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Family Plays

AFTERNOON AT TAVERN MacTAVISH

OR,
MY WALLET IS IN THE HIGHLANDS



AFTERNOON AT TAVERN MAC TAVISH

OR, MY WALLET IS IN THE HIGHLANDS

This play was voted one of the most popular of the 27 productions staged by the Players Club of Detroit and won first place in the statewide Jocundry Books/Capital Times One-Act Playwriting contest in Lansing, Michigan.

Comedy. By Frances A. Hogg. *Cast: 3m., 2w., extras.* Subtitled "My Wallet Is in the Highlands," this light comedy shows three gullible American tourists (wife, husband, and their teenage son or daughter) being fleeced in a tourist trap, and loving every minute of it. The play takes place in Scotland, but it could happen (and does) anywhere in the world, including America. The wily tavern owner and his equally conniving wife know every trick, and they enjoy plying their trade. The way they sell two skulls which, they say, came from the same body is priceless. Audiences of all ages will laugh their own skulls off. *Restaurant setting, modern clothes. The author says the setting can be changed to any place where Americans travel (including the USA). She adds that "cash and blarney flow freely and everyone gets what they want in the end!"* *Approximate running time: 20-25 minutes. Code: AG4.*

Family Plays

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Afternoon at Tavern MacTavish
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**A ONE-ACT COMEDY BY
FRANCES A. HOGG**

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(AFTERNOON AT TAVERN MACTAVISH OR, MY WALLET IS IN THE
HIGHLANDS)

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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ABOUT THE PLAY

Here is a play designed for fun . . . fun for the director, cast, and audiences.

Are American tourists really as gullible as those depicted here? Statistics probably are not available, but the tourist business is one of the world's biggest—and most profitable—industries. And American tourists are welcome everywhere, with open arms and ringing cash registers.

But this play is not designed to criticize or warn vacationers, nor to expose those who cater to them or to imply that Scottish people alone are greedy; the setting could be anywhere in the world where Americans travel (including the USA). This brightly paced, funny play answers the question, "What happens when the most gullible family in America meets up with the most 'accommodating' inn-keepers in Scotland?" Cash and blarney flow freely and everyone gets what they want in the end!

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The playwright, Frances A. Hogg, spent her youth in the tenor drum section of the Clan MacNeil Pipes and Drums, and singing folk ballads at Scottish functions. She is the author of plays and children's mystery books and the founder of the Merrick Place Players, an interactive mystery theatre troupe in Detroit, Michigan.

"Afternoon at Tavern MacTavish" was first produced by the Players Club of Detroit. It was voted one of the most popular of the 27 plays staged by the club during the season. The script won first place in the state-wide Jocundry Books/Capital Times One-Act Playwriting contest in Lansing, Mich., and was produced by East Lansing High School under the direction of Kate Veihl as a benefit for the Lansing Area Literacy Coalition.

Playing time is about 20 to 25 minutes.

AFTERNOON AT TAVERN MacTAVISH

Cast of Characters

SANDY—A coarse, large brute.

ANGUS—Shrewd con artist.

FIONA—Not quite as bright as her husband, Angus, but she knows the game well.

HERB—Gullible American tourist.

JANET—Smarter than her husband, Herb, but she doesn't like to "make waves."

DANNY—Disgruntled American teenager who would just as well have stayed home (may also be played as a teenage girl, in which case she is referred to as "Princess" by her parents.)

CUSTOMER—Also a tourist, but not as "colorful" as Herb's family. Can be played by a male or female, who may be accompanied by his/her spouse.

Place: Tavern MacTavish in rural Scotland

Time: The present

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First produced by the Players Club, Detroit, Michigan, with the following all-male cast under the direction of Mark W. Habel:

Sandy	Alex M. Herbertson
Customer	Michael J. Demchak
His Wife	Robert J. Borsodi
Angus	Mark W. Habel
Danny	Michael K. Rodgers
Fiona	Joseph A. Gillis
Hattie (Janet)	Charles E. Roberts
Herb	Jeffrey Montgomery

PRODUCTION NOTES

Props

Cash register with loud bell
2 large, cumbersome restaurant menus—on tables
Bolts of tartan fabric—behind bar
Dishes and glassware, Scotch bottle (may be omitted)
Money and wallets
2 human skulls, one smaller than the other—on tables
Eyeglasses and camera for Herb
Pocket camera for Danny
Floral print shoulder bag for Janet, with guide book and book of tartans and travel literature
3 identical distinctly marked paper bags large enough to hold a skull
Set of bagpipes—on wall near Stage Right entrance
Cheese plate—Fiona
Small notebook and pencil—Angus
Large bus tray or basket large enough to conceal a skull—Fiona
2 sets of curtains with splashy, floral pattern

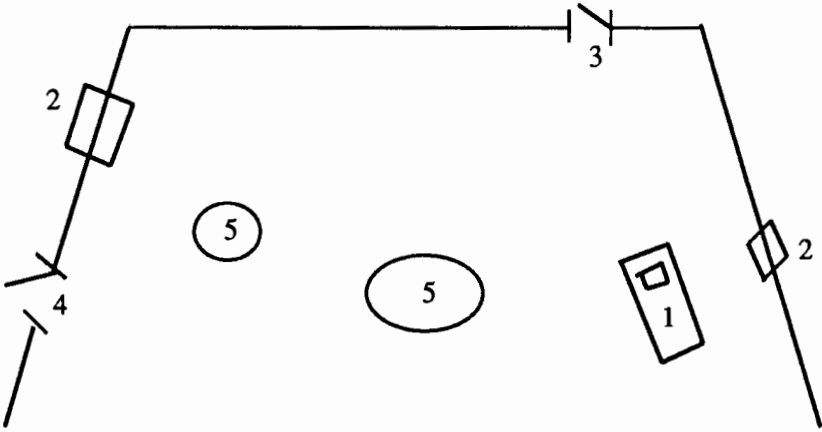
Costumes and Make-Up

SANDY—He looks as if he spends most of his time cleaning stables. He wears a kilt and a dirty white shirt with the sleeves rolled up.
ANGUS—He has gray hair and wears side-whiskers. He wears a kilt and vest.
FIONA—She wears a plain dress and an apron.
HERB—He wears rather gaudy traveling clothes and is burdened with cameras and guide books.
JANET—She wears a splashy floral print dress and carries a shoulder bag (in another floral design) that contains maps and travel literature.
DANNY—He is dressed in the latest “cool” teen clothing.

Sound Effects

The *ringing of the cash register* is one of the many comical features of this show. It should be loud and distinctive. Ear-frightening *bagpipe music* is also called for.

The Set



- 1—Bar with cash register
- 2—Window
- 3—Door to kitchen
- 4—Door to street
- 5—Small tables and chairs

Add set decorations as desired—paintings or photos of Scottish castles, etc.

AFTERNOON AT TAVERN MacTAVISH

[As the curtain rises, ANGUS is behind the bar, at the cash register, counting money. CUSTOMER is at the Stage Right table, finishing a meal. There is a distinctly marked paper bag (exactly like the two bags we will see later) and a bolt of yellow tartan fabric on the floor near CUSTOMER.

Enter SANDY, Stage Right. He stands just inside the door, at attention, and glances briefly at the palm of his hand before announcing, loudly:]

SANDY: LAST CALL FOR SPECIAL, PERSONALIZED HORSE-CART TOUR OF ANCIENT CASTLE ROSENBERG!

[ANGUS rings CASH REGISTER. CUSTOMER excitedly prepares to leave, picking up the cumbersome bolt of fabric, at first forgetting the paper bag. CUSTOMER remembers the paper bag and returns to get it before following SANDY out the Stage Right door. ANGUS waves goodbye, cheerily, and returns to his money counting. Enter FIONA, Down Left, with a deep basket. She clears the table, putting the used dishes into the basket, and takes the basket behind the bar. She makes herself busy behind the bar.

Enter HERB, JANET, and DANNY, Stage Right]

JANET. *[To Herb]* Oh, Honey! Isn't this place quaint? It's so RUSTIC!

HERB. *[Looking at his guidebook]* I can't find this place in the guidebooks . . . but according to the sign outside, they serve authentic Scottish cuisine. Shall we give it a try?

JANET. I'm game if you are, Honey.

DANNY. I'm hungry!

ANGUS. *[Approaching them]* Good day to you all! Welcome to Tavern MacTavish! My name is Angus MacTavish and this is my lovely wife, Fiona *[motions to FIONA, who smiles and nods]*. Welcome to our humble establishment!

HERB. Pleased to meet you, I'm sure. I'm Herb Braun *[pronounce as "Brown" throughout]*, this is my wife, Janet, and our boy, Danny. We're from the Great State of Michigan, in the Good Old USA!

[FIONA rings CASH REGISTER]

ANGUS. Delighted! Will you have a table? *[He seats them at the Stage Center table]*

JANET. *[Looking around, wide-eyed]* Is this REALLY an authentic Scottish restaurant?

ANGUS. Oh, my yes! The MacTavish family has had this tavern for as long as time. At Tavern MacTavish we serve only the AUTHENTIC foodstuffs of the Scottish people.

FIONA. *[From behind the counter]* None of that fancy foreign fare here, Sir!

JANET. Oh, I'm so PLEASED! You see, my grandfather came from Scotland. This is our first visit to your lovely country. We want our son Danny to have a true Scottish cultural experience!

ANGUS. An excellent experience for the bairn!

DANNY. My dad keeps harping that he wants me to "discover my roots."

FIONA. *Roots?* Aye, we've got roots—all kinds of roots on the menu!

[HERB, JANET, and DANNY exchange quizzical looks]

ANGUS. *[Pulling his note pad from his vest pocket]* How about starting with a shot of good Scotch whiskey? That's the way to steel oneself for an authentic Scottish meal!

HERB. Sounds good to me!

JANET. Me too!

DANNY. Me too! *[JANET cuffs him]*

ANGUS. Fiona! Bring a wee drap to our guests! *[To Janet]* You say your grandfather was from Scotland? What was his clan? *[FIONA, upon hearing Angus begin talking about clans, leans over the bar to listen closely]*

JANET. MacIntyre! *[Hearing this, FIONA begins to pull heavy bolts of green tartan fabric from behind the bar, piling them on the counter. JANET produces a book about tartans from her bag and flips through the pages. FIONA gestures to Angus that she has located the right bolt]* Isn't the MacIntyre tartan lovely? *[JANET shows the page to ANGUS, who nods appreciatively. JANET looks at the page thoughtfully]* No, wait a minute . . . this isn't right . . . It's not the MacIntyre tartan after all . . . it's the MacIntosh! How silly of me!

[FIONA, who has just finished laying out the green tartan bolts, shakes her head as she stows the green tartan bolts and begins to pile red tartan bolts on the counter. JANET finds the correct page in her book and shows it to Angus, proudly]

ANGUS. Yes, the MacIntosh tartan is lovely—and it's even more lovely next to your eyes! You should wear your tartan often, and PROUDLY!

HERB. She had better! Just yesterday she bought bolts and bolts of the stuff. Pretty near cost me an arm and a leg! I had to put my foot down. "Janet," I said, "I will not allow you to buy another INCH of the MacIntosh plaid!" *[FIONA grimaces in disgust]*

JANET. I don't know what possessed me! I can't even sew a stitch! And as you can see, I'm more partial to floral prints!

[ALL laugh good naturedly, except FIONA. She serves the whiskey to Herb and Janet, and returns to the bar]

HERB. We visited the wife's ancestral home just this last Thursday!

JANET. MacIntosh Castle! It was a thrilling experience!

DANNY. *[Loudly]* Mom, it was nothing but a pile of rocks!

ANGUS. So you've already visited your ancestral home? That's too bad . . .

JANET. Too bad?

ANGUS. *[Recovering]* . . . I meant to say that it's too bad your ancestral Castle MacIntosh is just a pile of rocks.

JANET. It was very ancient.

ANGUS. Aye. *[To Herb]* But what about *your* ancient Scottish ancestral home, Sir? Have you seen it yet?

HERB. I'm afraid all the Scotch blood in this family is on the wife's side.

ANGUS. But I heard you say your name is Brown. There's a bonnie Scottish name for you, eh, Fiona? *[FIONA nods, vigorously]*

HERB. I think it's actually German . . .

JANET. Yes, German. It's spelled B-R-A-U-N.

ANGUS. B-R-A-U-N. Exactly! That's the original Gaelic spelling. Isn't it a treat that here you are, smack in the middle of the Braun family homeland! *[FIONA rings CASH REGISTER]*

HERB. Imagine that! And I never even knew Braun was a Scottish name!

JANET. [*Paging through her book of tartans*] Braun isn't in here, Darling.

HERB. Maybe they only have the big clans in there, Dear—the ones with heraldry and coats of arms and their own tartans. The Braun family probably doesn't have its own tartan.

ANGUS. Not true! Those little books have only enough pages for a few families—you know, the *common* Scottish names. Just because there isn't a Braun family tartan in that book there, my good lady, does not mean you don't have your very own tartan. Fiona!

FIONA. Yes, love?

ANGUS. You're the expert on such matters, my dove . . . does the family Braun, of *Castle Braun*, have its own tartan?

FIONA. [*Hesitating, she looks at the bolts of tartan on the countertop, then glances at the window curtains behind her*] More or less.

JANET. More or less?

FIONA. [*She pulls down the curtain from the window and drapes it over her arm. She advances to the Brauns' table*] Actually, it's more of a floral pattern . . .

[*HERB, JANET, and DANNY examine the curtain. ANGUS glares at FIONA, who shrugs her shoulders*]

JANET. [*To Angus*] Really! I had no idea that Scottish families each have their own floral print!

ANGUS. It's only the very *unique* Scottish families. The Brauns were always fierce individualists!

HERB. [*With growing family pride*] That's us! [*He downs his Scotch*]

DANNY. But isn't that one of the curtains?

ANGUS. Curtain? Of course not, Laddie! This here is called a "finestral tapestry." It's a little-known ancient Scottish tradition for the eldest daughter of the clan chieftain to fashion a banner of the ancestral floral print to display in the window to welcome the tired and hungry Scottish soldier home from the wars! In fact, the Braun family floral print is one of the most rare in existence. My Fiona used the last known yardage to make the finestral tapestries you see in this very room!