

RUN, ROBBER, RUN

A One-Act Comedy

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Two safe crackers, Otto and Spider, are busily engaged in trying to crack a safe in what seems to be a rather well-to-do mansion. To their surprise, however, they find that they have made a mistake and inadvertently stumbled into the very exclusive Caldwell School for Girls. Fortunately for them, the headmistress, Miss Prudhomme, mistakes Otto for a visiting professor and Spider for a newly-hired stable hand.

The men decide to string along in the hopes of having an opportunity to eventually crack the safe. They are certain it contains vast sums of money. The girls at school have a plot of their own going at this time. They have discovered that their favorite TV Western hero, Colt Winchester, is in town. The girls connive to have Colt visit the school without the permission of the very stuffy Miss Prudhomme, whom they are sure would never approve. During this time Otto and Spider take every opportunity to try their luck with the stubborn safe but all to no avail. Several times they are caught working on the safe; each time they manage a convincing excuse for their actions. Even Colt Winchester catches them looking for the safe's combination. After leveling his six-shooter at them, he meekly explains that his gun isn't real and besides, it's none of his business what school teachers do in their spare time.

As to be expected, Miss Prudhomme learns of Colt's presence at the school and has a showdown with the girls and their hero. The personality conflict between two of the girls is threaded throughout, but all calm down when Colt explains to Miss Prudhomme that they have a mutual friend in Knoxville who happens to be a benefactor of the school. The headmistress now has a change of heart and plans a reception for Colt. In her haste for making plans for the reception, she gives the combination of the safe to Otto plus some money to put in the safe. It seems finally that all their efforts were not in vain.

All ends happily when both Spider and Otto let their conscience rule and decide that the school can put the money to far better use than they can. They open the safe and after some soul-searching and hesitation, they deposit the money in the safe and hurry outside to join the reception being given for Colt Winchester.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 8 w)

OTTO: A professional robber.

SPIDER: A professional robber.

MISS PRUDHOMME: The headmistress at Caldwell School for Girls.

MR. ALDEN: A teacher and disciplinarian at the school.

SALLY: A sensible and likable school girl.

GAIL: A spoiled child.

COLT WINCHESTER: A phony TV Western star.

CAROL: A student at the school.

JEANNE: Another.

CHERYL: Another.

JOAN: Another.

LINDA: Another.

SETTING

The setting is the combination office and reception room at the Caldwell School for Girls. There are two exits; exit SR leads to outside the rest of the school while exit SL leads to the rest of the school and to the patio. RC is a desk with a typewriter on it. UC is a medium-sized table and DL is a small table. A chair is DL and a chair is behind the desk. To the left of table UC is a small (*cardboard*) safe and over that table hangs a portrait of the school's founder, Oliver T. Caldwell. There is a wastebasket to R of desk. These are all the furnishings necessary, but more can be added to give the set more of an office and reception room look.

CHARACTER AND COSTUME PLOT

OTTO and SPIDER: Professional robbers. Old clothing can be worn. Both wear a small slit of a black mask.

MISS PRUDHOMME: Headmistress of the school. Middle-aged. She is a very strict woman, but can be pleasant, also. She is a business woman, a politician, a mother to the girls when necessary and she fits to a tee the many roles that a headmistress must play. She is dressed in a suit and a pair of eye glasses are hanging around her neck.

MR. ALDEN: He is stiff, a pseudo-intellectual and a bore. Plain business suit may be worn.

COLT WINCHESTER: He is dressed in gaudy cowboy clothes. Colt is not too bright. He speaks in a southern accent.

STUDENTS: May wear any sensible clothing to go along with the fashion of the day.

HAND PROPERTIES

Two small eye masks, typewriter, small black bag, electric drill, sandpaper, map, wooden plaque, letter on desk, eyeglasses, bank receipt, test questions, watch, papers, small plant, application with photo, typing paper, lariat, dynamite*, gun and holster, two water pitchers, two glasses, napkins, handkerchief, slip of paper, money, picnic paraphernalia, matches, pie**.

***Dynamite:** Use a small cylinder of cardboard with a string attached for the wick.

****Pie:** Various things can be used for the pie, but a real pie is not recommended because of the mess it leaves. The authors have quite successfully used a pressurized can of shaving cream squirted onto a paper plate. A pressurized can of whipped cream can also be used.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Enter two suspicious characters from the rear of auditorium. These characters are OTTO and SPIDER, two small-time but professional robbers. Each wears a small slit of a black mask. Otto carries small black leather "robber's bag.")

OTTO: *(In a loud whisper.)* Shhh, Don't slam the door. Come on, Spider, follow me. *(Walking about one third the way down the aisle.)* Down here. Down here. *(Turning to rear door.)* Spider? Spider? Are you still with me?

SPIDER: *(Entering auditorium.)* Otto? Otto? Where are you, Otto? Is dis da right place, Otto?

OTTO: I'm over here. Come on. Get next to me so we'll be together.

SPIDER: *(Coming to OTTO who is about halfway down the aisle now.)* Gosh, Otto, you'd t'ink I was new at dis game.

OTTO: Spider, will you be quiet? You want the cops down on our necks?

SPIDER: Okay. Okay. Let's get this job over with. We ain't got all day.

OTTO: *(Starting down aisle.)* Follow me and be quiet.

SPIDER: What if dere's somebody in dere?

OTTO: *(Stopping momentarily.)* Will you quit worrying, Spider, and follow me? Now, c'mon, *(BOTH tiptoe to the foot of the stage.)* Quiet, now. Let's go in here. This has to be the place. *(HE climbs up on stage.)*

SPIDER: *(HE climbs up on stage, takes one step, and falls flat on his face.)* Owwww. Otto? Otto?

OTTO: *(Helping SPIDER up.)* Will you be quiet? Spider, sometimes I wonder why I ever let you be my partner. Do you have to be so clumsy?

SPIDER: Ah, gee, Otto, I'm sorry. I was t'inking of somet'ing else.

OTTO: You were thinking of something else at a time like this?

SPIDER: Yes, Otto.

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OTTO: If you're going to be my partner, I want you to think of nothing but what we're doing. Is that clear?

SPIDER: Right, Otto.

OTTO: All right then, let's get this over with. (*Spotting safe and crossing to it.*) Here it is, ready and waiting for us. (*HE pats safe.*)

SPIDER: (*Looking around.*) But it's supposed to be in the library. I don't see no books here.

OTTO: Well, maybe it's a library without books. Who cares? Here is what we want. (*Pats safe again.*)

SPIDER: Yeah, I guess so. But dis sure is a funny lookin' house if you ask me.

OTTO: Who's asking you! Let's get busy and get out of here.

SPIDER: (*Kneeling down and taking out an electric drill from OTTO'S bag.*) Poor old Charlie; he always did have bad luck.

OTTO: His hard luck is our good luck. Get busy or we'll be with him.

SPIDER: But just t'ink. Here he was, with dese directions all mapped out and everyt'ing set when whoosh, the cops nab him for overtime parking. (*Hands OTTO sandpaper from bag.*)

OTTO: (*Sandpapering fingertips.*) He should have been more careful.

SPIDER: And when dey found out who he was, dey really trew da book at 'im. He'll be in the state pen two to five years anyways. Poor old Charlie.

OTTO: Stop worrying about Charlie. He gave us this map (*Taking it from HIS pocket.*) before they sent him up, didn't he? And he gets a third of the take so he's not so bad off. We're taking the risk, not him. (*Puts map back in pocket and kneels in front of safe and sandpapers HIS fingertips for a second; he turns the tumbler as he listens closely.*)

SPIDER: Gosh, I'll miss old Charlie though.

OTTO: Be quiet so I can hear the tumblers. (*HE works for several seconds as SPIDER looks over his shoulder.*)

SPIDER: What do ya t'ink?

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OTTO: (*Standing up.*) It's no use. That's a double combination lock with fixed tumblers. We'll have to cut it or drill it.

SPIDER: Let's blow it.

OTTO: (*Alarmed.*) Are you nuts? Blow a safe in the middle of the day? We'd have more cops here in three minutes than there are at a St. Patrick's Day parade.

SPIDER: Dat's anudder t'ing I don't get. How come we have to hit dis joint in broad daylight? I ain't usta workin' at dis time of day.

OTTO: (*Rather exasperated.*) Come here. (*Seats SPIDER on chair DL.*) Once and for all, let me get this job through that head of yours.

SPIDER: (*Seated like a school boy being chastised.*) Yeah, once and for all.

OTTO: When Charlie was on his way to the pen, he gave us the map, right?

SPIDER: Right.

OTTO: And Charlie says to us, "Boys here is a real kill. Take it because you guys are my best friends. All I want is a third."

SPIDER: (*Nods.*) A third.

OTTO: So we got this map of the layout of this fancy mansion. (*Taking out map.*) Charlie got all the dope on the map. He said it would be like picking berries off the vine. But, he said that we would have to do it during the day because the owners are down in the city then, but they are all home at night. Understand?

SPIDER: Yes, Otto.

OTTO: So here we are. All we got to do is open the safe, scam out of here and be a few grand richer.

SPIDER: (*Rising.*) Let's get busy.

OTTO: (*Moving back to safe.*) Now you're talking. Just stop worrying about Charlie, the daylight and everything else. I'm the boss here; let me do the worrying.

SPIDER: Sure. Otto, you worry real good. (*SPIDER hands OTTO the drill then looks around for an outlet to plug it in.*) Gee. wit' all dat money I'll be able to buy my mother a TV set and she can watch the late show while I'm out working.

End of Freeview

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