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Yoo-Hoo and Hank Williams

By

GREGORY S. MOSS

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“*Yoo-Hoo and Hank Williams* was first produced in 2002 by Independent Submarine Productions, Newburyport, Mass., directed by Gregory S. Moss.”

Yoo-Hoo and Hank Williams was originally produced by Independent Submarine Productions in Newburyport, Mass., in the summer of 2002.

Cast:

Yoo-Hoo Girl Nikole Beckwith
Amy.....Holly Little
PaperboyHal Fickett
Salesman Paul Wann
BattyMaureen Daley

Yoo-Hoo and Hank Williams

CHARACTERS

YOO-HOO GIRL: Mid-20s. Odd duck. Lives alone. Wears her father's old, white, button-down shirts and dungarees. Loves instant foods, movie-star gossip magazines, stuffed animals, Hank Williams and Elvis.

THE PAPERBOY: 16. Earnest, damaged, shy, a bit androgynous. Wears Dickies, t-shirts and Keds. Too curious.

AMY: Late 20s to early 30s. Pretty, big body and big smile, exuberant to the point of hysteria. Former prom queen now lost. Overdresses.

THE SALESMAN: Middle-aged. Cheap suits. Graying, world-weary, exhausted, charming. A very good salesman.

BATTY: Elderly. A legend in this small town. Holds her clothes together with safety pins and clothes pins. Saves everything. Lives in an enormous, run-down house that all the school children say is haunted.

SETTING

A sleepy, small town in an imaginary version of the American South, in an imaginary version of the mid-twentieth century.

It is spring when the play begins.

Yoo-Hoo and Hank Williams

ACT I

PROLOGUE

(YOO-HOO GIRL's home.

White spot on THE PAPERBOY, curled up on the floor R.

Elvis Presley's "My Happiness," or something similar, begins to play.

Blue spot up L. YOO-HOO GIRL steps into the light.

Static slowly grows beneath the song, louder and louder until it overwhelms the music, crescendos, then dies abruptly with the lights. Blackout.)

SCENE 1

(Lights up on AMY and YOO-HOO GIRL sitting on YOO-HOO GIRL's porch in the sunshine. AMY has no shoes on. She is attempting to wind a doll-shaped music box with no results. She stares the doll in the face and shakes it.)

AMY. Rrrrr—sing! Sing! *(Looks up. Pause. Smiles.)* What a beautiful day! I love the spring, don't you? It's like it all happens to me too, you know? Like I have little green—sprouts, buds coming up out of me ... I get a very exciting feeling in my stomach. Like a tickling. Like going down hill fast on a bike. You know? It's a very specific feeling. ... So what should we talk about? ... Are you a—Scorpio?—No don't tell me a—Sagittarius!

YOO-HOO GIRL. Umm-hm.

AMY. You are? A Sagittarius?

YOO-HOO GIRL. Yes.

AMY. No way! I AM psychic! It's true you know I'm always getting these feelings, like I'll see somebody? On the street in front of the drug store or someplace and this voice in my head says, "He is cheating on his wife, look at the way he's got his tie all twisted up," or, uh, "Mmm-mmm, that lady is gonna slap those kids around when she gets home—it's in those creases around her mouth." I mean, it's not always bad things but always—something. Some like, information. Like a scent. I can smell it. It's just something I know—I should have been a detective. I still could be. People trust me. They open up to me instinctively. Because, they know, that I, Do Not Judge. That's a very rare thing you know. They know they can just tell that I will accept whatever they have to say and smile and say something comforting—If I were a detective, I'd be a good one 'cause I can get at everybody's secrets. *(To music box.)* Except you.

YOO-HOO GIRL. I think she's busted. You wound her too tight.

AMY. You think?

YOO-HOO GIRL. Mmm-hm. *(Pause.)* Are you sure?

AMY. Am I sure?

YOO-HOO GIRL. What you smell or whatever—that it's true? That you can trust it?

AMY. Well—I was right about you wasn't I?

YOO-HOO GIRL. Hmm.

AMY. Wasn't I?

YOO-HOO GIRL. OK.

(BATTY shuffles in slowly from L with a white handkerchief in her mouth. Her ragged clothes are held together with safety pins.)

AMY. Psst! Hey, look! It's Batty!

YOO-HOO GIRL. Where?

AMY. Don't look! She'll think we want her to come over here!

YOO-HOO GIRL. So?

AMY. So look at her! She's horrible! You wanna have a conversation with her? She's nuts! And she's mean! I heard she carries a brick in her purse to throw at little kids!

YOO-HOO GIRL. No way.

AMY. This is what I heard!

YOO-HOO GIRL. She's—

AMY. Ssshh!

(AMY puts her hand over YOO-HOO GIRL's mouth to hush her. BATTY passes.)

AMY (*cont'd*). Phew! She's not interested in us—

(AMY removes her hand from YOO-HOO GIRL's face and they relax. BATTY suddenly wheels around and faces them, pulling the handkerchief from her mouth and spraying saliva as she speaks.)

BATTY. Awhhh! Ah-HA! Ah-HA Ah-HA Ah HA! I know, I know! Oooh there ought to be a CURFEW for you people! Mhh! All you should be LOCKED INSIDE! In your stupid houses at 6:30 p.m. every night! You ought to be kept off the streets ... you ... you ought to be CRUCIFIED! (*Begins to weep and dabs her eyes with the handkerchief.*) ... You

shits ... you shits ... *(Exits crying, stuffing her handkerchief back in her mouth.)*

AMY. Ughh! She sprayed me! I wanted the news not the weather!

YOO-HOO GIRL. She's a strange bird.

AMY. She's disgusting! She's like an evil old witch!

YOO-HOO GIRL. You know what's scary? Someday you and me are gonna be like that too.

AMY. Like that?

YOO-HOO GIRL. Yup. Old and crazy.

AMY. We will?

YOO-HOO GIRL. Yeah. Of course. Won't we? *(Pause.)* Amy?

AMY. Yeah?

YOO-HOO GIRL. I'm an Aries.

(YOO-HOO GIRL smiles. They stare at each other. Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(Fade music when lights are up full. THE SALESMAN standing C with a pair of binoculars, a notepad and a pencil. He is looking through the binoculars through the windows of YOO-HOO GIRL's house. He pauses to scribble on his notepad.)

THE PAPERBOY enters L. He stops upon seeing THE SALESMAN and watches THE SALESMAN watch YOO-HOO GIRL.)

THE SALESMAN *(speaking to himself)*. Bright yellow walls. Wooden cabinets. Out-of-date, dirty. Rice-a-roni, Kraft dinner, a few cans of ...

(THE SALESMAN looks up and realizes he is being watched. He stops writing. THE PAPERBOY and THE SALESMAN stare at each other a long moment.)

THE SALESMAN *(cont'd)*. Fuck off.

SCENE 3

(THE PAPERBOY and YOO-HOO GIRL are seated on the couch, going through a shoe box full of old photos. YOO-HOO GIRL is looking intently at the pictures. THE PAPERBOY is mostly looking at her.)

YOO-HOO GIRL. Who's that?

THE PAPERBOY. Uh—my aunt Carrie. And her dog.

YOO-HOO GIRL. This one?

THE PAPERBOY. I don't know.

(YOO-HOO GIRL holds up another snapshot.)

THE PAPERBOY *(cont'd)*. My cousin Andy. He used to ride me around on this bike he had. He rode me on the handlebars when we used to visit him and my aunt in the summer. This one time, we were just riding around, they live up north a little, lots of hills and we were just burning down this one hill, and Andy's laughing, I'm laughing, we're going really fast, and he's got his head down and all of the sudden Andy turns his head back to me, there's a sick kind of light in his eyes, he says, "You know my brakes don't work, right?"

YOO-HOO GIRL. No!—

THE PAPERBOY. And so I start screaming and squirming, and Andy's fighting me to keep still so he can steer and stuff, and there's this intersection below, at the bottom of the hill, the

light turning so the traffic's flowing and we can't stop. We're falling down this hill—I yelled, “Stop! Please! We've got no brakes! Please! Stop!” No one can hear me—

YOO-HOO GIRL. What happened?

THE PAPERBOY. I don't know, it's a blur kind of—there was some honking and I think the light changed. Something happened. I guess I closed my eyes. (*Pause.*) I think maybe he had brakes. Maybe he just wanted to scare me. To scare us both—Then we rode the rest of the way to the corner store and had Cokes and played pinball. (*Pause.*) He did a lot of weird things. He didn't have any friends. He used to keep live bugs in his pockets. He would take them out to give to the girls he liked at school. Then—I guess one day he goes up to this big graveyard on a hill after school out by where he lives. He takes off all his clothes and starts running around jumping and biting at the air. Like a dog. Someone called the police, and when they asked him he told the cops he was trying to catch birds in his mouth. (*Pause.*) That's what my mom told me. (*Pause.*) He got locked up. (*Pause.*) He was really good at pinball.

YOO-HOO GIRL. What made him like that, you think?

THE PAPERBOY. I don't know. Just lonely, I guess. Makes people do weird things. He was funny, though. I wanted to be like him so bad. He was really cool. He had really thick glasses, like Buddy Holly? I thought they were so cool—I begged my mom to get me some of those. I didn't know he was wearing 'cause he couldn't see.

YOO-HOO GIRL. Did she?

THE PAPERBOY. No.

YOO-HOO GIRL. Who's this?

THE PAPERBOY. That? Those are my parents! Before I was born. Looks like my mom's pregnant, though.

YOO-HOO GIRL. These are your parents? I hate them.

THE PAPERBOY. Why? They're just dumb hicks!

YOO-HOO GIRL. I hate them.

THE PAPERBOY. Why? You don't even know them.

YOO-HOO GIRL. 'Cause they're so happy. And cute. This is the cutest goddamn picture I've ever seen! They've got everything they want, your mom smilin' in her dress and pregnant—they've got everything they want and they're stuck in there! I wanna get stuck! I wanna get stuck! I wanna fall in love and get stuck in a picture and never move again.

(Pause.)

THE PAPERBOY. They're broken up—

YOO-HOO GIRL. Not in the picture, they're not. In that picture, they are in love, forever.

(Pause. YOO-HOO GIRL stares at the picture. THE PAPERBOY stares at her.)

THE PAPERBOY. There was some guy looking in your window before.

YOO-HOO GIRL. Huh?

THE PAPERBOY. Some guy with a notebook. When I came in. He was looking in at you.

YOO-HOO GIRL. What was he doing?

THE PAPERBOY. I don't know. Taking notes. Watching you.

YOO-HOO GIRL. Out there? From the window? *(Stands and goes to the window.)* No one out there now.

THE PAPERBOY. He was across the street. I saw him when I was walking up the street. He looked at me.

YOO-HOO GIRL. That's OK I guess. I wasn't up to much today anyway. Probably got bored.

THE PAPERBOY. I don't know. He was kinda—mean-looking.

YOO-HOO GIRL. What did he look like?

THE PAPERBOY. He said something to me.

YOO-HOO GIRL. What'd he say?

THE PAPERBOY. I don't want to repeat it.

YOO-HOO GIRL. What'd he say?

THE PAPERBOY. Why do you wanna know?

YOO-HOO GIRL. Come on.

THE PAPERBOY. He told me to—"fuck off."

YOO-HOO GIRL. He did?

THE PAPERBOY. Yeah.

YOO-HOO GIRL. That's rude.

THE PAPERBOY. Yeah.

YOO-HOO GIRL. For no good reason?

THE PAPERBOY. I saw him. I caught him looking.

(Pause.)

YOO-HOO GIRL. Well, he's out there and we're in here.
And I got you to protect me. Right?

(Pause. They look at each other.)

THE PAPERBOY. I gotta go finish my route now. You can
keep those pictures if you want.

YOO-HOO GIRL. Thanks. I'll see you tomorrow, right?

THE PAPERBOY. Tomorrow? Yeah. *(Pause.)* Yeah.

SCENE 4

*(The distorted voice of THE SALESMAN, heard on a tape
as the lights slowly come up. YOO-HOO GIRL is in her*

home, cleaning and arranging things. She puts on a Hank Williams record and exits. Returns, dancing, with a white mixing bowl. She is making chocolate pudding. YOO-HOO GIRL sings off-key with the song. She sits C on the couch, mixing and singing.)

THE SALESMAN (*V.O.*). Bright yellow walls. Wooden cabinets. Out-of-date, dirty. Rice-a-roni, Kraft dinner, a few cans ... (*Beat.*) few cans of Campbell's soup. Instant foods. Birdseye frozen peas, TV dinners, Salisbury steak and corn with mashed potatoes and an apple cobbler dessert. Jell-O mix in cherry and lime. Tapioca pudding and whipped cream. Oscar Meyer hotdogs. Wonder bread. *True Confessions* magazines. Yoo-Hoo. Peter Pan peanut butter. *True Confessions*. *True Romance*—Movie star magazines. *Casper the Friendly Ghost* comic books. Photo albums. Lots of them. Fake fruit in a glass bowl. Candy dish filled with peppermints. Rotten couch. Pink, fuzzy slippers. Mmm. A record player, a child's record player, that suitcase kind. Brown. It's on all the time. (*Pause.*) Thin, white curtains on the windows.

(There is a knock at the door. Pause. Another knock. YOO-HOO GIRL looks at the door. Pause. Another knock.)

SCENE 5

(BATTY's house. THE PAPERBOY stands in the doorway with his sack.)

BATTY. Yes?

THE PAPERBOY. Yes, hi. I'm the paperboy.

BATTY. Yes I can see you're the paperboy. What do you want?

THE PAPERBOY. I'm here to collect. It's Thursday.