

DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRIDGET OF GREVA [AND ABEND DI ANNI NOUVEAU, BY R. LARDNER.

Chapter 1 : Ring Lardner - My CMSMy CMS

Introduction: The long Christmas dinner / by T. Wilder: The ping-pong players / by W. Saroyan: The tridget of Greva [and] Abend di anni nouveau / by R. Lardner.

An area under repair on the fifty-ninth street bridge. Summary The play is preceded by a program note in which it is explained that the play is "an adaptation from the Wallachian of Willie Stevens. Why is the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge always torn up? The program note explains that according to Willie Stevens, Alexander Woollcott was the chief engineer during the construction of the bridge and that he once dropped a loaded cigar, meant as a practical joke to play on his brother-in-law, under the unfinished surface planking. Since that incident, men have been digging up the bridge to search for it. Waiters bring them cocktails and caviar. Later the waiters announce that dinner is served. The men find their places. The men speak "in correct Crownisnshield dinner English, except that occasionally, say every fourth or fifth speech, whoever is talking suddenly bursts into dialect, either his own or Jewish or Chinese or what you will. In conversation marked by many changes in dialect, the men talk about the bridge. Ripping it up is much more fun now because it is busier. He stops traffic in such a way that the mourners show up at the wrong funerals. A announces that he is a trumpet medium. How long were you married to her? Right up to the time she died. His second wife is a Swiss murderess who is in jail. The waiter asks whom she has murdered but then quickly exits. She wanted to know his name so she killed him. T says he was a newspaperman and worked on the tabloid the Porno-graphic. He said yes and then said he charged three dollars a dozen. She says she will have to come back later because she only has eleven. T begins asking the others if they can imitate birds. It was then he learned to imitate birds. The whistle blows and the men go back to work. The waiter asks how many Mack trucks crossed the bridge in the last half hour and leaves before getting a response.

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Chapter 2 : Ring Lardner: Stories & Other Writings | Library of America

From the fisherman in "The Tridget of Greva" who remarks that the wind is coming from "off-stage" to the waiter in "Abend di Anni Nouveau" who remarks that after the murders of all of the characters, the play will have to be recast, Lardner's nonsense characters are constantly reminding the audience of their own and the play's own fictional.

Lardner found an atmosphere more to his liking among the small revues put on by more intellectual and creative types. The first to make it to the stage was "The Tridget of Greva. From all accounts, "Tridget" was well received, though the revue as a whole was a flop. In his book *American Musical Revue*, Gerald Bordman credits "The Forty-Niners" with changing the direction of musical revue from a revue with sketches and music to a revue of music because of its complete failure and intellectual demands of its sketches. In short, the sort of sketches that were performed were difficult for the audience to understand. It is still performed about a half dozen official times a year. Like the sketches he wrote and unlike the later nonsense plays, it is intended for performance; yet it includes many nonsensical elements, chiefly in dialogue, later found in the nonsense plays. From "Tridget" until with the publication of "Quadroon," Lardner wrote at least eight nonsense plays, but only "Tridget" and "Dinner Bridge" were written for the stage. Determining the "meaning" of the nonsense plays is an impossible and perhaps even nonsensical endeavor. Many tried to label these plays as "dada" or as parody of such, but Lardner claimed no such intention. In an interview with Grant Overton, Lardner specifically denied writing the plays to satirize the Moscow Art Theatre, saying he had written them long before there was such a thing⁴⁴, a claim supported by his plays published in his column "In the Wake of the News" and by the findings of his biographers. According to Donald Elder, his first biographer: He found a good deal of theatrical inspiration at home. The repartee in the Lardner family was swift and uninhibited by the rules of classical drama. They were always amused by the kind of incorrect grammar and diction that characterizes the speaker; they played with words, and the more outrageous their puns, the funnier they were. Drawing attention to the futility of realistic depictions of time in the theater, Lardner directs that the curtain be "lowered and partially destroyed to denote the passage of four days" in "Abend di Anni Nouveau," or that it be "lowered for seven days to denote the lapse of a week" in "I. Such directions provide, as Delmore Schwartz has observed, "a concise definition of the limitations of naturalism in the theater" Besides the various limitations of space, time, and knowledge, working against the possibility of appearing real on the stage is the constant awareness on the part of audience and actor that what is happening is, in fact, a play. The message is clear: Nothing on the stage is, nor can it be "real. Unlike the dadists, futurists, surrealists, expressionists, and members of other avant guard movements, Lardner subscribed to no known theories of drama; in fact, his alliance with the "common American" would force him to eschew any such "highbrow" intellectual schools of thought. Deflation of the pretensions of the theater, then, may have a more personal motive. The nonsense plays may be a sort of gentle revenge for the way Lardner was treated by the popular theater. Certainly, forcing two Broadway theatrical producers to enter a scene riding pelicans and an actor to enter through a faucet has something more than simple nonsense behind it. No character actor dominates a nonsense play; in fact, they are often upstaged by rats, milch cows, laughing horses, and other animal acts. Lardner also complained that actors had a habit of embellishing his scripts with their own lines. In the nonsense plays, the author retains complete control. Actors do not have the power to revise because before they could do so, they are themselves revised out of the play. The character listings at the beginning of the plays rarely reflect the actual characters who appear in the plays; in the extreme, "Abend di Anni Nouveau" has all of the listed characters killed in the opening scene. Even when characters appear with their limited lines, they are interrupted by Lardner himself, through the use of intrusive and sometimes lengthy notes. The plays are, for the most part, unproducable, and that may be the only way Lardner thought they could remain his exclusive creative property. Much of the Jazz Age party mentality that surrounded Lardner was, in fact, random and absurd. One scene Lardner describes to F. Scott Fitzgerald, his former neighbor and, at the time, a recent expatriate, resembles a scene in later

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nonsense plays in which characters imitate birds or buildings or come on the stage for no apparent reason on high-wheeled bicycles. We would ask them to imitate Houdini, or Leon Errol, or Will Rogers, or Elsie Janis; the imitations were all the same, consisting of an aesthetic dance which ended with an unaesthetic fall onto the tennis court" Letters Another real-life scene Lardner reports has an unexplainable and nonsensical feel about it as well: Well, what I started to say was that on Friday afternoon, I had to go way downtown to buy an algebra book for John, and I came uptown on a bus. I say on the roof and a lady sat down beside me. Her costume looked as if it had been cut out of a wash cloth. Lardner did not try to explain such nonsensical activities that happened around him; he simply reported them as he had reported sporting and political events for years before. Drunken party performances and non sequiturs of the train stand out in everyday life as contrasts to the mundane and normal; in the nonsense plays such scenes are the mundane and normal. The nonsense plays create a world in which a gangster can be used as a card table, as in "Abend di Anni Nouveau," without anyone finding it peculiar. Senator La Follette can practice sliding to base and be interrupted by a farmer on a pogo stick in "Taxidea Americana," or Frank Case, the Algonquin Hotel manager can inexplicably ask the mayor of New York and the Prince of Wales: Besides strange situations, one important and common element of the nonsense plays is the comical and offbeat sound of many of the individual words. Whether the words are real or invented, English or foreign, common or archaic, used in their proper form or in unusual ways, the odd-sounding words create a tone of strangeness and playfulness, which sets the sheer enjoyment of nonsense in motion. Lardner found many words to be funny simply because of their sound. If the word had a peculiar meaning, or he could invent such a meaning, the humor was doubled. Lardner played with unusual or invented words in his personal life as well as in print. It is reported that once, while playing a s parlor game, Lardner was asked to list what he considered the ten most beautiful words: This habit harkens back to childhood and to the columns. In , Lardner used several of his columns to pose questions to fictional readers and list their responses. Plant, weasle pursuer," "John Sublett, blotter tearer," "Artie Hofman, shirt dispenser," and even himself, R. Lardner, as a "collar buttoner" 3 May Often, the nonsense sound of the words is drawn from foreign or pseudo-foreign sources. The daily headlines and news stories were filled with information about unpronounceable world leaders and exotic places. The streets and the stages were filled with a variety of accents. Lardner pokes fun at the superficial aspects of these new and exotic places and people, using their words and speech patterns for comic effect. Gaspiri," defined parenthetically as "The Upholsterers," is "adapted from the Bukovinan of Casper Redmonda; "Taxidea Americana" is "Translated from the Mastoid," and "Cora, or Fun at the Spa," makes a more subtle allusion to foreign drama, the French in particular, with its subtitle, "An Expressionist Drama of Love and Death and Sex. In "Dinner and Bridge," for example, every common accent used on the vaudeville stage is included and exaggerated. Characters switch accents in mid-sentence, and are directed to "talk in correct, Crowninshield dinner English, except that occasionally, say every fourth or fifth speech, whoever is talking suddenly bursts into dialect, either his own or Jewish or Chinese or what you will. Characters speak without listening, ignore one another, and forget the subject of their conversation. The non sequitur becomes the essential element of their conversations. In "Clemo Uti," and "Quadroon" almost no conversation transpires. In "Dinner Bridge" the waiter continually asks questions and leaves before he can get an answer: Gaspiri" fail to accomplish the most perfunctory of greetings: In "Abend di Anni Nouveau" the waiter and the second policemen forget what they are discussing eight lines into the conversation: Lardner distilled and thus intensified the nonsensical sounds and actions of his society into the comic tributes to non-communication and bizarre behavior known as the nonsense plays. Though they were written for personal amusement, they were still published, and others were let in on the joke. His nonsense plays received attention and praise when they were collected in What of It? For example, one critic says "The significance of his nonsense plays is precisely this despairing sense that nothing connects up with anything else" Holmes Another tries to account for the despair and the laughter it oddly brings: There was one final stage beyond despair. It is no surprise to discover that Lardner turned to writing nonsense plays and fairy tales in which the main source of humor is the unintentional pun and the non sequitur. From one viewpoint they

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were simply extensions of what he had been describing all along [isolation]. Here, however, the isolation is so absolute and abstract that it sheds its human dimension and becomes an exercise in the absurdity and impotence of language itself. Spatz The "childlike joy" of the nonsense plays is unmistakable. The comical scenes around the breakfast table related in the "Wake" plays are still present in the strange but harmless conversations and actions of the nonsense play characters.

Chapter 3 : Barcelona - Spain

The long Christmas dinner, by T. Wilder. The ping-pong players, by W. Saroyan. The tridget of Greva [and] Abend di anni nouveau, by R. Lardner. Three travelers watch.

It is also easy to sense the principle of emotional disinvolve- ment at work in his narratives. This is so because here the comic thrust is directed not against some of behavior, but “ in the opposite direction, as it were, “ against language as a central means of communication. My discussion will retrace an historical development, examining the playlets in the context of the experimental theatrical forms which anticipated the theater of the absurd. A comparison with Dada will foreground the disruptive tendency of the texts; in a next step I shall want to consider in how far they go beyond Dada-destruction as, for instance, did the work of the Surrealists to suggest a certain sense in This is not to say that Lardner was either a Dada or a What I want to emphasize, though, is that in their probing of the conventions of communication, Lardner and the avant-gardists of the early twentieth century had a shared concern. It has often been pointed out that Lardner thought of mainly as a journalist, not as a man of letters, let alone a literary revolutionary. As far as the theater is concerned, his life-long ambition was to be a commercially successful playwright. Yet one can also observe that there is method, i. II Turning to the playlets, the first and most obvious problem for the reader concerns their status as theatrical scores. The others, he concludes, are simply unperform- able. They disrupt theatrical discourse 8 on all levels. All dramatic information that could contribute to building up a consistent set of character traits is systematically confused. To begin with, most lists of dramatis personae contain figures which do not appear in the play, and, vice versa, most plays have figures in them which cannot be identified by referring to the cast. Furthermore, relations between characters are so fragmentary “ if they exist at all “ that there is hardly any dramatic development in the sense. On the level of dramatic language comprehension is undermined because the exchanges between interlocutors are often either discontinuous in themselves or disconnected from mime and action, or both. Clearly, this treatment of character and dramatic dialogue disturbs the mimetic level of the play. Instances of similarly confusing stage directions and descriptions of setting abound. The disruption of theatrical discourse is taken to such an extreme that the playlets seem doomed to be confined to the printed page. One should, however, not give up on them as theatrical scores too quickly. Indeed, the play-texts sometimes read more like zany documents of their own production than like theatrical scores. Cast in Order to Confuse: It is, of course, quite implausible “ and lays no claim to plausibility. In any case, one of the main effects of these references to stage celebrities is to draw the actual theater world into the sphere of nonsense, in which the real names stick out like signposts pointing in all directions at once. Further instances of the confusion of theatrical score and stage performance concern the dramatic action itself. The stage direction at the head of the same play reads: Two rats have gone in there by mistake. One of them seems diseased. The other looks at him. They both go out. Both rats come in again and wait for a laugh. Yet such comic subversion of theatrical discourse does not make the playlets unthea- trical. One might not be able to act most of them on a stage “ which has yet to be put to the test “ but they are, nevertheless, essentially theater of the mind. They are most significant as challenges to the dramatic imagination of the reader. It must be mentioned that the playlets do, of course, contain eccentric, nonsensical parodies of different events in the American theater “ with which Lardner as a playwright with at least one commercially successful play to his credit June Moon, , a collaboration with George S. Kaufman , was well acquainted. Lardner had had a special affection for vaudeville since his boyhood days Elder , III Linking Lardner with Dada is justified on account of his strategy of negation which consists in creating a theatrical frame of reference only to baffle attempts at realizing it on stage and understanding it in the audience. Such negation whether militant, subversive, or nihilistic is the important trait that characterized the different Dada groups in Zurich, Paris, Berlin or New York. Lardner, it is true, lacks the public militancy of the Dadas. The main form of reception was through the printed page. Characters are turned into puppets, masks, or machines performing certain linguistic and social

functions. Such a de-individualization, blurring the dividing line between subject and object, was also undertaken with a vengeance by the Dadas as the following examples will show. All references to the individual speakers of the words and indeed any coherent meaning of their words is obscured by the interference from the other voices; the speakers are effectively reduced to rhythmical voice machines. Melzer, in a further example, reconstructs the stage events of the second Paris Dada Manifesto. Such disorientation and disruption of acts, even to the point of downright sabotage, was also a strategy favored by the Dadas. The following three quotations contain non-sequiturs, semantic and syntactic dislocations, and in the last example, a grotesque use of onomatopoeia: She died a little while ago in a haphazard way. He gives another cry The Vatican. He gives another cry Hotel McAlpin. One of the most extreme Dada negations of language as a medium of dramatic communication occurs in those playlets in which the dramatic text itself is replaced by another type of discourse – by menus, advertisements, notices to the public. This is not only undramatic and unactable; at the same time a type of language which is by definition purely referential invades the dramatic situation and acts itself, as it were. His Dada-revolution was perhaps more private, staged within the context of his own writing rather than that of a militant avant-garde movement. IV Within the movement of the historical avant-garde Dada developed the most extreme strategy of aesthetic negation, aimed at destroying art as an institution of the bourgeoisie. Anti-art pushed the concept of artistic autonomy within society to the point at which artistic production staged its self-destruction. Yet while Dada manifestoes made spectacles of the refusal to signify, it does not follow that these anti-creations were devoid of meaning. Rather, the gesture of negation underlines a dialectic between art and anti-art within the historical avant-garde. Hence, even the idea of the abolition of art is respectful of art because it takes the truth claim of art seriously. For my present purpose, however, in early twentieth-century European theater provides a more immediately productive field of comparison. The reality of illusion is unmasked in order to reveal the truth of being. In this perspective Dada appears as a step – that of destruction – within a broader deconstructive development. When they find a man murdered over in those places, they generally try to learn who it is and put his name in the papers. In some of the other playlets, too, the characters frequently touch on questions concerning their birth and origin. Hence speaking isolates them from one another. Yet there seems to be a kind of pattern underlying such linguistic behavior in that series of non-sequiturs almost ritualistically start out as acts of establishing an identity. These acts, however, are constantly thwarted; there is nothing beyond the basic impulse toward self-presence: Characteristically, many of the fragments of dialogue begin with a question or an implied question which is answered by another question, or a statement begging one. Every member of the cast is dead. They go through the motions of dialogue as though they were under some form of remote control; the very act of asserting identity through language makes the speakers more anonymous. Yet these extra-dramatic encroachments on the dramatic text serve a structural function in that they superimpose a temporal sequence on the playlet: Furthermore, the two notices to the public contain references to travel, i. Again, the comic strategy of de-centering theatrical discourse hints at patterns of meaning beyond the de-individualized, dislocated level of conventional dramatic representation, namely at archetypal forms of orientation in the flux and transitoriness of experience. Such patterns, which suggest themselves across the fragmentation of theatrical discourse, foreground basic mechanisms of sense-making at the same time as they underscore the eternal otherness of meaning. They all speak together. Each one to itself. Whether one wishes to emphasize the connection with Dada, with Surrealism, or a field I have left unexplored here with the dramatic experiments of Gertrude Stein 21 or Djuna Barnes: Works cited Adorno, Theodor W. Routledge and Kegan Paul, ; first published in German in Blair, Walter and Hamlin Hill. From Poor Richard to Doonesbury. Brucoli, Matthew and Layman, Richard. University of Press, ; first publ. Garden City, New York: Penguin, ; first ed. Geismar, Maxwell, – Writers in Crisis: Houghton, Mifflin Co. Ring Lardner and the Portrait of Folly. Reinhold Grimm and Viktor Zmegac. De Gruyter, ; first published Critical Inquiry, Spring Dichtungen und Dramen, vol. The Ring Lardner Reader, ed. Dada and Surrealist Performance. UMI Research Press, Der Beitrag Dadas zur Kunst des Du Mont, , Ironie und Reflexion im Kubismus von Picasso. Braque und Gris 14.

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The New York Times.

Chapter 4 : Allan Kaprow () - Author - Resources from the BnF

Abend Di Anni Nouveau A Play in Five Acts: Publishing/Performance History. New York Morning Telegraph DEC 1. First and blog.quintoapp.com Gilbert Seldes.

Chapter 5 : Sense in Nonsense: Ring Lardner's Playlets as Aesthetic Adventures - PersÃ©

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Chapter 7 : Theatre experiment. (edition) | Open Library

Shut up, he explained, a Ring Lardner selection. Edited by Babette Rosmond and Henry Morgan.

Chapter 8 : Plays Introduction 3

Plays Included: "The Long Christmas Dinner" by Thornton Wilder "The Ping-Pong Players" by William Saroyan "The Tridget of Greva" and "Abend di Anni Nouveau" by Ring Lardner "Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise" by Wallace Stevens "Santa Claus" by E. E. Cummings "The Birthday" by Paul Goodman "Benito Cereno" by Robert Lowell "George Washington.

Chapter 9 : Theatre experiment / [comp. by] Michael Benedikt - Details - Trove

Theatre experiment / [comp. by] Michael Benedikt Benedikt, The tridget of Greva [and] Abend di anni nouveau, by R. Lardner. by R. Whitman.