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Samuel French Acting Edition

Four Old Broads

by Leslie Kimbell

SAMUEL FRENCH

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www.concordtheatricals.com
www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

United States and Canada
info@concordtheatricals.com
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FOUR OLD BROADS received its world premiere at Winder Barrow Community Theatre in Winder, Georgia on March 3, 2017. It was directed by Léland Downs Karas with assistant director and stage manager Samantha Webb. The set design was by Don Wildsmith; the technical director was Pamela Veader; and the costume design was by Billie Nye-Muller. The cast was as follows:

BEATRICE SHELTON . . . . . Billie Nye-Muller
EADDY MAE CLAYTON. . . . . Elinor Hasty
IMOGENE FLETCHER . . . . . Linda Keller
PAT JONES . . . . . Beverly Rutledge
MAUDE JENKINS . . . . . Linda Moore Oulton
SAM SMITH . . . . . Thomas Manley
RUBY SUE BENNETT. . . . . Nancy Lowery Powell
BINGO LADIES . . . . . Karan Japps, Sharon Neal, Carol Phillpotts

I am eternally grateful to this cast and crew

FOUR OLD BROADS received its professional premiere at Center Stage Greenville in Greenville, South Carolina on September 12, 2017 under the direction of Ruth Wood, with set design by Rebekah Brock, lighting design by Taylor Jensen, and costume design by Tiffany Nave; the technical director was Thom Seymour, and the stage manager was Donna Norman. The cast was as follows:

BEATRICE SHELTON . . . . . Cindy Mixon
EADDY MAE CLAYTON. . . . . Jan Anderson
IMOGENE FLETCHER . . . . . Linda Forrest
PAT JONES . . . . . Cindy Thompson
MAUDE JENKINS . . . . . Jeane Bartlett
SAM SMITH . . . . . Peter Godfrey
RUBY SUE BENNETT. . . . . .Jenni Baldwin

CHARACTERS

BEATRICE SHELTON – A former burlesque star with an attitude. Senior Citizen.

EADDY MAE CLAYTON – A former nurse and "religious" lady. Senior Citizen.

IMOGENE FLETCHER – The newest resident at Magnolia Place. Senior Citizen.

PAT JONES – A rude and pushy nurse. Forties.

MAUDE JENKINS – A funeral and soap-opera-obsessed frump. Senior Citizen.

SAM SMITH – Retired Elvis impersonator and Casanova. Senior Citizen.

RUBY SUE BENNETT – A quiet, romance-novel-loving nurse. Thirties.

SETTING

The common area of Magnolia Place –
a Senior Assisted Living Community in Petula, Georgia

TIME

Spring 1992

AUTHOR'S NOTES

If the production's director should so choose, the Bingo scene can include up to three non-speaking background actors for realism until the Bingo game ends. Then they should exit.

The residents of Magnolia Place should be portrayed as vital and real people, not caricatures in any way.

The author suggests that Pat come out for the curtain call wearing a prison uniform and handcuffs.

The characters portrayed in *Four Old Broads* are fictional creations, and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Eaddy is pronounced "Eee-Dee."

Ruby Sue should never make it obvious that her romance novel is a hidden camera. This spoils the surprise.

For Nannie DeVries and Aunt Sissie Bumpus
The sassiest OLD BROADS I have ever known...

And for Momma and Daddy
I love you more than words can ever say...

ACT ONE

Scene One

(Spring 1992.)

(Opening with music and lights up.)*

(The setting is the main recreation area or common room of Magnolia Place – an upscale assisted living home in Petula, Georgia. The room is decorated in a tasteful and slightly outdated 1980s motif of country blue and mauve. A sofa and coffee table flanked by two wingback chairs sits down center. Behind the sofa is a sofa table with a silk floral arrangement. The coffee table holds magazines and a box of tissues. This is the "television" area.)

(Stage right is an open hallway arch leading to the residents' individual apartments. Up center is the double open archway leading to the medical offices and dining room. A sign with arrows indicates that the dining room is offstage right and the offices are offstage left. Down left is the breezeway to the convalescent wing of the facility, known to all the Magnolia Place residents as "the dark side.")

(On either side of the up center archway are another set of matching wingback chairs and side tables with cloisonné lamps.)

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(Period-appropriate artwork, perhaps magnolias, hangs on each side of the archway. Downstage right of the doorway is a small game table and two small chairs. A bright poster advertising the upcoming Miss Magnolia Senior Citizen Beauty Pageant hangs on the stage right wall.)

(Downstage left of the doorway is a bookcase that holds games, puzzles, and books.)

*(***BEATRICE SHELTON** *and* **EADDY MAE CLAYTON**, *longtime residents and best friends, are seated on the sofa. Both women have their hands full of vacation travel brochures and are planning a vacation getaway.* **EADDY** *has stylish gray hair. She is dressed casually in age-appropriate clothing.* **BEATRICE** *has bright blonde hair. She is wearing stretch pants, a flashy top, heavy makeup, large false eyelashes, and an abundance of jewelry.)*

*(***IMOGENE FLETCHER**, *a recent addition to Magnolia Place, rushes in from stage right and sits in the downstage right chair. She is stylish and wears a conservative pantsuit.* **IMOGENE** *is pulling a portable oxygen tank and wears the attached cannula with a long hose.)*

IMOGENE. OK girls I'm back…what did I miss? Sorry…my bladder is the size of a pea.

EADDY. Well…you didn't miss much…we narrowed it down to a cruise –

(Glares at **BEATRICE.***)*

– or a cruise.

BEATRICE. *(Excited and animated.)* Oh girls…let's go with the cruise! Eaddy…we have been talking about a cruise for weeks now…even before Imogene moved in. Oh…I would love to do a cruise… *(Dreamy.)* I've wanted to go on a cruise since I saw that episode of *The Love Boat*, guest-starring Lana Turner.

(Switch.) I guess we could go with Eaddy's *wonderful* idea and take yet *another* trip up to Helen and see that precious little German village for the umpteenth time… or well…I DON'T CARE…a night over at the Stay and Save Motor Court by the eighty-five off-ramp would work! Just get me out of this hell hole!

EADDY. (*Shaking her finger at* **BEATRICE.**) Beatrice… language! Why do you have to be so vulgar?
(Worried.) OH…I need to pray.
Dear Lord…please forgive Beatrice for her crude tongue. I am praying for her forgiveness because I know that she won't and I do not want her to burn in the fiery pit of hell…AMEN.

BEATRICE. Well excuse me Sister Mary Holier than thou Supreme…

EADDY. Thank you Maria Von Trashy.

IMOGENE. *(Peacemaker.)* Now ladies please…no squabbling today. Let's just –

EADDY. You know I can't stand it when you act like a common heathen… RUDE!

BEATRICE. Prude!

EADDY. Witch!

BEATRICE. Bitch!

(Both women collapse in laughter as **IMOGENE** *shakes her head.)*

IMOGENE. Ya know girls…I have been over to that Stay and Save Motor Court and it just reeks of the reefer since those hippies bought it. I can't even drive by there without gagging.

EADDY. I know…it's just awful. We tried to have a Senior Gals on the Go Club meeting there and Leona Bartholomew broke out in hives and fainted from the smell…right in the middle of reading the minutes… BOOM…she gagged and fell on the floor…poor thing peed on herself too –

IMOGENE. Yes…I think someone told me about that… awful…just awful.

EADDY. It really was sad. One minute she was talking about our upcoming bake sale and the next…BAM…

(She smacks her hands together.)

…she just fell right out on the –

BEATRICE. *(Irritated.)* Eaddy…I know what you're doing… stop trying to change the subject. Now I still have plenty of money that the children don't know about… *yet*…and I will pay for the whole trip…all you gals have to do is say yes and –

IMOGENE. If we go somewhere I can pay my own way…but thank you for offering.

BEATRICE. Well…I just *assumed* Frank had taken all your money by now.

EADDY. *(Worried.)* Ima…I'm not trying to get in your personal business…but…how much money did you give him this morning?

IMOGENE. *(Defensive.)* Frank is just going through a rough patch right now. He *is* trying to find a job. He said he applied over at the Burger Barn. I only gave him $200… and I told him that I could not give him any more.

EADDY. That's what you said on Tuesday.

IMOGENE. No…I mean it.

(Not convincing even to herself.) I meant it this time.

EADDY. I'm going to pray for him tonight.

BEATRICE. Ima…get serious…you have lived here for less than two weeks and Frank has come to see you at least four times to get money. Now forgive me…but this morning he looked like he had been out on a three day drunk. Does he even own a toothbrush?

EADDY. Ima honey…I am sorry to say this, but I think he looks a little like…Charles Manson… I'm just sayin'… how old is he anyway?

IMOGENE. Forty-six.

BEATRICE. Oh honey…no one is gonna hire a forty-six-year-old serial killer look-a-like to flip burgers.

EADDY. No ma'am…no how…no way…uh uh –

*(**IMOGENE** stares off blankly.)*

BEATRICE. Imogene?

IMOGENE. *(Blankly.)* The Stay and Save Motor Court reeks of the reefer since those hippies bought it. I can't even drive by without getting sick to my stomach.

*(**BEATRICE** and **EADDY** become worried. **BEATRICE** claps her hands in **IMOGENE**'s face and speaks loudly.)*

BEATRICE. Oh hell Imogene…not again. Imogene…I-MO-GENE! Get it together honey…snap out of it.

*(**BEATRICE** snaps her fingers in **IMOGENE**'s face.)*

EADDY. This is the third time this week…it's getting worse… check your oxygen sugar.

(Tapping on the oxygen tank.)

Oh Lord Beatrice we are going to have to put a hunk of ice down her panties again –

BEATRICE. *(Exasperated.)* Dammit! OK *you* check her oxygen…and I'll get the ice.

(Rises to leave.)

EADDY. *(Tapping the tank's gauge.)* No…wait Beatty… Ima honey…just take a few deep breaths. Did the hose thingy come undone from the little doodad?

(Both ladies begin wrestling with the oxygen tank and hose.)

BEATRICE. No…it seems to be fine.

IMOGENE. *(In a trance.)* The reefer makes me gag…gag… gag –

BEATRICE. OK…I'll get the ice –

*(**BEATRICE** turns to exit up center as **PAT JONES** enters up center. She is the villain. **PAT** wears a starched white dress with pockets, nurse cap, white stockings, and white nursing shoes. She carries a tray with small medicine cups and a patient list. She stops to look over her*

list. **IMOGENE** *continues her blank stare and mutters quietly.* **BEATRICE**, *seeing* **PAT**, *spins around in panic.)*

(She stops up center to look over her list. **IMOGENE** *is staring blankly and muttering quietly.* **BEATRICE**, *seeing* **PAT**, *spins around.)*

OH GOD...keep it down...we don't want *(Pointing wildly at* **PAT**.*)* to hear you. Oh God Eaddy, look...she's coming over here...what are we gonna do?

EADDY. STALL!

(She begins to shake **IMOGENE**.*)*

BEATRICE. *(Sweetly.)* Hello Pat...don't you just look lovely today. How are you today dear?

PAT. *(Haughty.)* What?

BEATRICE. *(Overly sweet.)* I asked how you are...um...dear.

PAT. *(Puzzled.)* Dear? Did you say...dear?

*(***IMOGENE** *rises and begins to cross center as* **PAT** *crosses down center.* **IMOGENE** *forgets her oxygen tank and her hose runs out, causing her to stop center.* **EADDY** *grabs the tank and brings it over to her.)*

IMOGENE. *(Extending hand to* **PAT**.*)* Oh...hello there...I'm Imogene Fletcher –

BEATRICE. *(Covering.)* Oh ha ha crazy...uh...silly girl. She knows who you are. You and those silly jokes of yours –

EADDY. *(Nervous laughter.)* Ha ha ha –

*(***BEATRICE** *guides a bewildered* **IMOGENE** *back to the sofa.* **EADDY** *and* **BEATRICE** *look to each other for support.)*

PAT. Is something wrong here?

BEATRICE. Oh no no no... Imogene is just...we are...uh... um... *(Gets an idea.)* We are rehearsing a little skit we put together for the Senior Gals on the Go meeting next week. Imogene just *loves* to stay in her character... she's so dedicated.

PAT. *(Suspicious.)* A skit…about what?

BEATRICE. *(Grasping.)* Well…um…it's a skit about…um –

*(***IMOGENE** *rises in a trance and begins talking and flirting with someone who is not there.)*

IMOGENE. Captain Stubing…Captain Stubing…I'm so excited to be on The Pacific Princess. Could you please get Gopher to escort me to my room? And I'll see you tonight at the Captain's table…you naughty naughty boy –

EADDY. *(Quickly covering.)* It's about some ladies who go on a cruise to…um…the Bahamas on the…um…Love Boat…and uh –

*(***IMOGENE** *abruptly stops speaking and becomes angry.)*

IMOGENE. And he does not look *anything* like Charles Manson!

BEATRICE. *(Pulling* **IMOGENE** *down to the sofa.)* Um… yes…they all get on the Love Boat with…uh…Charles Manson.

PAT. Charles Manson? *(Taken aback.)* Are you talking about the psycho murderer from the sixties?

EADDY. Yes…well…it's uh –

BEATRICE. *(Quickly.)* It's a comedy –

EADDY. It's hysterical. Ha ha ha –

*(***EADDY** *and* **BEATRICE** *both begin to laugh nervously as* **IMOGENE** *looks at them, confused.)*

IMOGENE. *(Vaguely returning to reality.)* What's so funny girls…did I…did I zone again?

PAT. Zone?

*(***EADDY** *quickly covers.)*

EADDY. *(Clapping.)* …Bravo Imogene –

BEATRICE. Oh…uh…yes…good job gal…so realistic…Oscar-worthy performance!

(Both ladies clap frantically as **IMOGENE** *hesitantly bows.)*

PAT. OK, I know something's not right here…but I do not have time for this ridiculousness… I have medicine to dole out to you old fools. If I am going to get that administrator's position…I can't stand around here all day listening to your drama.

(Looking at her list she calls a name:)

Fletcher!

(Louder:)

Imogene Fletcher!

(She recognizes **IMOGENE** *and snaps her fingers.)*

Oh yeah, you. OK here…take this.

(She gives **IMOGENE** *her medicine cup then turns and exits right.)*

BEATRICE & EADDY. *(Sweetly.)* Bye Bye!

EADDY. *(Muttering.)* God help us all if she becomes the administrator.

BEATRICE. *(Worried.)* Imogene honey…you are scaring the sh–

(Looks at **EADDY***'s disapproving glare.)*

Uh sorry…you are scaring the crap out of us. You need to get some help.

(She takes the little medicine cup from **IMOGENE** *and looks in the cup.)*

Wait…are you sure this is your medicine? This doesn't look like your medicine.

EADDY. Hey…why *do* they bring you your medication? I mean…I'm not trying to get into your personal business…but I keep my meds in my room.

BEATRICE. Yes…me too.

IMOGENE. Really?

(Puzzled.)

Well…when I moved in…Nurse Pat came to my room and told me that she would keep it in the nurses' station…then she gathered it all up and took it with her.

BEATRICE. That's odd…that's very odd.

EADDY. Have you talked to Doctor Head about this memory thing sugar?

*(***BEATRICE** *begins to laugh.)*

BEATRICE. That man is an idiot…he –

(She looks into the medicine cup.)

Honey, I really don't think this is the right medicine.

EADDY. Now…I know he is a little old and crotchety…but –

BEATRICE. His mother must have been a moron. I mean… what woman…in her right mind…with the last name Head…names their child Richard?

(Beat.)

OH and get this…his sister's name…is Anita.

EADDY. Bless their hearts.

IMOGENE. *(Takes medicine cup and peers in.)* That man is older than dirt…yes…this is my medicine…I think.

(She takes the medicine.)

EADDY. Last week…Gayle Saunders went to see him with an earache and before she knew it…he was planning to Life Flight her to Atlanta for brain surgery. She just wanted some ear drops.

BEATRICE. There's no telling what he will want to do with poor Imogene. He'll probably just wanna put her down.

EADDY. Beatrice!

IMOGENE. I don't want to talk about it anymore… I –

EADDY. We *have* to talk about that memory loss of yours miss lady. I mean…I don't want to get into your personal business…but what if it's the All Timers? I swear if you don't get some reliable medical attention you are going to end up…uh…

(She points off left and whispers:)

EADDY. On "the dark side."

(All three turn their heads in unison and stare stage left.)

IMOGENE. *(Worried.)* Oh girls…I never had these memory problems before I moved here…well…not that I'm aware of anyway. I'm taking all my meds like I'm supposed to –

BEATRICE. Well something ain't working looney tunes.

EADDY. *(Scolding.)* Beatrice!

BEATRICE. OH come on…she knows I'm joking. Don't ya crazy pants?

IMOGENE. Of course I do…ya old toothless bat.

EADDY. Imogene honey –

IMOGENE. *(Anxious.)* I'm really worried girls… I don't want to end up over on the dark side. Why does everyone call it the dark side anyway?

BEATRICE. Because…there are a bunch of pitiful old people over there sitting around in the dark…alone…drooling on themselves.

IMOGENE. *(Shivering.)* How awful.

EADDY. You know…it seems like there are more moving over there every day. I saw Minnie Roberts last week…she was fluttering about and being a social butterfly. Two days later…I saw them rolling her down the breezeway to the dark side…she was babbling like a wacko and her eyes were rolling back in her head.

BEATRICE. *(Realization.)* Yes…you're right…same thing with Joe Porter *and* Mable Dupree.

IMOGENE. *(Panicked and pacing.)* Oh my God girls…they are going to take me over there and dump me in a padded room.

(Beat.)

I'm gonna be a drooling vegetable –

EADDY. Ima honey…don't worry…we won't let that happen. Will we Beatty?

BEATRICE. Of course not sugar…we'll disguise you and put you on a bus up to Canada before that happens.

EADDY. Beatrice…get serious!

BEATRICE. *(Adamant.)* I am serious.

IMOGENE. Ohmygod –

BEATRICE. OK…good…so it's settled…if they come to take Ima off to the dark side…we will throw her in the trunk of your Lincoln and haul her off to the Greyhound station. Now…while you are at least mildly lucid Sybil… can we get back to our vacation plans?

*(***IMOGENE** *sits.)*

EADDY. Beatrice…Imogene needs our help.

BEATRICE. And like I said…I will be happy to help her…but can we *please* finalize this trip first? Imogene may want one last happy hoorah before we put her on a bus to Nova Scotia. Now, listen…I want to plan our cruise… OK?

IMOGENE. Fine –

EADDY. OK…whatever –

BEATRICE. Now who else can we invite? We need a fourth.

*(***EADDY** *begins to pray.* **BEATRICE** *is disgusted.* **IMOGENE** *is bewildered.)*

EADDY. Dear Lord *please* forgive this heathen woman for only caring about herself and the carnal desires of her burning loins. Please do not do anything horrible to her…such as striking her down with burning hemorrhoids. She may be a selfish sinner Lord…but she is my friend and I love her. Amen.

IMOGENE. *(Confused.)* Uh…Amen?

BEATRICE. Listen to me! I want to go on a cruise! I want to wine and dine and dance the night away.

(Beginning to fantasize, she rises.)

I want to run on the beach and get my hair braided like Bo Derek. But most of all I want to meet a Silver Fox and get a little pickle tickle while I still can…without needing a nebulizer treatment afterwards.

EADDY. Beatty you really are a floozy.

IMOGENE. I can't believe you are into those one-night stands.

BEATRICE. Oh honey…I don't stand.

EADDY. Beatrice Shelton…just because you have a scandalous past *does not* mean you can't change your future.

IMOGENE. A scandalous past?

BEATRICE. Eaddy…look what you have done! Imogene was the one person besides you in this place who will speak to me like I am a human being –

IMOGENE. What are you talking about?

EADDY. Well she was going to find out sooner or later –

BEATRICE. Well it's not like I'm ashamed –

IMOGENE. *(Apprehensive.)* Ashamed…of what?

EADDY. *(Gently.)* Imogene…Beatrice here has a little secret…it's not a big deal…it's just that some people don't under–

BEATRICE. Well…it's not exactly a secret –

EADDY. Imogene it's not a big deal… Beatrice was –

IMOGENE. *(Throwing her hands up.)* Wait wait wait… I knew it… I knew it I knew it.

(Beat, and then, pointing at **BEATRICE***:)*

YOU'RE REALLY A MAN!… I should have known with those big ole feet of yours…and that awful wig is a dead giveaway.

BEATRICE. *(Appalled.)* WHAT?! Oh Good Lord Imogene… I am not a man… I was a stripper…and this is *MY HAIR*!

EADDY. Beatty…you were not a stripper…you were a –

(Grandly:)

Lady of Burlesque.

BEATRICE. Oh hell Eaddy…I was a stripper…and I am not ashamed.

IMOGENE. *(Disappointed.)* Oh…well poo…I have to admit I'm a little disappointed…I thought it was going to be something more exciting.