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*Dramatic Publishing*

A Play in Three Acts

# **BOYS AND GHOULS TOGETHER**

by

DAVID ROGERS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(BOYS AND GHOULS TOGETHER)

ISBN 0-87129-698-5

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BOYS AND GHOULS TOGETHER

*A Comedy in Three Acts*

For Six Men and Ten Women

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CHARACTERS

THE COUNT. . . . . *last of a long line*  
LETHA. . . . . *his wife*  
DIRGA. . . . . *their daughter*  
GRANNY. . . . . *Letha's mother*  
MODEL S. . . . . *their butler*  
FRITZI WASHBURN. . . . . *Hostel Group leader*  
BUDDY FORD  
BARBARA AMES  
RON CONNORS  
ISOBEL CONNORS  
EDDIE PHELPS  
EVELYN ROBINSON  
MERRY BEAN  
NANCY BROWN  
FRAU HUBSCHMIDT. . . . . *the postmistress*  
THE MAGNIFICENT MARVELINI. . . . . *a carnival performer*

} . . . . . *Hostelers*

PLACE: *A castle in the Alps.*

TIME: *Last summer.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *An evening in summer.*

ACT TWO: *A few minutes later.*

ACT THREE: *The next morning.*

LETHA (calls). Granny. . . . Granny. . . .

(LETHA appears at the top of the steps L. She is tall and thin, with long, limp black hair. She pauses at the top of the stairs to call.)

LETHA. Granny! (With an impatient toss of the head, she starts down, saying:) Where can she be? Just when there's so much to do! (She pulls the bell cord U L, then crosses to the kitchen door R, opens it and calls off.) Granny? (There is no answer, and, as a last resort she crosses to the fireplace and calls up the chimney.) Granny?

(MODEL S lumbers down the stairs L. He is the butler and appropriately dressed for his position. While seeming almost human, MODEL S is actually man-made. He moves a little stiffly and awkwardly. As he comes toward LETHA, she turns and sees him. She gives a little start of surprise.)

LETHA. Oh! I didn't hear you come in. Would you go and see if you can find Granny, please, Model S?

MODEL S (turning awkwardly). Gran. . ny. . . find. . .

LETHA. She might be down in the dungeon with Queenie.

MODEL S (starting toward door D L). Dun. . geon. . Quee. . . (Suddenly he stops, frozen in position. He makes a strange whirring sound and stops. His mechanism has gone dead.)

LETHA (irritated). Oh, Model S! (She crosses to him and pounds or shakes him as one does with a faulty machine.) Always breaking down when I need you the most! (Leaving him standing motionless, she crosses to the stairs and calls up.) Dirga! Dirga!

DIRGA (from off R). I'm in the garden, Mummy.  
LETHA (crossing to front door U R C). Do come here, Baby Imp, Mummy needs you. (In the doorway, looking off R, charmed, she says:) Oh, Dirga, baby, how spectral you look!

(DIRGA appears U R C from R. She is an eighteen-year-old version of her mother. Her arms are full of flowers and leaves at the moment.)

DIRGA. I've been picking some flowers for their rooms.

LETHA. Charming. Deadly nightshade and bane-wort. Baby Imp, you're so thoughtful.

DIRGA. I thought I saw their car. (Pointing off.) There--'way past the stunted oak.

LETHA. No, they'll be coming by bicycle. (Looking off.) That's the postmistress's car--that dreadful Frau Hubschmidt! What can she want? She threw the mail in once today.

DIRGA. It must be a telegram--or a special delivery.

LETHA. Oh, no! Telegrams make me nervous. And I'm nervous enough as it is today. My blood is running positively warm. So much to do . . . all those people coming . . . and Granny nowhere to be found and your Daddy buried in his laboratory as usual . . . and, on top of everything else, Model S is on the fritz again.

DIRGA. I'll see what I can do. (She comes into the room, dropping her flowers on the window seat. She crosses to MODEL S, unbuttons his jacket and, taking a screw driver from her pocket, she reaches under his coat and fiddles at his back with the screw driver.)

LETHA (watching). It's the first group to come and I do so want to make a good impression.

MODEL S (coughs his whirring machinery sound and finishes his earlier phrase). . . nie. . . (He continues as before toward the door D L, turning in his awkward way to DIRGA to say:) Thank. . you . . . (He exits through door D L.)

LETHA. He adores you. You're the only one who can do anything with him.

DIRGA (sadly). I don't know how much longer I can keep him going. It's just one breakdown after another.

LETHA (philosophically). Well, we all have to wear out some time.

DIRGA. Oh, Mummy, don't!

LETHA. He's frightfully old. He was the very last model my great, great grandfather Frankenstein built. Poor, poor, great great grandfather. How he slaved! He made Model A, Model B--C--all the way down to Model S. He died before he could make a Model T and he never even knew how close he came to inventing the Ford. (She sheds a few tears.)

DIRGA. Now, Mummy, don't cry. . . .

LETHA (sorry for herself). Well, if he had, we should all be rich and living in America today--and not obliged to turn our little home into a Youth Hostel.

DIRGA. But it's going to be fun having young people around. You know how few visitors we have.

LETHA. My poor Baby Imp, have you been grotesquely lonely and unhappy?

DIRGA. Me? Unhappy? Why, I'm the luckiest girl alive. I live in a lovely castle with the best-equipped lab a girl could wish for--and my wonderful family--Daddy and Granny and Model S--and you, Mummy.

(Affectionately, she puts her fingers around Letha's

throat. FRAU HUBSCHMIDT, a frightened, angry lady of indeterminate years, in plain clothes, with a mail bag slung over one shoulder, appears in the door U R C. Seeing DIRGA apparently strangling LETHA, she utters a frightened scream.)

LETHA (breaking the embrace, outraged). What is it? What is it? Have you never seen a child embracing her mother before? What kind of families do you have down there in the village? What are you doing here anyway?

FRAU HUBSCHMIDT. I . . .

LETHA. Why don't you drop the mail and run as you usually do?

FRAU HUBSCHMIDT (a slight German accent).

Sign for it, you must, *bitte*. It is, for the Count, a special delivery.

LETHA (frightened). Oh!

DIRGA. May I sign?

FRAU HUBSCHMIDT. *Ja* . . . anyone . . . just so long as I go from this castle in one piece out . . . (DIRGA gets a quill pen from table L.)

LETHA. Go--go--in as many pieces as you choose, but go!

FRAU HUBSCHMIDT (as DIRGA signs). *Vun day . . . vun day . . .* I find out vat happened to my Hans ven he delivered here de parcel post, and ve never saw anyt'ing but his cap again.

(She gives DIRGA the letter. GRANNY enters from the door D L.)

FRAU HUBSCHMIDT. Her! Her! Dot's de vun!  
You know more dan you're telling, old lady, but I'm vatching you!

GRANNY (cackling happily). Why don't you come



closer? Get a better look?

FRAU HUBSCHMIDT. *Nein!* (Backing up.) No closer. . . . My poor Hans--neither rain nor snow nor dark of night could stop him from his appointed rounds--but her--mit her alligator in the dungeon--she stopped him!

GRANNY (outraged). My Queenie is the sweetest alligator in the whole Alps!

LETHA. Will you leave? Can't you see you're upsetting my mother?

FRAU HUBSCHMIDT. I'm upsetting her? Frau Countess, you are crazy altogether! (She runs off, DIRGA following to watch her departure.)

GRANNY (to LETHA). So they found Hubschmidt's cap down in the dungeon! Is that any reason for the villagers to be rude?

LETHA. Of course not, darling. He shouldn't have been snooping around our dungeon anyway.

DIRGA (looking off, laughs). Oh--she was running so fast, she tripped on the Venus fly-trap.

GRANNY (cackles). I love that plant. I'll feed it some extra flies later. (The little door on the clock flies open, revealing a man's face. It screams five short, piteous screams and the door shuts again. [If that's too difficult, LETHA shuts it in a preoccupied manner.])

LETHA. Five o'clock already. Where does the time go?

DIRGA (looking off R). I see them! I see them, Mummy. They're just starting up the mountain on their bikes.

LETHA. Granny, be a devil and make sure everything is straightened up out there. (She indicates the kitchen door.) They have kitchen privileges, you know.

GRANNY (grandmotherly). Maybe I should make them a little snack.

LETHA. No, dear.

GRANNY. Some of my blood pudding?

LETHA. Mother, they bring their own food. (Disappointed, GRANNY goes off R. LETHA crosses to DIRGA.)

DIRGA (looking off R). How wonderful for them! Coming all the way from America to bicycle across Europe--seeing new sights--old places--and then--stopping at a homey hostel like this.

LETHA (looking down at them, sentimentally).

Adorable! From up here they look like little baby bats!

DIRGA. So young--so tender--so delicious.

LETHA (fondly). You're your Daddy's little girl, aren't you?

DIRGA (shyly). Oh, Mummy!

LETHA (walking her C). Who knows, maybe one of those baby bats is the one my little raven will fly away with?

DIRGA. Mummy, you know I'm not allowed to fly any more! And--if I ever fly away with anyone, I want it to be someone who can really fly.

LETHA. Baby Imp----(Not knowing whether to say this.) That kind isn't so easy to find any more.

DIRGA. I'll find one. I know I will.

LETHA. But, you mustn't be too disappointed if----  
(She stops, not wanting to go on.)

DIRGA. If what, Mummy?

(LETHA doesn't know how to answer and is fortunately interrupted by GRANNY, who comes out of the door R.)

GRANNY (cackling cheerfully). All ready out there. It's shiny and white as a tombstone.

LETHA. Did you put your cauldron away?

GRANNY. Must I? I was just going to start dinner

for Queenie.

LETHA. Oh, very well--but don't get the place all messy. (GRANNY exits R again.)

DIRGA. Mummy, what were you going to say?

LETHA. It's just that your father and I have been thinking it over, and . . .

COUNT (off L). Letha. . . . Letha, dear heart, where are you?

LETHA (glad of another interruption). Down here, darling.

(THE COUNT appears at the top of the steps L. He is tall and commanding, dressed in a black suit and cape which he wears continually. He speaks with a rolling Hungarian accent.)

COUNT (excited and happy). My own, I have monstrous news!

LETHA. What, sweet?

COUNT (swooping into the room, his cape billowing like bat's wings.) I have finally succeeded in crossing a miniature cow with a giant chicken.

DIRGA (impressed). Daddy!

LETHA. How stupefying!

COUNT. You don't know how stupefying! It moos and it cackles and it lays cheese omelets.

LETHA. I'm so proud of you, hemlock-bunch. (She does their strange strangle embrace.)

DIRGA. Oh, Daddy, Frau Hubschmidt brought you a special delivery.

COUNT (taking it from her, pleased). Ah--it's from Ezio Borgia. . . . (He opens it, quickly glances at the contents, then sighs, depressed.)

LETHA. Bad news?

COUNT (discouraged). Ezio was my last hope. I've written everyone. Martha Cagliostro, Kurt and Ilse Caligari--even what's her name? Dr.

Jekyll's granddaughter--and Mr. Hyde's grandson as well--and now, Ezio. And--(Embracing DIRGA.)--and nobody knows of a boy--a boy suitable for my princess.

DIRGA. Oh, Daddy! I'm not even thinking of marriage yet. (She crosses away from him.)

COUNT. You must! You must! It's time. But what boy? It's not like the old days when there were plenty to choose from. Our kind of people is dying out.

LETHA. Darling, you'll depress the baby.

COUNT. She must learn. She is the last descendant of Dr. Frankenstein on your side, and the last of the House of Dracula on mine. Two such magnificent blood lines coming together in one perfect poppy--and not one boy in Europe her own age who is suitable!

DIRGA. There must be someone! I've often heard you speak of Murdock Svengali.

COUNT. Little Murdock--old Svengali's grandson. But he has disappeared. Poof! I've asked all the old gang, but no one knows where he is. Living in poverty somewhere, I suppose--earning who knows what degrading kind of living--working in an office or even selling insurance.

LETHA (on point of tears). Oh, not insurance! Not Murdock. He was such an adorably sinister little child.

COUNT (totally discouraged). Sometimes, I get up in the morning and it hardly seems worthwhile drinking my glass of plasma.

LETHA. But you mustn't carry on so, darling. We've had this out and made our decision, and it's time we told the baby.

DIRGA. What? What is it?

LETHA. Murdock cannot be found and there is no other boy in Europe. We've decided the only

place left where our kind is appreciated is America. That is really why we have invited the hostellers to come here. We hope to find you some nice young American boy to marry.

DIRGA (shocked). Marry an American?

LETHA (firm). Yes.

DIRGA. A normal American?

LETHA. I'm afraid that's all they have. But, at least, an American will be rich and you will be able to continue your experiments and carry on our wonderful traditions.

DIRGA (bursting into tears). But a normal American!

LETHA (holding her). You must be brave. We'll find you the richest and the strangest boy we can. Maybe a little new blood is what our kind of people needs. Now, that's enough tears. Go. Take the flowers up to their rooms. And remember, Daddy and I are counting on you.

DIRGA. Yes, Mummy. (She picks up the flowers, hastily embraces the COUNT and runs off.)

COUNT (gloomy). To send my only baby away--to America--without us.

LETHA. We're too old to change, darling. We belong here. In our own castle--among our own things. . . . (Her gesture encompasses the room.) Besides, your side of the family can't travel over water. We'll do our best for the baby. That's all we can do.

COUNT. You're right, as usual. . . . Oh, my brave Queen Bee. . . .

LETHA. My handsome King Cobra. . . . (Their hands go round each other's necks and they kiss.) Come--they'll be here any minute. Let's go upstairs and make ourselves presentable. Comb your hair--wash your face. I'll put a little more white in my makeup. (They go off up-

stairs together.)

EDDIE (from off R, yelling, kid style). C'mon, gang! The last one over the drawbridge is a rotten egg!

(After a second EDDIE rides his bicycle into view outside the door U R C. He is a muscular eighteen-year-old, terribly athletic but not too bright. He is dressed in shorts and a T shirt, there is a pack on his back, surmounted by a large bar bell and, in the basket affixed to his bike, a large package of groceries.)

EDDIE. I win! (There is a certain amount of derogatory comment from the others off R. EDDIE leaps off his bike and stacks it out of sight, then runs in the door U R C, carrying the groceries. Casting a quick look around, he yells.) C'mon, guys! It's keen!

(He sets the groceries down on the floor U R and is taking off his pack as FRITZI WASHBURN, the group leader, strides in. She is older than the others, perhaps thirty, a hearty, athletic lady who is a physical ed teacher. Eddie worships her. She wears shorts, blouse, sun-visor cap and a pack. She carries another bag of groceries.)

FRITZI. This is living, Eddie, living! Thirty-five miles a day on a bike! My lungs are pumping, pumping, pumping! Here, Eddie. (She gives him the groceries, which he puts with the other bag, and crosses to the window, looking at the view.) Look at that mountain! It must be higher than this one! Maybe you and I can run up to the top tomorrow morning before

---

breakfast.

EDDIE. Yes, Miss Washburn.

(ISOBEL CONNORS, a pretty eighteen-year-old, who takes a dim view of everything, lurches in the front door holding her back. She wears a smart ensemble of pedal pushers and blouse, set off by some jewelry and an attractive scarf.)

ISOBEL (an exhausted comment). Why is all Europe uphill?

(She unbuckles her pack, lets it fall to the floor and wearily drags it over to where Eddie has dumped the others, moaning as she goes. EVELYN ROBINSON, a pretty girl of nineteen, scampers in. She is wearing shorts and blouse and carries a pack. She is followed by MERRY BEAN, a little girl of eighteen, similarly dressed. MERRY is nervous and jumpy and almost gives the impression of hanging on to Evelyn's skirts, although she doesn't actually. EVELYN stops in the doorway, takes in the room in one sweeping glance.)

EVELYN. Oh! I love it, I love it, I love it! (She runs into the room with an all-embracing gesture.) It's so ancient--it's atmosphere--atmosphere. It's so----(The final compliment.) It's so European! (She has landed in front of the door D L. MERRY has followed her, looking to all sides for danger. She now sees the portrait and screams.)

MERRY. What's that!

EVELYN. What?

MERRY. That picture! It frightens me!

EVELYN (looks, a bit startled herself). Oh . . .  
(Pulling herself together.) Oh, Merry, it's ob-

viously a genuine European antique. I think it's fascinating. (She sneaks a look but can't quite take it and looks away.) If you wanted to look at pictures by Norman Rockwell, why did you come to Europe at all? (They help each other remove their packs.)

ISOBEL (by now has staggered to the wooden bench). Oh, look! A Castro convertible slab. (She sits wearily.)

FRITZI. Stop grousing, Isobel. A firm chair is good for your back.

ISOBEL (lowering herself to reclining position). My back doesn't like things that are good for it. It likes to be coddled. (Her head bounces on the wood.) Oh, for Pete's sake!

(NANCY BROWN, a pretty twenty-year-old, dressed in smart slacks and blouse, a crazy straw hat and sun glasses, enters U R C, calling behind her.)

NANCY. Careful with my pack, Ron. I've got some perfume bottles on the top.

(RON CONNORS enters U R C behind her. He is a good-looking twenty-year-old dressed in sport shirt and shorts, a bicycle cap on his head. One pack is strapped on his back and he carries another.)

RON. It's okay, Nancy. I'm being careful.

ISOBEL (rising to sitting position, to RON). Why are you carrying her pack?

RON. She was tired.

ISOBEL. I'm your sister. Why don't you help me?

RON. You're my sister. I don't have to help you.

ISOBEL (imitating him, nasty). "You're my sister.