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The Playground

A Short Comedy By

Greg Freier

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The Playground

by Greg Freier

CHARACTERS

Andy: *A man in his 60's.*

Helen: *A woman in her 60's.*

SETTING

A park; the present

The Playground

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SETTING: *A park; the present.*

AT RISE: *ANDY and HELEN are seated center stage on a park bench. It's a beautiful spring day, the sound of birds and children are heard. ANDY sips from a large cup of coffee while HELEN sits looking attentively straight ahead.*

HELEN

(Loudly to a child) That's not chocolate Jessica, that's dirt. Tell your brother to quit spooning it in your mouth.

ANDY

Could you please not yell? Just being here gives me a headache enough.

HELEN

Well if I don't yell, how exactly are the kids going to hear me?

ANDY

That's why I hate this place. It's nothing but a ton of noise just to piss me off.

HELEN

What did you expect? We're in a park.

ANDY

What's wrong with a little quiet? I don't think that's asking too much.

HELEN

(Loudly to a child) Little Raymond, you put that dead squirrel down this instant.

ANDY

And who in their right mind picks up a dead squirrel? That kid's an idiot. He's going to get eaten in the real world.

HELEN

He's four years old, he'll learn.

ANDY

No he won't. I mean look at his mother. She's had what, like sixteen-thousand jobs in the past five years and lost them all.

HELEN

According to her it's all politics.

ANDY

Politics my ass...the woman's dumber than a stale cheese sandwich.

HELEN

Well our son loves her, and that's all that matters. (*Loudly to a child*) If you don't put that dead squirrel down this instant, young man, we're taking you and your little sister home.

ANDY

I mean that's just it—a normal kid would poke the squirrel with a stick...or at the very least push his sister into it. He wouldn't pick it up...That's just plain stupid.

HELEN

(*Beat*) I'll give you that one.

ANDY

Kind of makes you wonder how old he'll be when we celebrate his first arrest.

HELEN

Will you stop that? He's going to grow up to be just fine.

ANDY

(*Points ahead*) And that other one...she'll probably grow up to be a hooker. Just look at the way she keeps lifting her dress up.

HELEN

She's two years old, she doesn't know any better.

ANDY

And neither does her mother... (*Gestures as he speaks*) ...I mean chest out to here...those long, perfectly formed legs that she's constantly show-casing with those short skirts...pouty lips that look like they've been filled at the gas station....

HELEN

(*Loudly to a child*) You put that thing back in your pants young man. If you have to go to the bathroom you come over here and tell your grandfather.

ANDY

See, indecent exposure. He's already turning into a pervert.

HELEN

They're little kids. They don't know right from wrong at that age.

ANDY

Well they damn well should. I mean what's the point in having a parent if they're not going to teach you how to act.

HELEN

I'm sure they're doing their best.

ANDY

Well their best sucks.

HELEN

Plus they have all those drugs to put kids on now-a-days...they'll be fine...simplifies the parenting experience.

ANDY

The only thing that would simplify the parenting experience is not having kids. I mean why in the hell we had any is beyond me.

HELEN

(Matter-of-factly) We had them because we had unprotected sex. And it's not like I didn't tell you what might happen.

ANDY

But you know I don't listen. If I did I probably wouldn't have married you. I mean I could have stayed single and happy.

HELEN

When have you ever been happy?

ANDY

1958...but not the entire year.

HELEN

You're pathetic you know that... *(Loudly to the children)* If you throw one more rock at your sister I'm sending your grandfather over, do you hear me.

ANDY

The hell you are. I hate those kids.

HELEN

They're your grandchildren. We are watching them. You will do as I say.

ANDY

(Emphatically with feeling) You're forgetting who has the bigger pension. I do. So therefore I am the primary source of income, so therefore I will do as I say. Have I made myself clear?

HELEN

(Looking straight ahead) No.

ANDY

(Shoots her a nasty look) And yet I still get up in the morning. *(Feigns shooting himself in the head)*

HELEN

(Points stage left) What's that man doing over there?

ANDY

What man?

HELEN

The one over there...the one in the funny hat and the lederhosen.

ANDY

(Beat) How in the hell would I know.

HELEN

Well he's certainly doing something.

ANDY

I don't know, maybe he's dancing...that or he's having a seizure standing up. What difference does it make?

HELEN

He's getting closer to the children; that's what difference it makes.

ANDY

What's the worst that can happen? He takes them away, so what.

HELEN

What do you mean, so what?

ANDY

They're stupid little kids. The world is full of stupid little kids, what's two less.

HELEN

(With anger) These are our grandchildren you're talking about.

ANDY

That's not my fault, I didn't pick them... *(Chuckles)* ...Look...the idiot's trying to pick up the squirrel again.

HELEN

(Rubs her temples; then loudly to the child) Little Raymond, for the last time, put that dead squirrel down.

ANDY

He's not putting it down.

HELEN

I can see that.

ANDY

Now the little girl... what's her name is crying.

HELEN

Jessica, her name is Jessica.

ANDY

She's crying pretty good... shouldn't you do something?

HELEN

(With anger again) Why don't you do something? She is your granddaughter.

ANDY

Because if I go over there my coffee will get cold... just yell at her to stop crying... you're good at that kind of thing.

HELEN

(Beat) I'm not sure I realized how much I hated you until just now.

ANDY

(Matter-of-factly) Well you can hardly blame that on me.

HELEN

(Looks around) I don't see that man anymore.

ANDY

What man?

HELEN

The one that was having the seizure standing up. What other man would I be talking about?

ANDY

(Looks around) He's over there behind the bushes... happy now.

HELEN

Of course I'm not happy and what's he doing behind the bushes?

ANDY

I would imagine the same thing everybody does behind the bushes.

HELEN

Those bushes are too close to the children. Go over there and see what he's doing.

ANDY

What are you kidding me? The guy's lederhosen are probably down at his ankles by now.

HELEN

Which is exactly why I want you to go over there.

ANDY

I can see him fine from here. I don't need to go over there.

HELEN

What if he suddenly jumps out from behind the bushes and tries running off with one of those children.

ANDY

My guess is he'd trip over his lederhosen.

HELEN

You're impossible, you know that.

ANDY

(Points at lederhosen man) Look, problem solved. He's running away.

HELEN

Of course he is. He's being chased by those two cops over there.

ANDY

(Somewhat impressed) And with lederhosen intact, I wasn't expecting that.

HELEN

(Points to the children) Will you go do something about that child and that dead squirrel?

ANDY

What for? The idiot's having a good time.

HELEN

Will you stop calling your grandson an idiot?

ANDY

(Chuckles sarcastically) I will when he stops playing with a dead squirrel.

HELEN

(Loudly to children) For the last and final time, put that damn stupid squirrel down before you get some kind of disease and your hand falls off.

ANDY

(Beat) I'll be damned he put the stupid squirrel down.

HELEN

Threatening the loss of a limb usually helps.

ANDY

You should do that to him again next time he takes his weenie out...now that would be funny.

HELEN

No that would not be funny...it would be mean.

ANDY

(Beat) No...it would be funny.

HELEN

Shut up and drink your coffee.

ANDY

(Takes a sip then offers it to HELEN) Here you want it? It's too cold for me now.

HELEN

If it's too cold for you, why would I want it?

ANDY

Because then I wouldn't have to get up to throw it out.

HELEN

So you're telling me I'm garbage, is that it?

ANDY

No, I'm telling you I'm lazy.

HELEN

Why don't you just stop talking to me all together? *(Looks back at the children)* Will you look at that...I swear to God, I'm about ready to kill that boy.

ANDY

At least it's not a dead squirrel this time.

HELEN

(Loudly to children) If you don't unwrap that swing from your sisters neck this instant I'm putting you on the first bus to Hell with a one way ticket. Have I made myself clear?

ANDY

(Beat) Hey look...it worked...and the color seems to be coming back to her face too.

HELEN

(Beat) I can't believe I'm going to say this, but next time they ask us to babysit...I'm just going to tell them we both have dementia and can't remember who they are.

ANDY

That or we could both be dead. I'm sure either one would work.

HELEN

(Looks back at children) Now what are they doing?

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