

IT HAPPENED ONE SUMMER...



Steven Stack

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

P.O. Box 1401

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KETCHUP SWEATS: A LOVE STORY

*To Brenda Miller,
who shared her story with me
of living with Ketchup Sweats.*

HOT ENOUGH TO FRY AN EGG

*To my oldest daughter Chloe Stack,
who despises puns
as much as her mother loves them.*

THE LAST DAY OF SUMMER

*To my brother Chris Stack,
who as a teenager,
told me he wrote a song and sang it
to a girl he met at the beach one summer.
The song was called "Farewell My Summer Love"
and he was lying about writing it.
Though I don't think his "summer love" ever found out.*

THE KIDDIE POOL MASSACRE

*To my youngest daughter Zoe Stack,
who always laugh at the jokes
no one else finds funny beside the two of us.*

IT HAPPENED ONE SUMMER

COMEDY COLLECTION. Kick back and enjoy a sizzlin' summer of silliness in this sensational collection of four short plays. In "Ketchup Sweats," Berkley discovers he suffers from a rare genetic disorder, which forces him to rethink his favorite food...ketchup. In "Hot Enough to Fry an Egg," a pun-loving, talking egg is egg-napped by a foul fowl. In "The Last Day of Summer," Freddy tries to convince his girlfriend that he is a jerk so he doesn't have to tell her the truth. And in "The Kiddie Pool Massacre," a narcissistic rich girl summons three "friends" to her backyard for a kiddie pool murder investigation.

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

KETCHUP SWEATS A LOVE STORY

(1 M, 2 F, 1 flexible)

BERKLEY: Teen in love with ketchup who discovers he has a rare genetic disorder; male.

BRENDA: Berkley's girlfriend whose father is a ketchup farmer; female.

CANDACE: Berkley's sarcastic older sister; female.

OFFICER GENE: Officer who enforces park rules by carrying around absurd signs; flexible.

HOT ENOUGH TO FRY AN EGG

(1 M, 2 F, 2 flexible)

EGWARD "MR. EGG MAN": A walking, talking egg who loves egg puns; wears an egg costume; male.

DIANE DUBEAKSKE: Egward's vengeful sister, a chicken who kidnaps Egward and ties him to an asphalt sidewalk; wears a chicken costume; female.

ELEANOR EGGBERT: Chicken farmer who ate Egward and Diane's mother; female.

BLAINE: Benji's best friend and writing partner; flexible.

BENJI: Blaine's best friend and writing partner; flexible.

THE LAST DAY OF SUMMER

(1 M, 1 F)

FREDDY: Glenda's boyfriend who is only in town for the summer and doesn't want Glenda to meet "School Freddy"; male.

GLENDA: Freddy's summertime girlfriend; female.

THE KIDDIE POOL MASSAGE

(1 M, 2 F, 1 flexible)

EZRA KINGSBURY: Mean, narcissistic rich girl who claims she is kiddie-pool royalty; unpopular with her classmates; female.

CASPIAN THORNBURGER: High school student from a wealthy family who hates the word "fart"; female.

THANE HUCKLEBERRY: High school student from a wealthy family who yearns to go to a relatively excellent college; flexible.

HAINSWORTH SMITH: High school student whose family is wealthy because they won the lottery; male.

SETS

Ketchup Sweats: A park, summer.

Hot Enough to Fry an Egg: Asphalt sidewalk, August.

The Last Day of Summer: A park, August. There is a bench.

The Kiddie Pool Massacre: Ezra's backyard. There is a partially deflated kiddie pool with a small table near it.

PROPS

Ketchup Sweats: A Love Story: A bowl of ketchup, an outdoor thermometer, a blanket, assorted picnic items, a wrapped present, a notebook, a ketchup sandwich, a sign that reads, "Talking to yourself in this park is strictly forbidden," a sign that reads, "No signs about rules can be displayed in the park," a sign that reads, "No temporary love-plan planning," a sign that reads, "Invited guests of a picnic are not allowed to leave a picnic until said picnic is complete (even if the participants had to break up their forever love because of a real disorder that sounds completely made up.)"

Hot Enough to Fry an Egg: A rope, a picture of Mother Clucker, a giant tub of chicken lard, a picture of an egg with arms and legs cuddling up to a chick, a trophy for "Double Fisherman's Knot Untying Contest," a trophy for "New Record in Untying a Double Fisherman's Knot," a clock, and two tickets.

The Last Day of Summer: A sketchbook, a pencil, a drawing.

The Kiddie Pool Massacre: A partially deflated kiddie pool, an umbrella drink, a plastic toy knife, and 3 cell phones.

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**"...WHEN I IMAGINED ALL THE THINGS
THAT COULD END OUR FOREVER LOVE,
I NEVER ONCE IMAGINED
THAT IT WOULD BE FEAR OF...
CONDIMENT."**

-BRENDA

KETCHUP SWEATS A LOVE STORY

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: *Outdoors, mid-morning. There is an unseen meadow nearby. Berkley is seated, eating a bowl of ketchup. Ketchup is his favorite food for breakfast, lunch, snacks, and dinner. Suddenly, he feels like he's on fire.*)

BERKLEY: Why am I so heated? (*Takes out an outdoor thermometer and checks the air temperature.*) 67.5 degrees. That's the ideal outdoor temperature for me. (*Eats some more ketchup and begins sweating.*) Am I having hot flashes? (*Gasps.*) Is this early-onset menopause?

(*Candace enters.*)

CANDACE: Doubtful, Berkley. It's something far worse. I knew it would happen at some point, and I knew that I would be the one who would gloriously have to tell you the news since Mom and Dad have been on that "recharging vacation" for the past three years. (*Dramatically.*) You, my friend—my lovely brother with minimal discernable unique qualities—have been given a wonderful genetic gift.

BERKLEY: It's early-onset menopause, isn't it? (*Crosses away from her.*) I should have known. All the signs were there.

CANDACE: Were they?

BERKLEY: Oh, yeah. The hot flashes, the...and the...and...hot flashes. (*Turns to Candace.*) You know, besides hot flashes, I don't know any other symptom of menopause...or if a teenage boy can get menopause.

CANDACE: Well, there is male menopause, but the difference is that male menopause features a slow decline in testosterone as men age. In contrast, as a woman ages, her hormones simply stop.

BERKLEY: I don't know any of those words...well, the big ones. I do know a few of the tiny ones like "A."

CANDACE: *(To herself.)* Wow, I got the looks *and* intelligence.

BERKLEY: Well, I got...charm...and apparently a genetic disorder. *(Approaches Candace and grabs her by the shoulders, dramatically.)* What is it?! You must tell me, Candace! Look at me! I'm sweating buckets of—! *(Realizes.)* Actually, I've stopped sweating. *(Lets go of Candace's shoulders and dramatically turns away from her.)* Am I about to go into a coma? I've heard of such things.

CANDACE: Have you?

BERKLEY: No.

CANDACE: Didn't think so. Anyway, let's go inside.

BERKLEY: *(Turns to Candace.)* Are you going to put me down because of my genetic disorder? How dare you not give me a chance to live out my last few precious moments!

CANDACE: No. I would have to put myself down as well because I have it, too. Mine, though, is a recessive recessive and yours is not. Why I'm bringing you into the house is that Mom and Dad prepared a booklet for me to use as I explain to you what this means.

BERKLEY: Am I going to be okay? I need to know because I'm meeting Brenda—you know, my beloved—and we're going to make our forever-love plans.

CANDACE: First, you're 14, stop. And, second... *(Puts her hand on his shoulder, dramatically.)* ...the life you knew as happy-go-lucky Berkley is over.

BERKLEY: Oh, dear! I need my ketchup bowl!

CANDACE: No, leave it. Trust me, it's better there.

(Berkley is in a state of shock. Candace takes one of Berkley's hands and leads him off. As lights fade to black, Berkley reaches out yearningly for his bowl of ketchup and exits.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: A delightful park, midday. Brenda is setting up a beautiful picnic. There is a wrapped present set off to one side. Excited and nervous, she starts pacing about.)

BRENDA: (To herself.) I can't believe that today Berkley and I will write in our journals about our forever love. (As in a musical, she looks up happily.) That's right, chirp away bluebirds of happiness...that I am sure would be chirping if there wasn't a rule in this park that bluebirds were not allowed to chirp nor be in the park. I hear you anyway, my bluebirds, even if you're not here...or chirping. Because happiness hears even when there's nothing to hear because what's to hear isn't here to create what's to hear. (Laughs.) That is a very confusing sentence! I wonder why my dear Berkley is late. (Officer Gene enters. Turns to him.) Hello, Officer Gene.

OFFICER GENE: Call me, "Officer Gene." And, hello, Brenda. Are you here with anyone?

BRENDA: Of course, silly...you.

OFFICER GENE: No, I mean before.

BRENDA: Before what?

OFFICER GENE: Before I got here.

BRENDA: Just the bluebirds.

OFFICER GENE: (Mood changes. Tense.) There were bluebirds here?

BRENDA: Only in my mind.

OFFICER GENE: Let's keep it that way. Who were you talking to?

BRENDA: Just a moment ago?

OFFICER GENE: Yes.

BRENDA: You.

OFFICER GENE: No. Go back more moments.

BRENDA: How many?

OFFICER GENE: Seventeen.

BRENDA: Oh. I was talking to myself. (*Officer Gene makes a condescending sound.*) Did I do something wrong?

OFFICER GENE: I'm afraid so. (*Pulls out a sign.*) Look...

(*Brenda looks at the sign.*)

BRENDA: (*Reads.*) "Talking to yourself in this park is strictly forbidden." (*Looks up at Officer Gene.*) Oh my, I'm so sorry. I was unaware of this new rule. Perhaps you should display the sign until all are aware of the new rule.

OFFICER GENE: Can't. (*Pulls out another sign.*)

BRENDA: (*Reads.*) "No signs about rules can be displayed in the park." I see.

[END OF FREEVIEW]

IT HAPPENED ONE SUMMER...
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**“WELL, THE TRUTH HURTS,
BUT NOT AS MUCH
AS BEING A CHARACTER
IN THIS SCENE...”**

—ELEANOR

HOT ENOUGH TO FRY AN EGG

(AT RISE: Asphalt sidewalk, very hot, late August. Our hero, Mr. Egg Man, is tied up on the asphalt sidewalk. He tries to move but cannot. He sighs.)

EGWARD: *(To himself.)* Um...a talking egg tied to an asphalt sidewalk on a summer day. It almost feels...staged. *(Pause.)* I suppose I'm about to find out if it's hot enough to fry a...me.

DIANE: *(Offstage.)* Oh, it is.

EGWARD: Who said that from a place where I can't egg-sactly see them?

DIANE: *(Offstage.)* The one who kidnapped and tied you to the asphalt.

EGWARD: Why don't I remember that happening?

DIANE: *(Offstage.)* Because I drugged you.

EGWARD: That's why I feel so eggs-hausted. *(Offstage, Diane groans.)* What?

DIANE: *(Offstage.)* Your egg puns are... *(Says it like "foul.")* ...fowl. I wish for you to stop.

EGWARD: You want me to stop *volking* around? Then reveal yourself, you dastardly villain!

DIANE: *(Offstage.)* Oh, I will. *(Pause.)* Or perhaps I already did...with a pun of my own.

EGWARD: I didn't hear anything that sounded punny. Pun-making deserves your best efforts and articulation, and you clearly did neither.

DIANE: *(Offstage.)* There you go again with your unhelpful hardboiled critiques.

EGWARD: *That* was somewhat good but also...false! Reveal yourself!

DIANE: *(Offstage.)* When the time is right.

(Pause.)

EGWARD: Which will be when? I mean, this skillet's gettin' hot in here—

DIANE: Now.

(Diane enters. She is a chicken.)

EGWARD: Mother Clucker!

DIANE: No, Mother Clucker is dead! Because of you!

EGWARD: Wait, what?

DIANE: That's right. Do you remember, Mr. Egg Man, three years ago on a busy street when you were walking and you had a chicken walking beside you? *(Egward thinks. Shouts.)* Of course, you do!

EGWARD: You know, it's a common fallacy that talking eggs have *egg-ceptional* memories. Talking eggs, as they say, are actually the goldfish of talking breakfast food.

(Diane takes out a picture of Mother Clucker.)

DIANE: Oh, so you don't remember her? Maybe this will ring a bell. *(Holding the picture closer.)* Look at it.

(Egward looks at the picture closely.)

EGWARD: *(Remembers.)* Wait, I walked down a road with someone who looked *eggs-actly* like her...about three years ago. But what does my walking down the road with some chicken three years ago have to do with my walking down a road with a similar-looking chicken three years ago? *(Laughs.)* Oh, don't answer that. Sorry, sometimes my brain gets all *scrambled*. *(Laughs.)* Anywho...I do remember her, and let me tell you, our relationship wasn't *egg-sactly* what I wanted it to be. She wasn't very open to my *egg-cellent* critiques of her shortcomings, which, by the way, came in the dozens. *(Laughs.)*

DIANE: Stop laughing! It's not funny!

EGWARD: Hey, don't get your feathers ruffled any more than they already are.

DIANE: Do you even know what happened to her?

EGWARD: No, she just up and crossed the road, and I kept on walking. I never knew why she crossed the road, though.

DIANE: Mother Clucker crossed the road because she could no longer take your "helpful critiques of her shortcomings." But she didn't make it to the other side because she was crushed by an 18-wheeler!

EGWARD: Ah, chicken *flatbe'*, I suppose. (*Laughs.*) Sorry, that was completely and 100 percent insensitive, but when a pun arrives, there's not much I can do.

DIANE: You won't have to worry about it much longer because soon you'll be burnt to a crisp.

EGWARD: Ouch. So, a shell for a shell, I see.

DIANE: Mother Clucker had feathers.

EGWARD: But she had a shell once...just like me. Just like you.

DIANE: Those days are forgotten, but I will never forget dear old Mother Clucker and what you did to her.

(Mr. Egg man considers this.)

EGWARD: I understand. So, are you here to simply watch me fry?

DIANE: Oh, yes, but I'm not going to be the only one. I've invited two of your friends...your only two friends.

EGWARD: Blaine and Benji? (*Diane nods.*) Yay! It can't be a fry party without my best buds in the world!

DIANE: Stop being excited!

(Blaine and Benji enter and are stunned at what they see.)

BLAINE: *(To Egward.)* What's going on here, bucko?

(Smiling, Diane turns to them.)

BLAINE/BENJI: (*Shout.*) Diabolical Diane Dubeakske!

DIANE: That's right, Blaine and Benji. So glad you could make it to watch your friend fry!

(*Mr. Egg man sees Blaine and Benji.*)

EGWARD: (*Excited.*) Blaine and Benji! Hi, guys!

BLAINE/BENJI: (*Excited.*) Mr. Egg Man!

BLAINE: (*To Egward.*) We didn't know you were here.

DIANE: What? I have him tied to the asphalt. And I just said, "Watch your friend fry."

BLAINE: I thought you were talking to Benji about me because in the sun I do tend to fry.

BENJI: You do. (*To Diane.*) And I'm simply not that observant.

BLAINE: (*To Diane.*) But now that we know that it is Mr. Egg Man, if you think *omelet-tin'* our friend fry, you've got another...thing coming. (*To Benji.*) The reason it was "omelet-tin'" instead of—

BENJI: Was because if you made it plural, it wouldn't be a pun. I understand.

EGWARD: I don't mean to rush this along, but this frying is not as delightful as I had hoped.

BLAINE: Right! Come on, Benji! Let's foil this foul fowl!

EGWARD: Ah, Diane! That was the pun you attempted to make earlier. "Foul" and "fowl"! See the difference? If you wanted me to get the pun, articulation is vital!

[END OF FREEVIEW]

IT HAPPENED ONE SUMMER...
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**“SEE WHY I WANTED YOU
TO THINK I WAS A JERK
INSTEAD OF TELLING YOU
THE TRUTH?”**

—FREDDY

THE LAST DAY OF SUMMER

(AT RISE: A park, late afternoon, August. Freddy is sitting on a bench, drawing in his sketchbook. He looks like he is super into it. Glenda, his girlfriend, enters.)

GLEND A: Hi, Freddy.

(Freddy looks up and smiles.)

FREDDY: Hey, Glenda.

(Glenda approaches.)

GLEND A: What are you working on?

FREDDY: A sketch...of my sketchbook...in my sketchbook.

GLEND A: In your sketchbook? (Freddy nods.) Cool.

FREDDY: Not really, but drawing sketchbooks is kind of my thing because they're rectangles, and I can only draw rectangles well. I got some mad rectangle drawing skills.

GLEND A: I've never heard someone say that before.

FREDDY: And I'm guessing, here, you probably won't. I also drew something for you earlier...like a going away gift.

GLEND A: Oh. I didn't know we were exchanging gifts. Because if I had—

FREDDY: Don't worry about it. The drawing is terrible. I opted not to use rectangles because...you deserve more than rectangles. You deserve other shapes, too. But once I finished and looked at it, I realized I should've stuck with rectangles.

GLEND A: I'm sure it's—

FREDDY: You haven't seen it yet.

GLEND A: I know I'm going to love it. By the way, I have something to tell you.

FREDDY: Good news, right?

GLEND A: Yeah. I mean, I hope you think it is.

FREDDY: Sweet. I should give you my drawing first, so we'll both have something to look forward to after the utter disappointment of you seeing my drawing.

GLENDA: Okay. *(Pause.)* Are you going to give it to me?

(Freddy crosses away from her. Silence as Freddy looks at her, pondering something.)

FREDDY: I suppose that's what I should do since I did draw it for you.

GLENDA: And you said mere seconds ago that you wanted to go first.

FREDDY: *(Looking at her.)* Yeah, I'm just a little nervous about giving it to you.

GLENDA: I didn't even know you got nervous about...anything.

FREDDY: *(Laughs.)* It's just...here you go. *(Tears out the drawing, accidentally tearing it in half. Takes a moment, tears the other half out, approaches her, and hands her both pieces.)* Hold them together like this.

(Freddy demonstrates, holding the two pieces together. Glenda takes the two torn pieces and holds them together as Freddy had done.)

GLENDA: Thanks. It's... *(Looks closer at the torn pieces. Confused.)* Wait...what is it? Perhaps I can't see it because it got torn in half.

FREDDY: I wish, but, no. It's my non-rectangle drawing ability that hinders my ability to draw anything not 100-percent rectangle based. Since this is our last time together, I really wanted to give you something unique. It was a stupid idea.

GLENDA: No, it's not stupid at all. I love it. It's a gift from the heart, and that's all that matters, anyway.

FREDDY: That's the same thing my dad always told me when I made him non-rectangle-based art. When I tried to give

my mom anything I made, she would just look at it and say, "pass." Then she would hand it back to me.

GLEND A: Really?

FREDDY: Yeah. Anyway, that's supposed to be 63 of our best memories from this summer.

GLEND A: It's lovely. And I'm sure if I looked for a...a really long time, then I could—

FREDDY: Doubtful.

GLEND A: I'll try anyway. Besides, these won't be our last memories together. We have time to make so many more.

FREDDY: Not too many more. I'm leaving in an hour.

GLEND A: I don't mean *today*.

FREDDY: Oh, you mean like next summer? I won't be here.

My mom signed me up for an all-summer summer-camp.

My mom and dad will be here, though, if you want to hang out with them.

GLEND A: Probably not, but I'm not talking about next summer, either. Remember when I said I had good news?

[END OF FREEVIEW]

IT HAPPENED ONE SUMMER...
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**"AH HOPE!
WHAT A LOVELY DISEASE."**

-EZRA

THE KIDDIE POOL MASSACRE

(AT RISE: Ezra Kingsbury's backyard. Ezra Kingsbury is sitting in a deflated pool, drinking an umbrella drink. Thane, Hainsworth, and Caspian enter, looking annoyed. Ezra Kingsbury stares at them but says nothing.)

THANE: (To Ezra.) So?

(Ezra continues looking at them.)

EZRA: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see you there.

CASPIAN: You were looking right at us, Ezra.

EZRA: Was I? (Pause.) I was. What brings you three here when you should be at the biggest par-tay of the year?

HAINSWORTH: Your urgent texts did.

EZRA: That's right. And you came running...like I knew you would because I've always been your Pied Piper and you...my tiny, tiny rats.

CASPIAN: Why are you sitting in a deflated kiddie pool?

EZRA: Why, indeed, Caspian? Why, indeed...

(Pause. Silence.)

HAINSWORTH: Crap. You tricked us, didn't you? So we would show up at another one of your lame kiddie-pool parties!

EZRA: My homecoming kiddie-pool party was not lame! It was one of the most talked-about parties of the school year! It went viral.

HAINSWORTH: For the wrong reasons!

EZRA: There are no wrong reasons to go viral, Hainsworth.

CASPIAN: Everyone was making fun of you, Ezra.

EZRA: Why would I care what the entirely forgettable population of our school had to say about me?

THANE: Look, Ezra, I know we haven't really talked to you –

EZRA: But you have spoken of me, have you not? (*Thane, Caspian, and Hainsworth look at each other, trying to hide their guilt.*) It doesn't matter. Continue, please, Thane, explaining yourself.

THANE: (*Trying to regain composure.*) What I was saying was that...we stopped talking to you because you're mean, narcissistic, and weird.

EZRA: So complimentary, but you forgot *rich*.

CASPIAN: (*To Thane.*) Can we leave now?

THANE: No. (*To Ezra.*) Even though all those things are true, we care about you, and your texts said something tragic had happened that you could never recover from.

EZRA: Because it has.

THANE: What?

EZRA: You're looking at it.

CASPIAN: You're sitting in a deflated kiddie pool drinking an umbrella drink.

EZRA: (*Correcting.*) It's a balloon drink...strawberry rhubarb.

HAINSWORTH: Gross.

EZRA: That's your poorness talking, Hainsworth.

HAINSWORTH: My parents are as wealthy as yours.

EZRA: (*With disgust.*) They won a lottery. Lottery winners are the unwanted, un-neutered mutts of the rich people world.

(*Hainsworth thinks of replying but doesn't see the point.*)

CASPIAN: Look, can we get on with this? There's an actual senior party we would love to get to.

EZRA: Of course. (*Starts to get up but struggles.*) The tragic thing that happened was— (*Slips face-first into the pool.*)

THANE: Are you all right?

EZRA: Of course. I meant to do that. (*Struggles but finally gets up.*) The tragic thing that happened was... (*Dramatically.*) ..."The Kiddie Pool Massacre"!

CASPIAN/THANE/HAINSWORTH: What?

EZRA: (*Dramatically.*) The Kiddie Pool Massacre!

HAINSWORTH: Wait. People were massacred in your kiddie pool?

EZRA: No, you simpleton! My kiddie pool was massacred in my kiddie pool! Well, not actually *in* my kiddie pool because it can't be inside itself. (*Looks off.*) Or can it? (*Ponders.*) No. But it was still massacred! (*Pulls out a knife.*) By this knife!

[END OF FREEVIEW]