

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

PLEASE DON'T GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM

by
JOHN O'BRIEN



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

*** 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 anytime 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”

©MCMXCIV by
JOHN O'BRIEN

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(PLEASE DON'T GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM)

Cover design by Susan Carle

ISBN 0-87129-434-6

PLEASE DON'T GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM

**A Play in Two Acts
For Five Men and Six Women, extras possible**

CARLA

PAULINE

MARIE

JENNIFER

SYD, a jock, at least on the surface

JOCKO, an intellectual

NINA, an Asian girl

THREE BOYS IN THE LIBRARY

TWO LIBRARIANS (one male, one female)

All characters, except the librarians, are students. For a school production, it might add an extra touch if the librarians were played by teachers. Extras may be used as students, eating in the cafeteria or relaxing in the courtyard.

TIME: September through November 17, the present.

SCENES: 1. High school library
2. High school cafeteria
3. High school courtyard
4. Jennifer's living room
5. Jennifer's attic

ACT ONE

SETTING: *The school cafeteria.*

AT RISE: *JENNIFER, CARLA, PAULINE, MARIE and SYD are pigging out on marshmallows. JOCKO is doing his homework and everyone else's. He moves from one book to another.*

CARLA. How do you do it, Jocko? He does one of my geometry problems, (*To JENNIFER.*) a question from your history book...

PAULINE. An exercise from my French book...

MARIE. And my Spanish book...

SYD. And my health book.

JENNIFER. How

CARLA. Do

PAULINE. You

MARIE. Do

SYD. It,

JENNIFER. Jock

CARLA. O?

JOCKO. How does a giraffe know how to neck?

CARLA. What's he talking about?

PAULINE. He means he just does it. He doesn't know how.

MARIE. It just comes natural.

SYD. Like Moe's art.

JOCKO (*correcting him*). Mozart.

SYD. Don't push your luck, Jocko.

JOCKO. What will happen to me if I do?

SYD (*to GIRLS*). He has a short memory. (*To JOCKO.*) Remember the last time?

JOCKO (*in mock fear*). Not that. Anything but that.

PAULINE (*to SYD*). You mean the time you held him upside down for ten minutes?

JOCKO. Eleven.

CARLA. How do you know?

JOCKO. I was counting.

CARLA. Minutes?

JOCKO. Seconds.

JENNIFER. I wish somebody would start counting the seconds until my seventeenth birthday.

PAULINE. Is that a hint?

JENNIFER. Of course not. It just slipped out.

CARLA. She was thinking out loud.

MARIE. And we just happened to be here.

JENNIFER. Forget I mentioned it.

SYD. I forgot already.

JENNIFER. Thanks.

JOCKO. When is it, Jennifer?

JENNIFER. That's sweet of you, Jocko.

SYD (*singing*). Jennifer and Jocko...

ALL (*except JENNIFER and JOCKO, sing*). Sitting in a tree...

JENNIFER. You're not funny.

JOCKO. When is your birthday, Jennifer?

JENNIFER. The seventeenth.

SYD. You already said that.

JOCKO. She means the seventeenth of the month. She will be seventeen on the seventeenth. It only happens once in a lifetime.

MARIE (to JENNIFER). The seventeenth of September is next week.

JENNIFER. It's the seventeenth of November.

PAULINE. That gives us time to plan.

CARLA. Once in a lifetime. It should be a special party.

MARIE. It can't be Sweet Sixteen. That was last year.

PAULINE. How about Sour Seventeen?

SYD. Hey, that's good.

PAULINE. Thank you.

SYD. That was good, wasn't it, Jocko?

JOCKO. It was clever, but cruel.

SYD. What gives with this guy? He analyzes everything.

JOCKO. "The unexamined life is not worth living."

SYD. Who says?

JOCKO. Socrates, according to Plato.

SYD. Plato? Hey, listen to this.

PAULINE. Do we have any choice?

SYD. What was Plato's last name?

JOCKO. Spaghetti.

SYD. He ruined my joke.

JOCKO. I answered your question.

SYD. You stepped on my punch line.

JOCKO. You wouldn't know a punch line from a lemonade bowl.

SYD. Somebody restrain me before I pulverize him. (SYD flexes his biceps.)

JOCKO. Girls, restrain him. (They do.)

SYD. Thank you, girls.

MARIE. Thank you, Sydney.

SYD. Don't call me Sydney. Don't ever call me Sydney.

PAULINE. Isn't Sydney your name, Sydney?

SYD. It's not a name, it's a city in New Zebra.

CARLA. New Zealand.

JOCKO. Australia.

SYD. New Zealand, Australia, what's the difference?

JOCKO. Fifteen hundred nautical miles.

SYD. That does it. He's not human. I'm going to the pool.

MARIE. Why?

SYD. To practice my diving.

MARIE. There's no water in the pool. They're draining it.

SYD. That's why I'm going.

PAULINE. Wait a minute. I'll go with you.

SYD. I don't blame you. If I was a girl, I'd go with me, too.

CARLA. Count me in.

MARIE. Me too.

SYD (*to JOCKO*). Don't feel bad, fella. Life's like that. (*All exit but JENNIFER and JOCKO.*)

JENNIFER. Don't let him bother you.

JOCKO. He doesn't.

JENNIFER. You're a unique person, Jocko.

JOCKO. I'd rather be unusual than unique.

JENNIFER. Why is that?

JOCKO. Everybody's unique, in fingerprints, if nothing else.

Not everybody's unusual.

JENNIFER. Jocko?

JOCKO. Yes?

JENNIFER. May I ask you something personal?

JOCKO. Of course.

JENNIFER. I'm not sure how to say it.

JOCKO. Just say it.

JENNIFER. Do you enjoy my company?

JOCKO. I do.

JENNIFER. Relatively?

JOCKO. Not just relatively.

JENNIFER. Isn't everything relative?

JOCKO. If everything's relative, I'll say uncle.

JENNIFER. Don't let this go to your head, but nobody else makes me laugh like this.

JOCKO. May I ask *you* a personal question?

JENNIFER. Of course.

JOCKO. Don't answer if you don't want to.

JENNIFER. I won't.

JOCKO. If you do answer, take your time.

JENNIFER. I will.

JOCKO. Are you ready?

JENNIFER. I'm ready.

JOCKO. Who was the greatest person who ever lived?

JENNIFER. That's personal?

JOCKO. It's about a person.

JENNIFER. That's true.

JOCKO. Well?

JENNIFER. In my opinion?

JOCKO. You're the one I'm asking.

JENNIFER. In my opinion, I never thought about it.

JOCKO. Think about it now.

JENNIFER. My grandfather says it was St. Patrick, but he only says that because his mother was born in Ireland.

JOCKO. I'm not asking your grandfather's opinion, I'm asking yours.

JENNIFER. Socrates.

JOCKO. Not a bad choice. He's in my top ten.

JENNIFER. You have a list?

JOCKO. I have many lists: ten greatest writers, ten greatest American writers, ten greatest men writers, ten greatest American men writers, ten greatest...

JENNIFER. I get the point.

JOCKO. Someday I'll publish it.

JENNIFER. It?

JOCKO. My book of lists.

JENNIFER. Why not publish it now?

JOCKO. First I have to become famous.

JENNIFER. Why not become famous by publishing your book?

JOCKO. Because nobody will care about my opinions unless I'm already famous.

JENNIFER. I care.

JOCKO. I'm glad.

JENNIFER. Are you keeping me in suspense on purpose?

JOCKO. Suspense?

JENNIFER. Who is *your* choice for the greatest person who ever lived?

JOCKO. Actually, once it was Socrates.

JENNIFER. Once?

JOCKO. When I was a freshman.

JENNIFER. You've been thinking about this for four years?

JOCKO. Five. I started in the eighth grade.

JENNIFER. That's...strange.

JOCKO. You mean abnormal.

JENNIFER. What do normal kids think about?

JOCKO. Ten greatest football players, ten greatest rock stars, ten greatest cars...

JENNIFER. When you put it that way, I'm glad you're abnormal.

JOCKO. Me too.

JENNIFER. But you still haven't told me your choice for the greatest person who ever lived.

JOCKO. Leonardo daVinci.

JENNIFER. I didn't know you were interested in painting.

JOCKO. I'm an artistic ignoramus.

JENNIFER. Then why...

JOCKO. I'm also a musical ignoramus, but I once had Mozart on top of my list.