

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



Junior High School One-Act Comedies



Comic anthology
by
Ruth Kelsey, Anne Coulter Martens
and Jewell Bothwell Tull

Junior High School One-Act Comedies



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

*** 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 catalogue 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.

On all programs this notice should appear:

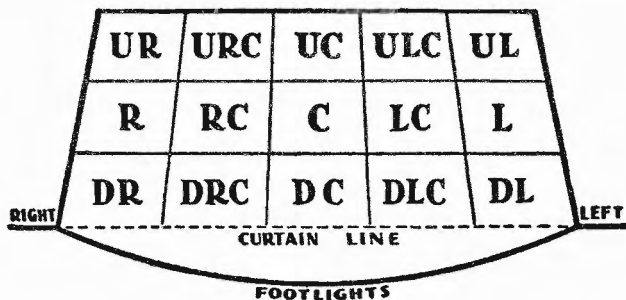
"Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois"

©MCMXXXIX by
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ONE-ACT COMEDIES)

ISBN 0-87129-271-8

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 considerable time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

The White Elephant Comes Home

A Comedy in One Act

FOR FIVE GIRLS

CHARACTERS

SALLY.....*who receives the picture*
MADGE.....*her friend*
ADA.....*a visitor*
ELLEN.....*who sells cupcakes*
NETTIE.....*the maid*

PLACE: *Sally's living-room.*

TIME: *The present. Washington's Birthday. Morning.*

The White Elephant Comes Home

SCENE: *Sally's living-room. There are two entrances to the room. In the L wall at center is a door leading to the kitchen and the back part of the house, while in the R wall at center is a door leading to the outside. The only furnishings necessary are a library table at C stage, with chairs on either side of it, and a small writing desk and chair below the door L. On the desk are a fountain pen and paper. There is an occasional rug just inside the door L. Other furniture may be used as the size of the stage permits, but the furniture listed above will be adequate to carry the action of the play.*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: SALLY, a pretty girl of fourteen, is sitting at the desk D L, making a list of supplies. She wears an attractive school frock.]

SALLY [*aloud, to herself*]. Cheese—olives—brown bread—cupcakes—Oh, the cupcakes haven't come yet!

[NETTIE comes in L. She is a gawky country girl of thirteen. She wears a cotton house dress and an apron. Her shoes should be too big for her, and she is always tripping over something. Just now she trips over the small rug by the door L as she comes in.]

NETTIE. Ooops! [*She recovers her balance awkwardly.*] Excuse it, Sally. Seems like I'm always tripping over something. [*She ambles awkwardly to L C and stands in a slouched position, her arms folded.*]

SALLY [*turning in her chair to face her*]. Nettie, have the cupcakes come?

NETTIE. Not that I know of. Want I should bake you some?



SALLY. Oh, no, no! They're ordered from Ellen. Anyway, you have enough to do getting that kitchen in order. At the rate you're going, you should have come last week to start cleaning up for my party.

NETTIE. I'm slow but I'm thorough, Sally. Slow but thorough. Want I should clean up in here now?

SALLY. And the kitchen not half done? Oh, dear, I wish Mother hadn't had to go away, today of all days.

NETTIE. That's how things happen. But I'll get everything done, see if I don't. I help around at lots of houses in town, and they all say——

SALLY. I think the right thing to say now is—*get busy*.

[*The doorbell off stage R rings.*]

NETTIE. Want I should answer it?

SALLY [*rising*]. No, I will. You go on with the kitchen work.

[NETTIE goes out L, tripping over the rug as she goes. SALLY starts for the door, but MADGE, an attractive, vivacious girl of SALLY'S age, comes in R just as SALLY reaches the door R. She wears a winter coat and hat over a neat dress.]

MADGE. Well, I'm here!

SALLY. Oh, Madge, I'm so glad you could come! Can you spend the whole day with me? [*She puts her arm about MADGE and comes C stage with her.*]

MADGE. Every minute of it. And I'll do all I can to help. Happy birthday, Sally!

SALLY. Thanks. It's so silly to have a birthday on February 22, isn't it? I feel like George Washington.

MADGE [*jokingly*]. Do you act like him? I mean, do you always tell the truth—at least on your own birthday?

SALLY. As much of the truth as a polite person ever can tell, I suppose. Well, take off your coat and hat. Mother's away, Nettie's in the kitchen, and I've been planning the refreshments for my party tonight.

[MADGE takes off her coat and hat and puts them on the chair right of the table C.]

MADGE [as she removes her wraps]. Oh, by the way, the mailman was just coming up your steps as I came in! He had a package in his hand.

SALLY [joyfully]. A package! I bet it's from Aunt Matilda. She always sends me something for my birthday!

MADGE [pushing her toward the door R]. Hurry! I'm dying to see what it is.

SALLY [going R]. Last year it was a locket, and the year before—Oh, I just can't wait to see it!

[SALLY goes out R. MADGE sits in the chair left of the table C.

SALLY enters R with a large flat package wrapped in brown paper. It is stamped and addressed, having come through the mail.]

SALLY. Look, Madge! What do you suppose it is this time?

MADGE. From your Aunt Matilda? [She watches SALLY, all agog.]

SALLY [laying the package on the right side of the table]. It's marked "Fragile, Handle With Care." [She takes off the outside wrapping paper.] I do believe it's glass. [After the outer wrapping is removed the gift is still in a large brown envelope. She pulls it out carefully. She speaks in tones flat with disappointment.] Oh, a picture!

MADGE [jumping up, crossing above the table and down to right of SALLY, looking over her shoulder]. Yes, a picture. [She is obviously disappointed, and her voice drops.] Glass, frame, and all!

[NOTE: This picture is never held in such a position as to be viewed by the audience.]

SALLY [with forced enthusiasm]. Isn't it lovely? Such—such color!

MADGE [falteringly]. Yes—there's color—as you say.

SALLY. So sweet of Aunt Matilda to remember me. I think it's the prettiest thing! [*She holds it away from her, trying hard to admire it.*]

MADGE. Oh, do you really?

SALLY. Don't you?

MADGE [*with an embarrassed laugh*]. It's your picture. From your aunt.

SALLY. Yes. [*After a pause.*] Of course, those big red roses, alongside of a bowl of purple plums—and all that fuzzy green stuff—what *is* that green stuff, Madge?

MADGE. You've got me there. But, as you say, the picture certainly has color.

SALLY [*shaking her head sadly*]. Too much color, I'm afraid.

MADGE. But I thought you liked it. Didn't you say you thought it was the prettiest thing?

SALLY [*laying the picture face down on the table*]. Yes, I guess I did say that. What does a person usually say about a gift? That it's simply lovely, and all that. [*She sighs.*]

MADGE. Why the sigh?

SALLY. Usually Aunt Matilda sends lovely presents.

MADGE. Then you don't really like the picture?

SALLY [*giving up the pretense*]. Could anybody like that picture? Oh! [*She shudders.*] I think it's simply hideous! Flowers and fruit and vegetables all mixed up together. Why, it looks like an atrocious fruit salad!

MADGE [*dryly*]. All it needs is a dab of mayonnaise. You're right. [*She crosses behind the table and down to her chair left of the table.*] I didn't like it from the moment I saw it, but I thought you did. [*She sits.*]

SALLY. I was just being polite. [*She slips the picture back into the brown envelope.*] I can't bear to look at it. Imagine hanging that up on the wall!

MADGE [*shuddering*]. I can't!

SALLY. But what on earth can I do with it?

MADGE. There's no accounting for taste. Perhaps to some people it would seem beautiful.



Junior High School One-Act Comedies

Comic anthology. By Ruth Kelsey, Anne Coulter Martens and Jewell Bothwell Tull.

The White Elephant Comes Home (5 girls). One of Sally's birthday presents is a horrible picture. Sally gets rid of it but it doesn't take long for it to return home again. Poor Sally! ***Midge Goes to the Movies*** (5 boys, 4 girls). Nobody wants to take care of the nuisance of a kid sister who wants to go to the movies. In the comical mixup, a romantic misunderstanding gets straightened out and Midge goes to the movies! ***Selma Goes Psychic*** (3 boys, 3 girls). Selma fancies herself a medium and neglects her lessons to forecast the future. ***Yellow Tulips*** (2 boys, 4 girls). Judy loves the new hat she has earned, but she sacrifices it for a pot of yellow tulips to bring Easter joy to a lonely old lady. ***The Case of the Glass Slipper*** (6 boys, 5 girls, extras). In this amusing mock trial, there is much excitement over who stole the family glass slipper.

Cover design by Susan Carle

ISBN 087129271-8



Visit us at: dramaticpublishing.com

Code: J13



Printed on Recycled Paper