

The United Plays of America – Kentucky - Burgoo

By Claudia Haas

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CAST 2: 1 female, 1 male or female

Glinda the Kitchen Witch (20's or older); female – cook

Casey (20's or older); male or female – novice chef

PLACE: Kentucky Town. A kitchen.

TIME: Late summer.

SYNOPSIS: Burgoo stew is a tradition in Kentucky. What makes it authentic? Eye of newt?

Tags, Kentucky, burgoo stew, eye of newt, authentic recipe, food

(Lights up on GLINDA stirring a large cauldron. Okay, it's a soup pot. There are marked ingredients in small bowls: eye of newt, toe of frog, wool of bat, and tongue of dog.)

GLINDA

“Double, double, toil and trouble. Fire burn and cauldron bubble!”

(Tastes.)

Needs more Eye of Newt.

(CASEY enters and watches from a doorway. After each ingredient, GLINDA will add from a small prep bowl.)

Eye of Newt ... toe of frog ... wool of bat ... tongue of dog!

CASEY

Nooo! Please tell me you're not really adding a puppy dog tongue to your concoction.

GLINDA

I shall tell you no such thing. Strangers are not welcome in my kitchen.

CASEY

Are you “Glinda, the Kitchen Witch?”

GLINDA

That's what my Instagram page says about me. Marketing is everything. And product placement.

CASEY

I'm Casey Miller from My Old Kentucky Home Diner. I'm here to learn to make the authentic Kentucky Burgoo stew. It's going to be our special this weekend. I was told yours was the most authentic recipe in Kentucky.

GLINDA

That's what they're saying on Twitter. Of course, I started the conversation. Whatever works.

CASEY

I'm ready to start cooking.

GLINDA

Wash your hands.

CASEY

I have to say I am a bit leery about adding a puppy dog's tongue to a recipe. Man's best friend shouldn't be in a stew.

GLINDA

You came to me to get the authentic Burgoo Kentucky stew recipe. And you'll get your money's worth. So far in here, I have the "one of by air" and "two of the ground" ingredients.

CASEY

Translate, please.

GLINDA

One creature that flies and two that live on the ground. In the olden days, that could mean a quail or a duck and then any combination of squirrels, gophers, deer or cute bunnies.

CASEY

Losing my appetite...

GLINDA

Relax. There's some chicken, a bit of pork and some beef. We've really gotten quite tame over the years. This used to be known as roadkill stew.

CASEY

Lost my appetite.

GLINDA

Nothing wrong with roadkill stew. I can tell you've never been hungry. This is poor man's food at its best. Once you add the potatoes, onions, and carrots, you'll never taste the squirrel brains. Although you might have an urge to climb a tree. Burgoo stew does different things to people.

CASEY

I'm not sure I want an authentic recipe.

SHAWN

Sometimes, I add some whiskey.

CASEY

I'm listening.

GLINDA

But today, I'm skipping the whiskey and squirrel brains and adding the eye of newt, toe of frog, wool of bat and tongue of dog instead. There are a lot of Scottish in Kentucky. They'll appreciate these ingredients.

CASEY

Please don't sacrifice a puppy for an authentic recipe. Skip the tongue of dog.

GLINDA

Muscle-up, Buttercup. I'm going to have you add them.

CASEY

I can't/

GLINDA

/It's on the menu. If you value your job, you will. Here you go – eye of newt.

(CASEY closes their eyes. They cannot look.)

Be generous.

CASEY

How many eyes?

GLINDA

Take a look.

CASEY

It looks ... like ... mustardseed.

GLINDA

Which is what it is. A great seasoning for meats. You really don't think I'd go on a trek to find an eye of newt, do you? The toxins in their body would kill you. Now, the toe of frog...

CASEY

Flowers?

GLINDA

Buttercups. A little sweet to counter the mustard tang. And finally the wool of bat...

CASEY

Which is not the wool from a bat?

GLINDA

Did you ever hear of anyone shearing a bat for its wool? You started slow but you're catching on. It's holly leaves. Tricky to find this time of year.

CASEY

Isn't holly poisonous?

GLINDA

Just the berries. Not the leaves. You really have to bone up on your knowledge of ingredients if you're going to cook in Kentucky. And finally the tongue of dog –

(CASEY falls their knees and assumes a praying position.)

CASEY

Please don't let it be a puppy-dog tongue... please, please, PLEASE!

GLINDA

Pour it in!

(CASEY does so.)

GLINDA (cont'd)

Good. What's done cannot be undone.

CASEY

That looks like flowers.

GLINDA

Gypsy flowers! And there you go – Authentic Burgoo Kentucky Stew.

CASEY

Is this truly authentic?

GLINDA

Nothing is but what is not.

CASEY

What does that mean?

GLINDA

Authentic or not, here's my bill.

CASEY

It is rather steep.

GLINDA

Your working with a bona fide Instagram Influencer here. That comes at a price. Pay up or the Burgoo stays here.

CASEY

You drive a hard bargain.

GLINDA

I have a charmed life. Pay up and skedaddle. Another chef will be here soon.

CASEY

For an authentic recipe for burgoo.

GLINDA

Of course. But don't worry about your burgoo – it's authentic. Yours is the .... "authentic Scottish version." I make these recipes up as I go along.

(CASEY pays GLINDA and is maybe taking the soup pot as the lights go down.)

END OF PLAY