

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

LONG WALK TO FOREVER

**Based upon an episode from
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s
"Welcome to the Monkey House"**

**by
Bryan Harnetiaux**

The Dramatic Publishing Company

*** 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 catalogue 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. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

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

© MCMLXXXIX by
BRYAN HARNETIAUX

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(LONG WALK TO FOREVER)

ISBN 0-87129-625-X

To
Victoria Hawker, Dorothy Darby Smith,
Betty Tomlinson, Pam Kingsley,
Jodine Watson, and Roger Gillis

PRODUCTION NOTES

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Of Newt and Catharine, Mr. Vonnegut writes: "They had grown up next door to each other.... There had always been playful, comfortable warmth between them, but never any talk of love."

NEWT is bright and also listens to his heart. He has a sense of humor, but is shy around others. He masks this shyness by speaking absently, indifferently, "...as though what really concerned him were far away...."

CATHARINE is guided by rational thought, and a need to make deliberate and well-grounded choices about life events — always looking for the path.

SET AND LIGHTING

No set is required. A bare stage with a pile of leaves on one side and a wooden chair on the other is all that is needed.

The use of the leaves in the play as representing the woods is enhanced by a lighting plot that employs several leaf "gobos" on dimmers to effect leaf-like shadows.

LONG WALK TO FOREVER

SCENE: *In the darkness is heard marching, loud and close-by. The sound is clear, precise and ordered. These are soldiers marching, perhaps a platoon. Cadence is being called—“Your left, your left, your left, right, left. Hut, two, three, four....” The lights come up R on a military parade grounds. There is a pile of leaves D. NEWT, dressed in army uniform, is marching in formation. (This should be achieved by having NEWT march in place.) He is impeccably dressed, except for a corner of a wedding invitation that sticks out of the fold in his shirt. The marching sounds slowly diminish so that finally there is mainly the sound of Newt’s marching. During this, NEWT furtively pulls the wedding invitation out of his shirt and glances at it as he marches. As the additional marching sounds fade down, and NEWT continues to march while reading the invitation, the lights come up L on Catharine’s house in the city. There is a wooden chair inside the house with a “brides” magazine on it. Outdoor bells from the local “School for the Blind” ring the half hour. CATHARINE is inside the house, practicing “walking down the aisle” to her wedding. She hums “The Wedding March” as she practices. She is wearing white high-heeled shoes that are obviously a new experience for her. Otherwise, she is wearing everyday clothes, except that she has on a white wedding veil which hides her face. As CATHARINE practices walking down the aisle*

the first time, there is awkwardness in her movement. She sighs audibly and goes back and tries it again. The second time is better, but rigid and lacking in any natural grace. Her third attempt is less than perfect, but there is marked improvement. CATHARINE sighs, and stops. She then lifts the veil and stands poised, as if at the altar. The veil slips down and she has to position it again. Having arranged and rearranged the veil, CATHARINE then practices saying, "I do." She says it several times, each with a slightly different inflection, all of which should speak more of her earnest attempt to master the phrase, as opposed to registering any doubt. At this, somewhat dissatisfied, she moves to the chair to collect herself. She sits down, removes her veil and changes to casual shoes. She then picks up the brides magazine, and begins pouring over it. At this point, NEWT stumbles and falls. Distracted by the invitation, he has not heard the order to "halt." He blurts out "sorry" to the soldier in front of him. The invitation ends up on the ground next to NEWT, as he finds himself looking at the boots and then the face of the PLATOON SERGEANT. Although the PLATOON SERGEANT does not actually appear, suggestions as to his "lines" appear in brackets to assist the actor playing NEWT in developing the inner monologue necessary to assure understanding of this sequence.

[SERGEANT. Hey, what the hell's goin' on here!?

What's the problem!]

NEWT (*still on the ground, aware of the Sergeant's boots, but not getting up yet*). It's my fault, sir.

[SERGEANT. Sir! I work for a living, soldier. It's Sergeant!]

NEWT (*trying to cover up the invitation with his hand*). I mean sergeant, sir. Sergeant, sir. Sergeant!

[SERGEANT. God! Get up.]

NEWT (*standing up. As he does so, he tries to cover the invitation with one of his shoes. He is only partially successful. He then salutes*). Yes, sir-sergeant.

[SERGEANT. What happened?]

NEWT. Ah, I didn't hear you say *halt*, sergeant.

[SERGEANT. Everybody else did. Are you saying I wasn't loud enough?]

NEWT (*wincing*). No. No, you were plenty loud. I wasn't paying attention. Sorry, sergeant.

[SERGEANT. What's your name, soldier?]

NEWT. Newt, sir. My name's Newt, Sergeant.

[SERGEANT. What's your last name?]

NEWT. Last Name? (*He's blank. [The SERGEANT reads name off Newt's name tag.] NEWT fingers his name tag and confirms the Sergeant's right.*) Oh, yeah, that's it.

[SERGEANT. Idiot. Why didn't you hear me, boy?]

NEWT. I don't know. I wasn't thinking, I guess.

[SERGEANT. I think you know.]

NEWT. No, I don't.

CATHARINE (*interrupting her reading, she tries out yet another variation*). I do. (*Discontented with this effort, she returns to her magazine.*)

[SERGEANT. Wouldn't have anything to do with whatever's under your foot, would it?]

NEWT. Whaa... (*Picking up the invitation.*) Oh, this?

[SERGEANT. It's yours, isn't it?]

NEWT. Yeah, I guess so.

[SERGEANT (*mockingly*). Well, it must be real important!]

NEWT. Important? Not really.

[SERGEANT. Why don't you just read it to us.]

NEWT. Read it? Now?

[SERGEANT. Now. While you're doing push-ups.]

NEWT (*starts to protest, stops. Drops to his knees.*) How many?

[SERGEANT. 'Til you're done reading.]

NEWT (*sets invitation on ground in front of him so that it's below his head as he assumes the push-up position. As NEWT executes the push-ups, he reads the invitation aloud:*) "Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Warren request the honor of your presence at the marriage ceremony..."

[SERGEANT. Louder, start over. The boys can't hear you in the back.]

NEWT (*much louder*). Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Warren request the honor of your presence at the marriage ceremony of their daughter Catharine and Mr. Henry Stewart Chasens on the 8th day of October at ten o'clock a.m., Heritage Square Cathedral. Reception to follow immediately afterward at the Cashet Club. (*NEWT looks up at the SERGEANT for directions.*)

[SERGEANT. Get up. This some big deal, boy?]

NEWT (*getting up, putting the invitation in his pocket*). No. No big deal, Sergeant.

[SERGEANT. These relatives or something?]

NEWT. No. Just an acquaintance. She lived next door.

[SERGEANT. Well, isn't this all just real cute. I don't care if she's your Siamese twin. You don't read mail in formation! Why don't you remind your buddies, here? Go on, tell them!]

NEWT. Yes, sergeant. (*Salutes SERGEANT and turns to the platoon.*) It is against army regulations to read mail in formation.