

Snappy's Happy Half Hour

By Don Zolidis

(On stage is the set of the children's television show, Snappy the Clown's Happy Half-Hour. The set is cartoonish and unrelentingly cheerful. A smiling yellow sun hangs from the rafters, and a grove of "happy trees" stands upstage. Everything should be brightly colored but poorly constructed, and the atmosphere should be one of almost oppressive joy.)

(We are in the final moments of a dress rehearsal. SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN, HENRI THE MIME, BOO-BA, and MR. CONDUCTOR MAN are on stage. Sitting on the ground near them are the child stars SPENCER, JOSIE, and SELENA. OF the three, SPENCER is the most happy, maintaining a brilliant open-mouthed smile through every moment of the show. His cheerfulness is obviously fake.)

(An ancient camerawoman, GLADYS, is positioned off the end of the stage.)

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN

Well kids, it's about that time.

SPENCER

Oh no!

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN

I'm afraid so. It's time to go.

MR. CONDUCTOR

But remember kids, you can always find us if you use...

EVERYONE *(except BOO-BA and HENRI)*

Your IMAGINATION!

(They laugh.)

BOO-BA *(a high-pitched gurgle)*

Boo-Ba!

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN *(chuckling)*

That's right Boo-Ba!

JOSIE

Snappy, can we sing one last song?

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN

Well...

ALL KIDS

Pleeeeeeese?

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN

What do you think, Mr. Conductor Man?

MR. CONDUCTOR MAN

I say let's do it!

SPENCER

Oh no, Henri the Mime is caught in a box again!

(HENRI THE MIME is indeed, trapped in a mime box that seems to be shrinking.)

BOO-BA

Boo-Ba!

(BOO-BA waves its arms and pulls out HENRI out of the mime box. HENRI smiles and bows to BOO-BA.)

SELENA

Good job, Boo-Ba!

BOO-BA

Boo-Ba!

(SNAPPY smiles and launches into a carefully choreographed song.)

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN *(singing)*

Where would be without friends?

MR. CONDUCTOR MAN

I don't know!

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN *(singing)*

Where would be without friends?

(HENRI THE MIME shakes his head. The kids begin to march in a circle.)

SPENCER *(singing)*

Hey you, you're my friend

JOSIE *(singing)*

Hey you, you're my friend

SELENA

Buenos Noches, everyone!

(Everyone waves at the audience.)

(TRACY, the director emerges from off-stage.)

TRACY

And... cut!

(Everyone breaks character instantly and looks dejected. BOO-BA pulls off its head and tosses it to the ground. SNAPPY looks utterly disgusted at HENRI. SPENCER sits immediately. SELENA takes out a cell phone and dials.)

HENRI THE MIME

What? Like that was my fault?

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN

Where were you on the hugs song, huh?!

HENRI THE MIME

Aw give me a break, you don't need me on the hugs song!

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN

It's in the script you moron!

BOO-BA

You know what, I'm a professional, all right? I come to work, I do my job, I know my lines.

HENRI THE MIME

All you say is Boo-Ba! How hard is that?!

BOO-BA

I'm a little sick of your attitude—I bring a lot to the table here—

TRACY

Guys guys guys! Enough!

(Everyone is quiet, except for SELENA, who is still talking on her phone in Spanish.)

SELENA *(in Spanish)*

Yeah, that's what I'm saying. This show sucks.

TRACY

Selena?

(SELENA holds up her hand.)

SELENA

Adios.

(She hangs up.)

TRACY

Now listen—that was just a dress rehearsal, we’ve had bad dress rehearsals before—

GLADYS

That was the worst show I’ve ever seen!

TRACY

Gladys. Not helping, okay?

GLADYS

I’ve seen a lot of shows!

TRACY

We know, Gladys.

GLADYS

That was the worst one!

HENRI THE MIME

You wanna come up here and do it?

GLADYS

I’d mime the pants off you, you chump!

TRACY

Gladys. Please.

GLADYS

You’re lucky I’m a lady.

TRACY

All right, we’ve got half an hour before the live broadcast, we can fix the problems—there might be something... the producers were here watching today—

MR. CONDUCTOR MAN

WHAT?

SELENA

I’m calling my agent—

SNAPPY THE HAPPY CLOWN

They’re not changing the show, are they?

(If you would like to read more of Snappy's Happy Half Hour, please e-mail me at don@donzolidis.com, please include your school or theatre information.)