

Excerpt terms and conditions

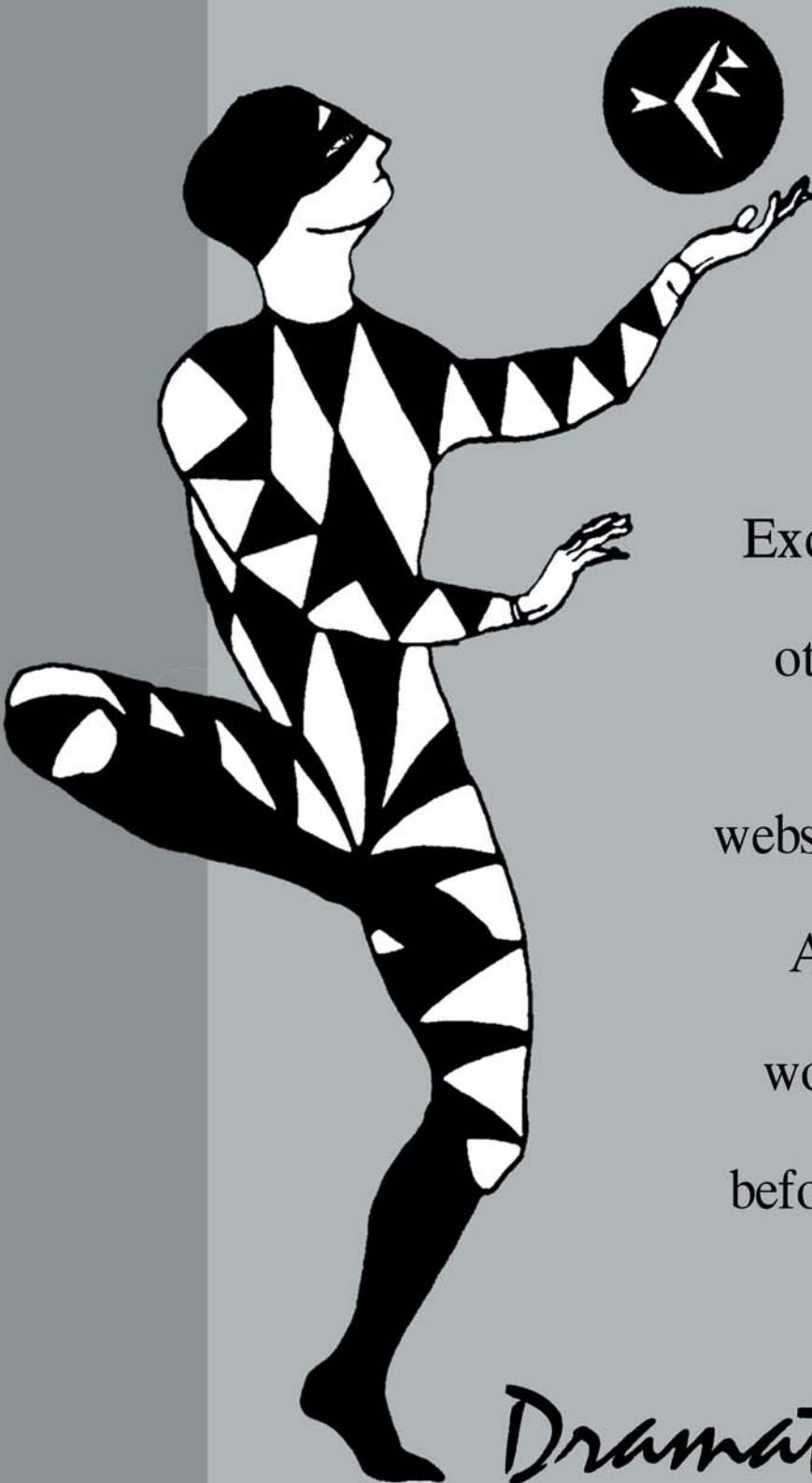
This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

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



A Thanksgiving Play in One Act
by
HOLLIS SUMMERS

A Note to Myself



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and professional 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 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. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our Web site: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 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. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

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

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.

©MCMXLVI by HOLLIS SUMMERS and
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

©Renewed MCMLXXIV by HOLLIS SUMMERS

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved

(A NOTE TO MYSELF)

A Note to Myself

A Thanksgiving Play in One Act

FOR TWELVE OR MORE PEOPLE, AS DESIRED

C H A R A C T E R S

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT	DAUGHTER
BOY	ANNOUNCER
GIRL	FIRST READER
MOTHER	SOLOIST
FATHER	SECOND READER
SON	THIRD READER

PLACE: *The stage of your high school auditorium.*

TIME: *Near Thanksgiving. The present.*

A Note to Myself

The curtains are closed. After the usual auditorium preliminaries, the STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT parts the curtains and steps forward. He speaks as if in conversation.]

PRESIDENT. Well, I guess we can get along with our business.

I'm sorry that we don't have a regular program, but I'm glad we're not about to have a Thanksgiving play. We'll talk about that later, though. You ought to have a title for anything that you give in an auditorium, I suppose.

———— people wrote this thing (that's our school population), and it's hard to get ————— people settled on any one idea. Today, we're going to have a sort of memorandum. If you have to call it something, you might as well call it—well—let's say, "A Note to Myself." Yeah, I guess that's pretty good. "A Note to Myself." [*He calls to the electrician.*] You can turn on the spot now, Jim, and we'll get under way. [*He calls backstage.*] Okay, Ed. Pull the curtains.

[The house lights go down and the curtains part slowly.]

PRESIDENT. A little more. Whoa!

[When the curtains are half opened the PRESIDENT calls.]

PRESIDENT. That's about right.

[The PRESIDENT leaves the stage. The spotlight reveals two desks at center stage, at which are seated a BOY and a GIRL. Both are writing. Left, in darkness now, is a piano; right, also in darkness, a table with five chairs and a microphone. The BOY and GIRL seem not to realize that the curtains have parted. Even the VOICE (STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT), at the microphone offstage, does not disturb them.]

VOICE. Thursday is November _____, in the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and _____.

[The BOY raises his head slowly. As the BOY and GIRL speak they look toward the audience.]

BOY. It all started simply enough. The Pilgrim Fathers, after landing at Plymouth, had a very poor harvest in the summer of sixteen twenty-one. You couldn't call things good—but you couldn't call them bad, either. After the harvest was gathered, the people came together to thank God for what He had done for them. They had corn and venison and bread—and they prayed some and laughed some, and talked about the next year, and the next, and the one after that. Sixteen twenty-one! *[He figures a moment.]* That was just _____ years ago. Three hundred and _____. It doesn't seem like anything when you think about light years and the glacial period, but it's a long time when you're talking about the history of a single man, or the number of years you get to spend being young, and being middle-aged, and being old.

GIRL. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. Not long ago a man shot his neighbor because they had quarreled over a fence line between their farms. In New York, a girl named Mary Weeks jumped from the seventeenth story of a Broadway hotel. She was cold and hungry and she didn't have a job. This morning the _____ *[Name of local paper.]* said:

[The VOICE on the offstage microphone reads an account of some calamity from the paper. He begins loudly, and then gradually fades, ceasing when the GIRL speaks.]

GIRL. You see, that's the way it is. The calendars say that tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. I don't want to do any unnecessary griping, and I don't want to go around being silly about something I don't really believe, either. The Pilgrim Fathers, and George Washington, and the people of America giving thanks because the Constitution had been adopted, and Lincoln asking the whole line of American

civilization to keep this day of remembrance, and a man shooting his neighbor, and a girl crushed on a New York sidewalk. [*She pauses.*] They all have to go together some way. That's why I'm writing this note to myself. For once, I want to get it all figured out straight.

[*The BOY and GIRL write quietly for a moment. The BOY looks up.*]

BOY. We might as well start at the beginning. I've been getting educated for eleven and a half years now—twelve, if you want to count the summer I spent chewing my pencil over Solid Geometry for the second time. I can't very well take my hair down and twine willow leaves in it, but I didn't feel very good about coming to school this morning. It was bad enough to have to get up, but it was worse when I remembered that it was auditorium day. That's why we took over. Most of the things that people say on Thanksgiving are the words that somebody told them in the second grade, and they never bothered to wonder about. All ————— [*The school population.*] of us like to believe in things, but we want to be sincere about it. Living is too important to have to swallow any extra bilge water, and it's good to decide what you don't believe in, as well as what you do. We don't believe in the glorified soap opera sort of philosophy where everyone sits around and says, "Oh, goody, I don't have a broken leg!" We've rigged up a play to show you what we mean. [*He calls over the footlights.*] A little preparation there.

[*From the orchestra pit comes a drum roll, a fanfare.*]

BOY. Why, you might as well have an oily-voiced announcer, and a commercial, and——

[*The spotlight has already moved to the right, where an ANNOUNCER sits at the right end of the table. Behind the table, facing the audience, are four characters, bearing tags in large awkward lettering: MOTHER, FATHER, SON, and DAUGHTER. Each is dressed in exaggerated fashion. The*

MOTHER, *very much lined and powdered, wears large glasses; the FATHER wears a flowing tie and frock coat; the SON and DAUGHTER exaggerate the current local fads. As the characters speak in monotone, they do not address each other; they stare idiotically into space. To give immediacy to the play, as a whole, all national figures should be current local favorites. Here, as in the BOY'S and GIRL'S speeches later, contemporary high school idols should be incorporated.*]

ANNOUNCER. Good morning, you dear sweet people. I'll bet that this is a big day for you. Yum and yum! Oh, gosh, oh, boy, and gee whizz! We are going to give you drama, and we just hope that that big old turkey and the red old cranberry jelly can wait for a minute. This is Thanksgiving Day, and we are all going to stop in with our average American family as they are brought to realize that this is—Thanksgiving Day! I have a lot of goodies to tell you about my product, too, but in honor of this precious little day, I'm not going to say a word, except—*[He speaks sentimentally.]*—do you wake up feeling tired and run down? Do you suffer from pains around the gills? Do, do you, do you, do you? Let me let you in on a little secret: If you will just march right down to your corner coroner, you can find—

BOY *[rising]*. Cut it! Get on with your tripe. *[He sits again.]*

ANNOUNCER. There's no need to be like that about it. *[He is hurt.]* Gee whizz! This is about a typical family. It is Thanksgiving morning. So there! *[He buries his face in his hands, and remains disconsolate until his appearance as the STRANGER.]*

DAUGHTER. Oh, I am angry.

SON. Oh, I am angry, too.

MOTHER. Oh.

FATHER. Oh.

DAUGHTER. I do not have anything to be thankful for. I want a mink coat.

SON. I do not have anything to be thankful for. I want a date with ————— *[He names a glamorous movie star.]*