Acting Edition

The Kitchen Witches

by Caroline Smith

This sample is an excerpt of a Concord Theatricals title.

Samples of Concord Theatricals titles are for perusal and cannot be used for performance or downloaded, printed, and distributed in any way.

This sample may not reflect the version of the play currently in print.

SAMUEL FRENCH

Copyright © 2006, 2021 by Caroline Smith
All Rights Reserved

THE KITCHEN WITCHES is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all member countries of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Universal Copyright Convention, and/or the World Trade Organization conforming to the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-63286-0

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

FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

United States and Canada
info@concordtheatricals.com
1-866-979-0447

United Kingdom and Europe
licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk
020-7054-7200

Each title is subject to availability from Concord Theatricals Corp., depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *THE KITCHEN WITCHES* may not be licensed by Concord Theatricals Corp. in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Concord Theatricals Corp. office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *THE KITCHEN WITCHES* is subject to a licensing fee. The purchase, renting, lending or use of this book does not constitute a license to perform this title(s), which license must be obtained from Concord Theatricals Corp. prior to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a license is a violation of federal law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to civil penalties. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Concord Theatricals Corp.

This work is published by Samuel French, an imprint of Concord Theatricals Corp.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, scanned, uploaded, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, digital, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall share this title(s), or any part of this title(s), through any social media or file hosting websites.

For all inquiries regarding motion picture, television, online/digital and other media rights, please contact Concord Theatricals Corp.

MUSIC AND THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music and/or other copyrighted third-party materials (e.g., artworks, logos) in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music and materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, including without limitation music, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Corp., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees. For music, please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

THE KITCHEN WITCHES premiered at the Stirling Festival Theatre in Stirling, Ontario on June 11, 2003. The performance featured sets by Franklin G. Stapley, costumes by Alice Fleming, lighting by Renée Brode, set painting by Lise Lindenberg and Perry Poupore, props by Donna Moorman, and "Witches Jingle" by Michael Barber. The production stage manager was Marilyn Lawrie. The cast was as follows:

DOLLY BIDDLE. . . . . .Diane Fabian
STEPHEN BIDDLE . . . . . Ken MacDougall
ISOBEL LOMAX . . . . . .Barbara Wheeldon
ROB THE CAMERA GUY . . . . . Rob Middleton

CHARACTERS

DOLLY BIDDLE – a fiftyish little cherub of a woman, prone to overweight but always going at top speed. She indulges herself with anything life has to offer whenever possible – even if it's not good for her?! – and her creative imagination knows no bounds. She is intensely proud of her son Stephen, loves to dispense advice along with recipes for cabbage rolls and borscht and hates Isobel Lomax with an intensity usually reserved for detonating nuclear devices.

STEPHEN BIDDLE – a nervous, prematurely balding but decent young man who actually enjoys producing this low-budget online cooking show, even though his mom is the occasionally-naughty star. He is thirtyish, bright and capable, if somewhat shy, but always reluctant to confront Dolly on her many shortcomings. He's not a fighter; he'd rather be a lover, but nobody's asked him yet.

ISOBEL LOMAX – thinks Martha Stewart could learn something about homemaking from her. She trained at the Cordon Bleu and enjoyed a successful career, including her own show *Busy Izzy*. Isobel likes people to think she has a much classier background than reality supports; she would never go out without being properly accessorized. At heart, she is a bright funny and articulate woman who has come to terms with the choices she made early in life.

ROB – The Camera Guy/Gal/Person – non-speaking role (except for the final line!). Rob is a young "Goth" inspired person; Stephen is a little afraid of him/her. He/she cleans up the sets, resets props, carries the camera around during the "live broadcasts" and despite his/her appearance, is generally extremely efficient and precise.

PLAYWRIGHT'S PRODUCTION NOTES

The show takes place in the "multi-purpose" studio within a small-town Community Centre, generally a black box with a stage at one end and flexible audience seating. At least, that's what it should feel like. The main thing is to not make it look too slick at first, it should have an amateurish feel. Act II can be "glitzier" as the show grows in popularity and success.

Over the years, some productions of *KW* have used a live camera with screens or monitors on either side of the stage so that the "studio audience" can see what the viewing audience at home can see, but I strongly feel that this is a distraction. The focus for the in-theatre audience should be the actors and the action on stage.

Rob the Camera Guy can also be Roberta the Camera Girl or Rob the Gender-Fluid Person. Although mostly silent, this character does a lot to keep the action moving, becomes quite a hit with the audience, and has the last line which always earns a huge laugh. Cast wisely.

All references to sponsors, locations, pop culture etc. can be changed to fit the needs of the producing theatre. Keep it relevant!

Finally, the show absolutely must be played *fast*. It is not Ibsen or Chekhov. It is a silly yet delightful little souffle, and falls flatter than a pancake if your actors don't fill it with energy and sparkle, especially Dolly. Run it almost at "Italian" speed, pausing only for laughter and the occasional "beat." Have fun. And especially in this post-2020 era…wash your hands.

Caroline Smith
Playwright

ACT I

Scene One

(We are in the multi-purpose studio within a small-town community center. An amateurish cooking-show set features a prep counter at center stage with sink, fridge etc. at upstage. Everything should look "portable" because it is. Offstage right is a door leading to Dressing Room One; the removable sign in a holder currently reads "Ms. Biddle." Dressing Room Two is stage left, but the name holder is empty. A third door leads to the rest of the community center. A young goth-looking **PERSON** *wearing blacks, tattoos, and a backwards baseball hat is holding a vlogging camera. A* **MAN** *in his thirties, wearing a somewhat rumpled suit, enters and speaks to the "studio audience." He is a little uneasy about this – he really doesn't like public speaking.)*

STEPHEN. Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to *Baking with Babcha*. How are you all doing today? *(Ad lib.)* I see a couple of familiar faces…hello there, Mrs. Hutchinson – how's the rash? Good… And there's old George… George? *(Over-enunciate, George is hard of hearing.)* Babcha wanted me to let you know she got your letter – *(He holds up a coloured piece of paper.)* and she thought your idea for using Babcha's Chocolate Syrup was really interesting. Unfortunately, health regulations forbid us from having Babcha, uh – *(He*

reads.) "dip you in it from head to toe" as you suggest… you are not a well man, George.

So, how many of you have ever watched a videocast in person? Anyone? Okay, for you first-timers, let me tell you a little about what's going to happen here today. My name is Stephen Biddle, and I am *Baking with Babcha*'s producer and director. And this is Rob, our Digital Media Co-op student from the excellent "Getting Our Kids off the Street" program.

*(***ROB** *gives the audience the "rock-and-roll sign" – pinky and index fingers extended.)*

Thanks to the miracle of today's fast-paced social media, Rob will be filming today's show and live-streaming it. That means anything that happens in our cozy little studio here in the Crossroads Community Centre will be zapped out over the interweb and instantly seen by… dozens of people. Anyway…

*(***ROB** *whistles and holds up one finger…)*

Rob is letting me know that we'll be starting in about a minute. One final thing – since today is our very last live show, how about we bring Babcha on with the biggest round of applause ever! Just watch the sign and when it lights up, give it everything you've got. And remember – have fun everyone! *(Knocking on stage right door.)* Fifteen seconds, Babcha! Have a great show!

DOLLY. *(From off stage, in thick Ukrainian accent.)* Are they good audience?

STEPHEN. They're going to be a great audience, Babcha – best we've ever had!

DOLLY. Stephen, did you check props…

STEPHEN. You know I always check the props…

DOLLY. Did you check mail…

STEPHEN. Ma! Five seconds! I gotta go!!!

DOLLY. So go already, vot's keeping you?

STEPHEN. In...three...two...one!

(A bouncy polka starts.)*

(On microphone, over the music.) And now, in front of a live studio audience in the Crossroads Community Centre, here is the final episode of... *Baking With Babcha*!

(The APPLAUSE *sign lights up and* **DOLLY BIDDLE**, *in somewhat tacky Ukrainian Grandma dress, emerges from her dressing room. She is, quite simply, an adorable human dynamo. She crosses downstage, addressing the audience as* **ROB** *follows her with the camera, recording every move. She speaks with a thick Ukrainian accent.)*

DOLLY. Hello, dears! Oh, so nice to see you today! Hello, Mrs. H, nice to see you not scratching – looking good! Hello, Georgie – Georgie – "dip me in chocolate" – you are bad boy. Bad boy! *(She winks seductively.)* I speak to you after show, come to dressing room. Hoi! How is everyone today? Oh, so good, so good! And all you peoples watching at home, hello dears! Hello, Elm Street United Ladies Bridge Club! Hello, Mabel and Gladys at the Knitting Nook! *(She pronounces the "k" in "knitting" and the invisible "k" in "nook.")*

Did you hear sad introduction? Yes, what Stephen say is true – today is last *Baking with Babcha* show. Ya! After today, no more Babcha cabbage roll. No more Babcha borscht. No more Babcha. Is tragic, like

---

*A license to produce *The Kitchen Witches* does not include a performance license for any third-party or copyrighted music. Licensees should create an original composition or use music in the public domain. For further information, please see the Music and Third Party Materials Use Note on page iii.

Russian play. And you know why? Community Centre say not enough peoples watch Babcha's show, they want more space for Pickleball. Pickleball! I tell them, "Hey! – I make pickle beets, what you want with pickle balls?!" And Babcha cannot do live show from tiny kitchen at home, Babcha needs live audience! Babcha needs laughter and applause!

*(***STEPHEN** *is frantically signaling* **DOLLY** *to get on with the show.)*

Babcha needs to move on with show. Is good idea. Have you met my boy Stephen? No? Come here, Stephen, come…

(She drags the reluctant **STEPHEN** *into camera view.)*

STEPHEN. Babcha…

DOLLY. My friends – say hello to Stephen. You know who is Stephen? Stephen is wonderful producer, wonderful director, and wonderful Babcha son! Say hello to peoples at home, dear.

STEPHEN. Hello peoples at home! Okay, Babcha…

DOLLY. Is hard-working, good-looking boy, yes? And you know vot? Babcha is so proud because Stephen is quit smoking! Such a good boy! How many days you quit now, Stephen?

STEPHEN. Four days, Ma.

DOLLY. *Four days* and no cancer stick, isn't that something? And you know what else?

STEPHEN. Oh, please don't…

DOLLY. Stephen is *single*! Can you believe, girls?

STEPHEN. Okay, that's enough, Babcha…

DOLLY. He got no job now and hair is getting little thin, but…girls at home – you write letter to Babcha and maybe I make blind date, eh?

STEPHEN. Ma!

DOLLY. What?

STEPHEN. Back to the show?

DOLLY. Hey, this *is* show!

*(***STEPHEN** *starts to speak…)*

Okay, okay, I get on with show!

*(***STEPHEN** *returns to his podium.)*

I tell you, that boy is like a teepee and a wigwam…two tents! *("Too tense" …She laughs at her own joke, then abruptly slaps the counter and gets down to business.)* Okay! So today is last show, I am cooking special Last Ukrainian Supper. So on go the apron!

STEPHEN. *(On microphone.)* Today's apron has been generously donated by… *(He reads a small business card.)* Cindy's Cellar of Sin…? What the…

DOLLY. Stephen dear, apron donated from Dollar Store was okay if you like that kinda thing, but is last show and Babcha wants to go out with bang… *(She puts on a sexy "naked lady" apron.)* Bang! You like? Georgie, dear, don't look too close, pacemaker is not set for Va-va-va-voom! Okay, now apron is on, what is first thing we do before we cook? We wash our hands! Okay, everybodies…let's all wash our hands, all nice and clean…okay, good! So. Last Ukrainian Supper. We make pyrohy *(Pronounced pee-ro-heh.)* …okay. Many of you peoples say "perogies" …is wrong, wrong, wrong!! Is insult. Every time you say "perogies," a Ukrainian grandmother dies. Is true! So say with me…pee-ro-*heh*! Pee-ro-*heh*! Good. Then, we make Ukrainian Rhum Baba… Poppy Seed Rum Cake!

(She pulls a mickey of rum from under the counter.)

STEPHEN. No…

DOLLY. Always use best ingredients… Babcha must taste rum for quality…

(She pours a large shot, downs the whole glass.)

Hooee, that's the good stuff!!

*(***STEPHEN** *sneaks the bottle off the counter, takes it back to the podium.)*

So. First make the borscht. In pot, we have ready, nice beef stock. First we chop one big onion, sweet like lover's kiss; six pretty beets red like little children's cheeks, one nice carrot, long like…oh, boy! Okay, not too long.

(She chops off the end of the carrot.)

And now we chop, and we answer Babcha's mail. Stephen, who is writing to Babcha this week?

STEPHEN. *(On mic.)* Our first email is from Jane from Belleville. She writes, "Dear Babcha, I was wondering if you know Isobel Lo…" …oh, I'm sorry, Babcha, I don't know how this email got past me…

DOLLY. *(She has visibly stiffened.)* No, no, Stephen dear. Read nice email.

STEPHEN. Babcha, I don't think it's…

DOLLY. *(Threateningly.)* Read!!

STEPHEN. Uh…okay. "Dear Babcha, I was wondering if you know Isobel Lomax, who until recently hosted another online cooking show called *Busy Izzy*. If so, can you get me Izzy's recipe for traditional Steak and Kidney Pie? With thanks, your friend and fan, Jane from Belleville."

DOLLY. *(Smiling into the camera.)* Hello Jane dear! Of course I know that person you mention. But you sound like nice lady, so I do nice thing. I don't get you recipe. Why? Because only thing more tasteless than Isobel Lomax is her Snake and Pygmy pie!

STEPHEN. Okay, Babcha, let's get back to your borscht…

DOLLY. You know why Isobel Lomax stops doing *Busy Izzy* videos? Nobody watch them! Because she is boring person, not exciting like Babcha! And you know vot else? She steals recipes! Steals ideas! And that's not all…

STEPHEN. Babcha!! We promised we wouldn't say any more negative things about Isobel Lomax on this show…

DOLLY. So vot? Is last show – sue me!

ISOBEL. *(From the audience.)* What a marvelous idea!

*(***ISOBEL** *starts to make her way up onto the stage.* **ROB** *does his best to catch everything on camera.)*

DOLLY. Who… Vot… *(She gasps.)* … Isobel Lomax!

STEPHEN. Um…we're live-streaming…

ISOBEL. I am aware of that. I am also aware that this woman has been slandering me in public for long enough, and I thought your viewers might like to know that you will soon be getting a call from my lawyer.

DOLLY. I never said a word on this show that wasn't true!

ISOBEL. Liar! Does your viewing audience know that "Babcha from Ukraine" is really Dorothy Biddle from Sudbury?

DOLLY. *(Dropping the accent.)* How dare you…

ISOBEL. *(To camera.)* Although, Biddle is her married name. She used to be Dolly Plotznik.

DOLLY. At least I got married! At least I had a husband!

ISOBEL. Well, I *had* your husband more than you ever did!

DOLLY. Take that back!

ISOBEL. You know perfectly well I dated Larry Biddle first.

DOLLY. In your dreams! I was going steady with Larry long before you oozed onto the scene! Who did he take to the Senior Prom, huh?

ISOBEL. Who did he take to the Spring Social?

DOLLY. We got engaged in June of 1988! *(Select a date that makes sense for the ages of your actors.)*

ISOBEL. And broke up in August!

DOLLY. And married in December!

STEPHEN. What is happening...?

ISOBEL. Larry may have married you, dear – but I was the one who made him happy!

DOLLY. That man was never happy!

ISOBEL. How could he be, living with you?

(She points to her "ring" hand.)

DOLLY. What is that?

ISOBEL. What – this?

(And she holds up her hand, showing off a flashy ring.)

DOLLY. That's...that's the Biddle family heirloom ring!

ISOBEL. Yep.

DOLLY. It was Larry's Great-Grandmother's!

ISOBEL. Yep.

DOLLY. How did...

ISOBEL. Larry gave it to me.

DOLLY. When?

ISOBEL. When we were dating.

DOLLY. He told me he lost it.

ISOBEL. Nope.

DOLLY. You…you must have stolen it…

ISOBEL. How dare you!

DOLLY. That ring should be mine!

ISOBEL. You can pry this from my cold, dead hand!

DOLLY. *(Picking up her chopping knife.)* Fine by me!

STEPHEN. STOP!! Everybody…time out!

(They quiet.)

Babcha, please go back to your borscht. And Miss Lomax, if you would please return to your seat…

ISOBEL. Make me.

STEPHEN. What?

ISOBEL. Call me Miss Bird's Eye, I'm frozen to the spot!

DOLLY. What are you waiting for? Drag her out!

STEPHEN. I… Ma, you know I have a bad back…

DOLLY & ISOBEL. *(In perfect unison.)* Just like his father.

STEPHEN. Look, can't you two just shake hands and call it a day?

DOLLY. You want me to shake hands with the woman who broke up your parent's marriage?

ISOBEL. Your marriage was over before it started. It never should have happened.

DOLLY. But it did, didn't it!

ISOBEL. He only married you because I said no.

DOLLY. Excuse me?

STEPHEN. Ladies…

ISOBEL. And Larry didn't even like your cooking!

DOLLY. Now, that is an outright lie!

ISOBEL. He told me so the night he died.

STEPHEN. Wait a minute. You know something about the night my father died?

ISOBEL. Of course…

DOLLY. Stephen, dear – you don't need to hear this…

STEPHEN. All you told me was he had a heart attack.

DOLLY. You were only six when he died, Stephen. How do you tell a six-year-old that his daddy was in a No-Tell Motel getting busy with Izzy?

STEPHEN. You mean – he died while you were…

ISOBEL. Yep. It wasn't so much a heart attack as a coronary orgasm.

STEPHEN. I think I'm gonna throw up.

DOLLY. The shame of it all. We had to arrange a closed coffin.

ISOBEL. Yeah. They couldn't get the smile off his face.

STEPHEN. Dear God…let's wrap this up, ladies…

(He starts the polka jingle play-out.)*

DOLLY. But I didn't finish my recipes…

---

* A license to produce *The Kitchen Witches* does not include a performance license for any third-party or copyrighted music. Licensees should create an original composition or use music in the public domain. For further information, please see the Music and Third Party Materials Use Note on page iii.

STEPHEN. Wrap it up!!

DOLLY. Fine. *(Getting as close as possible to* **ROB***'s camera.)* Well, it's been wonderful sharing time with you each week, everyone – I'm so sorry to have to say goodbye.

ISOBEL. *(Squeezing into camera range.)* Remember to eat well and enjoy life...

DOLLY. ...and most importantly...wash your hands!

(They wave into the camera ad-libbing goodbyes until **ROB** *indicates they have turned off the camera.)*

STEPHEN. *(To the studio audience.)* Well, that's one way to end a showbiz career. Thanks for coming, everyone. Remember to take your coat and purse, Mrs. Hutchinson...

DOLLY. Goodbye George, dear – don't forget to drop me a line once in a while. Goodbye, everyone!

(She waves goodbye until the studio audience is "gone." **ROB** *exits, returning with tubs, clearing away the tops of the counters.)*

ISOBEL. Despite the unfortunate circumstances – Stephen, it was nice meeting you.

STEPHEN. *(His cell phone is chirping.)* Excuse me. *(He answers it.) Baking with Babcha*! Yes, this is Stephen Biddle...

DOLLY. You just had to mess things up for me one more time, didn't you. Just couldn't ever let me have the last word.

ISOBEL. Funny – in my recollection, you *always* had the last word, every single time. But here is my very last word to you – goodbye!

(She starts to exit.)

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and anything theater-related, follow us on our social media channels.

@ConcordShows and **@ConcordUKShows** on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

concord
theatricals