

With Six You Get Eggroll

US : 1968 : dir. Howard Morris : Cinema Center / Arwin : 95 min
 prod: Martin Melcher : scr: Gwen Bagni & Paul Dubov : dir.ph.: Ellsworth Fredericks
[Jimmy Bracken](#); [Richard Steele](#)
 Doris Day; Brian Keith; Pat Carroll; Barbara Hershey; George Carlin; Alice Ghostley;
 Vic Tayback; Jamie Farr; William Christopher; Milton Frome; Allan Melvin; Mickey Deems

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω	□	≠	Z	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5407	2½	7	1		3	3	7	7	7	No	June 2001



Bathing the kids and putting the kids to bed – two “heartwarming” rituals to be found in cosy family movies the world over. Only now filming such a scene would constitute a serious federal crime in the good old home-loving U.S. of A. That’s progress for you.
 Source: Movieboys website

Leonard Maltin’s Movie and Video Guide
 2001 review:

“Oft-told tale of a widow and widower who try to move their children under the same roof. Amiable but slow on laughs. Day’s last film to date. Shot in Panavison. ** ”

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review – identical to above

Halliwel’s Film Guide review

“A widow with three sons marries a widower with one daughter. Quite a bright and inventive family comedy.”

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
 review:

“One of those bumbling affairs which casts Doris Day as a widow with three kids who

teams up with widower Brian Keith who has only one daughter. ** ”

The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television review:

“Widow with three sons, Doris Day, marries widower with one daughter, Brian Keith. That’s when the fun begins – or so director Howard Morris hoped anyway. In fact, this 1968 attempt at a “happy” film (there are no bad guys, promised the publicity) is sickening enough without the promised eggroll. 77 ”

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

“A wholesome if rather obviously-plotted comedy about the disaster-prone romance of a widow (with three sons and an enormous Old English sheepdog) and a widower with a teenage daughter and a French poodle. Their numerous troubles seem largely of their own making, but nonetheless it’s fun, with a good chase sequence, and some nice comic “bits” from Alice Ghostley (as a nutty housekeeper), Pat Carroll (as heroine Doris Day’s wisecracking sister) and George Carlin as a smart-Alec hamburger stand operator. ** ”

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

“Widow Doris Day has three kids, widower Brian Keith has a daughter. They get together. Awww! Bachelor Father meets Mother Knows Best. The two stars refer to Doris and Brian, neither of whom helped their cause with this turkey. Strictly a picture for the 1960s. Unrated. ** ”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Hollywood – 1960s", "The Moving Picture Boy", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times review:

“Doris Day’s last movie so far is this amiable trifle, in which she plays a widow with three sons who marries convenient widower Brian Keith, father of teenage daughter Barbara Hershey, hence the arch title. There’s a tired sixties gloss to the whole thing: when the only cast member that shines is a dog called Lord Nelson, it’s easy to see why Doris called it a Day. ** ”

“Comedy starring Doris Day as widow Abby McClure, who begins a tentative romance with engineer Jake Iverson – who is also widowed. But as their relationship develops they discover their respective children prove a stumbling block to happiness. ** ”

Seven reviews, and not one of them mentions Day’s three sons by name. We’re told about the housekeeper, about Day’s sister, about a hamburger stand operator, even the name of the family dog, but her three kids are just “three kids”. Time and again we see this attitude reflected by film writers and critics – unless a child actor is delivering a fulcrum or exceptionally dramatic performance, they are simply not worthy of adult notice at all.

In point of fact the two boys here, Richard Steele and Jimmy Bracken, are eminently forgettable as Jason and Mitch McClure, but then so is the film they’re appearing in. So far from it being “strictly a picture for the 1960s”, **“WITH SIX YOU GET EGGROLL”** is all too plainly a 1950s film which got seriously delayed at the airport. From the opening titles, the TV sitcom view of family life, the Jerry Lewis style “comedy” turn at the drive-in hamburger joint, all of its sensibilities are five or ten years behind the times for 1968, and one only has to consider the other American movies of the day to appreciate how tired and staid it must have looked on release. One scene has Day accidentally spotting Brian Keith at a swinging disco (where she sees him dancing with a glamorous teenager, not realising the girl’s his daughter). The director’s arthritic efforts to give the scene a trendy look – coloured lights, camera flash-zooming on a suspended mirror-ball – are laughably inept.

So Day's a lonely widow running her late husband's lumberyard, and pressed by friends and family into finding a suitable match. She has a teenage son called "Flip" (Jake Findlater) and two of about 10 and 7. "What those boys need is the firm hand of a man around here!" eccentric maid Mrs Benson (a stock sitcom figure – remember "**The Brady Bunch**") advises her. A firm hand across their bottoms, she means. We first meet the younger boys being naughty in the parlour, minutes later being naughty in the bath, and then being naughty en route for bed. Something is missing in the household, and we're in no doubt what it is.

Day is bamboozled into inviting Keith, a widowed friend of her husband's, to a houseparty which doesn't go too swimmingly. He makes a lame excuse and leaves early. Nevertheless the two of them click pretty soon (much reciprocal flashing of well-tended teeth) but are hampered in their dating attempts by Day's son Flip (think Ronnie Howard in "**Happy Days**" and you're halfway there) and Keith's daughter Stacey (Barbara Hershey). Good liberal 1960s parents that they are, they fall over themselves trying to smooth these ruffled feathers, and stealing private moments together at the hamburger drive-in.

When the absurdity of their situation becomes intolerable, they have a snap overnight wedding and present their respective offspring with a de facto relationship. "There's a man in mommy's bed!" Jason shrieks to the whole household next morning. Flip baulks at moving to Keith's house, Stacey refuses to move into Day's, so the whole bunch commute back and forth between both their houses in appeasement of this teen territoriality. Frictions develop, and a spat between the newlyweds culminates in a pointless and humourless chase sequence ending at a police station, where for no accountable reason Day has acquired a posse of spaced-out hippy protestors – or a stuffy scriptwriter's notions of what such people might be like. All family discord evaporates in an outbreak of spontaneous bonding, and the film wraps itself into a wad and aims for the basket marked "box office dud". The dog, actually called "Calico", plays little part in the proceedings (except on the title animations), and Keith's French poodle is never seen at all.

"**The Brady Bunch**" premiered on American TV the following year, but if it grabbed the idea from any film, it was more likely "**YOURS, MINE AND OURS**", also released in 68, where Lucille Ball was the widowed mother of eight and Henry Fonda the widower father of ten ("With Twenty You Get Sweet and Sour King Prawn Balls"?). And if Ball and Fonda seem a highly incongruous couple, Day and Keith are not much better. Day does not sing a note in this, her swansong (as she had for the similar "**PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES**" in 1960). On the whole, perhaps she should have done. Without it, and given such a limp joke-free script, this made for a poor farewell to the screen. Not so poor, it has to be said, as Ball's final film "**MAME**" (74) which was catastrophically bad.

Nothing else is known of Bracken or Steele, and neither is listed in *The Moving Picture Boy*. It's Bracken who gets to utter the title phrase, when the troop descend on a Chinese restaurant. The only memorable spot business either is given would be Steele yelling at the top of his voice "There's a man in mommy's bed!" Not bad exactly, but certainly dull, in the main I share the director's attitude – the film's just not worth staying awake for.

See subject index under **MATCHMAKERS / MATCHBREAKERS** and **STEP-PARENTS**.