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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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EVIL PEOPLE

COLLECTION. There's a world of hilariously "evil" people in this provocative collection of four short plays. In "Perceptions," a mother treats her grown son like a baby—literally. In "Easy Flavors," a stranger arrives in a town where everything proves to be too easy. In "Train Station," a man waiting for a train encounters a beggar in this silent, absurdist play. And in "Evil People," seven people meet to define "evil" and to decide the fate of all "evil" people.

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.

PERCEPTIONS

(1 M, 3 F)

MRS. CHILDS: An older, motherly woman with a pleasant disposition.

MRS. HEPPER: Mrs. Childs' friend.

PETER: Mrs. Childs' sophisticated, professional son who works as a traveling secretary to a US senator; wears a proper business suit.

VIVIAN: Peter's fiancée; a professional business woman; wears a suit.

EASY FLAVORS

(1 M, 1 F, 2 flexible)

MR./MRS. EASY: Stranger who loves the easy life; flexible.

JOE/JO: Works at an ice cream parlor; flexible.

DICK: Joe's assistant at the ice cream parlor.

JANE: Ice cream parlor customer; nicely dressed.

TRAIN STATION

(2 flexible)

MAN/WOMAN: Waiting for a train; wears average-looking clothing including a coat and a wristwatch; non-speaking; flexible.

BOY/GIRL: Train station beggar; wears tattered clothes and a hat and carries a crutch; non-speaking; flexible.

EVIŁ PEOPLE

(7 flexible)

WANDA/WILLARD: Group leader who dislikes wrathful people.

PRICILLA/PAUL: Group's secretary who dislikes prideful people.

GREG/GEORGIA: Group member who dislikes greedy people.

LUCY/LOU: Group member who dislikes lustful people; wears a wristwatch.

GUS/GUSTINE: Group member who dislikes gluttonous people.

SETH/SARAH: Group member who dislikes slothful people.

ELISE/ELI: Group member who dislikes envious people.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

SETS

Perceptions: A simple living room or parlor. There is a sofa, two chairs, and a coffee table with some photo albums on it.

Easy Flavors: A café/ice-cream parlor. The café is old fashioned but has some modern qualities. There is a lunch counter and some small dining tables with chairs. On one table there is a TV with an old gaming system hooked up to it. On another table there is a radio/CD player.

Train Station: A train station. The stage is empty except for a sign that reads "Trains" and one stool.

Evil People: A conference room. The stage is empty except for seven chairs placed randomly onstage.

PROPS

Perceptions: Tea tray, 4 teacups with saucers, photo albums, baby rattle, teddy bear, baby bottle, pacifier, burp cloth, adult diaper.

Easy Flavors: Dishrag or towel, banana nut split dish, TV, old videogame system, radio, CD, napkin, spoon.

Train Station: Sign with an arrow that reads "Trains," 2 stools, crutch, 2 beggar's cups, apple, money.

Evil People: Notepad and pen or pencil.

SOUND EFFECTS

Train Station: Train approaching, train stopping, train departing.

EVEL PEOPLE

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"THEY GROW UP SO FAST"

—MRS. HEPPEL

PERCEPTIONS

(AT RISE: Mrs. Hepper's living room. Mrs. Hepper is sitting on the chair SL, admiring the room. Mrs. Childs enters SR, carrying a tea set on a tray. There are four cups with saucers.)

CHILDS: Well, here we are, Mrs. Hepper. Earl Grey. (*Sets the tray down and starts serving.*) Sugar?

HEPPER: Oh, no, Mrs. Childs, sugar is for the young. I prefer an adult taste.

CHILDS: So do I. A strong cup of tea keeps the whole body awake and fresh, I always say.

HEPPER: Yes. I love the way you've done this room. It has such an elegant...and mature feel.

CHILDS: Oh, thank you. I do my best, but it is not an easy job to maintain it with the little one running around.

HEPPER: Your son?

CHILDS: Yes, he's always running around and leaving his toys on the sofa, or worse, on the floor. One night, I came through in the dark on the way to the kitchen and stubbed my toe on his little red fire engine. Oh, it hurt like the dickens, but who could get mad at the cute little guy?

HEPPER: Are those pictures? (*Indicating the photo albums.*)

CHILDS: You'll just love these. (*Mrs. Childs and Mrs. Hepper go to the sofa. Grabs an album.*) Here he is! His first pony ride. Of course, I had to stand and hold him because he hasn't learned his balance yet, but "Parents Magazine" says he should have his balance in a couple of months.

HEPPER: (*Points to another photo.*) Where's this one?

CHILDS: Oh, that was our coastal trip to Maine. Doesn't he look so cute with that camera around his neck? He wanted to play with it so much, I just let him keep it. (*Points to another photo.*) Oh, look at this one with the hat! He loves to wear hats, and you know some mothers try to take pictures of their babies wearing hats, but the little darlings can't

stand it and rip the thing off. (*Proudly.*) Not my little boy. He loves that hat so much that he can almost put it on himself.

HEPPER: (*Points to photo.*) Is that an umbrella?

CHILDS: He must have seen me use it one day. Now he drags it around with him everywhere.

HEPPER: Where is the little guy?

CHILDS: Oh, he's stumbling around here somewhere. (*Knock at the door off SL.*) That must be him now. You know, he's getting so smart...just like his father. (*Another knock.*) You must watch his chin when he smiles. It forms the cutest little dimple.

(*Louder knock.*)

PETER: (*Adult male voice. Offstage SL, calls.*) Mother?

CHILDS: (*To Mrs. Hepper, excited.*) Oh, here he is! (*To Peter, calls SL.*) We're in the parlor, lum-lums!

(*Peter and Vivian enter SL.*)

PETER: Ah, there you are, Mother. You really must start answering your door.

HEPPER: (*Baby talk.*) Ooooh! Walking already! What a clever little fellow!

PETER: (*Annoyed.*) Hello, Mrs. Hepper.

CHILDS: (*To Mrs. Hepper.*) Here's my little angel drawers. Isn't he just adorable?

(*Mrs. Hepper rises.*)

HEPPER: Can he talk?

PETER: Of course I can talk. I'm the traveling secretary to Senator Willingdale.

(*Mrs. Childs rises and approaches Peter.*)

HEPPER: *(To Mrs. Childs.)* He is a clever little tike!

(Mrs. Childs and Mrs. Hepper stand on either side of Peter and pinch his cheeks.)

CHILDS: Oh, yes, he is so very clever. You know, I think he's advanced for his age. Do you know that one time I went to one of those specialty toy stores where they only sell educational toys—

HEPPER: Oh, I know the ones. They help with motor functions as well as mental development.

CHILDS: Exactly. Well, I asked the clerk if he had anything for a toddler that would help develop his problem-solving skills. So the clerk sold me a small puzzle with red knobs on each piece, you know, so they can grab them better. Well, when I got that puzzle home, he put it together in a matter of seconds.

HEPPER: *(Amazed.)* He is advanced for his age!

(Mrs. Childs and Mrs. Hepper continue to pinch Peter's cheeks.)

PETER: *(Annoyed.)* Mother, I'd like to introduce you to my fiancée Vivian.

CHILDS: *(Indicating Vivian.)* Is this your little friend?

(Mrs. Childs and Mrs. Hepper start to pinch Vivian's cheeks.)

VIVIAN: *(Confused, as her cheeks are being pinched, confused.)*
How do you do?

HEPPER: *(To Childs.)* Oh! She's a bright one!

(Mrs. Childs and Mrs. Hepper release Vivian and return to their chairs. Peter indicates for Vivian to sit next to him on the sofa. They all sit.)

CHILDS: Now, I told the store clerk that my little boy was advanced for his age, and he gave me a look like he hears that a lot. Well, I'm sure he does. I mean, every parent wants to feel like their child is special.

HEPPER: Naturally, but in your case, I'm sure it's true. Just look at the way he wears those grown-up clothes.

CHILDS: Oh, yes, he loves to play dress-up. Always wearing things that grown-ups wear. Hopefully, he'll be able to tie his own shoes soon.

(Mrs. Hepper stands, approaches Peter, and puts her face up to his. She then covers her face with her hands and opens her hands quickly for a game of peek-a-boo.)

HEPPER: *(To Peter, in baby talk.)* Peek-a-boo! *(Repeats her actions.)* Peek-a-boo! *(Peter just stares at her.)* Oh, oh, can he play patty cake? *(Rolls her arms together.)* Roll it! Mark it with a "B." Can you roll it? Can you do like this? *(Demonstrates. Peter just stares.)* Roll it? No? Well, roll it is a tough one.

CHILDS: Give it another month, and he'll be patty-caking everywhere.

PETER: Well, Mother, we really must be going. I just came by to pick up a computer disk I must have left in the den the last time I was here. *(To Vivian.)* I'll be right back.

(Peter gets up but Vivian grabs his hand, afraid to be left alone with the ladies. Peter pulls his hand away and hurries off SR. Mrs. Childs and Mrs. Hepper just smile at Vivian.)

CHILDS: *(To Vivian, in baby talk.)* Are you hungry? Would you like something to fill that little tummy of yours? I have a little treat for you!

(Mrs. Childs rushes off SR. Vivian tries to avoid Mrs. Hepper's stare but is unsuccessful. Mrs. Hepper reaches behind one of the photo albums and pulls out a baby's rattle. She shakes it at Vivian.)

HEPPER: *(To Vivian, in baby talk and almost singing.)* Do you like your little rattle? Do you like your little rattle? Do you like your little rattle? *(Grabs a teddy bear from the coffee table and puts it in Vivian's face.)* How about this teddy bear? Isn't it cute? Oh, give it kisses! *(Makes the bear kiss Vivian all over her face.)* Don't you just love the little teddy bear?

VIVIAN: *(Annoyed, sarcastic.)* Ah, yes, the teddy bear. It's very entertaining.

(Mrs. Childs enters, holding a baby bottle.)

CHILDS: *(Excited.)* Here we go! A nice warm babba of milk! *(Sits on the couch next to Vivian and tests the temperature of the milk by squirting a bit on her forearm. Suddenly, she grabs Vivian and lays her across her lap. Vivian tenses and begins a verbal protest but when she opens her mouth to talk, Mrs. Childs shoves the bottle in. Vivian gags and flails her arms like a baby would. Mrs. Childs restrains Vivian's arms with her free hand and finally Vivian relaxes. Mrs. Childs now strokes her forehead as she feeds Vivian the bottle. Sings to any melody.)*

*"It's okay, it's all right,
It's your babba in the night.
It's all right, it's okay,
It's your babba in the day."*

HEPPER: What a darling little song.

CHILDS: Shhh. *(Indicating Vivian.)* She's almost out.

(Vivian's eyes are wide open with terror. Peter enters.)

PETER: Mother, I can't find the disk— *(Sees Vivian lying on his mother's lap with the bottle in her mouth.)*

[END OF FREEVIEW]

**"YA KNOW,
I'VE NEVER SEEN A TOWN
AS BEAUTIFUL AS THIS."**

—MR. EASY

EASY FLAVORS

(AT RISE: A café. Dick is wiping down one of the tables. Jane is sitting at one of the barstools. Joe is behind the counter fixing a banana split for Jane. Joe, Dick, and Jane, keep glancing at the entrance as if waiting for someone. After a while, Mr. Easy enters, looking confused. He looks at the café with excited amazement. Jane and Joe just look at Mr. Easy. Dick approaches Mr. Easy and examines him with the same excited amazement. Mr. Easy finally notices Dick and stares him down. Dick goes back to wiping down the tables.)

MR. EASY: *(Still looking around, amazed. To Joe.)* I was standing outside just now and I noticed your café.

JOE: Did you?

MR. EASY: Yeah...there's a movie house across the street. It's playing "It's a Wonderful Life." I was gonna go there first but it doesn't start for another few minutes.

JOE: First?

MR. EASY: Oh, yeah, I just got into town. Well, I almost got into town. My car broke down about a half mile back. Ya know, I've never seen a town as beautiful as this.

JOE: I suppose that's a matter of opinion, but it's true you'll never see a town like this.

DICK: Well, I think it looks nice, too.

MR. EASY: It doesn't just look nice. This town is perfect. It's so clean. And all of the buildings are so unique, not like where I come from. I didn't see a single shop that I didn't like. Not even a fabric shop.

JANE: What's wrong with fabric?

MR. EASY: Well, it's boring.

JANE: Hmmmm.

DICK: *(Winks at Jane, smiling. To Mr. Easy.)* So how long you gonna be in town?

MR. EASY: Well, I...I guess that depends on my car. Is there a garage in town?

JANE: I don't think a garage is any more exciting than fabric.

MR. EASY: It is a necessity. *(To Joe.)* Can you tell me where the garage is?

JANE: Fabric isn't a necessity?

(Mr. Easy looks at Jane.)

MR. EASY: *(To Joe.)* I do need to get my car fixed.

JOE: I think what Jane is trying to ask you is...do you find auto repair shops as boring as you do fabric?

MR. EASY: *(Confused.)* Well...I mean...I guess. I never really liked getting my car fixed. It always takes so long. But I do need a car even though... *(To Jane.)* ...Jane, wasn't it?... *(She nods.)* ...even though, Jane... *(Slight pause.)* ...I do find them boring, yes.

(Jane smiles.)

JOE: Well, Mr. Easy, I don't think you'll find a garage in this town.

MR. EASY: Well, what about my car? How am I gonna fix it? How far is the next town?

DICK: Why don't you stay around here? You said you liked the town. Didn't you say you wanted to see the picture show across the street?

MR. EASY: Yes, but I...well...I mean, eventually I'll have to go.

JANE: Go where?

MR. EASY: Well...go back home.

DICK: Back home? Where were you going in the first place?

MR. EASY: I was...I, well...I...

JOE: Maybe there is a garage in town, Mr. Easy.

MR. EASY: I...was going to... *(Realizes.)* Hey, wait a minute. You've been calling me "Mr. Easy." How do you know my name?

JANE: The cat's outta the bag now, Joe.

MR. EASY: What do you mean? *(To Joe.)* How do you know my name? What's going on here?

JOE: I'm making a banana split. Do you want one?

MR. EASY: Why did you call me "Mr. Easy"?

JOE: Do you prefer "[Ned]"? [*"Nadine" if female.*]

MR. EASY: I don't care, but...there you go again. Something screwy's going on here.

JOE: Fine, then I'll call you "Ned."

MR. EASY: Now, wait a minute! I want some answers. How do you know my name? Why can't I get my car fixed? Why is this town so perfect? *(To Jane.)* And why isn't there a fabric store?

JOE: Do you want that banana split, Ned?

DICK: *(To Mr. Easy.)* They're real good.

MR. EASY: Is this a dream?

JOE: No, Ned, I'm sure you'll find us all to be quite real.

MR. EASY: Then how do you know my name?

JOE: Ned, where were you going?

MR. EASY: I...I can't remember

JANE: What can you remember?

MR. EASY: Well, I'm [Ned] Easy. I live at 326 Willow Drive, apartment B-12, in the city of...hey, what's the name of this place?

DICK: Joe's.

MR. EASY: No, this place. This town.

JOE: You should know. You came here.

JANE: Why don't you think back, Ned? Think back carefully. What was the last thing you were doing before you arrived here?

MR. EASY: Something's wrong. I can't remember. *(Hesitant at first but with Jane's urging, he closes his eyes and tries to remember.)* I...I remember my wife. No, wait a minute, I

don't have a wife...she wouldn't marry me...it was my girlfriend...oh, she had just left me. Why do they always leave me?

JOE: Maybe it was your apartment.

JANE: (*Waving him off.*) Shhh!

MR. EASY: (*Eyes closed.*) My apartment wasn't that bad...aside from the rats. Actually, I don't blame her. I couldn't stand it anymore, either.

JANE: (*Anxious for Mr. Easy to remember.*) Keep going, Ned, you're almost there.

[END OF FREEVIEW]

TRAIN STATION

(AT RISE: At DSR is a sign with an arrow that reads "Trains." There is a stool CS. This play is silent except for sound effects, which can be played throughout.)

Boy enters SL, limping. He holds one crutch and is wearing tattered clothing.

Man rushes on SL, quickly passes Boy, and bumps into him.

Boy falls down, and Man keeps going.

Man stops, looks back at Boy, and hesitates.

Boy gets up.

Man goes on, stops at train sign, and waits.

Boy limps to stool, attempts to sit on stool, but fails.

Man watches Boy.

Boy sits on stool and leans his crutch on the side of the stool.

Man looks away and then looks at Boy.

Boy grabs his collar closed and holds out a beggar's cup.

Man looks at Boy, thinks long, and then looks away.

Boy scratches his head and his hat falls to the ground. Boy looks down at his hat.

Man looks at Boy and then at hat.

Boy looks at Man.

Man looks at Boy.

Man and Boy look long at each other.

Man looks away.

Boy looks down.

Boy slides off of his stool, slips, and falls to the ground.

Man looks at Boy.

Boy looks at Man.

Man looks away.

Boy grabs his hat and puts it on. Boy pauses on the ground. Boy climbs up stool.

Man watches Boy.

Boy sits on stool, grabs his collar closed, and holds out his beggar's cup. [END OF FREEVIEW]

**"IT TAKES SPECIAL PEOPLE
TO BE ABLE TO
IDENTIFY EVIL,
TO RULE AGAINST IT,
AND TO DESTROY IT."**

—LUCY

EVIL PEOPLE

(AT RISE: Late evening. Stage is bare except for seven chairs placed randomly. No one is sitting. Everyone is standing in pairs and one trio is talking like old friends at a party.)

WANDA: *(To group.)* All right, it's time to get started. We're all here, so I think we should get started. Would everyone just sit down?

(Pricilla, Lucy, Gus, Greg, and Elise take a chair, turn the chair toward CS, and sit. Seth and Wanda remain standing.)

SETH: Wanda, before we start, I think we should find out if everyone is 100 percent committed to this. Otherwise, it's all just academic.

PRICILLA: I agree. Everyone must be sure. There's no backing out.

WANDA: *(To group.)* All right, does anyone have second thoughts about this? Let's face it, this is a big decision we are making, and everyone needs to be sure they want to go through with it. Seth, you're obviously committed.

SETH: Absolutely. *(Sits.)*

WANDA: Lucy?

LUCY: I'm in, wholeheartedly.

WANDA: Good. Gus?

GUS: I've been waiting for this for a long time. I'm in 110 percent.

WANDA: Excellent. Greg?

GREG: We should have done it years ago. I'm ready.

WANDA: Okay. Elise?

ELISE: Hey, no one is more committed to this than me. Let's do it.

WANDA: Pricilla?

PRICILLA: You bet I'm sure. Let's get started.

WANDA: Okay, we're all invested in this. So, today, we're gonna make it happen. Does anyone have any suggestions as to what we should do first?

(Seth rises.)

SETH: I believe we should first identify all of the evil people.

ELISE: All of them? That's a lot of people.

PRICILLA: Here, here!

(Seth sits.)

SETH: We've got to start someplace.

WANDA: He's right. That's as good a place to start as any.

Let's identify the evil people.

(Greg stands and wanders around as he speaks.)

GREG: Well, I think that's the easy part. The evil people are selfish. They're the ones who want more and more for themselves. No matter how much they have, they just want more.

GUS: Want more what?

ELISE: *(To Greg.)* Money?

PRICILLA: *(To Greg.)* Material possessions?

GREG: Anything and everything.

LUCY: So we don't have to specify what they want...just people who want more of whatever?

GREG: Right. It's not the "what they want" that's evil, it's the insatiable attitude they have of just wanting more and more.

It's their ravenous self-indulgence. It's their voracity.

WANDA: *(To group.)* Should we be writing this down?

PRICILLA: *(Writing in a notepad.)* I'm way ahead of you.

WANDA: *(To Greg.)* Okay, could we summarize this into one word?

GREG: Yes. Greed. *(Sits.)*

WANDA: Okay, thank you, Greg. You got that, Pricilla?

PRICILLA: Got it. *(Writes.)* "Greedy people are evil."

WANDA: *(To group.)* Does everyone agree with that?
"Greedy people are evil." Lucy?

LUCY: I'll second that. Greedy people are absolutely evil.

GUS: *(To Wanda.)* Yes, evil people are greedy.

SETH: *(To Wanda.)* Greed is very evil.

ELISE: *(To Wanda.)* Greedy people are most definitely evil.

PRICILLA: *(To Wanda.)* I think you'll have a hard time
finding someone who doesn't think greedy people are evil.

WANDA: All right, well, now that we know who the evil
people are...

(Lucy stands and wanders around as she speaks.)

LUCY: Hold on! We know that greedy people are evil,
but that's not all.

[END OF FREEVIEW]