

We Appear To Have Company

A Play in One Scene

By

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Characters

Harold Tittleton: A man in his sixties. English. Smokes a pipe. Very proper. Clueless for the most part though.

Emma Tittleton: A woman in her sixties. English. Very proper. Also rather clueless.

Clown: A clown.

Setting: A living room.

At Rise: Harold and Emma are seated center stage reading. A clown is seated back stage right, reading a book for no apparent reason.

Emma
(She turns round and notices
the clown. She speaks
matter-of-factly with no
alarm at all)

Harold.

Harold
(Leaves the pipe in
his mouth)

Yes dear.

Emma
(She once again looks back
at the clown)

There appears to be a clown in the room.

Harold
(Speaks with his pipe in his
mouth)

A clown?

Emma
(She points at the clown)

Yes, over there.

Harold
(He turns towards the clown.
He removes his pipe)

So there is.

(He goes back to reading)

Emma
(Short pause)

Do you think we should do something?

Harold

About the clown?

Emma

Yes.

Harold
(Looks back at the clown.
Then back at Emma)

He appears to be rather harmless.

Emma

But he's in our living room.

Harold

Perhaps he's just lost.

Emma

If he's lost, then perhaps we can help him.

Harold

And what exactly do you suggest?

Emma

Perhaps give him directions or see if he needs aid of some kind.

Harold

I once read in a medical journal that clowns were a rather resourceful bunch.

Emma

So you think he just might find his own way out then.

Harold

That would be my guess.

(They go back to reading)

Emma

Harold?

Harold

Yes dear.

Emma

What if the clown doesn't leave?

Harold

(Thinks for a second)

I don't see why he wouldn't. I mean our son Reginald left eventually.

Emma

Yes dear, but that was to go to university.

Harold

And you don't think the clown's here so he can go away to university?

Emma

I would imagine not...unless of course we paid his tuition.

Harold

Puts us in a rather sticky wicket there doesn't it.

Emma

Perhaps you should go and talk to him.

Harold
(Looks back)

He appears to be reading. Might be best to wait until he's done. Don't want to be rude.

Emma
He is in our living room.

Harold
But still. To interrupt a man in the middle of his reading isn't very cricket.

Emma
Why don't I go see what he's reading? That might make a difference.

Harold
I don't see how, but if you feel the need. Just don't get too close. We don't where he's been.

Emma
(She stands)
Well put.

(She slowly crosses towards
the clown, and looks at
the title of the book.
She turns to Harold)
It's The Brother's Karamazov, by Dostoyevsky.

Harold
(Strokes his pipe)
It appears then that we're dealing with a sophisticated clown. You'd best come back this way.

Emma
(She crosses back and sits)
What do you think we should do now?

Harold
(Slight pause)
I could always shoot him I suppose.

Emma
Isn't that against the law?

Harold
Good point, I hadn't thought of that.

Emma
Perhaps there's someone we could call.

Harold
You mean like a government department or some such?

Emma
I'm sure this kind of thing happens all the time.

Harold
That or we could see if there's a circus in town.

Emma
That's a good idea.

Harold
That way we could just drop him off and he could slowly acclimate himself.

Emma
I'm sure the other clowns would take him like he's one of their own.

Harold
I'll make some calls.
(He continues to read
his book)

Emma
(Sight pause)
Harold?

Harold
Yes dear.

Emma
When were you going to make those calls?

Harold
About the clown you mean?

Emma
Yes.

Harold
I was thinking in the morning. When I was at the office.

Emma
What about tonight?

Harold
I'm sure he'll be fine. We might want to consider giving him a blanket and pillow though. That chair looks awfully uncomfortable.

Emma
So you're suggesting he spend the night?

Harold
We certainly can't toss him out into the cold...stray clown or not.

Emma
But what if he's dangerous?

Harold
Dangerous? He's a clown. Clowns are funny.

Emma
But are you sure letting him stay is such a good idea?

Harold
That's not the point. It's about compassion.

Emma
How so?

Harold
What if we put the clown out on the street and he was maimed or worse yet, killed? We'd then be known as "those people." The one's without compassion.

Emma

I hadn't thought of that.

Harold

And in today's society it's all about compassion. That's what makes us civilized.

Emma

You're a very good man Harold.

Harold

It's all about upbringing and proper manners. A man needs to be proud. Hold his head high.

Emma

Should we offer the clown some dinner then?

Harold

I don't see why not. Don't let it ever be said that I, Harold Tittleton refused to eat dinner with an uninvited clown.

Emma

Shall I serve on the good china?

Harold
(Proudly)

With our best silver.

Emma

I'll let the cook know there's one more for dinner.

(Phone rings)

Shall I?

Harold

No. You make the arrangements for our clown guest over there.

(Answers phone)

Tittleton here.

(Slight pause. He then
speaks to Emma)

It's the office.

Emma

But it's a Sunday evening.

Harold
(To Emma)

Can't be helped, I am Prime Minister.

(Into phone)

Yes...I see...really...you don't say...I see...off?...really...well, there you have it then.

(He hangs up)

Emma

Problem?

Harold

It seems the Minister of Defense has run off.

Emma

Again.

Harold

Only this time it seems he finally snapped. This time...he pushed the button.

Emma

You don't mean....

Harold

I'm afraid so.

(Slight pause. Points to clown
and speaks very calmly)

That clown just started World War III.

Emma
(Slight pause)

I'd best get us some tea then.

Harold

Jolly good. And best hurry.

(Looks up and speaks profoundly)

Harold (Continued)

I feel a nuclear winter coming on.

(He strokes his pipe)

Emma

And I just sent all our warm coats to the cleaners.

(She crosses stage left)

Best go see about that tea.

(She exits)

Harold

(He stands)

And to think the end of the world was brought on by a clown.

(Turns to clown)

Jenkins, I'm very disappointed in you.

(The clown hangs his head)

Pouting isn't going to bring back civilization. You're a very bad, bad clown.

End of Play