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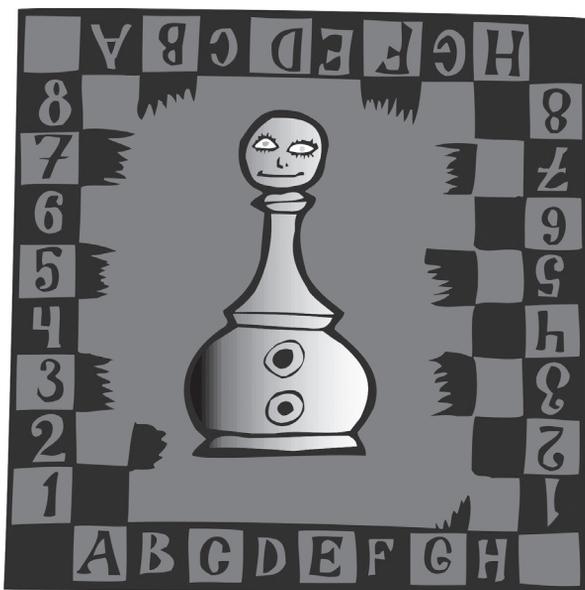
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*Dramatic Publishing*

# OF WINNERS, LOSERS AND GAMES

Drama by  
O.B. Rozell



# OF WINNERS, LOSERS AND GAMES

*Drama. By O.B. Rozell. Cast: 7m., 7w., flexible.* A commedia dell'arte flavor adds charm to this drama about life. A real-life husband and wife play out a tragic scene against a background of fantasy. "Winner" and "Loser," a Harlequin-Columbine team, watch to see who will get to celebrate with the young couple ... will they be winners in the game of life or losers? *Of Winners, Losers and Games* is absurd, realistic, comical, dramatic, philosophical and touching. It provides a company of 14 players with interesting characterizations and opportunities for imaginative blocking. All characters with the exception of the children should be played as standard stage characters. The "children" may be grown men and women, or small children, or any age in between. The parents, Winner and Loser, are compatible because it is their nature to accept victory or loss. However, Mr. White and Mr. Redd are definitely on opposite sides of the fence of life, one representing the white purity of good and the other displaying the fire and glare of evil. The contestants or players in the game, Bob and Susan, anticipate a complicated test of endurance but instead find themselves plunged back in time to the moment they were summoned for the game. The actual game is a contest between good and evil, with Bob and Susan as the pawns. The children are points, Mr. White and Mr. Redd are the scorekeepers, Winner and Loser celebrate the outcome. This play is a popular contest piece. *Unit set—two platforms and three screens. The set can be simplified by using two stools and the existing backdrop found on most stages. Actors and actresses will find the characters a delight and a challenge. The costumes can be as simple or as colorful as the imagination dictates. Approximate running time: 25 to 30 minutes. Code: O90.*

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Of Winners, Losers and Games



# Of Winners, Losers, and Games

A Play in One Act

by

**O. B. Rozell**

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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## OF WINNERS, LOSERS, AND GAMES

### *Cast of Characters*

**Winner, an attractive woman**

**Loser, her husband**

**Patience**

**Peace**

**Compassion**

**Love**

**Hate**

**Anger**

**Greed**

**War**

**Bob, a young man**

**Susan, his wife**

**Mr. White**

**Mr. Redd**

*Winner's children*

*Loser's children*

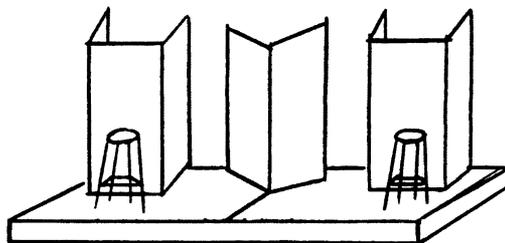
**Time: Anytime**

**Place: Anywhere in the universe**

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### PRODUCTION NOTES

“Of Winners, Losers, and Games” is absurd, realistic, comical, dramatic, philosophical, and touching. It provides a company of fourteen players with interesting characterizations and opportunities for imaginative blocking. The play utilizes unit set pieces – two platforms and three screens. The set can be simplified by using two stools and the existing backdrop found on most stages.





All characters with the exception of the children should be played as standard stage characters. The “children” may be grown men and women or little children or any age in between. The parents, Winner and Loser, are compatible because it is their nature to accept victory or loss. However, Mr. White and Mr. Redd are definitely on opposite sides of the fence of life, one representing the white purity of good and the other displaying the fire and glare of evil. The contestants or players in the game, Bob and Susan, anticipate a complicated test of endurance but instead find themselves plunged back in time to the moment they were summoned for the game. The actual game is a contest between good and evil with Bob and Susan as the pawns; the children are points, Mr. White and Mr. Redd are the scorekeepers, with Winner and Loser celebrating the outcome.

“Of Winners, Losers, and Games” has humor, touching moments, complete absurdity, and an unusual approach to good and evil. Actors and actresses will find the characters a delight and a challenge. The costumes can be as simple or as colorful as the imagination dictates; for example, Winner may be dressed in a gold robe and crown; Loser in a rumpled black tunic with a torn hat. The children might wear leotards and tights, with Patience in pink, Peace in white, Compassion in pastel blue, Love in Valentine red, Anger in deep violet, Greed in dark green, Hate in deep purple, and War in olive brown. Mr. White and Mr. Redd would be appropriately dressed in suits or tunics in keeping with their names. Bob and Susan might wear the casual clothes of a modern young married couple. Susan may or may not wear a nightgown and robe.

Imaginative make-up in keeping with the costumes would be appropriate for the allegorical characters: red and yellow lightning bolts for War, hearts for Love, stars for Winner, tears for Loser (Winner and Loser may symbolize the Comedy and Tragedy masks traditional in the theatre, and their make-up can emphasize this symbolism).



## OF WINNERS, LOSERS, AND GAMES

*[The scene begins with a recording of a lively march played by a traditional concert or marching band. WINNER and LOSER are seated on stools at either end of the platform. The music fades as WINNER rises.]*

WINNER. Life is a game.

LOSER. *[Rising]* A festival of living.

WINNER. There are soaring heights.

LOSER. And devastating lows.

WINNER. There are smiles.

LOSER. And there are frowns.

WINNER. Happiness.

LOSER. And deep sorrow. *[He escorts her from the platform to Downstage Center.]*

WINNER. The only thing we can be sure of when we are born is . . . what?

LOSER. Eventually we will die. *[He laughs.]*

WINNER. *[Pulling away and moving right]* What are you laughing at?

LOSER. Why not? Isn't death an act of losing? Isn't it losing at the game of life?

WINNER. Only in some cases.

LOSER. In all cases. *[Mockingly]* He lost his life in a valiant attempt to break a world record. She lost her husband in a terrible accident.

WINNER. Those are only figures of speech.

LOSER. If they are only figures of speech. I wouldn't exist and *[moves to her]* as you well know, *[reaches and puts his arms around her]* I am very much in existence. *[She responds to his charms momentarily with a gentle sigh.]*

WINNER. *[Pulling away and moving past him to Center Stage]* Careful, dear. You know very well . . . that isn't part of this game. *[He snaps his fingers in defeat as the lights begin to flash. The strains of an instrumental march are faintly heard.]* Take your place, dear. It's time. *[The lights stop flashing as she moves to the platform and to the stool at Stage Right.]* Oh, this is so exciting . . . I just love festivals and games and ceremonies. *[She sits gracefully on the stool.]*

LOSER. *[Moving onto the platform]* That's because you like crowds . . . singing and dancing and laughing and carrying on . . . *[He stops near his stool and points at her . . . teasingly.]* You're a wicked one. *[Chuckles]*

WINNER. *[Responding giddily to his teasing]* Ooohhh . . . you shouldn't say such things. *[The lights flash again.]* Hurry! Sit down and prepare yourself. He'll be here any second.

LOSER. *[Moving to his stool at Left]* Hold your horses! I'm going. *[He sits and settles himself before looking at Winner.]* Ready? *[She nods.]* Set . . . one . . . two . . . three . . . four. *[They turn together, their backs to the audience. MR. WHITE and MR. REDD enter escorting BOB, each holding an arm. BOB's eyes are closed as if asleep. They take him to Downstage Center and release his arms. He stands perfectly still as they move to stage right, MR. REDD leading. A few steps from the wings they turn in unison, facing the audience, and snap the fingers of their right hands. The music stops and BOB's eyes pop open on the snap. MR. WHITE and MR. REDD quickly step off stage. BOB looks around, confused, and moves to the platform. He sits and shakes his head as if regaining consciousness.]*

LOSER. *[His back is still to the audience.]* You are not dreaming.

BOB. Who said that? *[He jumps to his feet.]*

LOSER. *[Whirling around]* I did, sir. *[He stands and bows.]* Welcome to you, young man. *[BOB moves cautiously to Stage Left to the edge of the platform.]*

BOB. Who are you?

LOSER. You mean to tell me that man himself doesn't recognize me? Why, I'm very important in the game of life; and games are essential in the survival of man. In all games we have a winner and a loser. That is, of course, unless there's a tie, in which case there is no winner but instead, two losers, because the elation of winning is not present. Even religion has a winner and a loser . . . and we know about them.

BOB. But, what about you? You haven't told me who you are.

LOSER. If you'll pardon the expression . . . my goodness. You certainly are impatient. That's delightful.

BOB. Mister? What do you want?

LOSER. Oh, sir, I can wait for what I want. I am . . . [*chuckles*] a good sport, I think that's what they call it. [*He scratches his head.*] Yes, that's it . . . a good sport. I am, sir, [*bows*] the Loser. [*Bob shakes his head and smiles.*] Why are you smiling like that, young man?

BOB. I don't mean to be rude, but you are kinda strange. You stand there and rattle on and on about nothing . . . and still you haven't told me who you are.

LOSER. I have several names . . . [*keeping track on his fingers*] Defeat . . . in baseball I think I'm called the Cellar . . . and in tennis I'm a beautiful name . . . Love . . . . In some games I'm called Zero, or Zip . . . and in races I'm often called Also Ran. You're still smiling.

BOB. We've all been taught from birth to smile in the face of defeat.

LOSER. I know . . . grin and bear it. Chin up and all that rot.

BOB. Yes, that's the way man is made.

LOSER. You mean that's the way man is made to behave.

WINNER. [*Stamps her foot and rises*] Who are you to say how man is made to behave? You can't win for losing. [*Chuckling*] I'm sorry, dear. I just couldn't resist that line.

LOSER. You're not smiling, sir, and you should. May I present the Winner . . . victorious, on the top, first place . . . Dear? When the score is something to nothing, the one who scored something is said to have skunked the one who has scored nothing. Right? [*She nods.*] Then, it's safe to say that you are a [*chuckling*] Skunker. The sweet smell of success. [*WINNER feigns insult and turns her head away from Loser.*]

BOB. [*Caught up in the conflict*] I'm very happy to meet you. [*He extends his hand and helps her from the platform.*]

LOSER. That's a stupid statement! All men are happy to meet a winner . . . to wallow in the seeds of victory.

WINNER. Pay no mind to him, sir. He goes about muddying the waters of life with doubt and a total lack of faith and confidence. [*She looks at LOSER, who has lowered his head.*] Don't look so hurt, dear. You know I'm telling the truth and you also know I will be the winner in any argument we have . . . whether it be vocal or facial. Now, straighten up your face. [*He relaxes.*] That's much better.

BOB. You're Winner and he's obviously Loser, but you seem to get along.

WINNER. Oh, yes. We're constant companions, sir . . . partners. We've been together since the very beginning . . . since Adam and Eve, actually.

LOSER. You see, sir, this is my dear, beloved wife. We do have a very busy existence, you know. As I said before, every time there is a winner there is likewise a loser. So, we both must be present for the game.

BOB. Isn't it a terribly competitive existence? Always involved in some sort of contest? Winner, loser, winner, loser . . .

WINNER. Oh, no. *You* are the competitors. We simply wait to find out which one of you will spend a few brief moments with me . . . or him.

BOB. [*To Loser*] Doesn't it upset you when she wins?

LOSER. Of course not. I'm too busy celebrating with my children and she with hers, and sometimes we celebrate together.

BOB. Your children?

LOSER. Yes, our children. You must meet them . . . all of the celebrants in the game of life. My dear? Ladies first. *[He bows and moves left.]*

WINNER. You mean, of course, winners first.

LOSER. Whatever you say, dear. *[He sits on the edge of the platform.]*

WINNER. You see? He accepts defeat because it is his nature, his purpose, his very need for existence . . . every bit as vital as my need for victory. *[She moves to the platform.]* Now, to the introductions. First, my twins . . . *[PEACE and PATIENCE step from behind screen right.]* Peace and Patience . . . Say hello to the young man, my children. *[They move downstage to the edge of the platform.]*

TOGETHER. Hello, sir. We are with you when all goes well.

PEACE. I give you peace . . . beautiful, lasting peace.

PATIENCE. I give you time and contentment. Time to wait . . . contentment to smile. *[They move right and sit on the downstage edge of the platform.]*

BOB. They're both very beautiful.

WINNER. They *are* beautiful, aren't they? But, you must meet my other children. *[Motioning toward the screen Right.]* Come, dear. *[COMPASSION steps from behind the screen.]* Here we have my sweetest. Oh, such a heart. My family wouldn't be complete without the concern and warmth of my precious Compassion.

BOB. She looks almost sad. *[COMPASSION moves off the platform to Bob and touches his cheek.]*

WINNER. Oh, no, she isn't sad at all, unless *you're* sad, or grieved, or lonely.

BOB. Her touch is so warm and tender. I can almost feel her thoughts.

COMPASSION. No, sir, quite the contrary. *I feel your thoughts. I give you understanding . . . companionship . . . I feel for you.*

WINNER. [*As COMPASSION moves right and sits beside Patience.*] What better gift could you desire?

BOB. None . . . none at all.

WINNER. Are you sure?

BOB. Peace, Patience, and Compassion . . . .

WINNER. What is the one emotional feeling that unites Patience and Compassion, and results in Peace? My last and most beautiful child . . . conceived in my very heart . . . . Love. [*She gestures to the screen as LOVE steps out.*]

BOB. Of course . . . love.

LOVE. [*Bows gracefully*] I give you all the beauty of the universe. [*She moves Right and sits beside Compassion.*]

WINNER. Well, you've met my lovely, lovely children and I'm sure you'll agree, none can compare.

BOB. You're right . . . they're all that's needed in life.

LOSER. I'm afraid not, sir. [*Rises*] You forget that life is a very rocky road . . . true love never runs smoothly.

BOB. Yeh, I'd forgotten about you.

WINNER. Don't worry . . . he'll not go unnoticed . . . nor his children. They're his pride and joy, or as he puts it, his shame and sorrow.

LOSER. Thank you, my dear. A perfect introduction for my first born. [*WINNER moves onto the platform and to her stool.*] Of course, he isn't as quiet and sweet as her love-lies, and there are times he tries even my patience. [*GREED storms out.*]

GREED. Give me my due ! ! ! !

LOSER. Not so fast, son. Let me introduce you first.

GREED. I have the floor and I refuse to give it up even to you Father. I'll introduce myself, thank you. Sir, I am Greed. Unlike the powder puffs over there, I don't give anything . . . I take ! ! ! Whatever you wish to covet, I'm here with open hands to grab, take . . . keep!

BOB. Is he always that rude?

GREED. I didn't give the floor to you, sir. You will not speak until I give you permission and if you know anything at all about Greed, you'll never speak because I never give! *[He continues ad lib about taking and keeping. LOSER covers his ears and moves Right as GREED moves Left on the platform, still chattering.]*

LOSER. The only way to shut him up is to pretend you're not here.

BOB. How in the world do I do that?

LOSER. Like this. *[He sits on the edge of the platform and hides his head between his knees. Bob does the same followed by PEACE, PATIENCE, COMPASSION, and LOVE. WINNER turns her back to Greed. He continues rattling for a few seconds and then looks around strangely before sitting quietly.]*

LOSER. You see? *[They all relax. BOB and LOSER rise.]* Now, don't make the mistake of getting him started again. *[Moves Left]*

BOB. *[Moving Right past Winner's children, to the end of the platform.]* I didn't get him started that time. You did.

LOSER. So I did.

WINNER. See? He never denies defeat. You can win an argument with him without arguing.

LOSER. Why, thank you, dear. Now, moving along . . . like my better half *[gestures to Winner]*, I, too, have a set of twins. They aren't beautiful like hers but they *are* dynamic. *[ANGER and HATE leap from behind the screen Left.]*

ANGER. I'm Anger . . . red, boiling Anger.

HATE. I'm Hate . . . red, boiling Hate.

TOGETHER. We give you high blood pressure, migraine headaches, the hives, and heart attacks.

HATE. I give you a slight temperature and an evil plot.

ANGER. I give you temper with a short fuse and frustration with a long fuse. *[They move Left on the platform and sit beside Greed on the downstage edge.]*

BOB. They're not very pleasant, are they?

LOSER. Oh, I don't know . . . I think they're pleasant enough. They're not boring and they do add some spice to your life.

BOB. But, are they necessary? .

LOSER. Oh, yes . . . without Anger and Hate [*gestures to Winner's children*] my wife's dear children would mean nothing. How could you possibly have a fight without anger or hate? [*WAR leaps from behind screen.*]

WAR. Did someone mention a fight? How wonderful! A little scrap among friends never hurt anyone . . . very much.

BOB. I've never seen anyone so ugly.

LOSER. Oh, thank you . . . thank you very much. Actually, he is my favorite child . . . a combination of all my children . . . hate, anger, and a lot of greed. Oooohhh, scramble them all together and it's a delightful tiff.

WAR. Full of beautiful violence!

BOB. He looks so evil . . . . Is . . . . is he . . . Satan?

WAR. Oh, Father, what a lovely compliment. I like your friend.

LOSER. Sir, you have done the impossible. You have caused a truce.

BOB. A truce in what?

LOSER. War, young man . . . my son there, is War.

BOB. No wonder he's so ugly.

WAR. Now just a moment, sir! I resent that! [*Moves toward Bob*]

LOSER. Now, you've done it!

WAR. Now you listen to me! To millions of people I'm beautiful. I keep the population down. [*He is standing directly beside Bob and he takes him by the shirt.*] Statistics show that there have been more lost in war than on our roadways. Men are on their toes when I'm present. I keep many tens of thousands employed and I create a lot of respect for fire arms. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder! [*He quickly*

*releases Bob, turns, and goes onto the platform. He turns and points his finger at Bob.] Without me you wouldn't have had General Washington, General Grant, General Lee, or even General Custer . . . . Yes, Mr. Patton, Mr. Eisenhower, . . . . [moves beside Anger] Mr. Washington! [He sits disgustingly.]*

LOSER. Without war, men become bores.

WINNER. And we become bored. My dear husband and I must have situations wherein there is a winner for me and a loser for him.

BOB. Tell me, then, why am I here? What is the purpose of all this? Are you putting me in a war?

LOSER. Be patient and I'll explain. You have been chosen for all your attributes to represent all men in one final contest.

BOB. One final contest? What kind? Why me? How was I chosen?

WINNER. My goodness, so many questions. You'll know the type of contest soon enough. Excuse me for a moment. *[To Loser] Dear? [Moves to center of platform] I'll explain everything to him while you fetch the scorekeepers.*

LOSER. Certainly, dear. *[He moves right past Bob and turns.]* Now, you be sure to make everything perfectly clear. We wouldn't want any mistakes because there can't be a rematch in this game.

WINNER. I'm perfectly capable of doing my duty. You just go and do yours. *[He bows and exits right.]* I love him but like all losers, he's a pain in the neck . . . never wanting to be beaten by technicalities. But, he's such a dear. Now, where were we? Oh yes, the lottery. You realize that I am explaining it to you because, at the moment, *[gleefully]* you are the winner.

BOB. I won a lottery? I don't remember entering one.

WINNER. You did, though, and you won. Every man on earth entered. It was a search throughout the world for the

one man who was the correct age, height, weight, and who possessed the right temperament, desires, wants, and needs. You won by a very slim margin, so you should be very proud.

BOB. I suppose so . . . every man on earth?

WINNER. Of course you won't have to enter this game alone.

BOB. *[Looks around]* You mean there's someone else?

WINNER. Certainly . . . but not just anyone. Your teammate had to be the most important person in your life. Tell me, who means more to you than any other living being?

BOB. That's easy . . . Susan.

WINNER. Well? *[She gestures to the screen Right and SUSAN steps out.]*

BOB. Susan! *[He moves to the platform as SUSAN moves forward.]*

SUSAN. Bob, what's going on? I had a terrible dream and when I woke up, I was here.

WINNER. You will know everything shortly.

LOSER. *[Entering from Right]* This way, gentlemen. *[He is followed by MR. WHITE and MR. REDD.]* Here we are, dear.

WINNER. Ah, good. Gentlemen. *[She bows gracefully.]*

LOSER. These are our players. Bob? Susan? We would like for you to meet Mr. White and Mr. Redd.

BOB. That makes sense . . . the way they're dressed.

SUSAN. How did he know my name? I've never seen him before. *[BOB shrugs his shoulders. He helps her from the platform.]*

MR. WHITE. You're a delightful young couple. *[Moves to them and shakes Bob's hand]* I am very pleased to meet you. *[He kisses Susan's hand.]*

MR. REDD. Now, now, Mr. White . . . no fair flattering the contestants.

BOB. What is all this? Contestants? *[He takes Susan Stage Left.]*

SUSAN. Is this some sort of game? Or a nightmare?

WINNER. You'll see . . . you'll see. Dear? My children and I must go and prepare ourselves while you explain the rules. And . . . remember what you said . . . there can be no re-match, so you must explain the rules clearly.

LOSER. That's right, dear.

WINNER. *[Moves onto the platform and turns]* Come, children. *[She goes behind screen right and the four children follow.]*

LOSER. Now, gentlemen, you will be situated over here. *[He moves onto the platform and gestures to the stools.]* Mr. White? *[MR. WHITE goes onto the platform.]* You, over here . . . on the right hand side. *[MR. WHITE goes to the stool and stands.]* And, Mr. Redd? *[MR. REDD moves onto the platform and to the Left.]* That's right. Now, to your rules. Remember, you may not speak to our contestants until you are summoned. They will hear you only subconsciously.

SUSAN. Bob? What are we doing here? Where are we? *[She moves Right to the edge of the platform.]* I don't like it here.

BOB. I don't know what's goin' on but don't be afraid. They have been nice to me so far.

LOSER. That's right, Susan. You need not be frightened. The rules for you are simple. You will take up your lives at the precise moment you were sent here. All you need do is approach this day as you have approached every other day of your lives. The game will take care of the rest. These two gentlemen will keep score. Children? We must be off. *[His four children rise and follow him behind the screen left.]*

BOB. *[Turns and shouts after him]* But you didn't tell us what kind of contest. *[MR. WHITE and MR. REDD raise their hands and look at their wristwatches.]* How will it end? How will we know? . . . . *[MR. WHITE and MR. REDD lower their right hands as if being the starters for a race. The lights begin to dim very slowly and SUSAN moves to the plat-*