

Regrets Only!



L. Don Swartz

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

Copyright © 2014, L. Don Swartz

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Regrets Only! is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and all of the countries covered by the Universal Copyright Convention and countries with which the United States has bilateral copyright relations including Canada, Mexico, Australia, and all nations of the United Kingdom.

Copying or reproducing all or any part of this book in any manner is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, or videotaping without written permission from the publisher.

A royalty is due for every performance of this play whether admission is charged or not. A “performance” is any presentation in which an audience of any size is admitted.

The name of the author must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play. The program must also contain the following notice: “Produced by special arrangement with Big Dog/Norman Maine Publishing LLC, Rapid City, SD.”

All rights including professional, amateur, radio broadcasting, television, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved by Big Dog/Norman Maine Publishing LLC, www.BigDogPlays.com, to whom all inquiries should be addressed.

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

P.O. Box 1401

Rapid City, SD 57709

Regrets Only!

3

*To Debby and JoAnn
for always making me laugh.*

Regrets Only!

4

Regrets Only! was first performed at the Ghostlight Theatre, North Tonawanda, NY, May 3, 2012: L. Don Swartz, director.

HAL: L. Don Swartz

SAL: Jesse Swartz

LOTTIE: Joann V. Mis

BERNICE: Debby Koszelak Swartz

BEST MAN: Carl Tamburlin

BRIDE: Gabrielle Wittcop

GROOM: Paul McGinnis

MAID OF HONOR: Julie Senko

PHOTOGRAPHER: Kathy Measer

WEDDING GUESTS: Drew Krause, Vanessa Stipkovits,
Daniel Torres, and Nora Waters.

NOTE: To view the original production photos, go to www.starrynighttheatre.com. Click on "Photo Album." Click on "Productions." Select "Lottie & Bernice in Regrets Only 2012."

Regrets Only!

COMEDY. The laughs never end when Lottie and Bernice, two cantankerous grannies, crash the wedding reception of an unsuspecting bride and groom so they can eat free food and steal rolls of toilet paper out of the restrooms. Two fire hall custodians in charge of the wedding reception find they are no match for these grumpy grannies, who heckle wedding guests, criticize everything from the wedding cupcakes to the bridesmaids' dresses, and complain about their numerous health maladies. Audiences will love the zany, unforgettable characters in this side-splitting comedy!

Performance Time: Approximately 60-75 minutes.

Characters

(4 M, 4 F, 1 flexible, extras)

BERNICE: Crotchety, loudmouth granny who loves to crash wedding receptions; female.

LOTTIE: Bernice's best friend, a cantankerous granny who complains about everything and loves to crash wedding receptions; female.

HAL: Fire hall custodian who serves food at the wedding reception; wears eyeglasses, a waiter's tuxedo that is too small, and dirty sneakers; male.

SAL: Fire hall custodian who serves as the wedding DJ and is suffering from a kidney stone; wears a waiter's tuxedo that fits him perfectly and shiny black shoes; male.

BRIDE: Bridezilla who loves to belittle the groom; female.

GROOM: Submissive groom; non-speaking; male.

BEST MAN: Groom's best friend who used to date the bride; male.

MAID OF HONOR: Interviews Lottie and Bernice for the wedding video; female.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Wedding photographer; flexible.

EXTRAS: As Wedding Guests.

Setting

A fire hall, Buffalo, NY.

Set

A fire hall decorated for a wedding reception. The room is decorated with wedding streamers and Mylar balloons. The tables have wedding balloon decorations on them and are set for a wedding reception. The tables are surrounded with metal folding chairs. At SR, there is a round table that sits on a raised platform. At SL, there is a small table on a raised platform that contains the DJ's sound equipment. There is a trapdoor in the floor CS from which Lottie and Bernice enter. There is a podium with a microphone at SL. At CS is an archway that leads to the bathrooms. SR of the archway is a wedding wishing well to collect wedding cards. SL of the archway is a decorated table with a wedding cupcake display. On the SL wall there is an enormous trophy display. The walls have working wall sconces, opt. There is a door to the kitchen SL and a door SL that leads to the parking lot.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Fire hall, the night before a wedding reception.

Scene 2: Fire hall, the next day, two hours before the wedding reception.

Scene 3: Fire hall, two hours later, the wedding reception is in full swing.

Intermission, opt.

ACT II

Scene 1: Fire hall, after the wedding dinner.

Scene 2: Fire hall, after the wedding reception.

Props

Bologna sandwich	Video recorder
Fancy whole-grain sandwich	Butcher knife (plastic)
Napkins	Camera
Huge purse, for Lottie	Meatball
Huge purse, for Bernice	Bridal bouquet
4 Nametags	Toilet seat
2 Wedding cards with envelopes	2 Rolls of toilet paper
Five-dollar bill	Silverware
Ten-dollar bill	Plate of wedding reception food
Wedding cupcake display (instead of wedding cake)	Paper towel
Newspaper	Lunch bag
Microphone	

Sound Effects

Music, for Lottie and Bernice	Sound of a toilet flushing
Sound of vomiting	"The Chicken Dance" music
Scream	Fake blood
Sound of an old man gagging	Music for last dance at
Wedding dance medley that	wedding
includes a disco, the	Sound of beautiful soprano
Hokey-Pokey, the Bunny Hop,	aria
polka, etc.	Money (misc. bills, change)
Oldie song about having a baby,	Kabanos (sausage)
or another song can be used	Babka (cake)
Quiet, slow, sappy dance song	Rye bread
Song for single ladies at wedding	Kapusta (cabbage dish)
Disco music	Small Tupperware container
Violent noises (bangs, thumps,	Thin Mints cookies
etc.)	

"I've seen those ladies
somewhere before . . ."

—Hal

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A fire hall, the night before a wedding reception. Hal and Sal are seated at the table SL taking a lunch break.)

SAL: You got any mustard?

HAL: What?

SAL: Do you have any mustard?

HAL: Mustard?

SAL: Yes, mustard. Do you have any?

HAL: Why would I have mustard?

SAL: If you don't have any, just say so.

HAL: I don't have any mustard.

SAL: There. Was that so difficult?

HAL: The kitchen is right there. I'm sure there is mustard in the kitchen.

SAL: I'm not getting up.

HAL: What do you need mustard for?

SAL: My bologna sandwich. The old lady refuses to put mustard on my sandwiches.

HAL: How come?

SAL: She hates mustard breath.

HAL: Oh. I can't stand garlic breath.

SAL: Garlic? I love garlic.

HAL: It stinks. I can't stand to be in the same room with it. It's gross.

SAL: You gotta be kidding me. Everyone likes garlic. I eat it all the time.

HAL: You don't have to tell me that.

SAL: What you got there?

HAL: Roasted turkey on 12-grain whole-wheat bread with endive lettuce, sun-dried tomatoes, slathered with a spicy hummus.

SAL: You packed your own lunch, didn't you?

HAL: How can you tell?

SAL: Your sandwich is pretentious.

HAL: Pretentious? It's a sandwich. How can a sandwich be pretentious?

SAL: Your sandwich is screaming, "I am better than you!"

HAL: My sandwich is screaming?

SAL: You know what I mean. What the heck is hummus?

HAL: It's a spread made from garbanzo beans and spices.

SAL: Beans on a sandwich?

HAL: Why not?

SAL: Because it ain't right, that's why. Beans are a side dish. Sometimes a party dip, but never on a sandwich. What's happening to this world?

HAL: Lots of people use hummus as a sandwich spread.

SAL: I say it's wrong. You got to draw the line somewhere, or nothing will be like it used to be. That's all I'm going to say about it.

HAL: Okay. I didn't realize you had such strong opinions about sandwich spreads.

SAL: Well, now you know.

HAL: Okay, I guess we'll have to agree to disagree.

SAL: Whatever.

HAL: Excuse me, I have to go to the restroom. *(Gets up to go.)*

SAL: Why do you do that?

HAL: Do what?

SAL: Announce your bathroom intentions.

HAL: I wasn't announcing my bathroom intentions. I was just letting you know why I was leaving the table. What am I supposed to do, just stand up and walk away?

SAL: Yeah.

HAL: Just like that? How would you know what I was doing?

SAL: What makes you think I care what you're doing?

HAL: You are a real jerk!

(Hal storms into the bathroom. Pause. Singing is heard coming from the bathroom at first quietly and then louder. It is a beautiful soprano

aria. Puzzled, Sal looks at the bathroom door. The singing continues and stops. Hal comes out of the bathroom and returns to the table. Sal looks at Hal.)

SAL: Were you...were you just...?

HAL: Was I what?

SAL: Were you singing in there?

HAL: No. Singing? I wasn't singing.

SAL: Are you sure? I thought I heard singing.

HAL: I think I would know if I were singing.

SAL: Whatever.

HAL: You whatever.

SAL: Ouch.

HAL: Why do you keep doing that?

SAL: What are you talking about?

HAL: You've been moaning all night, and you're sweatier than usual. What's going on?

SAL: I wasn't going to tell you because I know you'll make a big deal out of it.

HAL: Make a big deal? Why would I make a big deal? I'm not going to make a big deal. What makes you think I would make a big deal?

SAL: I went to the doctor today —

HAL: Oh my—! *(Realizes.)* You're dying! I knew it! I could tell. *(Smells Sal.)* I can smell death on you. I smell death, I just can. How long do you have, Sal? How long?

SAL: I'm not dying. *(Confused.)* Smell death? *(Reassuring.)* It's not like that. Listen...I've been having pains, and they keep getting worse. You know...down there...

HAL: Down where? Your feet?

SAL: No, higher.

HAL: Your knees?

SAL: Higher.

HAL: Your stomach?

SAL: Lower.

HAL: Higher than the knees and lower than the stomach?
(*Realizes.*) Uh-oh.

SAL: Yeah.

HAL: Pains...in your...*man* area?

SAL: My man area? Yeah.

HAL: Are you contagious? Should I be concerned? Should I be sharing a table with you? (*Holds a napkin over his face.*)

SAL: No, it's not that. I have a kidney stone. And they can't shrink it with medicine or break it up with laser beams, so the doctor said the only option I have is to let it pass.

HAL: Let it pass?

SAL: Yeah.

HAL: Let it pass? Ohhh. Let it paaaaaaaaaaaaass.

SAL: Stop saying, "let it pass."

HAL: This is not good, Sal. This is not good. My uncle had a kidney stone. He said it was the most painful thing he ever experienced...and he has a metal plate in his head. His kidney stone was enormous! It's mounted over his fireplace. Enormous and really jagged like barbed wire covered with tiny shards of broken glass.

SAL: Okay, that's enough.

HAL: When my uncle passed it – after weeks of unimaginable agony – his screams were so loud he set off car alarms for five city blocks! How big is your stone?

SAL: About this big. (*Indicates with his finger and thumb.*)

HAL: Oh, Sal, how in this wide world is something that big going to come out of your...you know where? It's going to rip you up, Sal! It's going to shred everything in its path. Did you ever see a bratwurst split on a grill? Oh, Sal. How can you stand it? How do you live with it? How do you just sit there so calmly while all that is going on in there. You're sitting on a time bomb, Sal. A time bomb. And it's ticking. It's ticking! I'm getting nauseous just thinking about it.

SAL: Get a hold of yourself.

HAL: My uncle said it felt like passing a bowling ball through a drinking straw. Think of it, Sal...a bowling ball through a drinking straw! Can I do anything for you?

SAL: Do anything for me? Like what?

HAL: Should you put some ice on it? I could get some ice from the kitchen.

SAL: Why would I put ice on it?

HAL: To keep the swelling down.

SAL: Swelling? Can we not talk about this anymore? I am very uncomfortable with your interest in my man area.

HAL: My interest?! My interest?! Believe me, I have no interest in your man area. Forgive me for being concerned about your health and well-being. It will never happen again.

SAL: Good. And don't send me a get well card, either.

HAL: I'm not sending you a get well card. Do they make cards for kidney stones?

SAL: You sent me one when I had hemorrhoids.

HAL: Excuse me for being a caring friend. I know that is a foreign concept to you.

SAL: Can you just talk about something else?

HAL: Like what? What am I supposed to talk about? I can't manufacture conversation just like that.

SAL: Fine, let's just sit here and not talk.

HAL: Okay, because that won't be weird. *(Long pause. They sit in silence.)* I can't do it! I don't know where to look.

SAL: Where to look? Why do you have to look anywhere?

HAL: I'll just pluck my eyeballs out and throw them against the wall.

SAL: That would be entertaining.

HAL: You wish. *(Pause.)* I was watching the Bigfoot Channel last night.

SAL: The what?

HAL: The Bigfoot Channel. It's fascinating. These four scientists—well, they're not really scientists—travel all over the country trying to catch a Bigfoot aka "Sasquatch."

SAL: The who?

HAL: The Sasquatch. Sasquatch.

SAL: Stop saying that. You're making me uncomfortable.

HAL: How does saying "Sasquatch" make you uncomfortable?

SAL: It just does. They ever catch one of them Bigfoots?

HAL: No.

SAL: They get a picture of that Bigfoot?

HAL: No.

SAL: What do they do in every episode?

HAL: Well, they walk around in the woods a lot and they talk about scat.

SAL: Scat?

HAL: Uh-huh. They look for scat. They examine scat. They put scat in little plastic bags. "Scat." Now, there's a word you don't hear in everyday conversation.

SAL: Not at mealtimes, anyway.

HAL: It's not a bad word..."scat." It's less vulgar than many of the alternatives one might use. Actually, it may be a refreshing change. One might say, "Okay, who took a scat in there?" Or if there is a noxious odor in the room, one might say, "Okay, who scatted?"

SAL: Or one might say, "You, Hal, are full of scat."

HAL: Yes. See there...that's somehow less hurtful when you put it that way. *(Pause.)* They do a lot of howling on the Bigfoot Channel. Like this. *(Howls.)*

SAL: Stop doing that. Why do they howl?

HAL: To make contact. They try and communicate with it. And every time they hear a noise, the fat guy says, "We got a Squatch in these woods." A "Squatch." That's a shortened version of "Sasquatch." "Squatch." You should watch it. There are a lot of mysteries out there, Sal. A lot of mysteries.

SAL: There're a few mysteries in here.

(Sal abruptly gets up and walks to the bathroom. Pause. Silence. A scream is heard. Hal turns to the bathroom. Another scream.)

Another scream. Each scream is louder than the one before. Finally, there is silence. Sal comes out of the bathroom and returns to the table.)

HAL: Did you...? Did it...?

SAL: What?

HAL: Did it, you know...

SAL: No.

HAL: I thought I heard—

SAL: It didn't.

HAL: Okay. *(Pause.)* They did a marvelous job decorating the fire hall.

SAL: If you like streamers and Mylar balloons.

HAL: Is that all you see, Sal?

SAL: Yeah. What do you see?

HAL: I see a room full of possibilities...and magic...and dreams coming true. Oh, it takes me back.

SAL: Takes you back where?

HAL: To my wedding day, of course.

SAL: As I recall, your wedding day did not go exactly as planned.

HAL: If you want to nitpick.

SAL: Nitpick? Your bride threw up on you...during the vows.

HAL: Yes, there was that.

SAL: The priest said, "Do you take this man?" She looked you in the eyes and barfed on you.

HAL: I was there.

SAL: She didn't just boot before her vow or after her vow. She booted during her vows, dude. The vomit just kept coming and coming. I've never seen anything like it for distance and volume. In fact, I never truly understood *projectile* vomiting until your wedding day.

HAL: Please...

SAL: Tell me, at least, that you can laugh about it now after all these years.

HAL: We have never spoken of it.

SAL: Not even on your anniversary?

HAL: We don't observe our anniversary.

SAL: Is she still putting on a black dress and locking herself in her room?

HAL: Don't be silly. She doesn't wear the dress anymore. She just wears armbands.

SAL: What does she do in there all day?

HAL: She sobs.

SAL: Didn't you ever ask her about it?

HAL: Once...years ago. When she came out the next morning, I told her I could hear her sobbing in there.

SAL: What did she say?

HAL: She looked me straight in the eyes and said they were tears of joy...then she threw up on me.

SAL: Hey, it's not all bad. They still play your video on that funny video show. I love the music they put under that and the sound effects. It's always in their most-viewed videos every year.

HAL: I know. I wish I knew who sent that video to them. I would kill him.

SAL: I'm sure the studio signed some non-disclosure agreement with the guy that stipulates that they could never reveal the source under threat of lawsuit. Not that I know how all that works. Hey, but the rest of your special day was okay, right? I mean, there wasn't anymore vomiting, was there?

HAL: There was some. But there were good parts. There was magic. I have no regrets.

SAL: None?

HAL: No.

SAL: Well, that's a blessing.

HAL: Yep. No regrets. (*Remembers.*) Well, there is that one, but it has nothing to do with my wedding.

SAL: Okay, but we don't need to go there.

HAL: You are the one who brought up regrets. You know darn well the only regret I live with, each and every day, is the fact that I never became a dancer.

SAL: Oh, not this again...

HAL: My one regret, Sal...my one regret. I could have been one of the great ones. Really great. I got the music in me, Sal. I'm full of the music.

SAL: You're full of something.

HAL: Haven't you ever noticed the way I move, Sal? (*Demonstrates.*) Haven't you ever asked yourself why I move that way?

SAL: I always thought it was a rash.

HAL: A rash? No. It's grace, Sal. Grace. I never asked for it, but I got it. I'm cursed with it. Grace oozes from my every pore.

SAL: Like a rash.

HAL: I got the grace, and I got the music in me. It's in there. The music is in me, Sal. It's in me, and I hear it. And I can't help moving to it. (*Demonstrating.*) See...poetry in motion...every move I make. I can't help myself. What about you, Sal? You have any regrets?

SAL: I'm having one right now. (*Pause.*) Tomorrow, after all the guests eat, we're allowed to eat as much as we want. And that is some good eating.

HAL: I don't eat from buffets.

SAL: You what?

HAL: I don't eat from buffets.

SAL: Why not? They got great food here.

HAL: Eating from a buffet is like eating from a public trough. I won't do it. You got two lines of people surrounding the food...everyone touching all the serving spoons with their sweaty digits. Things fall off the human body, Sal. We're not self-contained. We erode...constantly. Hair, dead skin, droplets of sweat, spittle...especially when a human being's salivary glands become aroused at the public staging of food. Scalp flakes, nose particles, nose hairs, ear hair, earwax

all...all falling off the human body and drifting down to blanket the food like a February snowfall. I'll bring a lunch from home.

SAL: One of these days they are going to lock you up.

HAL: That's a terrible thing to say.

SAL: Yes, siree. Just lock you up and throw away the key.

HAL: Yeah, whatever.

SAL: You whatever.

HAL: Before I forget, please remember tomorrow that I cannot speak into the microphone. I will do everything else. I will line up the CDs. I will serve all the coffee and bus all the tables. Just promise me that you will not ask me to speak into the microphone.

SAL: Don't worry about it.

HAL: That's not a promise.

SAL: I said, don't worry about it.

HAL: I do worry, Sal. I worry a lot. You know, Sal, one of these days you are going to push me too far.

SAL: And then what?

HAL: Pray you never find out, mister. Pray you never find out.

(Hal and Sal continue to eat. Blackout.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Fire hall, the next day, two hours before the wedding reception. We hear Lottie and Bernice's music. Lights rise. We don't see them but we hear them muttering from a great distance. A trapdoor opens in the floor CS. A huge purse appears. Lottie crawls out through the trapdoor. Another huge purse appears. Bernice crawls out through the trapdoor. They cross to the table SR and sit down. They pop the table balloons. Lottie pulls two nametags off the table and puts them in her purse. Bernice pulls two nametags from her purse and places them on the table.)

BERNICE: Stupid balloons.

LOTTIE: Yeah. I hate balloons.

BERNICE: This is the best spot.

LOTTIE: Next to the toilet and by the kitchen.

BERNICE: Spitting distance from the music guy.

LOTTIE: I hate those people who play the loud music.

BERNICE: Yeah. Too dang loud.

LOTTIE: It's cold in here. I should have brought another sweater.

BERNICE: Cold? It's hot. I'm already sweating. My Arm & Hammer deodorant is clumping.

LOTTIE: I'm getting goose bumps. My lips are turning blue. My teeth are cheddaring.

BERNICE: It smells like cabbage in here.

LOTTIE: Yeah. Cabbage.

BERNICE: There were too many people at the church.

LOTTIE: Yeah. Too many.

BERNICE: I didn't see Josie. I thought Josie would be there.

LOTTIE: She couldn't come.

BERNICE: How come?

LOTTIE: She's dead.

BERNICE: When?

LOTTIE: Last Saturday.

BERNICE: What happened?

LOTTIE: She went to the casino and one of them Elvis singers fell on her.

BERNICE: Crushed her?

LOTTIE: No, the sparkles on his costume cut her and she bled out.

BERNICE: Didn't anyone help?

LOTTIE: It was Canada.

BERNICE: Oh. When is the funeral?

LOTTIE: Her husband won't claim the body.

BERNICE: How come?

LOTTIE: He won't pay the duty.

BERNICE: Duty on a corpse?

LOTTIE: Yeah. You pay by the pound. She was very heavy near the end. The husband doesn't have that kind of money.

BERNICE: What is he going to do?

LOTTIE: I don't know. Canada said if he don't claim the body by Monday, they're pushing her over Niagara Falls.

BERNICE: Serves her right, then.

LOTTIE: Yeah, serves her right. I thought Father Frank was going to be at the church.

BERNICE: He couldn't come.

LOTTIE: How come?

BERNICE: We had words.

LOTTIE: What did he do?

BERNICE: He was standing on the porch when I was leaving church and he said I should be more kind.

LOTTIE: What did you do?

BERNICE: Pushed him down the steps.

LOTTIE: Did he die?

BERNICE: He bounced.

LOTTIE: Serves him right, then.

BERNICE: Yeah, serves him right. He'll be out of the hospital next month.

LOTTIE: Is he coming back?

BERNICE: No, he's taking a transfer to another state.

LOTTIE: Serves him right.

BERNICE: Yeah, serves him right.

LOTTIE: Give me your card...for the money table.

BERNICE: Yeah.

(Bernice hands Lottie a card. Lottie looks at it.)

LOTTIE: Bernice?

BERNICE: What, Lottie?

LOTTIE: Somebody ripped your envelope.

BERNICE: I cut it open with a knife.

LOTTIE: How come?

BERNICE: It will look like someone cut the envelope and stole the money.

LOTTIE: Give me that knife. I want my five dollars back.

(Lottie slices the envelope open and extracts her five-dollar bill. Lottie walks over to the wishing well and deposits the envelopes. Lottie crosses to the cupcake display and returns to the table with cupcakes.)

BERNICE: Cupcakes? I hate cupcakes. It should be cake.

LOTTIE: Yeah. It should be cake. I hate people who put cupcakes out at weddings.

BERNICE: Yeah. Cake is better. *(They eat the cupcakes.)* I didn't like that church. How come they weren't married in a [Catholic] church? *[Or insert another religion.]*

LOTTIE: She's not [Catholic]. She's in one of them cults.

BERNICE: I hate them cults.

LOTTIE: Yeah.

BERNICE: Which cult?

LOTTIE: Edju said it's the cult that throws snakes. I think she's [Lutheran]. *[Or insert another religion.]*

[END OF FREEVIEW]