

CANCELLED

A Farce in One Act

by

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<http://offthewallplays.com>

Cast of Characters

FRED BENNETT	Suave, good-looking actor, plays lead role of Parker Bates in the radio show
CONSTANCE FIGG	No-nonsense leading lady, plays Jennifer in the radio show
JASPER HUGHES	Elderly British actor, plays Old Man Bates in the radio show
GEORGE MINT	Flashy young actor, plays the drifter, Jonesy, in the radio show
DENNIS PARTRIDGE	Fey middle-aged actor, plays Dr. Rupert Rudyard in the radio show
DAVIS WEAKLY	The show's effete, clueless narrator
BETTY WILKES	Dimwitted actress who plays Emily Rudyard in the radio show
WALTER ST. PAUL	Heavy-set producer/director of the radio show
MONTY NAVOLI	A mobster, owner of Monty's Green Grocer, a sponsor of the show
KENNY	A young gopher at the radio station
SGT. DONOVAN	Of the LAPD's Organized Crime Bureau
FOUR POLICEMEN	

Scene

The studio of Hollywood radio station KWEE.

Time

The evening of November 10, 1940.

(The Los Angeles studio of a radio show, 1940. Six microphones stand at front stage right, a sound effects station is at stage left. The walls are soundproofed appropriately, and an ON-AIR light hangs above a door at the back of the studio. At a long table at the back sit six actors: FRED BENNETT, CONSTANCE FIGG, JASPER HUGHES, DENNIS PARTRIDGE, BETTY WILKES and GEORGE MINT. They are obviously waiting for someone)

DENNIS

Does anyone know why we're here? Walter wouldn't tell me. Just said to be here a half hour early for the show. Damn peculiar, if you ask me.

GEORGE

I'll bet it has something to do with the script. I didn't get one again this week. Did anyone else?

(THE ACTORS all respond negatively)

JASPER

Honestly, is it too much to ask to get a script in enough time to memorize the bloody thing? It's getting harder for me to see every day, and reading these shows cold, live on the air with no rehearsal time, is wearing me out.

CONSTANCE

It's unprofessional, is what it is. Walter needs to do something about Edelman. He's a good writer, but it's called a deadline for a reason, you know?

BETTY

Well, I'm glad when I don't have to rehearse. Gives me more time for other things.

CONSTANCE

Like what? Medical school?

(BETTY is about to deliver an indignant response when

the door opens. It is
WALTER, producer/director
of "Life in Barker's
Corners." He is out of
breath and pats his brow
with a handkerchief)

FRED

Finally! What's kept you, Walter?

WALTER

(sitting down at the head of
the table)

I'm awful sorry I'm late, everyone. I'm glad you all could
make it on such short notice. Where's Davis?

FRED

Late, as usual.

WALTER

I'll have to catch up with him later, then.

CONSTANCE

And so is Edelman's script.

THE ACTORS

(in unison)

As usual.

JASPER

So what's this all about, old man?

WALTER

Well, I've got some bad news. "Life in Barker's Corners"
has been cancelled.

(Gasps erupt from THE
ACTORS)

DENNIS

What happened?

WALTER

Well, it seems that we're losing our sponsors. They say
they're losing money, and just about all of them have left.

CONSTANCE

I thought all the sponsors were pleased with the show. I got a lovely letter just last week from the president of Stay-Pure Water Softening Tablets. Of course, that may have been for something other than my work on the show.

FRED

Surely not Old Gray Mare Cigarettes, Walter? I have a lifetime contract with them.

(FRED looks at the other
ACTORS)

They give me all my cigarettes for free, you know. Three packs a day. I plan on advertising with them for another 50 years. I relish their deep, rich flavor.

GEORGE

Pipe down, will ya? You're not on the air, you ham.

(FRED glares at GEORGE)

WALTER

Yes, all of them. Old Gray Mare, Vivacious Face Cream, even Chubby Bubbles Pork-Flavored Soda Pop, and we're the only show they sponsor. I don't understand it myself. But this is the word from J. Allan, so that's it.

CONSTANCE

So when is our last show?

WALTER

(pause)

Last week.

(more gasps from THE
ACTORS)

DENNIS

We're already off the air? This is an outrage, Walter!

FRED

What's going on in our place?

WALTER

Ted Barkley's "Symphonette Hour." On recording.

JASPER

What about the fans? They'll be left hanging! Old man Bates was on his deathbed.

CONSTANCE

What about Jennifer's baby? Is Parker the father, or the drifter?

BETTY

What about my mink?

(WALTER and THE ACTORS
stare at her)

WALTER

Your what?

BETTY

I just started buying a mink on time. If I'm out of a job, I'm not going to be able to make the payments.

JASPER

Couldn't you just return the mink?

BETTY

Are you kiddin'? I ain't even worn it yet.

DENNIS

Walter, isn't there anything you can do? Plead with J. Allan, get him to give us at least another week or two?

WALTER

I'm sorry, folks. It's over.

FRED

Well, I guess that's it, then. What's to become of us?

WALTER

You'll have to move on, I suppose. No job lasts forever. Unfortunately, there are no open roles right now. Every other show seems to be doing well, I'm afraid.

GEORGE

What about you?

WALTER

Oh, I've got another job.

CONSTANCE

Doing what, pray tell?

WALTER

(smiling weakly)

Producing another show.

DENNIS

(outrage growing)

Here?

WALTER

Yes.

(Angry muttering breaks
out among THE ACTORS)

Aw, go easy, everybody. J. Allan offered me another job. What was I supposed to do, turn him down? You turn down J. Allan Hunsicker, you can just hang it up in this town.

JASPER

Well, you've certainly got things ironed out, then, haven't you? It's all very well for the rest of you to jump from job to job, but I've been on this show for 10 years. I'm an old man. What kind of work am I supposed to find at my age?

WALTER

There's lots of opportunities out there for you, Jasper.

JASPER

Such as?

WALTER

Well, Christmas is right around the corner. You'd be a perfect Santa at Macy's or Gimble's.

(JASPER scoffs)

Or maybe you could sell pencils or something.

JASPER

You bastard!

CONSTANCE

If there were any justice in this world, Walter, you'd be the one selling pencils on the sidewalk, and J. Allan Hunsicker right beside you competing for space. Of all the gall. I've never heard such a callous attitude in my life!

FRED

Hear, hear!

(THE ACTORS all join in in support of CONSTANCE)

WALTER

(shouting to be heard above the rabble)

Alright, alright!

(THE ACTORS quiet down)

You've all made your position perfectly clear, and so have I. My hands are tied. It's been a genuine pleasure working with you all, and I wish you the best of luck.

(WALTER leaves)

DENNIS

Well, that's that, I suppose.

CONSTANCE

(tearing up)

I suppose.

GEORGE

Anyone have any plans?

DENNIS

How could we possibly have plans? We just got fired.

GEORGE

I mean, we've got the evening to kill. Anyone want to take in a movie?

JASPER

Don't you understand? We don't have two nickels to rub together, you sap. I'll probably have to move into a Hooverville someplace.

CONSTANCE

Oh, don't pay any attention to George. He's independently wealthy. He doesn't know anything about what it's like to have to watch every penny.

GEORGE

Hey, now that's not fair. I've been with this show for three years. I put a lot of sweat into it.

JASPER

Put a lot of cheese in it, you mean.

GEORGE

What's that supposed to mean?

JASPER

It means that you couldn't deliver a convincing line if your life depended on it. And lucky for you, it never will.

(GEORGE begins to respond, but FRED cuts him off)

FRED

Now, let's everyone calm down. Tempers are high right now. What do you say we all go catch a movie and then a late dinner? It'll be on me.

DENNIS

You'll have to do it without me. I'm going home to sleep this off.

CONSTANCE

(pulling out a handkerchief and dabbing at her eyes)

Count me out too, Fred. It's very kind of you; I just don't feel like making merry right now. I've got to go decide if I'm going to eat or pay the rent with my last paycheck.

BETTY

I'll go. I'm just dying to see that new Cary Grant picture at the Avalon. I should go home and get my mink first. It might be the only time I get to wear it before it's repossessed.

CONSTANCE

Oh, screw your mink!

BETTY

Hey, is that any way for a lady to talk?

CONSTANCE

How would you know?

BETTY

Well I never. Come on, everyone, let's get outta here. I could use a good stiff drink at Ramone's before we leave.

(THE ACTORS rise, some muttering their agreement. As THE ACTORS turn to leave, DAVIS WEAKLY bursts through the door. He never departs from his smarmy, on-air radio announcer voice)

DAVIS

Hi, everyone! What did I miss?

(groans from THE ACTORS as they hustle DAVIS out the door)

FRED

We'll explain it to you downstairs at Ramone's. Come on.

(THE ACTORS and DAVIS exit through the door, which closes behind them. The studio is empty for a few moments. Then, all eight of them come back in, single file, with their hands up. WALTER is the last one in, and following him, holding a pistol to WALTER'S back, is MONTY NAVOLI. He is every bit the 1930s Hollywood gangster cliché, from his broad-brimmed fedora to his stylish pinstripe suit to his imitation of George Raft)

MONTY

Now, everyone just stay quiet, and nobody's gonna get hurt.

WALTER
(stuttering nervously)
Wh-wh-what is it you w-w-want?

MONTY
You don't remember me, big boy? Aw, I'm hurt. I remember you awful well.

WALTER
Y-y-you're Monty Navoli. From Monty's Green Grocer.

MONTY
(brandishing pistol)
There, I thought this'd jog yer memory.

DENNIS
Where have I heard that name?

CONSTANCE
They're a new sponsor. They were supposed to start with commercials on tonight's show.

MONTY
Yeah, the dame's right. Only I got word that your little show got the axe. And that means my commercials ain't gonna get heard by nobody. And that ain't exactly good fer business.

WALTER
You should take that up with J. Allan Hunsicker. He handles all the business matters.

(WALTER has regained some confidence, which vanishes when MONTY points the gun at him again)

MONTY
Yeah, well Hunsicker ain't my problem, bub. You are. You know it and I know it. This little show got some money from me. A lotta money. Too much money, if you ask me. And you were in charge of that money.

WALTER

(glancing about at THE
ACTORS, hoping they can't
detect he knows what
MONTY is talking about)

I have no idea what you're talking about.

MONTY

C'mon, bub. Don't play dumb with me, I ain't got the time.
I want my money back and I want it back now. You were the
one I met with, you're the one who's gonna give you what
you owe me. And I can take it in cash, or...

(MONTY pushes the gun
emphatically into WALTER's
considerable belly)

...some other way.

FRED

What's this all about, Walter? What's this money he's
talking about?

WALTER

(ignoring FRED)

N-n-now let's not be hasty, Mr. Navoli. I'm sure we can
work something out.

MONTY

Yeah? Like what?

(WALTER looks at THE
ACTORS, who are all
scowling at him)

WALTER

Well...

MONTY

C'mon, pal. Time's wastin'.

WALTER

(suddenly struck with
an idea)

We could go ahead with tonight's show!

(angry murmurs from THE

ACTORS)

DENNIS

Are you mad, Walter? We don't even have a script!

CONSTANCE

Screw the script! I'm not going to perform my last show - probably for free - just to get this whale off the hook with a two-bit hood.

(CONSTANCE makes to leave.

FRED, GEORGE and DAVIS

Move to follow her, but

MONTY points the gun at them)

MONTY

Not so fast. Nobody's leaving here until I get paid back, one way or the other.

(he pauses, lowering the gun for a moment, and leans on the edge of the sound effects table and smiles thoughtfully)

Come to think of it, that idea may not be so bad after all.

WALTER

What?

MONTY

Yeah. I like your show. It's dirty. That's why I picked it to advertise my little, uh, operation. I wanna hear what's gonna happen to Jennifer and that bum from Detroit, anyways.

(he's convincing himself)

Yeah, that's it. You guys do the show tonight, read the commercials, and we'll be square.

(JASPER strides up to MONTY, a little too brazenly. Everything about JASPER seems to amuse MONTY)

JASPER

Now, listen here, you, you, hoodlum!

DENNIS

Jasper, what are you doing?

(JASPER ignores DENNIS)

JASPER

We will not be pushed around! This is an outrage!

(turning to WALTER)

And you! This is all your fault! What have you got to say for yourself?

(THE ACTORS all look at WALTER expectantly. WALTER looks at them in anguish, then begins sobbing loudly)

WALTER

Oh, can't you leave me alone? I couldn't help it! I took the money, alright? I spent it already! I can't pay it back! This is the only way out! You don't want to see me get killed, do you?

(WALTER looks at THE ACTORS, and it appears that yes, they would like very much to see that)

MONTY

Aw, dry up, ya fat sissy. Nobody's gettin' shot here tonight. That is, not as long as everyone does the show.

FRED

Look here, Mr. Ravioli.

GEORGE

Navoli.

MONTY

Call me Monty.

FRED

Could we have a little time to prepare? You see, we hadn't gotten the script yet for tonight's show. The writer still has it down in his office down the hall. And we can't very well do a show without a script.

(MONTY ponders this a moment)

MONTY

(to WALTER)

Alright, it's you and me, baby cries-a-lot.

(he gestures for WALTER to
lead the way out of the
studio, then turns back to
THE ACTORS)

And the rest of you, don't try to be heroes. I'm right down
the hall, and, you know, something could happen.

DENNIS

Oh, we won't, Mr. Navoli.

FRED

Monty.

DENNIS

(almost cheerfully)

Monty!

(MONTY escorts WALTER out,
the door closes, and the
actors appear immediately
relieved)

CONSTANCE

Thank God that's over. Now let's get the hell out of here.

(CONSTANCE makes for the
door)

DENNIS

Are you crazy? They'll be back any second. Unless you're in
a hurry to get your head blown off.

CONSTANCE

If we're quick, we can make it to the elevator in a few
seconds, we'll be out the door and it's over.

GEORGE

(looking at CONSTANCE
through the veil of his
crush on her)

I'm with you. But we can't stand around here talking about
it.

JASPER

Well, count me out.

(CONSTANCE and GEORGE
look at JASPER)

I've come too far to take a bullet at my age.

DENNIS

Wait, everyone. Wait. We can't just leave.

BETTY

Why not?

DENNIS

That Navoli character means business. If we run out of here and don't do the show, he'll kill Walter.

BETTY

Aw, let 'im.

DENNIS

Come on. The man may have done something pretty crummy - I'll admit I'm not sure what - but that doesn't mean we actually want to see him dead, do we?

CONSTANCE

(turning back)

I guess you're right.

(The argument is decided
when WALTER re-enters,
followed by the gun-toting
MONTY)

FRED

That was quick.

GEORGE

Don't tell me Edelman didn't have the script.

WALTER

(obviously hiding
something)

Oh, no. He had it.

CONSTANCE

Well, let's have it. It's ten minutes to air. We can at least give the first few pages a look.

WALTER

(turning to MONTY)

Monty, would you mind if I had a word with the actors in private, please? To help them get ready, you know. Give them a little pep talk, a warm-up.

MONTY

(eyeing WALTER dubiously
and gesturing with the gun)

Alright, but no funny business.

WALTER

N-no. Of course not.

(WALTER gathers THE ACTORS
together at the front of
the studio. MONTY resumes
his place at the edge of
the sound effects table)

DAVIS

What is it, Walter? What's wrong?

DENNIS

Is there something wrong with the script?

WALTER

Not exactly. The script, as such, is fine.

CONSTANCE

Will you just get to the point, you slob?

WALTER

Well, you see, Edelman got the word about the cancellation a couple of days ago. Andy Golden is leaving "The Fabulous Mr. Smoot" and Edelman's taking his spot.

FRED

And?

WALTER

He only had five pages finished of this week's script.

(outrage from THE ACTORS)

CONSTANCE

Five minutes? Walter, we've got forty minutes to fill. Edelman's scripts usually work out to a minute a page. What are we supposed to do for the other 35?

WALTER

I don't know. Improvise?

(more incredulous moans
from THE ACTORS)

BETTY

I don't believe this. I wasn't hired to make stuff up. That's for someone else to do.

CONSTANCE

Yes, the smart people.

DENNIS

Look, everyone. What choice do we have?

WALTER

Yes. Listen to Dennis. There's no other way out of this.

GEORGE

Couldn't we just redo an old script?

FRED

Of course not. You heard Navoli. He loves the show. He'd know he'd heard it before.

DAVIS

(looking at his watch)

We've got to make up our minds soon. We're on the air in less than five minutes.

FRED

(clapping his hands
enthusiastically)

Well, I for one look forward to it. I think it'll be a challenge.

DENNIS

(warming a bit to the idea)

What better way for the show to go out than with an ending we create ourselves?

JASPER

It'll be a bit like my old Vaudeville days. Fitchley and Hughes' Black and Blues.

CONSTANCE

Thanks for the trip down memory lane, pops. Now can we get started?

DAVIS

Wait! Wait!

WALTER

What?

DAVIS

Where's Roger?

WALTER

Oh, I completely forgot. Roger left for "The Gay Mortician." They need a second sound effects man now that the series takes place in a munitions factory.

BETTY

How are we supposed to do a show without sound effects?

CONSTANCE

Well, if we need the sound of nails on a chalkboard, dear, you can do that one.

BETTY

Now listen, you.

DENNIS

Ladies, please. Walter can do the sound effects.

(WALTER is unprepared for this. DENNIS looks at him sternly)

Can't you, Walter?

WALTER

Of course. Sounds like fun. No pun intended.

FRED

Alright, everyone. Let's give it all we've got.

(CONSTANCE withdraws a
flask from the waist
of her skirt)

CONSTANCE

Anybody want a little bottled bravery?

(THE ACTORS look at her
in horror)

Suit yourself.

(CONSTANCE takes a healthy
swig from the flask. THE
ACTORS take their places
behind the microphones.
WALTER hands each of them
a photostat of the five-
page script, checks his
watch and flips a switch
on the wall. The ON-AIR
light goes on, and WALTER
crosses to the sound
effects table, smiling at
MONTY, who watches with
interest. WALTER puts on
a record of sappy soap
opera music and gives
DAVIS his cue)

DAVIS

It's time for "Life in Barker's Corners," starring Fred Bennett, Constance Figg and George Mint. Brought to you tonight by Monty's Green Grocer. Monty's Green Grocer. Where you get what you want, or else. When we left you last week, Parker Bates, heir to the Bates Feed Supply empire, was at the bedside of his father, Parker Bates Sr., who is dying of blood hypoluvia. And what of Parker's beloved, Jennifer? She is heavy with child, quite the scandal in this little burg. And even more scandalous is her affair with Jonesy, a drifter from Detroit. He has eyes on Emily Rudyard, wife of the town physician, Dr. Rupert Rudyard. Sit back, relax, and join us as we return once again to the little town of Barker's Corners, where life is simpler, but the people are just as complex as you and me.

(there is a long pause
as WALTER forgets he's

supposed to turn the record off. THE ACTORS eye him, and he remembers, scraping the needle across the entire record, making a horrific screech. MONTY and THE ACTORS make sour faces. WALTER mouths "Sorry." CONSTANCE takes another swig from her flask)

FRED

Oh Papa, I can't bear to see you like this. There's so much more I need to learn from you about feed supply. So many questions left to ask.

JASPER

People come in, ask for feed, you give them feed. It's not that hard.

FRED

Yes, but you made it so much more than that, Papa. You made it good to sell feed. You made it...noble.

JASPER

There's no nobility in hay and hog slop. Remember that. You know everything you need to keep Bates Feed Supply running.

(THE ACTORS turn to page 2 of the script)

There's only one thing that could cause it to fail.

FRED

What's that, Papa?

JASPER

If you don't have a son to carry on the family name.

(WALTER makes a phone ring)

FRED

(glaring at WALTER)

There's the doorbell, Papa. It'll be Jennifer. She has some wonderful news for you.

JASPER

Has she discovered a cure for blood hypoluvia?

FRED

I'll let her tell you herself, Papa.

(WALTER makes the sound of
a door opening and shutting)

FRED

Oh Jennifer, darling.

(WALTER can't get the
latch for the door sound
effect to catch and slams
it again)

CONSTANCE

Parker, my beloved.

(WALTER slams it again)

FRED

(chuckling)

That darn door is stuck again.

(WALTER slams it again,
satisfied)

CONSTANCE

Have you told your father our news?

(THE ACTORS turn to page 3
of the script)

FRED

No, I want you to do it. Make his final hours on this Earth
full of hope that his legacy will live on. Another little
Bates to carry on the Bates Feed Supply legacy.

JASPER

Hello, my dear. You're looking well.

CONSTANCE

(the tiniest bit slurred)

Thank you, Mr. Bates. So are you.

JASPER

That's very kind of you, dear. But I have blood hypoluvia.
I'm not long for this world.

(JASPER begins a dramatic
coughing fit)

FRED
Hurry, darling. Before he goes.

CONSTANCE
Mr. Bates, your son and I are going to have a baby. In
about a week.

JASPER
What? But you're not married!

FRED
No, Papa. We're not.

(THE ACTORS turn to the
page 4 of the script)

JASPER
You can't bring a bastard into this world, Parker. It will
destroy the business. The family's reputation will be
ruined in Barker's Corners.

FRED
Papa, if it will make you happy, I'll promise to marry
Jennifer right here and now. What do you say, darling?

CONSTANCE
Of course, my love. I want to spend the rest of my life
with you.

(CONSTANCE slurps loudly
from her flask)

FRED
Yes, drink some water, Papa. It's big news. Oh, Jennifer,
you've made me the happiest man in Barker's Corners. The
happiest man in the world!

(there is a pause, and
JASPER and FRED look
expectantly at CONSTANCE)

CONSTANCE

(a little out of it)

What? Oh, me.

(she refocuses on her script
and reads the next line
as if it's in a foreign
language)

Uh, yes, darling. Me, too.

JASPER

Now I can die a happy man. Another heir to carry on the family name and the family business. The blood hypoluvia can take me now. I'm ready.

CONSTANCE

Oh, Parker. Is he...

FRED

Yes, darling. He's gone.

CONSTANCE

Well, perhaps it's for the best.

GEORGE

You bet it is.

CONSTANCE

Jonesy!

GEORGE

Hi there, gorgeous.

FRED

Now you wait just a minute, you drifter. Jennifer is my fiancée. You can't just waltz into my father's house like you own the place and take her from me without a fight.

GEORGE

Wanna bet on that, fancy boy?

CONSTANCE

Oh, Jonesy, don't hurt him.

GEORGE

Stay out of this, dollface. Go wait in the living room. It might get messy in here. Here's a kiss for good luck.

(GEORGE takes advantage of the scene and kisses CONSTANCE, who is taken aback, but only slightly. She suddenly wraps her arms around GEORGE's neck and kisses him full on the mouth. This goes on for several seconds)

FRED

Now look here, you drifter. This has gone far enough. I think it's time to teach you a lesson.

(GEORGE manages to push CONSTANCE away, but she grabs him again)

FRED

(trying to move on)

Ah, the strong, silent type, eh? Well take this!

(WALTER punches a baseball glove for the sound effect of Parker striking Jonesy. GEORGE finally loosens CONSTANCE. THE ACTORS all turn to the fifth and final page of the script)

GEORGE

You'll be sorry you did that, Bates.

(CONSTANCE, who has no lines for a few moments, steps away from the microphone. DENNIS approaches her angrily and mouths something at her. CONSTANCE mouths something back and raises her flask. DENNIS grabs it from her. CONSTANCE makes to punch DENNIS in the face but misses by about a foot. This all takes place in

the background as the
show continues)

FRED

Oh yeah?

GEORGE

Yeah.

(FRED and GEORGE look
expectantly at WALTER,
who is playing idly with
the sound effects table)

FRED

Oh yeah?

GEORGE

Yeah.

FRED

Oh yeah?

GEORGE

Yeah.

(MONTY, growing tired of
WALTER'S ineptitude,
punches WALTER in the
stomach, eliciting just
the right sound effect
and an accompanying
"oof")

FRED

Jennifer's mine, you bum. You'll never have her. We're to
be married. And what's more, she's having my baby. What do
you think about that?

GEORGE

What makes you so sure it's your kid?

FRED

What do you mean?

GEORGE

How blind can you be, buddy? She's the town tramp. She's been with every man in Barker's Corners.

FRED

I will not stand here in the presence of my dead father and allow you to besmirch the reputation of his daughter-in-law to be.

(FRED and GEORGE look at WALTER, who smiles at MONTY and punches the baseball glove)

BETTY

Stop it, you two!

FRED

Emily! What are you doing here?

(THE ACTORS reach the end of the script and look at each other with cautious optimism)

BETTY

I came as soon as I heard your father had died.

FRED

Uh, yes. He died just a few seconds ago.

BETTY

Now what's this all about? I found Jennifer with tears all over her eyes, and you two fighting. What happened?

GEORGE

Emily...

BETTY

(interrupting)

What happened? I want to know what happened to make you two so angry at each other.

FRED

Emily...

BETTY

(interrupting)
 What is it that has come between you, Parker Bates, the heir to the Bates Food Supply fortune and Jonesy, the gruff but lovable drifter...

(BETTY'S rambling is cut off by CONSTANCE, who steps on BETTY's foot)

BETTY

Ow!

(DAVIS, thinking quickly, interjects)

DAVIS

We'll return to "Life in Barker's Corners" in a moment. First, a word from our sponsor. Monty's Green Grocer is...

(DAVIS' voice fades as THE ACTORS relax a bit)

BETTY

(to CONSTANCE)

What'd ya have to do that for, ya drunk idiot?

CONSTANCE

Because I didn't have a dirty sock to shove in your mouth.

(CONSTANCE sits down at the conference table and puts her head down. WALTER walks from behind the sound effects table to join THE ACTORS, rubbing his hands with glee)

WALTER

Well, I think this is going splendidly, everyone!

FRED

Oh you do, do you?

GEORGE

Now we've got to jump into it for real. We're out of script.

WALTER

Well, Monty likes it. Don't you Monty?

(WALTER looks at MONTY,
who makes a "so-so"
gesture)