

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

Reduced for Quick Sale

One-act Comedy

by

KENT R. BROWN

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
www.dramaticpublishing.com

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, music 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.

©MCMLXXXIX by
KENT R. BROWN

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(REDUCED FOR QUICK SALE)

ISBN: 1-58342-076-2

REDUCED FOR QUICK SALE

A Play in One Act
For One Man and Three Women

CHARACTERS

MARGIE in her late 20s, divorced
KATHY in her early 30s, getting divorced
DOROTHY the mother of Margie and Kathy,
in her mid-50s, divorced
JIM Kathy's husband, in his early 30s

TIME: The present. Late evening.

PLACE: A garage

Reduced for Quick Sale premiered at the BoarsHead: Michigan Public Theatre in Lansing, MI on February 18, 1988. The production was directed by Judith Gentry. Set design by Kyle Euckert. Lighting design by James E. Peters. Properties design by Louise Phetteplace. Sound design by Scott Shonk. Costume design by Charlotte Dear-dorff. Stage management by Suann Pollock. The cast was as follows:

Margie	Judi Ammar
Kathy	Monica Deeter
Dorothy	Carmen Decker
Jim	Frederick Hill

for Holly

REDUCED FOR QUICK SALE

SETTING: A "garage sale." The upstage wall should function as the back of the garage. There is an outside entrance there or in one of the side walls. A second entrance exits from the garage into the kitchen. There should be tables of books and bottles and other odd items... a box of paperbacks and record albums, a rack or two of clothes, a chest of drawers, a hassock, picture frames, outdoor lawn chairs, and any and all other items that can be made useful in this setting. A sign lettered "Reduced For Quick Sale" is attached to a stake and leans against a wall. Two aluminum lawn chairs are set apart from the sale goods.

AT THE CURTAIN: MARGIE is discovered pulling out drawers and looking under stacks of sheets, etc.

MARGIE (calling off). I can't find them. Did you say they were green? Why would anyone want green salt shakers. They should be white or blue or crystal clear.

DOROTHY (from offstage in the kitchen). Green! I know they were green. They're out there somewhere. Keep looking.

MARGIE. I'm looking, Mother. I'm looking.

(KATHY enters with her arms full of blankets.)

KATHY. Margie? What do you think? Nice, huh? I got them out of the cleaners this morning. Even fixed the burned spot. *(Puts blankets on top of something.)*

MARGIE. Not there. They'll look so ... clumpy.

KATHY. What difference does it make? Here or there. It's a garage sale not a boutique.

MARGIE. Environment is everything! Can't just plop stuff down anywhere. Makes you look too eager. First sign of weakness... they'll tear your throat out.

KATHY. Who cares? Might be a blessing.

MARGIE. Trust me. Arrangement is everything.

KATHY. Fine! Arrange it! I just don't want to see this stuff any longer. *(Pause.)* How can a marriage be crammed into one small garage. I thought we had more than this.

(DOROTHY sticks her head out the kitchen door.)

DOROTHY. Did you find them, Margie? Green. Six inches high. Very nice. Tacky but nice. Keep looking. Kathy, don't put the blankets there. They don't look good. Margie, take charge out here. Help your sister. She looks a little fragile. *(Exits into the kitchen.)*

MARGIE *(to KATHY who sits down in one of the aluminum chairs to smoke a cigarette)*. Told ya! Environment is everything.

KATHY. Yeah! You told me. *(Pause.)* Margie, am I fragile?

MARGIE. You?

KATHY. Who else is out here?

MARGIE. Depressed ... exhausted ... suicidal, sure. Fragile? No.

KATHY. Those I can live with. But I hate fragile women.
(*Mimicking.*) 'I've lost my focus. Binkie ate the goldfish... what will I do! I can't cope on Tuesdays!'
(*Pause.*) Damn that man!

MARGIE (*moving to the blankets and finding a better place for them*). There! That's better, don't you think?
Of course you do. How much for these? Not too much... not too little.

KATHY. Surprise me. "Take charge!"

MARGIE. I'm sorry, Kathy. I'm just trying to help. I've done a lot of these divorce sales. I did mine. Kind of a warmup. Then Mother's. And now yours. Should start my own business.

KATHY. I appreciate the help. I do. I'm just a little tired, that's all.

MARGIE (*holding up a blanket*). \$4.50... but we'll take \$3.00. What do you say? This stuff'll sell like hot cakes.

KATHY. It's a deal.

(*DOROTHY enters from the house with a pressure cooker, a set of clear glasses, and the green salt shakers.*)

DOROTHY. Found them! In Jim's closet I might add. In the den.

KATHY. I know where Jim's closet is, Mother.

DOROTHY. Why did you put them in the closet?

KATHY. I didn't like them.

DOROTHY. That makes no difference. Give them to somebody. Somebody gave them to me and I gave them to you. That's how it's done. How much for the blankets? \$6.50... but we'll take \$5.00. Not a penny less. I washed the pressure cooker. You never used it, did you? I can tell. No scorching on the bottom. Did

you ever feed him, Kathy? How about these glasses?
Where do you want them? Over there would be nice.

KATHY. Whatever you say, Mother. Let's just get on with it. And, yes, I fed him! For three years... two months... and twenty-six days!

DOROTHY. Are you all right, Kathy? You look a little pale. Want to lie down?

KATHY. Mother, I'm fine! See? I'm all here. Eyes... ears... nose... and throat! I'm not in the grave yet!

DOROTHY. You might be if you hadn't gotten out when you did.

KATHY. Jim left *me*, Mother... I didn't leave him.

DOROTHY. His guilt drove him out the door.

KATHY. You sound like a talking Bible. He didn't know what else to say, that's all.

DOROTHY. What could he say? That he hadn't been with that woman!

MARGIE (*brightly*). I thought we might ask \$4.50 for the blankets, Mother. Not too high... not too low.

DOROTHY. That's too low. \$6.50! The subject's closed. Iced tea, anyone?

KATHY. I hate iced tea.

MARGIE. Got any Coke?

DOROTHY. Coke ruins the skin. You're too young to have bad skin.

KATHY. Well, I'm not too young. I'll take a Coke.

DOROTHY (*exiting to the kitchen*). Margie, she's getting depressed. Cheer her up. I'll get the iced tea.

MARGIE. Mother's right, Kathy. Cheer up. In thirty days it'll be final and you'll feel free as a bird. Sell it all and jump into the old wagon.

KATHY. The salt shakers were in Jim's closet because that's where I put them. That's where we put every-

thing we didn't want. Salt shakers... the humidifier we brought from Arizona... the turkey platter Aunt Louisa gave us for our second anniversary with the American flag on it. 'Perfect for Thanksgiving Day,' she said.

MARGIE. Ever use it?

KATHY. On the Fourth of July. Seemed more American that way. Hot dogs.

MARGIE. Aunt Louisa is a strange lady.

KATHY. We're all strange ladies. (*Pause.*) OK... what's next? Records... albums... books... sheets? God, I hate this. (*Rises and moves about the garage.*) \$2.00 for the albums except for Janis and the Beatles. \$3.00 for Janis. \$1.00 for the Beatles.

MARGIE. Poor Beatles.

KATHY. They were Jim's favorites. And twenty-five cents for the paperbacks. Except for Henry Miller. Ten cents for horny Henry.

MARGIE. Jim's favorite, right?

(*DOROTHY enters from the kitchen with a tray of iced tea, setting it down on the table.*)

DOROTHY. That man was a vile, disrespectful sex fiend!

KATHY. We weren't talking about Jim, Mother. We were talking about Henry Miller.

DOROTHY. What's the difference?

KATHY. Dear God!

DOROTHY. Here's the iced tea. Sweetener for you, Margie.

MARGIE. Thank you, Mother.

KATHY (*sarcastically*). Just like you like it.

DOROTHY. Kathy, you're sagging. I can tell. Get a grip. Lift something. Get the blood circulating. Do some deep knee bends.

KATHY. I don't need a coach, Mother. I need my Coke. Where's my Coke?

DOROTHY. Let's see, fifty cents for the paperbacks and...

KATHY. You must have missed it. Stuffed way back in the fridge. Don't bother, I'll get it. *(Exits.)*

DOROTHY. She looks terrible. She's got to get all this in perspective. Did you get the maps?

MARGIE. Yesterday. Everything's underlined. Motels... scenic vistas... the usual.

DOROTHY. What did she say?

MARGIE. 'Nice maps.'

DOROTHY. That's just like Kathy. No wonder Jim left her. If she had been doing her job he wouldn't have looked someplace else. No man wants a wife hanging around his neck when he doesn't want her hanging there.

MARGIE. Mother, that's not fair.

DOROTHY. I never said it was fair. I just said it was true. Your sister's never grown up. Janis Joplin records! Honeymoon memories! Well, it's not like that.

(KATHY enters carrying three toasters and a can of Coke.)

KATHY. These should really 'sell like hot cakes.' Everyone needs a toaster. Did you know the average American family has three toasters... two cheese cutters... and four can openers? I read it somewhere. We only have three can openers. One under the national aver-

age. Typical. The one Uncle William and Aunt Jan gave us for our second anniversary... they never were very imaginative ... the ugly yellow one I bought in college ...

MARGIE. And the one I gave you.

KATHY. Bingo! But it never worked right so we used the ugly yellow one all the time and put yours out whenever you came over. Never knew it, did you? Just like marriage. Now you see it... now you don't. (*Displays the toasters.*) How's this? Toaster heaven.

DOROTHY. Over there, Kathy, and not all together. Bunch them all together and it looks...

KATHY. Too eager. Can't look too eager.

DOROTHY (*adjusting items*). That trip will do you wonders. How do you like the maps?

KATHY. Nice maps.

DOROTHY. Kathy!

KATHY. New points... and plugs... whatever the hell they are ... new tires... air conditioning ready to go ... all set. The maps accent the perfect ensemble.

DOROTHY. You're bitter.

KATHY. I can't be bitter? I'm surrounded by marital fallout and I can't be bitter?

MARGIE. After Fred left me I cut his jockey shorts up into little strips. When he came back for his clothes I gave him the scraps and a bottle of glue. You should have seen his face.

DOROTHY. That was infantile and childish.

MARGIE (*to DOROTHY*). When Daddy changed his mind about you, you cut up all his fishing rods!

KATHY. Sounds mature to me. I love the way you set standards for the "spurned woman," Mother. You're an inspiration to us all.

DOROTHY. Let's leave your father out of this!

MARGIE. Ah, what else is in the closet? Anything?
Time's skipping by.

KATHY. My art supplies, Jim's sweat pants, baseball cleats and glove. And our honeymoon albums from Europe.

DOROTHY. And Kathy. Don't forget Kathy. She was curled up in the back of the closet crying her heart out. *(To KATHY.)* You looked so defeated. I know that look.

MARGIE. Truce! Mother, arrange something over there, will you? Anything. Make it nice and pretty. *(To KATHY.)* I thought Jim took the albums with him.

KATHY. Over my dead body. I took all the pictures, didn't I? London Bridge at dawn. Could barely see it. Got up at 4:00 a.m. and took the tube. Then five blocks to the Thames. Four cups of hot tea and "snap!" London Bridge! I got up to snap it... I keep it!

MARGIE. How about the clippings?

KATHY. Yeah, he took the clippings. The "Daytona Demons!" Jim couldn't live without his clippings.

DOROTHY. Silly game!

MARGIE. He looked so cute in his uniform.

KATHY. Undefeated. 427 average. What a summer.

DOROTHY. How could you sit there night after night and watch a bunch of grown men running around the field catching a little white ball?

KATHY. It was fun yelling at the umpire. I never knew what to say so I'd yell 'Up yours, Ump!'

DOROTHY. How clever.

KATHY. Everybody yelled at the games, Mother. Joanne had 'Open your eyes, stupid!' Gabby had 'What's the matter with you!'

MARGIE. Not very original.

KATHY. She was pregnant. I liked Sharon's the best.

'Dumb shit!' Quick and to the point.

DOROTHY. Stupid game for grown men to play. Fishing's even worse. Mosquitoes... beer cans... dirty jokes... and sunstroke! Some fun.

MARGIE. Wasn't Sharon having a thing with the catcher?

KATHY. Sure was.

MARGIE. What was his name?

KATHY. I don't know. They all had nicknames. His was Ding Dong.

DOROTHY. I wonder why?

KATHY. Think about it, Mother.

DOROTHY. I'd rather not.

KATHY. They used to do it in the first base dugout after the games.

MARGIE. No!

KATHY. Yes!

DOROTHY. Kathy, I don't think I like this conversation.

KATHY. It's natural, Mother. That's how we all got here.

DOROTHY. Not in a dugout, we didn't.

KATHY. She used to watch him squatting down behind the plate with his legs spread real wide. Couldn't take her eyes off his...

DOROTHY. Kathy!

KATHY. She talked about his legs all the time. How strong they were. How he would pick her up and set her down...

DOROTHY. More tea, Margie?

KATHY. ...and walk up and down the dugout.

MARGIE. Fred never had legs like that. He could barely hold himself up with his elbows.

DOROTHY. Bedroom talk is best left in the bedroom.

KATHY. Jim and I did it once. In the dugout.

MARGIE. You didn't!

KATHY. We did!

DOROTHY. Dear God!

KATHY. After the championship game. Jim had hit two doubles and a single and he was flying high. 'I'm the greatest, honey,' he said. 'Let's celebrate.' And he gave me a big hug. Well, I wasn't up for it right then.

DOROTHY. Right then?

KATHY. But after we all finished our beer and pepperoni pizza ... I was a little looped ... I whispered in Jim's ear. 'Let's do it in the dugout.' Didn't even finish his beer. As we drove to the field, I started unbuttoning my blouse.

DOROTHY. Kathy!

KATHY. It just seemed the liberated thing to do, Mother. Got Jim all excited. He drove right on the field ... hooked around the fence and screeched to a stop right on the pitcher's mound!

DOROTHY. Did he turn his lights off?

MARGIE. Who cares!

KATHY. Sharon yells out 'Glad you could make it' as we stumbled to the third base dugout. And then we ... you know ... did it.

MARGIE. How was it?

DOROTHY. Margie!

MARGIE. I'm sorry.

KATHY. Jim yelled 'I'm the greatest' a couple of times ... and that was it.

DOROTHY. I can't believe you did that. You weren't brought up that way!