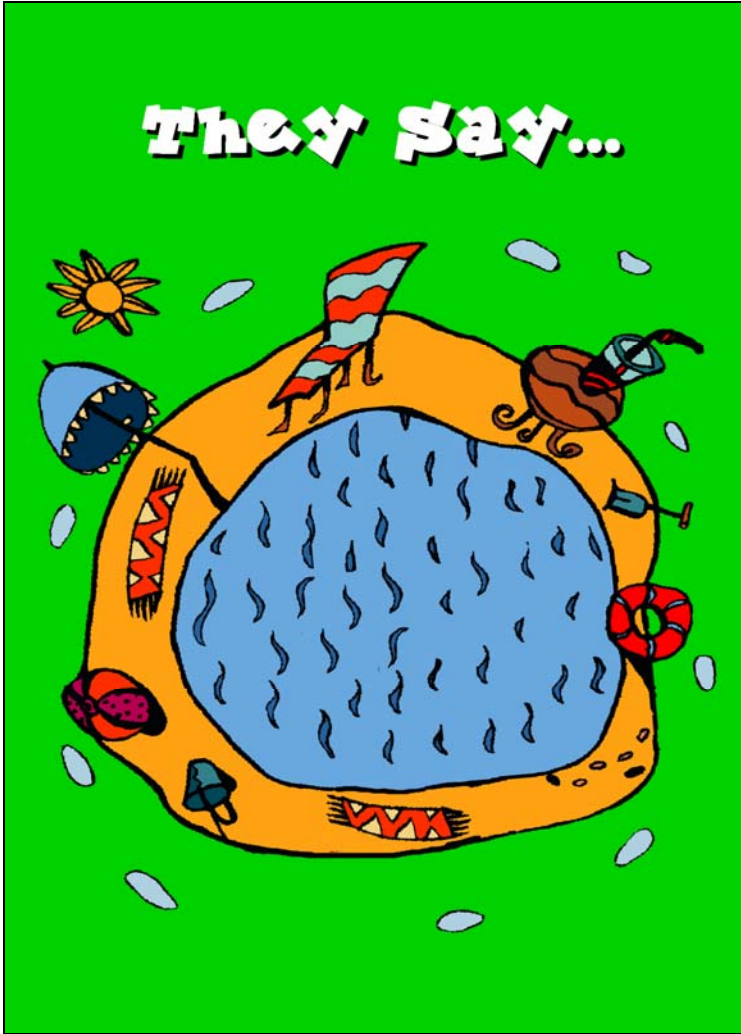


**They say...**



**BRADLEY HAYWARD**

Norman Maine Publishing

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## They Say...

**COMEDY.** They say you should never swim on a full stomach. They say you should never talk to strangers. They say you should never say never. Who exactly are “they”? And who do they think they are?! Martin and Gloria They, two know-it-alls, have moved in next door to Joe and Betty. These windbags think they have the answer to everything, and they instantly begin telling Betty and Joe what to do. But with the help of a blowtorch, a chainsaw, and a lawn chair, Betty and Joe are able to teach their annoying neighbors a thing or two. Opportunities to showcase physical humor abound in this witty, fast-paced comedy.

**Performance time:** Approximately 30 minutes.

## Characters

(2 M, 2 F, 1 flexible)

**JOE:** A happy-go-lucky guy who always goes with the flow and couldn't care less what people think of him; wears colorful swim trunks and a T-shirt.

**BETTY:** Joe's wife who is far more concerned with the opinions of others and can get a little bit moody from time to time; wears a barbecue apron over a swimsuit and has cast on her leg.

**KYLE/KRIS:** Joe and Betty's identical twins; Kyle is sarcastic and uncomfortable with parental displays of affection; Kris is more outgoing and willing to try anything; wears a baseball uniform; flexible. [If female, change "Kyle" to "Kyra."]

**MARTIN:** Joe and Betty's smug neighbor who thinks he knows everything but tries to pass himself off as "just one of the guys"; wears a white tennis outfit with a matching cardigan wrapped around his waist.

**GLORIA:** Martin's judgmental wife who thinks she knows even more than her husband and has absolutely no problem telling people what's on her mind; wears a white tennis outfit similar to Martin's.

## Setting

Joe and Betty's suburban back yard on a hot summer day.

## Set

There are a couple of lawn chairs scattered around along with inflatable pool toys and other summertime play things. A grill faces front and has hotdogs, buns, and cooking utensils on a tray next to it. A tall fence borders the back of the entire yard and has trees poking over it from the other side.

## Props

Barbeque tongs	Metamucil
Tray	Hotdogs
Inflatable pool toys	Snorkeling mask
Hotdog buns	Ice cream cone
Towel	Blow torch
Lawn chair	Chainsaw
Crutches	Charred, sooty tennis outfit, for Gloria
Baseball bat	Swimsuit or swim trunks, for Kyle
Cooler	
Cans of Slim-Fast	

## Sound Effect

Chainsaw  
Chainsaw cutting through wood

They Say...  
7

**“We talk  
and people listen.”**

**—Gloria**

## They Say...

*(AT RISE: Joe and Betty's suburban back yard on a sweltering afternoon. The intermittent sound of a chainsaw interrupts what should otherwise be a perfect summer day. Betty stands behind the barbecue, wearing an apron over her bathing suit. One of her legs is in a cast, so she has to put half her weight on a crutch. Her skin glistens with sweat as she as she tries to fire up the grill.)*

JOE: *(Offstage.)* How long until the hotdogs are done?

BETTY: They say you shouldn't swim on a full stomach.

JOE: *(Offstage.)* Then toss one in the pool and see if it floats!

BETTY: Did you fill the propane tank like I asked?

JOE: *(Offstage.)* Sure did.

BETTY: Then why did it go out?

JOE: *(Offstage.)* Don't ask me.

BETTY: Hop out of there and help me.

JOE: *(Offstage.)* Only if you say please.

BETTY: Now!

JOE: *(Offstage.)* Coming, dear.

BETTY: *(Mutters to herself.)* It figures. Labor Day and I'm the one laboring.

*(Joe enters, toweling his wet hair. He's wearing a soaked T-shirt and a colorful pair of swim trunks.)*

JOE: What was that?

BETTY: Nothing. Are you sure you filled the tank?

JOE: Sure did...right after Susan's wedding.

BETTY: That was last summer.

JOE: Yeah, but how many times did you haul out the barbecue over the winter?

BETTY: Tanks dry up, Joe. And why are you wearing that T-shirt in the pool when I specifically asked you not to?

JOE: Listen to you, baby cakes. Why the angry voice? It's a beautiful day. The sun is shining! The birds are chirping!



They Say...  
9

*(Sound of a chainsaw cutting through a piece of wood.)*

BETTY: And the chainsaw massacre continues...

JOE: Is that what's got you down?

BETTY: I was asleep not five minutes before they started up again this morning.

JOE: Just try to ignore it.

BETTY: That's easy for you to say. You can sleep through anything. I'm surprised we ever managed to have children.

JOE: It's not so bad.

BETTY: Three weeks it's been going on like this. Are they building a monument, or what?

JOE: Step aside and relax. *(Flirtatiously.)* Let a stud light your fire.

BETTY: Look, these hotdogs are cooked on one side and raw on the other.

JOE: Just put the raw side down in the bun.

BETTY: Very funny. And take off that shirt before you get back in the pool.

*(Kyle enters behind them, unnoticed. He is wearing a baseball uniform and is carrying a bat over his shoulder.)*

JOE: But what would the neighbors think?

BETTY: That you should probably hit the gym.

JOE: My love handles are just for you, baby.

*(Joe playfully wraps his arms around Betty.)*

BETTY: Now, now! The neighbors!

JOE: *(Nuzzles her neck.)* Forget the neighbors.

BETTY: *(Smiles.)* I'm sorry. It's not you. You know I love your handles.

JOE: And you know how to get my motor running.

BETTY: *(Pinches his waist.)* Vroom, vroom!

KYLE: Knock it off.

*(Startled, Joe and Betty hastily pull apart.)*

BETTY: Kyle, honey! When did you get home?

KYLE: In the nick of time, apparently.

JOE: What? You should be happy I can still turn your mom's crank.

KYLE: Dad...

JOE: Yeah, Son?

KYLE: Barf.

BETTY: Where's your brother?

JOE: *(Sarcastically.)* He stayed after the game to do drugs under the bleachers.

BETTY: Kyle!

KYLE: Mom, chill. He went for ice cream with the guys.

JOE: Ignore your mother. She's a little sleep deprived.

*(Sound of a chainsaw starting up again.)*

KYLE: Oh, that. I don't know why it bothers you. It sounds just like that make-out band you guys like so much.

JOE: Make-out band?

BETTY: I think he means Kiss.

JOE: Oh, Kiss! Kinda does sound like that, doesn't it? Rock on, dude!

KYLE: Dad...

JOE: Yeah, Son?

KYLE: Stop it.

BETTY: Believe me, if it was Kiss, I'd pull up a lawn chair and throw my bra over the fence.

KYLE: Mom...

BETTY: I know, I know...gross. But it's not. It's our stupid new neighbors who haven't even had the decency to come over and introduce themselves...let alone apologize for the ongoing racket.

JOE: They're probably perfectly nice people.

**They Say...**

11

*(Betty sits in a lawn chair.)*

BETTY: Maybe so, but it's too late now. If I see those idiots, they're getting a crutch up their butt!

KYLE: Then you better get it ready.

BETTY: Why?

KYLE: They followed me up the driveway.

BETTY: What?!

KYLE: Gotta run.

*(Kyle dashes off. As Kyle exits, Martin and Gloria creep on opposite Kyle. Martin and Gloria are wearing matching white tennis outfits and condescending smiles. Martin is carrying a cooler.)*

GLORIA: *(To Joe, Betty.)* Knock, knock.

MARTIN: *(To Joe, Betty.)* Howdy, neighbors.

JOE: Well, hi there. Look, honey. It's the new neighbors. They've come to *be nice and say hello.*

BETTY: *(To Gloria and Martin, with a forced smile.)* Hello.

GLORIA: I hope we're not barging in, but we smelled your barbecue and thought we'd pop over to introduce ourselves.

MARTIN: The name's Martin. Martin They. *(Shakes hands with Joe.)* And this is my wife, Gloria.

GLORIA: Gloria They. *(Shakes hands with Betty.)*

MARTIN/GLORIA: We are the Theys.

JOE: I'm Joe and this is Betty.

JOE/BETTY: We are the Griffins. *(Confused as to why they also spoke in unison, Joe and Betty look at each other and shrug.)*

MARTIN: Pleased to make your acquaintance.

BETTY: *(To Martin and Gloria, under her breath but loud enough for them to hear.)* Took you long enough.

*(Joe jabs Betty in her side.)*

JOE: *(To Gloria and Martin.)* What she means is...it was worth the wait.

GLORIA: Sorry about that. What with all the work on the house, we haven't had much time to meet the neighbors.

MARTIN: Although you could have come over to greet us. It's not like we have an electric fence.

GLORIA: Yet.

BETTY: Oh, I came over, all right, but one of your construction workers knocked me into a giant pit.

MARTIN: That would be our pool.

GLORIA: You should see it! It's just wonderful! It's Olympic-sized and everything. Sure, we had to demolish half the house and knock down every elm, but it was well worth it. Swimming is excellent cardiovascular exercise and when the world has got you down, there's nothing quite like floating on a wet water noodle!

BETTY: Thanks for your concern.

GLORIA: You weren't hurt, were you?

BETTY: Not at all. *(Points to her leg with the crutch.)* I'm just preserving my leg for future generations.

GLORIA: Don't tell me you broke your leg in our pool?

BETTY: *(Nods.)* In the deep end.

JOE: *(Smiles jovially to lighten the mood.)* Well, you know what they say, "Always look where you're going."

MARTIN: As a matter of fact, we did say that.

GLORIA: Good memory.

*(Joe and Betty stare blankly. Joe begins to laugh, perhaps a little too hard. Martin and Gloria look confused.)*

JOE: That's funny! Their last name is They, so when I said, "They say you should always look where you're going," they made a joke as if I was talking about them. That's so funny! Right, dear? Please laugh...because their name is They! Get it?

BETTY: I get it. It's just not that funny.

GLORIA: We apologize for the construction.

MARTIN: And your leg.

GLORIA: Right. And the leg.

MARTIN: I hope the noise hasn't been keeping you awake at night.

JOE: Not at all.

MARTIN: We simply must have a pool wherever we go.

GLORIA: But don't you worry. They filled it with water this morning and put the door on five minutes ago. That should be the last of the noise.

BETTY: *(Sarcastic.)* Noise? What noise? Ha, ha.

GLORIA: We thought it was high time to bring a peace offering.

MARTIN: We always say, "You should keep your friends close and your enemies closer." *(Holds out the cooler.)* Enjoy.

JOE: Well, isn't that nice. Look what they brought us, honey.

BETTY: Thank you.

*(Joe throws open the lid and pulls out a can of Slim-Fast.)*

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**