When Bullfrogs Sing Opera

By Carl L. Williams

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Millicent and Coreen grew up in Bullfrog Waller. Millicent got away fast and is now a big-city highbrow with a wealthy husband, Brian, and a bookish college son, Patrick. Coreen, however, stayed in the country … until now. It's the very night Millicent has made plans to take another step up the social ladder by attaching herself to the snobbish Kuppermans, Frances and Andrew and their daughter, Stephanie. How can Millicent keep her embarrassing past a secret when Coreen is as country as cornbread and grits? Frantic, she decides to pass Coreen off as an actress, Rebecca Manderley, who never leaves her latest role in a play.

High comedy takes over when Coreen and Andy (as she calls him) imitate bullfrog sounds. Later, Frances lets loose with a rendition of Kate the Shrew. Meanwhile, Stephanie tries to prove to Patrick that he is not above any romantic involvement.

But why would Coreen leave Bullfrog Waller after all these years? Deceit and conceit ultimately reveal not just secrets, but what matters most in this award-winning comedy.

"When Bullfrogs Sing Opera" is the winner of the 2001 McLaren Memorial Comedy Playwriting Competition. The play premiered at the Midland (Texas) Community Theatre, March 8-30, 2002. It was directed by Michael Trost with the following cast:

Coreen:	*Cindy Oglesby*
Millicent Westlake:	*Jane Moore*
Brian Westlake:	*Carl Beery Moore*
Frances Kupperman:	*Marilyn Allen*
Andrew Kupperman:	*Neal Allen*
Patrick Westlake:	*Jeremy Wood*
Stephanie Kupperman:	*Tamara Susaneck*

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(3 m, 4 w)

COREEN: 40s, very country, filled with plain-spoken humor and heart.
MILLICENT WESTLAKE: 40s, Coreen's sister, sophisticated, big-city highbrow who has put her humble beginnings behind her.
BRIAN WESTLAKE: 40s, factory owner, regular sort of guy.
PATRICK WESTLAKE: 19, college student, bookish, convinced of his superior intellect.
FRANCES KUPPERMAN: 50s, high-society woman, very proper and vain.
ANDREW KUPPERMAN: 50s, banker, wealthy but with a small-town background.
STEPHANIE KUPPERMAN: 19, attractive college student, filled with self-assurance.

SETTING

A New York City penthouse. Present day. The living room is expensively furnished with a couch, chairs, coffee table, and sideboard. Modern art hangs on the walls. There is a front door and an exit to an interior hallway. One large window overlooks the city.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I
Scene 1: Friday evening.

ACT II
Scene 1: Saturday morning.
Scene 2: Late Saturday afternoon.

PROPS

Tray of assorted hors d'oeuvres, including liver pâté on crackers
Assorted liquor bottles (including a cognac bottle)
Newspaper for Brian
Letter for Millicent
Book by Nietzsche for Patrick
Suitcase for Coreen
Purse with money for Millicent
File folders for Millicent
Gaudy dress for Coreen
Cocktail glasses
Bottles of Perrier water
Water glasses, crystal
Coke
Art magazines, assorted
Playbills, assorted
Photo album for Millicent
Large deli bag for Millicent
Set of brackets for Brian
Take-out soda cup with lid and straw for Millicent
Long coat and "Kate" costume from "Taming of the Shrew," for Frances
Wristwatch for Coreen
Poetry anthology for Stephanie
Pen and paper
Bus tickets

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Doorbell ringing

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Living room of a penthouse apartment, Friday evening. A tray of hors d'oeuvres sits on the coffee table. A sideboard holds assorted bottles, including cognac. BRIAN, wearing a tie but no jacket, glances at his newspaper while MILLICENT, dressed smartly, paces with a letter in hand.)

MILLICENT: No. Oh, no. I don't believe it! After years of nothing but Christmas cards back and forth, suddenly she decides to visit. Today! Of all days. With no warning!

BRIAN: She did write you the letter.

MILLICENT: And mailed it three days ago! *(Reads letter.)* “Dear Tadpole, Guess what? I'm coming to see you and Brian and the bean sprout. Look for me Friday evening about the time the fireflies come out. Don't y'all move before I get there!”

BRIAN: I haven't seen a firefly since ... well, since the last time we went down to visit Coreen. What's it been? Nine, ten years?

MILLICENT: How long it's been doesn't matter, Brian. What matters is how long it'll be before she gets here.

BRIAN: Sometime in the next couple of hours.

MILLICENT: She doesn't even say how she's coming. I know she wouldn't fly. And she never owned a car, just horses. Said it cost more to shoe a car than a horse, and nothing came out of the tailpipe she could use in the garden.

BRIAN: That sounds like Coreen, all right.

MILLICENT: She's as country as an outhouse.

BRIAN: Which you obviously don't want in our penthouse.

MILLICENT: Not with the Kuppermans coming over! *(Tosses the letter aside.)*

BRIAN: Millicent, aren't you being a little hard on your sister? I always got a kick out of Coreen.

MILLICENT: That's you, but the Kuppermans are the Kuppermans. You know how important this is to me.

BRIAN: It's not like you were applying for a position at Andrew's bank. It's charity work. You're doing Frances a favor by helping her out.

MILLICENT: Doing her a favor? If Frances makes me her vice chair for the Pilgrims' Day Heart Fund Gala, I'll be … how can I even express it?

BRIAN: You'll get your name on the society page, with a picture of you and the other ladies dressed in phony colonial costumes.

MILLICENT: It's for a good cause.

BRIAN: The cause of boosting you up the social ladder.

MILLICENT: A little glamour, a bit of publicity -- it's all a part of putting on a successful fund-raiser. People have a good time at these benefits.

BRIAN: I don't.

MILLICENT: I can't believe Coreen is really coming. I never thought there was anything that could pry her loose from home.

(BRIAN picks up the letter.)

BRIAN: No clues here. For someone who always had something to say, she doesn't put much in a letter.

(PATRICK ENTERS from hall with a volume of Nietzsche.)

MILLICENT: I just don't know what's gotten into her and why it had to get into her now.

PATRICK: Who are you talking about?

MILLICENT: Your Aunt Coreen. She's coming to visit. You remember Coreen, don't you?

PATRICK: How could I forget her?

BRIAN: You sure enjoyed running around that old farm of hers.

PATRICK: I was ten.

BRIAN: A good age for a boy, and a good place to be one. I always envied your mother for growing up on a farm.

MILLICENT: It was a country estate.

BRIAN: Right.

End of Freeview

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