

# 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 View From Sunset Towers**

Interwoven Tales of Love and Courage

by

KENT R. BROWN

**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

**\*\*\* 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  
www.dramaticpublishing.com

*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, 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.

©MCMXCVI by  
KENT R. BROWN

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(THE VIEW FROM SUNSET TOWERS)

ISBN: 0-87129-739-6

## Contents

### ACT ONE

Ensemble Prologue .....	7
It's Now Or Never! - <i>Doris &amp; Sparky</i> .....	9
The Houses On Pleasant Street - <i>Sister Darlene</i> .....	13
The One-Arm Push-Up King - <i>Clarence</i> .....	16
Reduced For Quick Sale - <i>Dorothy</i> .....	20
Video Fantasies - <i>Sarah</i> .....	24
A Change Of Pace - <i>Camilla</i> .....	28
A Patriot For The Nineties - <i>Lloyd</i> .....	32

### ACT TWO

The Reader - <i>Barbara</i> .....	35
The Man Inside My Father - <i>Richard</i> .....	38
It's The Same Menu Coast To Coast - <i>Jackie</i> .....	42
Dinner's In The Oven - <i>Crandall</i> .....	46
Drive Through - <i>Helen</i> .....	49
Mount 'em Up And Move 'em Out! - <i>Carolyn</i> .....	53
Par Sounds Good To Me - <i>Arthur</i> .....	57
We Came, We Saw, We Charged It All! - <i>Doris &amp; Sparky</i> ..	61
Closing Tableau .....	64

#### Additional or alternate monologues:

There's A War In My Living Room - <i>Fred</i> .....	67
Downsizing - <i>Charles</i> .....	70
Thank You And Have A Good Day - <i>Roger/Rhonda</i> .....	73

## Acknowledgment

During early Spring, 1996, after completing a first draft of *THE VIEW FROM SUNSET TOWERS*, I spent a short time in residence at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Dr. Ann McDonough, Director of the Senior Adult Theatre Program at UNLV, had invited me to workshop the script with her students. In fully committing their energy and insight to interpreting and responding to the script, I was able to realize its final shape and texture.

My deep appreciation is extended to Dr. McDonough and the following students for having given me a rewarding and deeply satisfying experience: Agnes Capps, Anna Cohen, Ann Marie Cosman, Jerry Dobin, Stan Dreyfuss, Rose Dunn, David Frazer, Nancy Frederick, Marge Gately, Joyce Gies, Annette Goldstein, Paul Harris, Audrey Heim, Marilyn Kaufman, Val Kolar, Rindy Lamuarglia, Gloria Malgarini, Flo Moditz, Joe Munn, Walter Ronayne, Carlo Paradiso, Mickey Sharp, Colleen Slaughter, Harriet Stich, Jackie Shick.

# **THE VIEW FROM SUNSET TOWERS**

A Comedy/Drama in Two Acts

## **Characters:**

An ensemble of 6 men and 9 women is required. It may also be doubled with 3 men and 4 women. The actors, in full view of the audience, will address the audience as well as interact with each other. Additional monologues appear at the end of the script.

## **Time:**

The present.

## **Setting-Props-Costumes:**

The set should consist of two performance “islands” each composed of stepped platforms of varying heights to allow actors fluid interaction with each other and with the audience. Neutral cubes should serve as chairs, benches and so on. A pen and ink sketch is provided on page 6 as a guideline.

Props may be pre-set as needed, as well as brought on stage with the actors.

The actors should either be in their costumes or carry on their costume accessories.

## **Music/Transitions:**

Music and sound effects should be used sparingly as needed to provide transitions between scenes.

# ACT ONE

*(As the house LIGHTS begin to fade down, the ACTORS, some of whom have been sitting with the audience, begin to take their positions on the set. Others appear from the wings and take their places.)*

## Ensemble Prologue

ACTOR. You can see it in their eyes. Sometimes they look right through you.

ACTOR. Young people.

ACTOR. That's usually anybody younger than he is.

ACTOR. They don't mean to, really. Many of them smile, chat a bit, then move on. But sometimes you'll catch them looking at you with that "I'll never be that old, will I?" look on their faces. And I want to say to them "You better hope so, squirt."

ACTOR. They only see the outside of us. The side that's putting up a hell of a struggle against gravity.

ACTOR. The walkers, the canes, a stooped shoulder or two.

ACTOR. Or they'll catch us in that far-off stare we get sometimes when a scene from the past plays across our memory.

ACTOR. But they don't see the inside of us. Our minds. Our tenacity. How do they think we've gotten this far? Sheer luck? Well, that's all right. They'll learn. They'll learn what we've learned.

ACTOR. And we've learned it the hard way.

ACTOR. And we've got the medals to prove it.

ACTOR. We've seen a lot.

ACTOR. And listened late into the night.

ACTOR. And sometimes looked out our windows to see what  
the rest of us were doing with our lives.



# It's Now Or Never!

**Characters:** DORIS and SPARKY, DR. SCHWARTZ,  
and ENSEMBLE MEMBERS

*(Two large suitcases are almost packed and ready to go.)*

DORIS. Well, if you want to see what I'm doing with my life, you'd better look fast 'cause it's now or never. *(To another ACTOR.)* Hand me that shirt, will you, sweetie? Thanks. I'd love to stay and hear all the juicy gossip about your lives but Sparky made the mistake of looking in the mirror the other day. Sparky, show them what happened. *(SPARKY pantomimes the action.)* He just stood there horrified. Then he screamed. Sparky? *(SPARKY screams.)*

SPARKY. Doris came running in and looked in the mirror, too. Then we both screamed. *(DORIS and SPARKY both scream.)* Very unnerving. Who were those older-looking people in the mirror!

DORIS. And right then and there we knew.

SPARKY. They were getting away from us.

DORIS. The days, the months.

SPARKY. The years!

DORIS. So we said "It's now or never!" and called the travel agent. *(DORIS continues packing while SPARKY passes out travel brochures to the other ACTORS.)*

SPARKY. Bangkok, Rome, Cleveland. Rental cars everywhere.

DORIS. When it starts coming after you, you'll hear it, too.  
Everyone does eventually.

SPARKY. Clump, clump, clump. Like that T-Rex in **Jurassic Park**. Now is the time to stand up and be counted before we cash it all in! Right, Doris?

DORIS. Sparky tends toward hyperbole. Anyway, we decided to boldly go where millions have gone before. The Gold Coast, the Silver Coast...

SPARKY. The Bronze Coast!

DORIS. Istanbul, the Tower of London, Germany, Australia—

SPARKY. Club Med! All those naked bodies everywhere.

DORIS. That's Sparky's idea. Fine with me. Why begrudge him a little fantasy. Sparky, did you pack the dental floss? (*Someone gives DORIS the dental floss.*) Oh, thank you.

SPARKY. Gourmet dishes we can't pronounce, entrance fees to museums with long corridors and no bathrooms, coupon booklets to the sex shops of Shanghai—

DORIS. That was Sparky's idea. That's fine with me. Why begrudge him a little... Well, you get the picture.

SPARKY. All transfers and taxes included!

DORIS. Sometimes I just want to curl up into a little ball and roll away. Just hide from it all, the pressures, the sameness of each day... But I can't drop my guard. Sparky needs watching. He's in transition. He sees something on the Home Shopping Channel, picks up the telephone and we're off to the races. I come home from the beauty parlor and we have—

SPARKY. A new television set! A pair of snow skis. A fifty-year subscription to the Music Of The Month Club!

DORIS. We've going to hear symphonies by composers who haven't even been born yet!

DR. SCHWARTZ. It's just like the pharaohs, Doris.

DORIS. That's our gerontologist, Dr. Schwartz. He minored in philosophy.

DR. SCHWARTZ. He's making preparations. Accumulating things for the big trip. The handwriting's on the wall in big neon lights, Doris. Better take that trip now, while Sparky still has his good health.

DORIS (*referring to SPARKY*). You call that good health! But I love him and he loves me and after a million years of marriage, we're joined at the hip. Besides, some of my muffins don't rise in the oven anymore, either, so it's a tradeoff. I do all the work, and I do all the work. Sound familiar? (*The sound of a departing cruise ship whistle is heard and someone proclaims "All aboard!"*)

SPARKY. They still say "all aboard" Doris!

DORIS. Apparently so, sweetheart. OK, everybody, we're off to see the universe! If someone can come in once a week to water the plants, I'd be very grateful.

ACTOR. I'll take care of everything, Doris.

ACTOR Go get 'em, Sparky!

ACTOR. Don't worry about a thing!

SPARKY. If you want a real thrill, try my new power vacuum. Just adjust the seat and you'll get the thrill of your life!

DORIS. Sorry we can't stay and mingle, but we'll be back! Sparky, bring that suitcase! (*DORIS hefts the luggage and gives the audience an "I don't think I'm going to survive this" look and staggers offstage. SPARKY speaks confidentially to the AUDIENCE.*)

SPARKY. Don't believe a word of what Doris says. The television was for our anniversary, the skis were for our son-in-law. I can't explain the fifty-year music club membership but I'm at the top of my game. Never miss a stroke. She's the milk of human kindness, you understand, but if she wants to go to Club Med... who am I to stop her.

*(As SPARKY exits amid waves and hearty “good-byes,” the LIGHTS fade down, creating shadows across the stage. From the semi-darkness emerges SISTER DARLENE wearing a full nun’s habit.)*

## The Houses On Pleasant Street

**Characters:** SISTER DARLENE, MR. & MRS.  
MAYBERRY, REBECCA STANDING,  
and ENSEMBLE MEMBERS.

DARLENE. After Mother and Father had gone to bed—very late at night—I often left my room and put on my wool coat that Uncle Edgar had brought all the way from Scotland.

UNCLE EDGAR. At night, Darlene, my darlin', when the wolves command the earth, only this coat will protect you from harm.

DARLENE. And I'd tiptoe down the hall past Mother and Father's bedroom, and across the tiled kitchen floor and out through the green kitchen door which never squeaked. And there, on the back porch, I'd step into my shoes and down into the darkness. We had no pets so nothing barked. And the Wilsons were very old next door and they didn't bark anymore either. Then, under the big oak tree in our backyard, I would turn around three times... (*DARLENE turns around as she counts.*) One, two... three... And I became invisible... And all the wolves stayed away just like Uncle Edgar said they would. And then I walked silently from shadow to shadow as I looked inside the souls on Pleasant Street where we all lived when I was a child. But things weren't always pleasant on Pleasant Street. Sometimes Mrs. Mayberry sat on her front porch swing... between two white pillars... swinging back and forth with a cigar in her left hand and her rose-colored bathrobe open to her waist.

MRS. MAYBERRY. And Donald ran the office today and made a hundred sales today, didn't you, Donald?

DONALD'S BOSS. Congratulations, Donald. You're the best we have. Have a big cigar on me.

MRS. MAYBERRY. Said Donald's boss today.

MR. MAYBERRY. Why thank you, sir, don't mind if I do.

MRS. MAYBERRY. Said Donald today...And wiped red lipstick off his cheek today just like yesterday.

DARLENE. And then Mr. Mayberry would open the front door and say ...

MR. MAYBERRY. Rosemary? I think I'll go up to bed. It's been a long day. You look silly with that damn cigar. And cover yourself up. The neighbors might see you.

DARLENE. Then Mr. Mayberry would walk upstairs to the dreams he never remembered and Mrs. Mayberry would slip the robe off her shoulders and down to her waist so the night could see how beautiful she was, and swing on the swing and puff on her cigar.

*(REBECCA STANDING is discovered slowly swaying from side to side. Faint sounds of a Gregorian chant can be heard.)*

DARLENE. Two blocks away lived Rebecca Standing who always stood and never sat. And on Halloween night she would put a pumpkin in the attic window and sing Gregorian chants hour after hour which sounded like moaning to our childlike ears. But I learned years later that she had been a nurse. That one day, after seeing all the pain and suffering, she began crying and couldn't stop. *(REBECCA STANDING's singing turns now to sounds of sobbing.)* No one ever knocked on Rebecca Standing's door. Except me. One Halloween night I came back after the whole town was asleep and her light was

on in her attic and I knocked on Mrs. Standing's door. (*A knocking is heard.*) The attic window opened.

MRS. STANDING. Darlene, is that you, child?

DARLENE. Yes, Mrs. Standing.

MRS. STANDING. You have the courage of the devil himself.

Come with me to the market after school tomorrow and we'll steal some candy and put it in my purse. Won't that be fun? To break the rules? You have to break the rules, Darlene, or they'll strangle you in your bed!

DARLENE. Mrs. Standing died two years later. On Halloween night. She was howling at the moon when she fell from her attic window. At least that's how the story goes. Mrs. Mayberry's husband died, too, of a coronary while... entertaining... his mistress... And for seven nights that followed his funeral Mrs. Mayberry sat out on her front porch swing naked from the top of her head to the tips of her toes and smoked big cigars. And broke the rules. And cried.

I never went to the market with Mrs. Standing after school. And I've never taken anything that wasn't mine. (*Beat.*) Maybe that's not completely true. Maybe I shouldn't have seen what I saw when I was invisible, when no one knew that I was inside their souls. Maybe that's why I became a nun. So I could stand quietly in the dark and listen. What am I looking for, I wonder, in breaking the rules? And is there someone out there, standing in the shadows... Looking at me?

(*As DARLENE slowly steps back into the shadows, we begin to hear someone humming an Elvis Presley tune. LIGHTS come up on CLARENCE opening a can of beer.*)

# The One-Arm Push-Up King

**Characters:** CLARENCE, ELVIS,  
and ENSEMBLE MEMBERS

CLARENCE. Most of the guys at lunch time would sit outside the stage door or run across the street to grab a bite from the commissary. They had a heck of a fine commissary at MGM in those days and you could sit and watch all the stars coming in for a bite. But I'd just finished watching all the love, hate and singing I could take on the sound stage below me and I just wanted a little peace and quiet. So I stayed up in catwalks with my lights and my dictionary so I could do my vocabulary drills...

CLARENCE'S FATHER. People always respect a man who chooses his words well, son. Remember that.

CLARENCE. My father was right and when I hitched up with a Shanghai steamer at the age of sixteen and never looked back I always remembered his advice. I never did stop moving long enough to go to school but every now and then I'd get the urge to know more about my world so I'd pick up the dictionary and learn some words. That afternoon I was thumbing through the "r's. Used to put all my new words in a sentence so I could use 'em properly. Never really used 'em in my line of work, but I knew them anyway. So that's where I was when he found me, on my lunch break and working on "rapturous" ... "reactionary" ... "recalcitrant" ... and I hear someone walking down the catwalk. It was Elvis.



ELVIS. Hear you do one-arm push-ups. Got quite a reputation for yourself.

CLARENCE. I looked up and said “Yep, I do. When I’m not having my lunch and working my words.”

ELVIS. How many can you do?

CLARENCE. “So many I can’t even count ‘em all,” I said. “So don’t even think about it.” And Elvis starts to laugh. He had a real quick smile and a full laugh. Really enjoyed himself. Well, I had a pretty good laugh, too, so we both started laughing. Then he says he wants to have a go at me. I tell him I’m doin’ my “r’s” and he says...

ELVIS. I’ll wait. Don’t want to interrupt a man when he’s doin’ his “r’s.”

CLARENCE. So I’m working on “resuscitate” and trying to think up a sentence to put it in and he leans in over my shoulder.

ELVIS. You trying to psych me out? I’ve got a big scene comin’ up after lunch, you know.

CLARENCE. “Yeah,” I said. “I’m trying to get you breathin’ in extreme anxiety.”

ELVIS. So when I expire you can resuscitate me, is that it?

CLARENCE. And we both laughed again. So after I jot down “when I expire you can resuscitate me,” Elvis said...

ELVIS. I’ll go first.

CLARENCE. Then he gets all situated, the right arm behind his back and... Bam! He starts in. One, two, three, four...

ACTOR. How many?

CLARENCE. Seventeen big ones! And that’s with his left arm! He does twenty two big ones with his right arm next!

SEVERAL ACTORS. Impossible! No way! Did he really? No kidding!

CLARENCE. Now he’s real tired. Rolls over on his back and he’s breathin’ hard.

ELVIS. OK, old man, it's your turn.

CLARENCE. Now, he had a twinkle in his eye, I admit, but "old man" really got my attention. I read where the President's Fight for Fitness campaign discovered most American men over 25 years of age can't do fifteen push-ups with both arms without somethin' snappin' or poppin' or goin' twang somewhere! But a challenge is a challenge, so I got down and put my right arm behind my back and off I went.

ELVIS. One, two, three, four, five—

CLARENCE. Then I get a little hitch under the ribs from the tuna salad san the wife had fixed that morning...and I burped. Lost my focus.

ELVIS. Broke his rhythm. Shot his concentration all to hell.

ACTOR. How many?

ELVIS. Twenty-three with his left and twenty-six with his right. Wiped me clean. (*EVERYONE ad libs a mixture of support and disbelief.*)

CLARENCE. Most I'd ever done in my whole life! God's truth. Before or since. Muscles were so sore I could barely bend 'em for a week. Elvis shook my hand and said he'd never seen that before. And me bein' his senior and all. Called me the one-arm push-up king then walked back down the catwalk and back into fantasyland. Every picture after that he asked for me by name.

ELVIS. I want Clarence makin' me look good. And I want another crack at him, too.

CLARENCE. Couple times each movie he'd come up into the clouds and we'd knock out a few one-handers. Sometimes he'd win and sometimes I'd win. Toward the last there we were both a little shaky. And he'd help me with my vocabulary words. "Resuscitate." Yep. That one I'll always remember. He never came back after he collapsed. Couldn't resuscitate him. Not even the King. So on his birthday I always get

down and see what I can do. Old Jack Palance caught a lotta people off guard on the Academy Awards, remember? (*CLARENCE gets down on the floor and tries—or does—a few push-ups.*) Well, I don't got as much in me as I used to. But then... who does? "Resuscitate." To revive from apparent death or from unconsciousness. You hear a lot these days of "Elvis sightings." In a bowling alley, playing basketball with Larry Bird. All that's hogwash. He's up on the catwalk doin' one-handers... Gettin' ready for me. And that's the truth. Happy birthday, big guy.

(*LIGHTS fade down on CLARENCE as he toasts ELVIS, and up on DOROTHY who is involved in setting out a few items for her daughter's garage sale.*)