

MEET THE FAMILY

A Short Comedy

by

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SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

THE ANGEL OF DEATH
GOING GOING, GONE
and
MEET THE FAMILY

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ISBN 978 1 872475 80 6

Printed and published by
SchoolPlay Productions Limited,
15 Inglis Road,
Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU

THE CAST

Mum

Dad

The Brown Family

Tommy

Doris

Uncle Bill

Henry

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(The Brown family are at home. It is nearly tea time).

Mum: Well, we've set the table, Doris. When do you think he will come?

Dad: Who?

Mum: Doris's new boyfriend. He's coming to tea.

Tommy: What? Another one? She seems to have a new one every month. She must get them cut-price or something.

Doris: Shut up, big mouth.

Dad: That's enough, you two. Try to be your age. You act like a couple of kids sometimes.

Mum: Yes, your Dad's right. Leave your sister alone, Tommy. Wait till YOU get interested in girls.

Tommy: Heaven forbid! I'd rather have a motor bike. Anyway, what's your new bloke like, Doris? Does he have a bike?

Doris: No.

Tommy: A car?

Doris: No, he doesn't drive anything.

(The doorbell rings).

Mum: There's the bell. That'll be him now. Go and let him in, Doris.

Doris: *(Goes to door).* Come in, Henry. Come and meet the family. This is Dad and Mum. And this is my brother, Tommy.

Henry: Hello, Mr. & Mrs. Brown. Hello, Tommy. Nice to meet you all.

Mum: Come and sit down, Henry. We'll have tea in a minute.

Dad: I expect you could do with a cup.

Henry: Yes, thanks.

Dad: Had a long journey?

Henry: Not too bad.

Mum: Where do you live, Henry?

Doris: He lives on the other side of town, don't you, Henry?

Henry: That's right. I live in Coleman Avenue.

Dad: Coleman Avenue? I know it well. We used to live near there, didn't we Mum?

Mum: That's right. When we were first married.

Dad: It's quite a long way. How did you get here, Henry?

Henry: I caught a No. 57 bus to the Palace Cinema and then a No. 4 to the Hospital and then a No. 18 to here.

(They all burst out laughing).

Dad: You didn't!

Mum: You never did!

Tommy: I don't believe it!

Henry: Why, what's the matter?

Doris: Oh, Henry! You poor thing! You must be worn out.

Henry: Well, it was quite a long way, I suppose.

Dad: Long way? LONG WAY? You must be joking, lad. The way you came, it was like going round the world.

Mum: It certainly was!

Tommy: I still can't believe it.

Henry: Well, what should I have done?

Dad: Just you listen to me, my lad

Doris: I'll go and get the tea while Dad explains to you, Henry.

Dad: First, you should have taken a No. 53 to the cross-roads, then a No. 10 to the hospital and a No. 3 would have brought you right to our door.

Tommy: No, no, dad. There's a much better way than that.

Mum: Some tea, Henry?

Henry: Thanks, Mrs. Brown.

Doris: Some cake, Henry?

Henry: Thanks, Doris.

Dad: What do you mean, Tommy? If you know a better way to get here, I'd like to hear it.

Tommy: Now listen to me, Henry. Put your tea down for a minute. I'll draw the route for you on this paper napkin. You live in Coleman Avenue, right?

Henry: *(Puts down his tea and listens).* Right.

Tommy: Well, you should have caught a No. 13 bus to the cemetery and then a No. 28 would have brought you here.

Henry: Only two buses?

Tommy: Only two, Henry.

Doris: Rubbish, Tommy. You can't do that trip on only two buses. Henry should have caught a No. 32 bus to the cemetery and then after that

Dad: Wait a minute, Doris. You're wrong there. The No. 32 doesn't go that way any more.

Doris: Oh, no, I'd forgotten. It would have to be a No. 8.

Tommy: Or maybe a 15.

Dad: Or even a 21.

Mum: Another cup of tea, Henry?

Henry: I haven't drunk my first one yet.

Mum: Dear me, you are slow. Doris, pass the cake to dad.

Dad: *(Takes a piece of cake)*. Thanks, Doris. Nice cake, Mum. Isn't it, Henry?

Henry: I don't know. I haven't tasted it yet.

Doris: Eat up, Henry. What's the matter with you?

(The bell rings).

Doris: That'll be Uncle Bill. I'll let him in.

(Enter UNCLE BILL).

Uncle Bill: Hello, everybody. I'm just in time for tea, I see.

Dad: Sit down, Bill, and I'll fetch another cup from the kitchen.

Mum: This is Henry. He's Doris's new boy friend.

U. Bill: Hello, lad. Nice to meet you. I haven't seen you around here before. Live far from here, do you?

Henry: On the other side of town. Coleman Avenue.

Mum: And guess how he got here!

Dad: *(Comes in with cup)*. It's the best laugh we've had all week!

U. Bill: Go on! I could do with a laugh.

Mum: First, he took the No. 57 bus to the Palace Cinema

U. Bill: Not the 57!

Doris: Then he took a No. 4 to the hospital.

U. Bill: You must be joking!

Dad: And then guess what!

U. Bill: What?

Tommy: A No. 18 to here!

U. Bill: But the No. 18 goes round the world before it gets here!

Mum: That's what we told him. Isn't it funny?

U. Bill: It's the funniest thing I've heard for a long time. What do you do for a living, lad? Exploring?

(They all laugh except HENRY. He is getting a bit fed up).

U. Bill: Can I have a slice of cake, please?

Mum: Here you are, Bill. Haven't you eaten yours yet, Henry? You ARE a slow

eater. Isn't he a slow eater, dad?

(HENRY picks up his cake and is about to take a bite....).

Mum: *(Loudly)*. Oh, my God!

Everyone: What is it?

Mum: I've just thought! What fools we all are! I know how Henry should have got here.

Henry: *(Under his breath)*. Oh no!

Dad: *(Smiles)*. Go on, Mum. Tell us.

Tommy: *(proudly)*. She knows a lot about buses, mum does.

Mum: Yes, I used to be a be a bus conductress, you know, Henry.

Henry: *(Coldly)*. Really?

Mum: Yes. Now, do you know what you should have done?

Henry: No. But I'm sure you're going to tell me.

Mum: You ought to have gone to the bus stop in Dale Street and caught a No. 38 to the Green Lion pub. Then a No. 2 would have brought you straight here.

Dad: Good Lord! I never thought of that.

Tommy: Mum's right, as usual.

Doris: Good old mum! There you are, Henry. Now you know how to get here next time.

Henry: Yes. I do, don't I? Er - I think I must be going now, Doris. It's getting late.

Mum: Oh, surely not. You haven't finished your tea yet.

Doris: It's still early, Henry.

Henry: No, I really must be on my way. It'll take me a long time to get home. I mean, I have a long way to go. I mean just let me get out of here.

Doris: But Henry!

Dad: Come back, lad!

Mum: You can't go yet, Henry.

Henry: Why not?

Mum: Because we have to work out your route home. You have to know which buses to catch. Or how will you ever get back?

Henry: I don't know how I'll get back, Mrs. Brown. And to tell the truth, I don't damn well care!

Doris: Henry!

Dad: No need for that language, my lad.

Tommy: Yes, you don't have to be rude. Mum was only trying to help.

Mum: We all were. We only want you to know the best buses to catch, Henry

Henry: I never want to see another bus as long as I live. I'd rather walk. In fact,

I'd rather crawl. Just don't mention buses to me again. And now I'm going. Thanks for the tea, Mrs. Brown. I'm sure it would have been nice if I'd had time to drink it. And the cake. It looked a very good cake. Pity I didn't get the chance to eat some.

Mum: Well, I never!

Henry: Just one last thing. Have you thought of opening a travel agent's? I'm sure it would be a great family business. Especially if people wanted to go by bus. Goodbye, Doris.

(HENRY goes out).

Dad: Well, what do you make of that? What got into him?

Tommy: What a cheek! Talking to us like that.

Mum: He's a strange young man and no mistake. I hope you're not too upset, Doris. We all did our best to make Henry welcome. But we just didn't seem to hit it off.

Doris: Don't worry, mum. I'm glad he's gone. Henry isn't the boy for me. I can see that now. I mean, how could I get really serious about a man who doesn't even know what bus to catch?

THE END