SOFTWARE & TECH

With Six You Get Egg Roll

Published: November 20, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Rediscovering a Charming Slice of Late-60s Cinema: With Six You Get Egg Roll

In the vast landscape of late-1960s cinema, certain films capture a specific cultural moment with a blend of charm, humor, and gentle social commentary. One such hidden gem is the 1968 comedy **With Six You Get Egg Roll**. While the title might sound like a quirky culinary order, it is actually a clever and risqué pun for its time, hinting at the film's central theme: the chaotic and loving journey of blending two families into one. Directed by Howard Morris and starring the beloved Doris Day alongside Brian Keith, this movie offers a warm, funny, and surprisingly relevant look at modern family dynamics. For fans of classic comedies, family-centric storytelling, or Doris Day's extensive filmography, this is a film worth revisiting.

This article will explore every facet of **With Six You Get Egg Roll**, from its plot and characters to its production history, cultural impact, and lasting legacy. We'll dive into why this film, despite being less famous than some of Day's earlier works, remains a delightful watch for audiences today. We will also examine the clever wordplay of the title, the strong performances of the cast, and how the film tackled the then-novel idea of the blended family with humor and heart. Whether you are a long-time fan or a curious newcomer, this comprehensive guide will give you a full appreciation for this underrated comedy.

The Story Behind the Pun: What Does With Six You Get Egg Roll Mean?

Before we delve into the plot, it is essential to understand the film's unforgettable title. At first glance, **With Six You Get Egg Roll**seems like a nonsensical phrase. However, it is a classic example of a double entendre, a form of wordplay that was particularly popular in comedies of the 1960s. The phrase is a humorous twist on the idea of ordering Chinese food. If you order an item that serves six people, you might receive an egg roll as a bonus or side dish. The pun lies in the phonetic similarity between "With Six You Get Egg Roll" and "With sex you get a girl." It's a playful, innocent way to reference the sexual union that results in a baby, which in the context of the film, leads to a large, blended family. The title is both a memory hook and a clever summation of the film's premise: a man and a woman come together, bringing their respective children, and "with six" (the total number of kids between them), you get the "egg roll" (the chaotic, crazy, and wonderful family unit).

This clever title is a perfect marketing tool, as it is memorable, funny, and perfectly encapsulates the film's lighthearted tone. It invites viewers in with a promise of laughter and a hint of mature humor, all while remaining family-friendly. Understanding this pun adds a layer of appreciation for the film's clever writing and the era's comedic sensibilities.

The Plot: A Modern Family Comedy Ahead of Its Time

The story of **With Six You Get Egg Roll** centers on Abby McClure (Doris Day), a widow who runs a successful plumbing supply business inherited from her husband. She is a strong, independent woman trying to raise her three sons single-handedly. The boys are a handful, representing a range of childhood and adolescent challenges. The family's dynamic is comfortable but chaotic, and Abby longs for stability and male companionship, though she is wary of disrupting her sons' lives.

Enter Jarvis "Jake" Iverson (Brian Keith), a widower and a wealthy contractor who owns a construction company.

Jake is also raising his children: a young daughter and a teenage son. He is equally successful and equally overwhelmed by the demands of single parenthood. When Abby and Jake meet at a traffic light—a fittingly modern, urban introduction—sparks fly, despite their initial bickering. They soon realize they are kindred spirits, struggling with the same challenges and feeling a similar loneliness. Their courtship is a comedy of errors, as they try to navigate their busy schedules, their skeptical children, and their own fears about love and commitment.

The film follows their decision to marry and merge their families. This is where the real comedy and heart of the story emerge. The title proves prophetic: with six children between them, the household becomes a battleground of clashing personalities, sibling rivalries, and logistical nightmares. The house is too small, the kids don't get along, and the parents are pulled in a dozen directions. One son is a budding juvenile delinquent, another is a bookworm, and the third is a mischievous prankster. Jake's daughter is a budding teenager with her own romantic dramas, and his son is a laid-back surfer who seems to exist in his own world.

The film's humor arises from the structured chaos of their new life. There are scenes of disastrous family dinners, arguments over the bathroom, and the constant struggle to find privacy. However, beneath the laughter, the film delivers a genuine message about compromise, patience, and the different forms that love can take. It posits that a family is not defined by blood alone, but by the bonds forged through shared experiences, arguments, and ultimately, mutual respect and affection. The climax involves a series of escalating mishaps that force everyone to pull together, leading to a heartwarming resolution where the family finally begins to function as a unit. The film ends on a note of joyful optimism, suggesting that while blending a family is hard work, the reward—a loving, if chaotic, home—is worth every struggle.

The Cast: Why Doris Day and Brian Keith Shine

Doris Day was at a transitional point in her career when she made **With Six You Get Egg Roll**. She was moving away from the "girl-next-door" roles that had defined her earlier work and into more mature, character-driven parts. As Abby McClure, she is believable as a capable businesswoman and a loving but frazzled mother. She brings her signature warmth, comedic timing, and resilience to the role, making Abby a relatable figure. She is not just a pretty face; she is a woman dealing with real problems—teenage rebellion, financial stress, and the loneliness of widowhood. Day's performance grounds the film, providing an emotional anchor amidst the slapstick comedy. This film is often cited as her final theatrical film before she retired from acting to focus on animal welfare, making it a poignant bookend to a remarkable career.

Brian Keith is the perfect foil for Day. His gruff, no-nonsense demeanor as Jake Iverson contrasts wonderfully with Day's softer, more diplomatic approach. Keith was renowned for his tough-guy roles in westerns and dramas, but he also excelled at comedy, and he brings a physical presence and a dry wit to the part. He is equally adept at showing Jake's vulnerability and his frustration, making him more than just a caricature of the harried father. The chemistry between Day and Keith is palpable. They have a natural, easy rapport that makes their characters' romance believable. They argue like a real couple who care deeply about each other, even when they are at their wits' end. Their performances elevate the material, turning a lighthearted comedy into a story with genuine emotional stakes.

The supporting cast of children is also memorable. Each child is given a distinct personality, avoiding the trap of making them all one-dimensional stereotypes. The older boys are funny and rebellious, the younger ones are cute and mischievous, and the teenage daughter is perfectly dramatic. Pat Carroll also deserves mention as Mother Hood, the family's eccentric housekeeper, who provides additional comic relief. The ensemble cast works together seamlessly, creating a believable and entertaining family dynamic. Their interactions are the heart of the film, and the performances ensure that the movie is as touching as it is funny.

Themes and Social Commentary: Blended Families and Changing Times

While **With Six You Get Egg Roll** is primarily a comedy, it touches on several themes that were progressive for its time. The most obvious is the blended family. In 1968, divorce and remarriage were becoming more common, but they were still often treated with stigma in popular media. This film takes a lighthearted but respectful approach, acknowledging the difficulties of merging two established households. It does not shy away from the jealousy, the competition for parental attention, and the difficulty of establishing new hierarchies. The children are not instantly accepting of their new step-siblings; they fight, they scheme, and they make life difficult for the adults. This realism is what makes the film resonate even today.

Another theme is the changing role of women. Abby is a business owner, a departure from the typical homemaker roles often seen in earlier family comedies. She is competent, assertive, and financially independent. She does not need a man to save her; she chooses to marry Jake because she wants companionship and love, not financial security. This was a subtle but important feminist message, reflecting the shifting societal norms of the late 1960s. The film also explores the challenges of single parenthood from both a male and female perspective, showing that it is difficult for everyone, regardless of gender.

Communication is another core theme. The film shows how much of the family's chaos stems from a lack of open communication. The parents make decisions without consulting the children, and the children act out because they feel unheard. The resolution of the film comes when the family finally sits down to talk, air their grievances, and listen to one another. It is a simple but profound lesson: that a family is not a dictatorship, but a team that requires cooperation and understanding. These themes ensure that **With Six You Get Egg Roll** is more than just a period piece; it is a story with timeless relevance about the messy, beautiful reality of modern family life.

Production and Direction: Howard Morris's Touch

The film was directed by **Howard Morris**, who is perhaps better known as an actor, particularly for his comedic roles on "Your Show of Shows" and as Ernest T. Bass on "The Andy Griffith Show." This was one of Morris's few directorial efforts, and he brought a light, comedic touch to the proceedings. He understood the importance of pacing in a family comedy, keeping the scenes moving quickly while allowing the actors room to breathe. He also had a good eye for visual gags, using the chaotic setting of the family home to create humorous tableaus. His background in sketch comedy is evident in the film's episodic structure and its reliance on strong character interactions.

The screenplay was written by Gwen Bagni and Paul Dubov, and later revised by Harvey Bullock and R.S. Allen. The script is sharp and witty, filled with the kind of snappy dialogue that was a hallmark of 1960s comedies. It balances broad slapstick with more subtle, character-driven humor. The film was shot on location in and around Los Angeles, which gives it a distinctly late-60s, Southern California feel. The sets, from the family's cluttered home to Jake's modern construction office, are authentic and help ground the story. The soundtrack, featuring a catchy theme song performed by the band "The Cowsills" (who were famous for their own family dynamic), perfectly captures the upbeat, optimistic spirit of the film.

Interestingly, the film was originally intended to be a television movie or a pilot for a potential series, but it was released theatrically instead. This might explain its slightly episodic feel, as if each scene is a different chapter in the life of a very busy family. Despite this, it holds together as a cohesive feature film, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. The production values are solid, and the direction is assured, making it a polished and professional product that holds up well.

Reception and Legacy: Why It Remains a Hidden Gem

Upon its release in 1968, **With Six You Get Egg Roll** received mixed to positive reviews. Some critics found it to be a pleasant, if not groundbreaking, family comedy. Others were more enthusiastic, praising the performances of Day and Keith and the clever premise. It was not a major box office blockbuster, but it performed respectably, particularly among family audiences. Over the years, however, the film has gained a cult following.

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