

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

THE VOWS OF PENELOPE CORELLI

A Play in Two Acts

by

RICHARD VETERE



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 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.

©MCMXCVIII by
RICHARD VETERE

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(THE VOWS OF PENELOPE CORELLI)

ISBN 0-87129-862-7

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. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

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

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

SETTING: *The Corelli home in Queens. The living room.*

AT RISE: *It is morning. PENELOPE and SHEILA sit in chairs facing CHARLIE. SHEILA is wearing tight jeans and a blouse. CHARLIE is in a cheap suit. He is working very hard to be sincere, and it's appalling.*

CHARLIE. So, now remember, when you get married for the ...

SHEILA. The first time ...

CHARLIE. It's important. It sticks in your memory forever. Over at Leonard's of Long Island we call it—"Wedding Bliss." Bliss means complete happiness.

SHEILA. That's what I want.

CHARLIE. Good. Bliss means Heaven—Paradise. (*Patronizing.*) Mom, you know what I mean when I say that the marriage state is a state of Paradise, right?

PENELOPE. My husband was a bum. He walked out looking for a pack of cigarettes five years ago and I haven't seen him since. Two years ago my sister said she saw him in Ithaca—upstate somewheres. He had a bump on his head so big she thought he had a Siamese twin. She asked him how he hurt his head and he said that he didn't know. Then he asked her if she could lend him twenty bucks. I told my sister that if he ever comes

CHARLIE. Twenty thousand. Rounded off. (*PENELOPE turns to the wall, removes a painting—revealing a safe. Inside are stacks of cash. She takes out twenty thousand and hands it to him.*)

PENELOPE. Here. In twenties. It's all there.

CHARLIE (*stunned*). You only need to leave a down payment ...

PENELOPE (*adamant*). No, I'm better than that! Okay, Charlie Sunshine? I'm better than that! Here's the whole twenty grand. Now, I want the works for my Sheila, here. A party for nine! But I want it as if you are throwing a party for ninety. That means I want waitresses and waiters for ninety!

CHARLIE. That's twenty waiters.

PENELOPE. Two per person.

CHARLIE. That's crazy.

PENELOPE. I'm payin' for it! I want two waiters per person! When I'm at this wedding I want to make sure that if I turn one inch to my right I see some guy dressed in a tuxedo staring at me wondering what I want next! And if I turn one inch to my left, I want to see another waiter standing there wanting to know what I want from him! Do you understand that? Do you see what I want? I want wedding bliss for my daughter! Bliss! Complete happiness! I couldn't give it to her when she was growing up, but I can give it to her now! I want her so blissful that she'll hear bells ringing in the trees from now until she turns a hundred and ten! I want bliss for her on that day to make up for all the hell I've given her for the last thirty-five years of her life!

SHEILA. Twenty-nine, Mom! I'm only twenty-nine.

PENELOPE. Whatever! Do you got that, Mr. Charlie Sunshine?

CHARLIE. You want bliss.

PENELOPE. In spades, pal.

SHEILA. I'm so excited!

CHARLIE. I just need to talk to the manager.

PENELOPE. The manager? You mean we've been wasting our time with a nobody?

CHARLIE. I schedule and plan out and emcee the parties, Mrs. Corelli. I just need to speak to Mr. Fuddercup. He's part-owner and manager of Leonard's of Long Island.

PENELOPE. Fine, call the pope if you want. I want bliss for my Sheila. Use the phone in the kitchen. It's on the wall. And don't be makin' any long-distance calls.

CHARLIE. Fine. (*He looks at wall clock.*) Is that the right time?

PENELOPE. No.

SHEILA. It hasn't worked in five years.

CHARLIE. Buy a new one, perhaps?

PENELOPE. I don't want a new one! There is nothing wrong with that clock! I pulled the plug out on it—do you mind? (*CHARLIE exits.*)

SHEILA. Mom, I want bigger breasts.

PENELOPE. They're fine.

SHEILA. No, not for a wedding. I want my dress to really fit nice. I want two new breasts. I hope Salvatore can make the date. Did we discuss the date?

PENELOPE. Sweetheart, are you sure you want to marry this Sal? He's got problems and I think he's got problems that go back into his genetic make-up.

SHEILA. And a honeymoon?

PENELOPE. I went to Staten Island with your father.

SHEILA. In the summer?

PENELOPE. No, it was in a blizzard. We were on our way to Chicago to see one of those big lakes.

SHEILA. The Great Lakes.

PENELOPE. Right, the Great Big Lakes. Anyway, he only had this dream to walk across it in the middle of winter. He saw some movie about some guy exploring the South Pole and he and all his pals die in a tent with the wind howling outside the tent, anyway, your father loved that movie. He loved how all the guys froze to death in the end. So, he wanted to walk across the lake and so we planned to go to Chicago.

SHEILA. Did you want to go to Chicago?

PENELOPE. In January? No, I wanted to go to Monte Carlo but your father only had five hundred dollars on him. He had just hijacked a truck and that was his cut. A real Einstein your father. Anyway, the plane can't take off because of a blizzard so, we take a cab to a motel in Staten Island and we sit in the motel watching *I Love Lucy* reruns on the TV. That was my honeymoon. Then I had to go back to work the next week. Your father never got to walk across the lake. I think now, if I was with him there at this moment, I'd rip a hole in the ice and throw him in it!

SHEILA. Mom, I love Sal.

PENELOPE. He's a bum.

SHEILA. How much money did we spend out of the money we won?

PENELOPE. Twenty grand give or take a few hundred. Just what I gave this knucklehead with the "I'm Leonard's of Long Island" on the brain.

SHEILA. Should we buy a new house?

PENELOPE. Out of the question. And we keep the money at home.

SHEILA. All of it?

PENELOPE. All of it. I don't trust banks, stocks or any other nonsense. When they send us the checks, we just cash 'em and put 'em in the basement. I got the cellar nice and nice. Nobody will know.

(CHARLIE returns.)

CHARLIE. Mrs. Corelli, I just spoke to Mister Fuddercup and he said that you can use the hall. I only have one date open, however. It's next month—a Monday night at eight.

SHEILA. I'm not getting married on a Monday night!

PENELOPE. Monday, Shmonday, who cares what day it is? Like this wedding will last out the summer?

SHEILA. But what church will marry us on a Monday?

PENELOPE. Your cousin Rita is a high priestess of the Holy Homage to the Universal Church. She'll marry you right here in the living room. Stop complaining. Fine. It's a deal.

CHARLIE. Mrs. Corelli, Mr. Fuddercup thinks he knows your name.

PENELOPE. I never heard of him.

CHARLIE. He saw it in the newspaper.

SHEILA. That's us.

PENELOPE. Shut up, honey.

CHARLIE. You're not the mother and daughter who won 53 MILLION in the lottery, are you?

SHEILA. That's us.

PENELOPE. Why? You want to borrow a coupla hundred?

CHARLIE. Oh, no...

PENELOPE. Ever since they announced that we won I've had relatives crawling out of the woodwork like rats crawling out of a burning building! Yes, we won 53 million! Yes, that means I get 2.7 million a year until I die! Any other questions?

CHARLIE. Not one. It was nice meeting you both.

PENELOPE (*to CHARLIE*). What are you standing around for? Do you want a tip? (*She hands him a ten-dollar bill.*)

CHARLIE. You don't have to do that...

PENELOPE. Of course I do. I'm realizing that people with money are ALWAYS expected to dish it out. (*CHARLIE exits.*)

SHEILA. He was kinda nice.

PENELOPE. Sheila, honey, the women in my family have been mixing their blood with losers for generations since we've been in this country. Why don't you learn to like the single life?

SHEILA. I want what you have.

PENELOPE. What do I have? I'm not a widow, I'm not divorced, I got a husband I haven't been near in five years who's probably hitchhiking his way through some wheat field with a bump on his head! You want my life? Are you crazy?

SHEILA. If it runs in the family, then I am.

PENELOPE. Let's drop the philosophy talk. What do you feel like doin', the night's young?

SHEILA. I'm hungry.

PENELOPE. Good. Let's rent a limo and go into the city.

SHEILA. Are we dressed for the city?

PENELOPE. We're rich. We can dress any way we want.
(PENELOPE opens the closet and finds some outrageous jackets. They put them on.)

SHEILA. Do we have enough money on us?

PENELOPE. I got fifty thousand. What do you have?

SHEILA. Just the eight thousand you gave me to hold.

PENELOPE. That should be enough. The tolls alone will
kill us. *(They exit. LIGHTS OUT.)*