

DRAMATURGS' NOTE by Angelique Bacha and Elizabeth Mangan

The Absolute Best Turkey Recipe

AKA Not Your Momma's Turkey

1 playwright, Georges Feydeau, born in 1862 and died in 1921

1 French upper-class society, salted generously

12 "normal" characters

3 outrageous situations

2 hotel rooms

2 naughty bells (not bellhops)

...on second thought, sprinkle in 1 pubescent bellhop

Some Swiss for taste, marinated in German

Laudanum and Strychnine

Salt

Pepper



From rehearsal of *An Absolute Turkey*

Step One:

Pour French upper-class society of the 1890s into a large mixing bowl. Watch out for flying bodices, a grand World's Fair (not yet including the Eiffel Tower), fashionable nights out to the opera, journeys into the countryside, and scripted social behaviors. Don't forget the once-a-week baths for an extra aromatic aspect! Gently fold in playwright, not so much so that he combines with the upper-class, but just enough that the two certainly recognize each other. Let sit for a few years.

(During this time, marry daughter of painter Carolus-Duran and have three children. Originally, playwright will seem well, but the marriage will sour with time. Debt will occur, prized art collections will be sold, and depression will be evident. DO NOT let the depression affect the joviality of the recipe; move to Step Two.)

Step Two:

Take 12 "normal" characters (or so they'd like to think) from different walks of life and mix them into a separate bowl for playwright's vision. These characters should be ripe with the feelings of the Belle Epoque: sexual mores, socialism, the need to elude ugly parts of modern life through frivolity, infidelity as a normal occurrence, and a bit of post-impressionist art. All these should bring tears of laughter to any aristocrats who may taste. Among these characters, make sure to pick two bold, lustful men and two women keen on dishing out revenge where it's due in a society where divorce is unacceptable.

Step Three:

Place over low heat. Gradually add 3 outrageous situations, 2 hotel rooms, 2 naughty bells, and 1 pubescent bellhop (frequent farcical ingredients). Raise the heat to high setting. Ingredients should start to boil. This means the comedy is cooking well.

Step Four:

When pot is at a rolling boil, it's time to combine the Swiss. (Note: Make sure one Swiss has questionable origins, highly concerned with *geschäft*.) Confusing identities are probable and may induce guffaws.

Step Five:

When pot is screaming hot, immediately add to the French society bowl. Mix in a spoonful of strychnine (Don't get poisoned!) and a few drops of laudanum (just to help with sleep). Season with a poultice of salt and pepper. Serve immediately to eager audience.

Now you have one piping hot farce! Enjoy!