

Excerpt terms and conditions

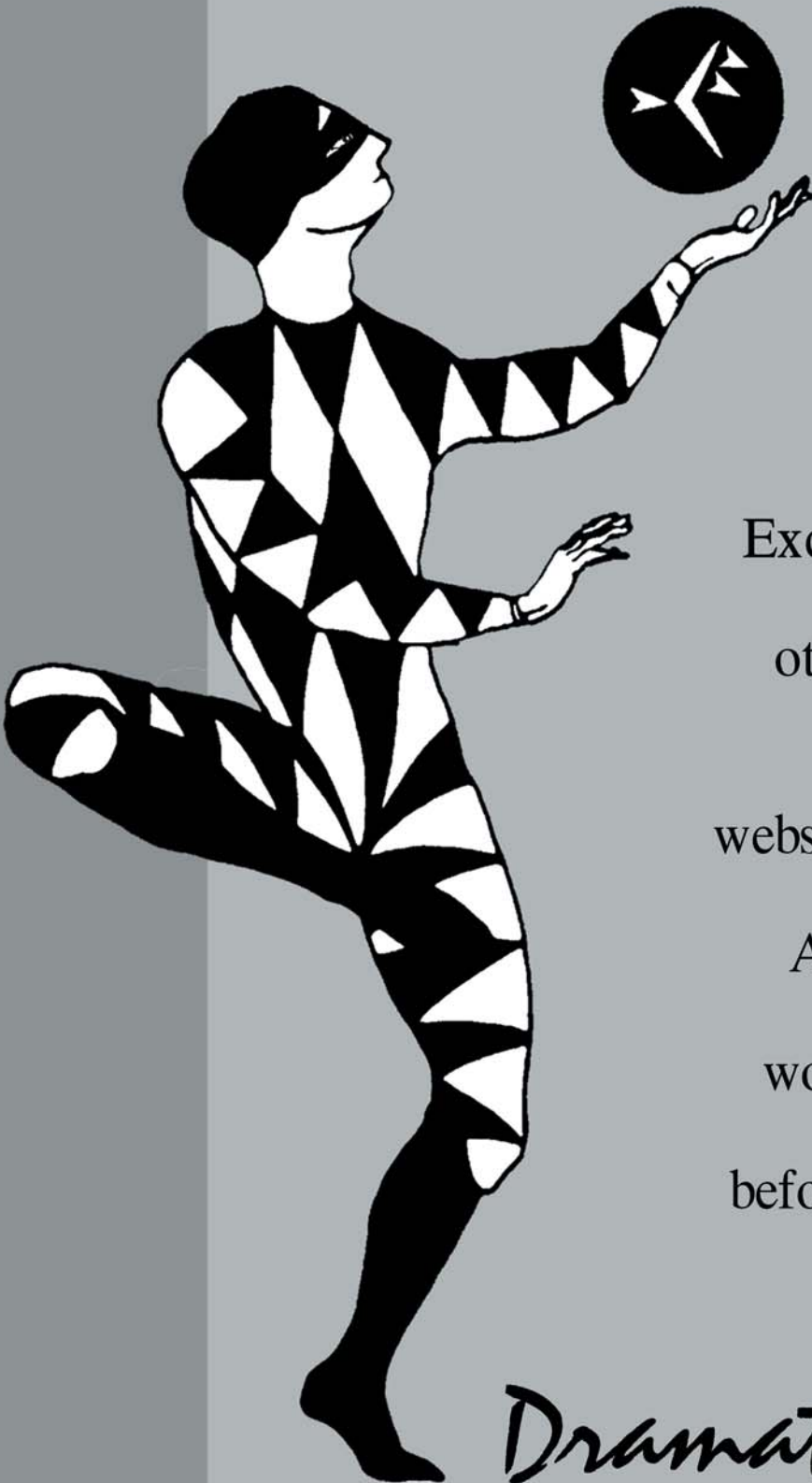
This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

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 Comedy in One Act
by
JOSEPH BALDWIN

Bachelor of the Year



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.

©MCMLXI by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved

(BACHELOR OF THE YEAR)

Bachelor of the Year

A Comedy in One Act

FOR THREE MEN AND SIX WOMEN

CHARACTERS

THOMAS CALDWELL *high school principal, and a bachelor*

ALICE MICHAELS ("Mike") *his secretary*

MISS EVANS *teacher of dramatics*

MISS GUSTAFSON *teacher of home economics*

MISS BAUMGARTNER *girls' physical education teacher*

JUNIUS MCCLENDON *superintendent of schools*

MISS VLEET *a reporter from the Register*

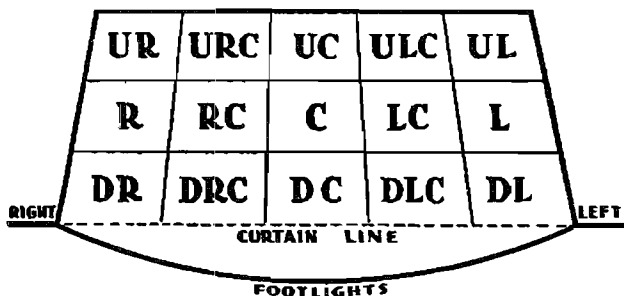
SANDRA SUE *a senior*

RONNY BRONKURSKI *a professional fullback*

PLACE: *The office of Mr. Caldwell, principal of Logan City High School.*

TIME: *Late afternoon of a regular school day in spring.*

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL: American flag on a standard; state flag on similar standard; bookcases filled with books (among them a "Complete Shakespeare"); desk and chair; on desk: telephone with fairly long cord, intercom box, stack of papers (reports), pen, pencil, calendar pad, etc.; six armchairs.

CALDWELL: Large award trophy, handkerchief.

MISS VLEET: Flash camera, case, flashbulbs, notebook and pencil.

MISS GUSTAFSON: Folder.

MISS EVANS: Handkerchief.

SANDRA SUE: Notebook and pencil, plate of cookies covered with napkin, note.

MIKE: Small framed photograph with newspaper clipping in back of it, small gold football pinned to her dress, wrist watch.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only, with the express purpose of snapping up cues.

Bachelor of the Year

SCENE: *The office of Mr. Thomas Caldwell, principal of Logan City High School. There are two doors. A door in the R wall at center is Mr. Caldwell's private entrance from the outside hall. Opposite, in the L wall at center, is a door from the outside office and waiting-room and from then on into the school corridor. In the U R corner of the room stands an American flag, hanging in folds, and there is a state flag on a similar standard in the U L corner. Against the upstage wall are bookcases filled with reference books, texts, encyclopedias, etc. Mr. Caldwell's desk is at R stage, facing the door L. The chair behind it stands just a few feet from the door R, so that when he sits at the desk, his back is to this door. On the desk, among various papers and the usual desk accessories, are a telephone with a fairly long cord and an intercom box, the instrument by which he can communicate directly with his secretary in her office offstage L. Left of Mr. Caldwell's desk, in a row facing the audience, are four armchairs. Similar armchairs are D R and D L. These are sturdy wooden armchairs of the type usually found in offices.]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is late in the afternoon of a regular school day in spring. MR. CALDWELL is standing in front of his desk, in front of the row of chairs, holding a large award trophy. He is flanked on his right by MISS GUSTAFSON, next to him, then MISS EVANS, and on his left by MISS BAUMGARTNER, next to him, and MISS ALICE MICHAELS, his secretary, known as "Mike." MISS VLEET, Society News Editor for the Register, is standing D C, taking their picture with a flash camera. MR. CALDWELL is a serious young man in his middle thirties. He is scholarly-looking—not hand-*

some—but shy and quiet, with a warm, winning personality. He wears a business suit. MISS GUSTAFSON, home economics teacher, is also in her middle thirties, very brisk and businesslike. She dresses very plainly and wears sensible, flat-heeled shoes. MISS EVANS, the dramatics teacher, is poised and extremely good-looking. She has excellent taste in clothes. MISS BAUMGARTNER, girls' gym teacher, is a jolly, fine-looking girl for all her size, which is considerable. She wears a tailored suit. MIKE is a peppy girl in her late twenties, and as American as a milk shake. She wears a simple spring dress. MISS VLEET is a bright, over-vivacious type of person with a professional smile; sometimes she gets on people's nerves. She is loaded down with camera equipment—camera, case, flashbulbs, notebook and pencil. The group having their picture taken is staring front with rather fixed smiles. It is all very stiff and unnatural. The flashbulb goes off suddenly, and the picture is taken. The five relax their frozen smiles and assume naturally pleasant expressions.]

MIKE. There now, boss! That wasn't so bad, was it?

CALDWELL. If I have to be shot, at least I'm shot in beautiful company. [*Beams at them, and all smile.*]

MISS EVANS [*laughing*]. I closed my eyes! I try like crazy to hold them open, but I blink every time I face a flash camera.

MISS BAUMGARTNER. Me, too.

MISS GUSTAFSON [*to MISS VLEET*]. Will that be all? Are we finished?

MISS VLEET [*bustily adjusting her camera*]. Oh, no! That is, if you can spare the time— Am I keeping you from classes?

CALDWELL. No, this is "activity period." The students don't have to be watched *all* the time.

MISS VLEET. First, if you'll just hold your positions, let me get your names and proper identification. [*Moves over to group and pauses by each person, writing in a small notebook.*]

CALDWELL [*indicating*]. Miss Jacqueline Evans, teacher of dramatics.

MISS VLEET [*writing*]. Yes . . .

CALDWELL. Miss Bertha Gustafson, teacher of home economics.

MISS VLEET [*writing*]. . . . economics.

CALDWELL. And I'm—

MISS VLEET [*a little too heartily*]. Oh, I won't need help on *that*, Mr. Caldwell! *Everyone* knows who the "Most Eligible Bachelor of the Year" is. That is, everyone in Logan City. [*Her smile is so bright and challenging that CALDWELL has to look away.*]

CALDWELL. Mmm—yes—I suppose they do.

MISS VLEET [*very close to him, and getting in some fast work on her own behalf*]. This is the first time a high school principal ever won the honor.

CALDWELL. Ah—hm! Yes. I suppose that's true.

MISS VLEET [*rattling on*]. I don't think high school principals are *dull*.

MISS BAUMGARTNER [*a little impatiently*]. I'm Texana Baumgartner, teacher of girls' physical education.

MISS VLEET. Just a minute. Let me get it all down—Baumgartner—Texana? [*Looks up.*] I'll just bet you're from Texas. [*Turns and moves on. MISS BAUMGARTNER lifts her eyes to heaven and shakes a clenched fist.*]

CALDWELL. And last, Miss Alice Michaels, my secretary.

MIKE [*smiling*]. People call me "Mike."

MISS VLEET [*with energy, pausing left of group*]. Now! That first picture was too stiff, too formal. I'd like to take one more. I'm sure that when the award was given at the luncheon, it was a very *gay* and *fun-type* occasion. Right, Mr. Caldwell?

CALDWELL. Oh, yes. Yes—fun. [*A sickly smile.*]

MISS VLEET. Now I've asked you ladies in because all of you are members of the Junior Business and Professional Women's Club, and were present at the luncheon. Let's try to re-

enact the scene just as it happened. Now—who gave Mr. Caldwell the award?

MISS GUSTAFSON. Mike did the honors.

MISS VLEET. All right! [*Takes trophy from CALDWELL and gives it to MIKE.*] You take the trophy and make your presentation speech to Mr. Caldwell, and hand it to him. I'll catch you in action with my flash, and we'll have a lively, *fun-type* picture. [*Pushing others D R.*] Now, you ladies stand over here.

MISS EVANS. But we weren't standing. We were sitting at tables.

MISS VLEET [*as if being courteous to an idiot*]. Just for the sake of the picture—you know. [*Smiles brightly, then backs D C and adjusts camera.*] Now, Miss Michaels. Begin, if you please.

MIKE [*a little stiffly, thrusting trophy toward CALDWELL*]. On behalf of the Logan City Junior Business and Professional Women's Club, it is my honor and privilege—

MISS VLEET [*interrupting*]. Oh, come, come, come! Surely it wasn't as *formal* as all that, was it? This was a *fun-type* affair.

MIKE. *Fun-type*, huh? Okay. I'll jazz it up a little. [*Strikes a pose, and adopts a coy manner.*] Mr. Thomas Caldwell, *sir*. You have often been kind enough to refer to me as the "perfect secretary." I admit it. [*Imitates cozy manner of MISS VLEET, and gets very close to him, rolling her eyes.*] And now, because I have always spoken of you as the "perfect boss," it gives me great pleasure that I have been chosen to present to you this trophy, symbol of your election as "Most Eligible Bachelor of the Year" in Logan City! [*Hands him trophy and plants a kiss on his cheek. Flash camera pops, and the other teachers cry "Hear! Hear!"—and clap.*]

MISS VLEET. Excellent! That's more like it.

[MR. JUNIUS MCCLENDON, *superintendent of schools for Clay County, chooses this moment to make an unexpected en-*

trance, L. He is a vigorous, friendly man in his fifties. He wears a business suit. He takes in the scene at a glance, and bellows jovially.]

MCCLENDON [*coming D L C*]. Well! School business proceeding as usual, I see.

CALDWELL. Oh—hi, Mr. McClendon!

MCCLENDON. Tell me, Caldwell: Why is it that when I come into the office of one of my principals, I find his secretary kissing him, and a photographer present to record the event?

CALDWELL. You see, sir, I get kissed so seldom, it makes news. [*Takes MISS VLEET'S arm and moves her toward MCCLENDON.*] Superintendent McClendon, this is Miss Vleet, from the *Register*. Miss Vleet, Mr. McClendon.

MISS VLEET. Pleased to meet you. [*MCCLENDON nods.*]

[*SANDRA SUE PICKENS, a most determined young lady in a hurry, bursts into the office and stops, D L C, vibrating. She is the editor of the school paper, bright, alert, and brassy, but likable withal. She wears school clothes.*]

SANDRA SUE. Somebody said a reporter from the *Register* was here getting a story. You aren't going to let them scoop the *Logan High Echo*, are you, Mr. Caldwell?

MISS VLEET [*gathering up her things*]. Excuse me, everyone. I have a deadline to meet. [*Crosses to door L and turns.*] Thanks, everybody! [*Goes out L, as others ad lib "good-by."*]

CALDWELL [*calling after her*]. And thanks, Miss Vleet.

SANDRA SUE [*still waiting*]. Well?

MCCLENDON [*turning to her*]. No, Sandra, you won't be scooped, for I can give you news they didn't give Miss Vleet for the *Register*. I heard all about that little wing-ding the ladies gave Mr. Caldwell down at the hotel dining room. Sit down and take out your notebook. [*SANDRA SUE sits in chair D L, notebook and pencil in hand. CALDWELL moves behind his desk. The three teachers join MIKE and form a group in front of Caldwell's desk. MCCLENDON moves*

slightly toward SANDRA SUE.] Now get this. At this annual affair, the young ladies take pleasure in subjecting the victim—*[Turns with a slight bow to CALDWELL.]*—I mean, the honoree—to a barrage of whimsical questions.

CALDWELL *[a grim memory]*. Oh, boy!

MCCLENDON. You may well say that. *[Turning back to SANDRA SUE.]* One of these questions fired at the innocent "Bachelor of the Year" was: "Do you think it is proper for a young lady to propose to a young gentleman, even if it's not leap year?" To which, obviously overcome by confusion at the sight of so much beauty in one crowded room, our hero answered, "Yes." *[Turns to look at CALDWELL, who looks as if he didn't know whether to turn and run or just drop to the floor—especially as all four women are staring at him.]*

SANDRA SUE *[writing furiously]*. Say! . . .

CALDWELL. Now, Sandra! Don't print that. *[Starts toward SANDRA SUE, and knocks a stack of papers from downstage corner of his desk to floor.]* Darn!

MIKE. I'll get them, Mr. Caldwell. *[Starts to pick up papers.]*

CALDWELL *[crossing toward MCCLENDON]*. Sandra Sue!

SANDRA SUE *[looking up]*. Sir! The freedom of the press!

MCCLENDON *[chuckling]*. Oh, yes! We mustn't be guilty of suppressing news.

SANDRA SUE *[jumping up]*. I've got to write this up while it's hot. S'long! *[Zooms out L.]*

MCCLENDON *[looking after her]*. That girl will go far.

CALDWELL *[fervently, wiping his brow with a handkerchief]*. I hope.

[MIKE has finished gathering up papers, and starts stacking them in order on desk.]

MCCLENDON *[to others]*. Well, ladies! Who's minding the store?

MISS EVANS. It's activity period.

MCCLENDON. Nevertheless, as I was coming down the corridor, I detected the faint odor of burning cookies.

MISS GUSTAFSON [*hurrying L.*]. That Wanda Sobolik has done it again! [*Hurries L.*]

MISS BAUMGARTNER [*to MISS EVANS, as they go out together.*]. Back to the old sweat shop. [*She and MISS EVANS go out L. MIKE sits in chair nearest front of Caldwell's desk and takes up papers and pencil, ready to work on reports with Caldwell. CALDWELL stands behind his desk chair and now thumbs through reports glumly, ready to attack his problems.*]

MIKE. Ready to work on those reports, boss. [*But MCCLENDON isn't here on business. He moves D L, strikes a pose, and wiggles his eyebrows, humming loudly.*]

MCCLENDON [*to tune of a well-known wedding march.*]. Tum—DUM—de—DUM!

CALDWELL. What do you mean, "Tum—DUM—de—DUM"?

MCCLENDON [*settling into chair D L and grinning at CALDWELL.*]. You've done it this time, and *how* you've done it!

CALDWELL. What did I do?

MCCLENDON. Made yourself a target. For matrimony.

CALDWELL. I didn't make myself a target. I was elected. Then I was invited to the award luncheon.

MCCLENDON [*nodding.*]. And you went.

CALDWELL. What was I supposed to do? Blow town? [*Sits at his desk.*]

MCCLENDON. If you wanted to stay single. [*Rises, moves C.*]. Last year's "Most Eligible Bachelor" was young Jenkins, minister of Grace Church. [*Snaps his fingers.*]. Bang! Married. The year before, it was a dentist. Before that, an undertaker. They're all family men, now. In a town like this, you don't last long.

CALDWELL. What do you mean, a town like this?

MCCLENDON [*coming upstage of desk, waggling his finger in CALDWELL's face.*]. The young men with ambition leave for jobs in the big city. Therefore, the town becomes what the girls call—[*Snaps fingers at MIKE.*]*—a what's it—a—*

MIKE. A desert of men?

MCCLENDON. Right! [*Moves back to c.*] The smart young professional women outnumber the young men. That's why the girls formed their club.

MIKE. That's not fair! Our club does a lot of good work.

MCCLENDON. But your club can't stand the sight of a bachelor. So you crown him as the next victim, and in a very public place. [*To CALDWELL.*] And you had to make it easy for them, with your crack about women doing the proposing. [*Shakes head sadly.*] Get ready, boy. Your days of freedom are numbered.

CALDWELL [*laughing, rising, moving upstage of desk and standing behind MIKE*]. Don't worry about me. I'm safe. [*Pats MIKE on shoulder.*] The only gal I'd have is Mike, the perfect secretary. And she's already engaged to a great hulking professional football player who'd make mincemeat of me if I tried to steal his girl. [*To MIKE.*] Go get the picture you keep at your desk, Mike. Let Mr. McClendon take a look at your intended.

MIKE [*as she crosses L*]. With pleasure. [*Goes out L.*]

MCCLENDON. Okay. So it's not Mike. But one of them will get you, my boy. And I'm happy for you. Marriage will tie you down to the job, and I won't lose a good principal. Bachelors move around too much. Married men stay put and work to pay the bills.

CALDWELL [*crossing, sitting at his desk again*]. Keep it up. I can take a joke.

[*MIKE enters L with a small framed picture.*]

MIKE [*crossing to MCCLENDON*]. Mr. McClendon, meet Ronny Bronkurski.

MCCLENDON. Ronny Bronkurski! That's a fake name if I ever heard one. There is no such person!

MIKE. Oh, no? Read this clipping from the Chicago paper. [*Takes a newspaper clipping from back of picture.*]