SCHMOO: Ever wonder 'bout that, Schmee? Why Percy's so diffrent from all the rest of us?

SCHMEE: Fer one thing, he's a boy. That's one big difference right off.

SCHMOO: Yeah, like all them Huyetts is boys. 'Nd we's the only two families in this whole entire holler. No matter what Pa does with his switch, sooner or later, we's all gotta meet face-ta-face or we's all—the Rooters and the Huyetts—gonna be history.

SCHMEE: Pa won't let that day happen.

SCHMOO: Shucks, Pa ain't never gonna let the day happen. That's why we gotta take matters into our own hands. Like Sunflower's already dun.

SCHMEE: Are ya sayin' what I think yer sayin'?

SCHMOO: I reckon I is. Nature keeps movin' on ya know.

SCHMEE: Think maybe thar'd be two Huyetts swimmin' in the hole this mornin'?

SCHMOO: Don't know til we look.

SCHMEE: Got all yer chores done yet?

SCHMOO: Yep. Before I forked down breakfast, Shinny wuz already milked dry 'nd the goats wuz all let out into the pasture on the hill back behind the barn.

SCHMEE: Same here.

SCHMOO: Then what's holdin' us back?

SCHMEE: Nuthin' 'cept our own barefeet.

SCHMOO: Then let's get 'em movin'. *(They excitedly hurry offstage.)*

From offstage, off in the distance: the sound of Betsy BB and then:

PA: *(Miffed.)* Missed! *(Angry.)* Stop movin', ya dern long-eared critters.

From another area offstage:

MA: Like I told ya, Pa, Lizard Lips' backside is safe.

From another area offstage: a very loud, startled and terrified scream!

SCHMICK: *(Rushing onstage.)* Pa! Pa! Come quick! We caught ourselves one!

PA: *(Rushing onstage.)* By jiminy, did we finally catch ourselves a Huyett?

SCHMICK: Couldn't tell right off, Pa, when they's hangin' upside down 'nd swangin' back 'n forth.

From offstage: another scream, "HELP!"

PA: Sounds like a woman, Schmick.

SCHMICK: But them Huyetts is all boys, Pa.

PA: All that we know about anyways. But with the Huyetts things change 'long about every springtime.

MA: (*Hurrying onstage.*) Pa! Pa! Someone's in the trap!

From offstage: another scream, "HELP!"

PA: We hear thet, Ma. We hear thet real good.

MA: Ya gotta do somethin', Elmer!

Unseen by anyone except the audience, sneaking behind some of the junk onstage is CRAZY SALLY. She pops her head up from time to time, looks around, real crazy like, then quickly bolts behind some other junk somewhere else onstage. If ever there was someone loony, CRAZY SALLY fills the bill, one hundred percent and then some.

PA: Wut's the hurry, Samanthamae?

MA: Wut??!!

PA: Now that it's come, we gotta enjoy the fact we finally caught ourselves one of them Huyetts fer as long as we kin.

MA: 'Nd if'en it ain't a Huyett swangin' at the end of yer rope?

PA: Gotta be, Ma. Ya know that. Who knows we're even up hyar in this holler?

From offstage: another scream, "Please somebody. Anybody!"

Popping her head up, looking in the direction of the trap, Crazy Sally seems to be wondering about the scream.

SCHMICK: Want me to go 'nd cut whichever Huyett it is down, Pa?

PA: Hold yer horses, Schmick. We'll get around to it soon enuf.

MA: (*Exiting.*) If you ain't the dernest, Elmer Rooter, lettin' that poor person swang upside down screamin', all their blood rushin' outta their veins. Sure hope ya don't get a dose of yer own onrey medicine some day, Elmer.

Rushing onstage, out of breath:

MIRANDA: Help! My partner's hanging upside down in a tree!

PA: Who're you?

From offstage: another scream, weaker now, "Help me! Quick!"

MIRANDA: That scream's my business associate.

PA: Ain't ever seen you befer. Ya a new Huyett?

SCHMICK: Couldn't be just since last springtime, Pa.

MIRANDA: This is no time for discussions. Help me get Sarah Lynn out of that whatever it is.

PA: It's a trap, lady. 'Nd now we know it's a purtty good one at that!

MIRANDA: What?!

PA: Both of you appears to be trespassin' on Rooters' land. That trap's set up fer that very reason.

MIRANDA: (*Very strong.*) You'll help get Sarah Lynn out of that tree, mister, and now, or the sun don't shine where you're going tonight.

PA: Real upity fer a trespasser, ain't ya?

MIRANDA: I've got a court order says I can cross any property line on this mountain.

PA: Says who?

From offstage: a very weak, "I'm . . ."

MIRANDA: (*Rushing offstage.*) Coming, Sarah Lynn. Hold on one moment longer! I'm coming!

PA: (*Puzzled.*) Now if that don't beat all.

SCHMICK: Strangers, Pa?

PA: Must be. Never seen her before.

SCHMICK: Huyett kin?

PA: Talks too good to be that 'nd she's wearin' shoes.

SCHMICK: Think we oughtta help?

PA: Ma'd probly say so. *(They both exit.)*

From behind her last hiding place, CRAZY SALLY stands up, looks around, then creeps downstage moving toward a pile of junk on which she leaves a note. She looks around, then rushes offstage, not as careful as when she first sneaked on. A split second later, a harried MIRANDA and an exhausted, frazzled SARAH LYNN enter, close on the heels of PA and SCHMICK.

MIRANDA: *(Speaking before she even hits the stage.)* Somebody could get really hurt, mister, having something that dangerous hidden so close to your home.

SARAH LYNN: *(Weakly.)* Yes.

PA: Sposed to.

MIRANDA: WHAT?!

PA: Told ya befer. That rope's a trap to stop trespassers.

MIRANDA: We're not trespassers.

PA: What'd ya doin' here then?

MIRANDA: Official business.

PA: Now don't that beat all? Nobody comes here in more'n forty some years, if that, 'nd then, when somebody does, it's official business. If'en ya don't mind my askin', wut kind of official business?

MIRANDA: We represent the Darke County Board of Education.

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