

# Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

*Dramatic Publishing*



# **TAKE TWO**

**A Play**

**by**

**JACQUELINE LYNCH**

**Dramatic Publishing**

**Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand**

### \*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\*

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalog and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING  
P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 60098

***COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES.*** This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMII by  
JACQUELINE LYNCH

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(TAKE TWO)

ISBN: 1-58342-128-9

## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in this book, may be used on all programs. *On all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with  
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

# TAKE TWO

A One-act Play

For 1 Man, 1 Woman, one either gender

## CHARACTERS

**EMILY NORBERT:** An award-winning film actress in her early 30s. She is mature, reserved, quiet and gentle, but beneath is a very tough and cynical person. She has had much demanded of her through her life. She has come to the point where she gives only what she wants.

**GIL RAFFERTY:** A noted film critic in his middle to late 50s. He is professorial, but outgoing and humorous, with a larger-than-life demeanor. He has known and written intimately of the world's foremost film celebrities. He is as cynical and reserved as Emily in his opinions of his subjects. He is not easily swayed or fooled but reveals a naiveté about real people.

**INSPECTOR RAMOS:** FBI agent. May be played by a male or female, any age. Brisk, efficient, businesslike, sometimes brash and impatient.

**TIME:** The present.

Approximate running time: 20 minutes.

## TAKE TWO

**SETTING:** *Emily's trailer on the set of her current film. It is compact, sparse (and can be entirely imaginary if using a minimalist set). A narrow door leading to the outside is on the back wall UL. There is a small table UC, with one end abutting the wall. One chair is placed at the table with the back facing the door. A companion chair has been pulled out and left UR. DR is a small counter and a small dormitory-room-style fridge. The set is compact, utilitarian, and not very personal. It suggests that EMILY does not live her life here but uses the Spartan trailer as a mask to shield her personal life.*

**AT RISE:** *It is a weekday afternoon. EMILY sits at the table with her back to the door, slowly sipping coffee with preoccupied concentration. She wears casual pants, a blouse which is not tucked into the pants. She wears slippers. She looks as if she is either between costume changes or like someone who is hanging around the house on a Saturday morning. There is a knock on the trailer door, and low voices are heard outside. EMILY is instantly alert. She puts her coffee down and stands slowly, deliberately, as if preparing herself to play a scene.*

*INSPECTOR RAMOS enters, impersonating a studio publicity agent.*

INSPECTOR RAMOS. Ms. Norbert? You're ready for Mr. Rafferty?

EMILY. Yes, yes, of course. Come on in.

INSPECTOR RAMOS. Please go in, Mr. Rafferty.

*(RAFFERTY enters.)*

RAFFERTY. Thank you.

INSPECTOR RAMOS. I'll call back for you in a little while to escort you out. Let me know if there's anything else I can do.

RAFFERTY. Thank you ... uh ...

*(INSPECTOR RAMOS exits, closes door behind him.)*

RAFFERTY. ...Mr....I've forgotten your press agent's name. Isn't that terrible? *(He takes her in slowly, smiling expectantly.)* Well, you were this high when I last saw you. *(Gestures waist-high.)* Saw you in person, that is. Gil Rafferty.

*(RAFFERTY extends his hand. EMILY takes it gently, but pulls quickly away after shaking his hand.)*

EMILY *(reserved, but not impolite)*. I remember.

RAFFERTY *(scoffing)*. You remember? So long ago? You were only ten years old.

EMILY. You wore a yellow plaid sport coat and had big, dark sideburns.

RAFFERTY. What a horrible, and evidently indelible memory I've left you with. Well, it was the '70s, every-

body had big sideburns, so don't blame me. As for the plaid sport coat... well, for that I guess you can blame me.

*(They both chuckle at this, EMILY more from politeness.)*

EMILY. Won't you sit down, Mr. Rafferty?

*(She gestures to the table, and quickly picks up her coffee cup. He sits down with good-humored acceptance and begins to rummage through his briefcase, pulling out a pad and a file folder, a pen, and a small tape recorder. EMILY eyes him with calm suspicion.)*

RAFFERTY. Yes, I guess it's down to business. I must say, I was very surprised at your accepting my request for an interview, Emily. Since you haven't allowed many interviews in your career, does this indicate a change in policy for you? Pardon me, may I call you "Emily"?

EMILY. Of course, Mr. Rafferty. You did at our first interview when I was ten.

RAFFERTY. Because it sounds foolish calling a ten-year-old girl "Ms. Norbert." Though, I must say, you impressed me at the time with your incredible poise and your intelligence. You were a very mature little kid, Emily. That's not just hindsight talking, either. Here... I actually looked up the clipping of that interview. I was still on the *Post* at the time, before I became syndicated. Here's a photocopy.

*(He hands her a photocopied sheet of paper. She reads a moment to herself, and then aloud.)*



EMILY (*reads*). “She met me with a firm handshake and a how-do-you-do? There were no agents or handlers hanging around this kid, nor a stage mother. Just a ten-year-old actress with more manners and intelligence than most professional actresses I’ve interviewed. She seems to have it all going for her. The only thing that makes me remember she is not a grownup is that I’m interviewing her on her role in a piece of G-rated crap called *Skippy’s Big Day*.”

(*Mildly amused, she hands the paper back to him. He tucks it into the folder.*)

RAFFERTY. Less than auspicious beginnings to your successful career.

EMILY. Yes, I seem to recall Skippy the poodle getting better reviews than I did.

RAFFERTY. He wasn’t a poodle, he was a schnauzer. And now he’s dead.

EMILY. Is he? Poor Skippy. Well, dogs do have shorter lives. And careers, I suppose.

RAFFERTY. He died right after the sequel, *Skippy’s Big Day II*. Thank heavens.

EMILY. Can I get you a coffee, or water or a diet soda, Mr. Rafferty? I’m sorry, I don’t have anything stronger.

RAFFERTY. Water, thanks. My gin and tonic days are over. Now if I can just get off movie popcorn, I might lose this gut. Unless your Oscar is in that refrigerator, I might note that there seems to be no items of a personal nature in your trailer. Have you just moved in, or do you like to travel light?

*(EMILY retrieves bottled water from the fridge and hands it to him, only smiling at his chuckling. He cannot take his eyes off her. She allows him to look.)*

EMILY. Both. I like to be free, and it's easier to do that without the trappings of stardom. *(As if making a do-or-die decision.)* I'm ready when you are.

RAFFERTY. Do you mind my using a tape recorder?

EMILY *(eyes it warily, seems almost to take a step back from it)*. No, I don't mind.

RAFFERTY *(not noticing her or even aware of her mood)*.

Fine. Now, since it's been so long since we spoke, and so much has happened to you, I'd like to talk first about your career until now, and then we'll build up to the film you're shooting here, *Post Mortem*. Lovely title. Typical, I must say. Anyway, this article will be the lead feature, with a side bar on your film. The actual review will come later with the film premiere and they will be published together.

EMILY. I understand.

RAFFERTY. I know you've been asked, probably a hundred times, about your parents splitting up when you were so young and being shuttled back and forth between them until they both essentially decided the best place for you was to live with your manager at the time... *(Rifles through papers.)* um... Crayson...

EMILY. Mr. Crayson, yes.

RAFFERTY. ...but I don't really want to repeat what's already been said a hundred times before.

EMILY. A thousand times.

RAFFERTY. Yes. Now, I know Crayson took a lot of heat for getting you into *Street Games*, which turned out to

be such a blockbuster and such a boost for your career when you were just twelve, but tell me...what did you really think of your part as an incest victim/murder suspect at only twelve years old? You were very sheltered from the press at that age, but you were obviously not sheltered from the facts of life or from a very sordid storyline. What were your impressions of that role, when you were twelve?

EMILY. I can remember wondering where Skippy was.

*(This is unexpected, and after a beat he laughs heartily, as she joins in politely.)*

RAFFERTY. Seriously.

EMILY *(thinks a moment)*. Do you remember your review of that film?

RAFFERTY *(gently teasing)*. Are you dodging my question?

EMILY. Perhaps I'm trying to clarify it, or clarify my answer.

RAFFERTY. You always think before you speak, don't you? And you speak carefully, almost as if you've rehearsed your words. There is a wariness about you, Emily, perhaps it's an inner strength that has just the opposite effect and makes you seem vulnerable. Just by trying not to be. It's very interesting.

EMILY. Vulnerable. Interesting. You don't find my manner obstinate? Suspicious? Judgmental? Arrogant?

RAFFERTY. I find you intelligent. I'm also aware that your having won several major acting awards before the age of thirty makes you the golden girl of our times. But you've managed to maintain quite an air of mystery

about you, not easy when your life is under microscope. I congratulate you on that. It's a great tactic. Those criticisms you've mentioned, are those supposed to be from reviewers or from your fellow actors?

EMILY. Your next question would be "which fellow actors?"

RAFFERTY. I never got an answer to my first question.

EMILY. Neither did I. Shall we meet each other halfway, Mr. Rafferty? I will tell you what it was like to be a twelve-year-old celebrity in a landmark film with adult themes, if you can tell me what your initial impressions were of that film.

RAFFERTY (*amused, enjoying her challenge*). Fair enough.

EMILY. I warn you, my reply may disappoint you.

RAFFERTY. I doubt that.

EMILY (*genuinely amazed, almost softening, and then chidingly*). Really. Those adjectives, "obstinate," "suspicious," "judgmental," and "arrogant" come from your own reviews of various roles I've played, Mr. Rafferty. Oh, I won't quote you chapter and verse, but I have read everything you've written about me for years, ever since I first met you that day.

RAFFERTY. Don't tell me I *did* make an impression?

EMILY. At first, no. I have to admit, at that interview it seemed to me you were just another boring grownup asking nosy questions. But Mr. Crayson afterward showed me your article. He always let me read my own press. I can remember being struck that the ordinary, somewhat dull man who seemed more like an absent-minded professor than a brilliant film critic and historian should write in such detail about meeting me at a simple interview, and about such detail on that movie and all the

movies afterward. You found meaning in film moments which for me were fleeting and much less meaningful, and sometimes barely remembered. A turn of my head. A catch in my voice. Slowly, through the years I came to understand what it must be like for a person to watch a film and be so affected by it. It's important for an actress to know those things, if only to be able to manipulate them.

RAFFERTY. Weren't you ever affected by films? Didn't you ever go to the movies?

EMILY. No. As a teenager, I wasn't even interested in going to my own films. I *had* to go to the premieres.

RAFFERTY. This is very interesting. I was wondering ...

EMILY (*interrupting*). But I always read *your* reviews of them. I learned so much from you, Mr. Rafferty.

RAFFERTY (*chuckling, pleased*). Well...thank you. You have me at a complete loss, you know.

EMILY. To learn what others think of you is very educational, as empowering as it can be shattering, and when it comes so objectively and from such a long distance away... To me, you were like a strong voice of reason in my otherwise sheltered world. A great leveler amid mountains of hype. If the film was bad, you said so, and you said why, unflinchingly. Even the good films, even on *those* you demanded some higher, vague perfection beyond my abilities. You were always raising the bar for me.

RAFFERTY. And your managers and agents?

EMILY. Echoed the film trailers and their hopes for the bottom line. Besides, my absent parents changed them frequently.