

# WHAT A FARCE!

by Ken Bradbury



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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Writer, a middle-aged struggling writer

Max, a dashing young hero

Lorene, his gorgeous wife

The Gorilla, big and hairy

Colonel Archibald Blackford (*who really is not*), a British aristocrat (*but not really*)

Mrs. Archibald Blackford (*who isn't either*) his much-younger, sexy wife

Little Bo Peep, a confused little girl

Prince Simon, a heroic fellow in tights with a wet past

Inspector Cummings, of Scotland Yard

Uncle Fernwood, who basically dies

*(A writer sits alone at a typewriter in the Center, reading from a book.)*

**THE WRITER:** “How to write a farce. A farce is a light theatre piece with characters and events exaggerated to produce broad, simple humor. Often slapstick elements are used for humorous effect. A type of primitive comedy.” *(thinking)* Hmm ... *(begins to type as he speaks)* The young couple dash into the McMurdo Mansion on a dark and stormy night.

*(Max and Lorene, a young couple, come stumbling into the playing area, carrying suitcases, and wearing their raincoats.)*

**MAX:** Wow! What storm! I can't believe our car broke down on a night like this!

**LORENE:** Where are we, Max? This place looks haunted!

**MAX:** Gee willikers, Lorene! I don't like the looks of this one bit!

**WRITER:** ... full of improbable situations ...

**MAX:** (*bumps into the writer and his desk*) Whoa! It's Uncle Henry's old sofa! The one he was murdered on! I got a funny feeling about this place, Lorene!

**LORENE:** (*clinging to him fearfully*) Oh Max, I'm frightened!

**WRITER:** ... murder is often used as a comic tool ... (*a gorilla enters, wearing a Halloween mask. The gorilla shoots Max in the back. He screams and falls to the floor. The gorilla runs off.*) ... in addition, mystery is often employed ...

**LORENE:** (*looking in the direction of the Gorilla's exit*) I wonder who that was?

**WRITER:** ... sex is a common device in most farce ...

**LORENE:** Oh gosh, I'd better cover you up, Max. All I have is this old dress! (*quickly takes off her coat, then her dress, and puts it over Max's body leaving her only in a slip*)

**WRITER:** ... surprise is a common element ...

**COLONEL BLACKFORD:** (*a military man, entering*) I say! (*surprised, Lorene screams!*) Did I hear a shot?

**LORENE:** (*trying to cover herself*) Who are you?

**COLONEL BLACKFORD:** I'm Colonel Archibald Blackford of Her Majesty's Royal Airforce, retired.

**WRITER:** ... usually, little care is given to the details of character ...

(*Colonel Blackford takes a hideous-looking moustache out of his pocket and slaps it crookedly upon his upper lip*)

**LORENE:** What are you doing here?

**WRITER:** ... coincidence is a common element ...

**COLONEL BLACKFORD:** My wife and I ... (*Mrs. Blackford, an extremely sexy young thing runs in to his side and clings to him*) ... were driving through the storm when our car broke down and we noticed that that couch looks like the one on which my Uncle Steppenwolf was murdered.

**WRITER:** ... perfect timing is absolutely essential to farce ...

*(The following lines are spoken at exactly the same time, with each time the characters stopping as if they're speaking at the wrong time)*

**COLONEL BLACKFORD:**

Whatever are you doing in your ...

*(a pause ... who's turn is it?)*

My wife and I were just ...

*(pause ... the same)*

I don't suppose you'd ...

**LORENE:**

But that's exactly what ...

*(a pause ... who's turn is it?)*

You see my husband and I ...

*(pause ... the same)*

I don't suppose you'd ...

**WRITER:** ... sudden entrances and exits are the most common characteristic of the true farce ...

**COLONEL BLACKFORD:** Sorry. I must be going. *(he exits as Mrs. Blackford kneels down to inspect Max's body)*

**LITTLE BO PEEP:** *(entering with staff in hand, crying)* Has anybody seen my sheep?

**INSPECTOR CUMMINGS:** *(entering)* I'm Inspector Cummings, Scotland Yard. I was out looking for the international terrorist Pierre Von Himling but I had a strange feeling that a crazed gorilla might be on the loose so I stopped. Anybody been murdered?

**LITTLE BO PEEP:** Murdered! *(she screams and exits as Prince Simon enters)*

**SIR SIMON:** *(enters, a knight dressed in tights and tunic, sword in hand)* The sheep! The sheep! We must save the sheep! *(he runs off)*

**THE WRITER:** ... mysterious characters often appear for no apparent reason ...



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