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Dramatic Publishing

CLOCKWORK

by

PAT COOK



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(CLOCKWORK)

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CLOCKWORK

A Play in Two Acts
For Seven Men and Nine Women

CHARACTERS

ZACK DUNWOODY family patriarch, 60 years old
LEON DUNWOODY Zack's nephew, 40 years old
FRIEDA DUNWOODY Leon's wife
HAROLD DUNWOODY Zack's son, in his mid-40s
DIANE DUNWOODY Harold's wife
MONROE DUNWOODY .. Zack's brother, 55 years old
LILA MAE DUNWOODY Monroe's wife
NOLA MARCUS Zack's sister
JACKSON DUNWOODY .. the son of Leon and Frieda
BETTY JEAN DUNWOODY their daughter
JENNY SUE DUNWOODY .. Harold and Diane's daughter
ELOISE MULDOON Zack's nurse
GLADYS FITCH a household cook
MYRNA HORNBECK ... a neighbor, Nola's best friend
DEPUTY CONSTABLE CROW a policeman
DOCTOR MCMURRY .. a middle-aged country doctor
*MESSENGER an old delivery man

TIME: The present.

PLACE: The living room of Zack Dunwoody.

*See "A Note About the Play..." in Production Notes.

CLOCKWORK was first produced by Encore Theatre, in cooperation with the Missouri City Arts Council in the Missouri City Civic Center, Missouri City, Texas on January 19, 1990 with the following cast:

GLADYS	Sheri Fryer
ZACK	Brad Morrison
ELOISE	Sheila Gilmore
HAROLD	Jeff Miller
DIANE	Lori Johnson
JACKSON	John Ehlinger
JENNY	Jenny Miller
BETTY	Dawn Roth-Ehlinger
FRIEDA	Bethina Peacock
LEON	Steve Hess
MONROE	G. Kent Brown
NOLA	Rose Ann Cook
MYRNA	Kathryn Hickenbottom
LILA	Kathy Gilmore
CROW	Jerry Baber
MCMURRY	Zach Grahlfis
MESSENGER	I. B. Bradley

The production was directed by Pat Cook, with original set design by Jerry Baber.

ACT ONE

SETTING: *The living room of the Dunwoody estate is like a magazine picture of southern attitudes and comforts. The walls boast the wood panels and flowered wallpaper so prevalent in the Deep South. All is slightly faded, however, to give the impression of long-past glories and the once proud architecture now seems tired and lifeless.*

The front door, which leads to the outside, is located on the R wall and is next to a curtained window. The second door is on the UC wall and leads to the kitchen. A small flight of stairs, located UL, leads to the second floor and the third door, DL, is a closet.

The furniture looks as if it was all rejected from a garage sale, mis-matched to say the least. There is a large, overstuffed couch near the center of the room. Next to it is a semi-matching chair. Around the rest of the room are other small tables, desks and chairs. On the table next to the kitchen door is a decanter of wine and glasses. The family telephone rests on a small couch table. DL is a large, rather imposing grandfather clock which doesn't run.

AS THE LIGHTS COME UP: *ZACK is sitting in a chair with a thermometer in his mouth. ELOISE is standing next to him, looking at her watch. HAROLD is sitting on*

the couch, reading a newspaper, while DIANE is looking up the stairs, waiting for something. The telephone rings. Nobody moves. It rings again, and again, and again. Finally, GLADYS emerges from the kitchen. She looks at the FAMILY and scowls.

GLADYS. I'll get it.

ZACK. Burbbbbmmbull.

ELOISE. Hush. *(GLADYS slowly ambles over to the phone and picks up the receiver.)*

GLADYS *(into the phone)*. Hello, this is the Dunwoody residence and don't you want to hang up now. What? Lemme see. *(She looks at ZACK.)* You still alive?

ZACK *(infuriated)*. Grazzit?!

ELOISE. Don't talk with the thermometer in your mouth. *(To GLADYS.)* Is that Doctor McMurry?

GLADYS. Yeah, he's just leaving for the mortician's convention. I guess he wants to know if he can pick up anything. *(ELOISE waves for her to hang up. She talks to the phone.)* Yeah, he's still kicking, but it's only a matter of time. Right. *(She hangs up and crosses to the kitchen.)*

HAROLD *(as GLADYS passes)*. When are we gonna eat? *(She ignores him and exits into the kitchen.)*

DIANE. Huh?

HAROLD *(looks at DIANE)*. When are we gonna eat?

DIANE. What? *(HAROLD motions her to come closer, which she does.)*

HAROLD. I said, when are we gonna eat?

DIANE. Oh, I don't know. *(HAROLD motions her to go back to the stairs.)*

ZACK. Mmmjmnklimnbmm.

ELOISE. No, you still got another minute yet.

ZACK. Kimmmbjbmmslurnummm?

ELOISE. Look for yourself! *(She holds her wrist watch where ZACK can see it.)*

ZACK. Lumminiumyllmmn?

ELOISE. Yes, it is! Nineteen ninety-five at the drug store!

ZACK. Burf?

ELOISE. No, the one downtown.

ZACK. Mendiddlelumbubum.

ELOISE *(shocked)*. Hey, I don't like that kinda talk!

(JACKSON enters from the kitchen carrying a shoe box.)

JACKSON. Uncle Harold? *(He rips the paper out of HAROLD's hands.)*

HAROLD. Gimme back my paper, you little wart!

JACKSON. Oh, sorry. *(He sheepishly hands the wadded paper back to HAROLD who looks at it disgustedly.)*

HAROLD. What do you want, anyway, like I care.

JACKSON. Have you seen the rest of my frog? *(There is a long pause while HAROLD stares at JACKSON and tries to make sense out of this last question.)*

HAROLD. Keeping in mind that I don't want this to degenerate into a discussion, the rest of your frog?

JACKSON. Uh huh, uh huh, it's gone.

HAROLD. Not *all* the frog, jist part of the frog?

JACKSON. Uh huh, uh huh, I got the front part right here. Wanna see? *(He starts to open the box.)*

HAROLD. NO!

DIANE. Y'all be quiet now. Leon's trying to rest.

HAROLD. Sorry. He lost part of his frog.

DIANE. Huh?

HAROLD. He lost part of his frog!

DIANE. What? (*HAROLD motions DIANE to move closer, which she does again.*)

HAROLD. Nature boy here lost part of his frog.

DIANE (*to JACKSON*). You lost part of your frog?

HAROLD (*sarcastically*). Uh huh, uh huh.

ZACK (*yanking thermometer out of his mouth*).

What'chall talking about over there?

HAROLD and JACKSON. Frogs!

DIANE. Shhh!

HAROLD (*to JACKSON*). I ain't seen the rest of your frog. I don't know why you bothered me? I don't know why I'm talking to you! (*He tries to straighten out his paper.*)

ZACK (*to ELOISE*). They talking about me, ain't they?

ELOISE (*examining the thermometer*). Ever' chance they git. (*Disgusted, she shows the thermometer to ZACK.*)

Look at this.

ZACK. Temperature's high, ain't it.

ELOISE. Naw, you chomped down so hard, you got teeth marks on the end of it. I'm responsible for this equipment, you know.

DIANE. Now, ever'body be quiet now. Leon's upstairs, trying to rest his leg, Lord knows how.

ZACK (*crossing to DIANE*). Well I, for one, would purely like to know what kinda accident he had to wrench up his leg like that.

DIANE. He don't want to talk about and we ain't gonna talk about it.

HAROLD (*disgusted*). Naw, we're gonna talk about frogs. Not even complete frogs, indeterminate ones.

DIANE (*to JACKSON*). What part of the frog do you have? (*JACKSON starts to open the box but she stops him.*) Wait! Why do you have jist *part* of a frog?

JACKSON. Biology experiment. See, we was supposed to cut up the little suckers today but I was late on accounta football practice.

DIANE. So they sent it home with you?

HAROLD. Whut kinda teacher would send home half a frog as homework?

JACKSON. And if I lose it I gotta pay for it.

HAROLD (*stands*). What *does* a frog go for these days... considering it was already damaged?

JACKSON. Aw come on, Uncle Harold, I gotta find the rest of Murphy.

DIANE. You named your frog and then cut him up?

JACKSON. Well, I figured he'd appreciate that as opposed to having a stranger do it.

HAROLD. Jackson, you got the brain of a tree. And I ain't talking dogwood here, I'm talking birch. Maybe. (*He thinks.*) I'd have to see the tree first. (*ZACK crosses to the GROUP, followed by ELOISE.*)

ZACK. If y'all are gonna talk I wish you'd have the good graces to speak up so I can hear what evil lies you're spreading about me! (*ELOISE tries to take ZACK's pulse.*)

DIANE. We're talking about frogs here.

ZACK (*to ELOISE*). She call me a frog? (*JACKSON backs away from ZACK.*)

HAROLD. Don't say that too loud or Jackson here will dissect you.

JACKSON (*to HAROLD*). Uncle Harold, he's scaring me agin.

DIANE. He does that to all of us.

HAROLD. Yeah, on accounta he likes it, don't you Daddy?

ZACK. You got that right!

(GLADYS enters from the kitchen.)

ELOISE. Mr. Dunwoody, will you please sit down? Your blood pressure!

ZACK *(to GLADYS)*. What do you want?

GLADYS. A trip to the Cayman Islands, but I don't suppose I'll ever git it outta you, will I?

ZACK. You got that right. *(He sits on the couch.)*

ELOISE. Are you gonna nest there for awhile?

ZACK. Maybe. I don't know! It was one of them spontaneous things! What do you want from me, an *itinerary*? *(ELOISE sits next to him and takes his pulse.)*

DIANE. What is it, Gladys?

GLADYS. I jist wanted to know if Leon's gonna come downstairs to supper or am I gonna have to truck it up there to him?

DIANE. Frieda will be down in a minute. I'll ask her.

GLADYS. Well, let me know, will you?

DIANE. You'll be the first. What're we having for supper tonight, anyway?

GLADYS. Frogs legs. *(She exits into the kitchen.)*

HAROLD. I had a feeling that was coming.

(JENNY AND BETTY JEAN come down the stairs.)

JENNY. There's no need to go getting into a snit about it. It wasn't me!

BETTY JEAN. Well, somebody's been reading my diary! Today's the third time I found it open.

JENNY. Open? Where?

JACKSON. The part where she and Dawayne had snuck into the Drive-In in the trunk...*(JENNY and BETTY JEAN suddenly turn to JACKSON.)*...uh, nothing.

BETTY JEAN. I figured it was you, you nosey little rat!
(*She crosses and punches JACKSON in the arm.*)

DIANE. Girls, now y'all stop that! Harold, tell them to stop it.

HAROLD (*no expression*). Girls stop that.

BETTY JEAN (*to DIANE*). Well, what am I gonna do?
Ain't nobody has any privacy in this house.

JENNY. Look. (*She pulls BETTY JEAN over to the clock.*)
I tell you what. I'll show you my hiding place. Ain't nobody knows about it.

BETTY JEAN. You mean that old clock? (*JENNY glares at her.*) Uh...that was jist a guess.

JENNY. You *knew* about it, didn't you?

BETTY JEAN. I...I...I...

ZACK (*rising, furiously*). You girls git away from that clock, you hear? (*He crosses to the clock.*) It's worth more'n the two of you combined. Why, it's been in the family for years!

HAROLD (*to himself*). So have you.

ZACK. What wuzzat?

HAROLD. Nothing, Daddy. I was jist remarking as to how that thing ain't worked in years.

ZACK. Why, me an' this old clock, we're jist alike we two.

HAROLD (*to himself*). That's what I jist said.

ZACK. What?

JACKSON (*finally catches it*). Frog legs? Hey? (*He exits into the kitchen.*)

(*FRIEDA comes down the stairs.*)

ZACK. Yeah, this old clock...if it could only talk it'd tell you a bunch. You'd be surprised, all of you.

FRIEDA. Listen, ever'body. Now, Leon's coming down and I don't want nobody asking him about his accident. I'm telling you now, he flat doesn't want to talk about it, so there's no sense in prodding him about it. Don't even *look* like you wanna talk about it, cause he ain't gonna talk about it!

ZACK. You interrupted my clock speech for that?

(LEON comes down the stairs on crutches. His right leg is bandaged.)

LEON. Outta my way, woman! *(FRIEDA turns to move, trips and falls to the floor. LEON steps over her, crosses to a chair and sits.)* Come on, make way. Lady with a baby. Hot food. Coming through.

ELOISE. You sure you don't want me to look at that?

LEON *(sullenly)*. Look at whut?

ELOISE *(backing away)*. Nothing. *(ZACK crosses to LEON and glares at him.)*

ZACK. I tell you how he hurt his leg. He was trying to do me in. *(He shoots a look at LEON.)* That's how, ain't it?

LEON. If I was trying to snuff you, old man, you'd be in a box right now!

ZACK. You'd like that, wouldn't you?

LEON. You'd be a lot easier to git along with, I grant you that.

ZACK. I'm too fast for you. I keep my room locked and bolted, always checking behind me. I don't give you no chance.

LEON. Yeah, well, sometime you're gonna doze off and then I'm going to have you laminated, turn you into a

lamp, how'd that be? (*ZACK roars with laughter at this.*)

ZACK (*to the OTHERS*). Hot dang, he always was my favorite. (*He turns to LEON.*) Now, how'd you hurt your leg? Go on, tell me.

LEON. If I wanted you to know, I'd send you a dang telegram.

ZACK. Sure, waste money.

LEON. What do I care, it's *your* money.

ZACK (*to the OTHERS*). He's good, ain't he?

BETTY JEAN. This family is such an embarrassment, I'm afraid to have any of my friends come around here.

HAROLD. I'd be afraid to let the Hell's Angels come around here.

BETTY JEAN. See? See? It's talk like that and the way y'all act and this furniture and...and...(*She looks back at the clock.*)

ZACK. You don't like it, take a hike!

FRIEDA. Now, ever'body settle down! You're irritating Bubba.

HAROLD (*to LEON*). When did she start calling you "Bubba"?

LEON (*scowling*). I don't know but if she doesn't stop she's gonna need one of these. (*He holds up a crutch.*)

FRIEDA. I thought it was kinda cute. I seen it on "Dallas" the other night.

LEON. You watch too much television, woman.

FRIEDA. I need the company!

ALL. Ooooooh!

LEON. Good one, wasn't it?

JENNY. I can't stand this. I'm going up to my room.

BETTY JEAN. You're absolutely right, Jenny. I believe I shall go with you. (*They climb the stairs.*)