

# **Excerpt Terms & 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 of scripts.

## **Family Plays**

# I HATE WAR

Drama by  
I.E. CLARK

# I HATE WAR

**Drama. By I.E. Clark.** *Cast: 10 to 30 actors, flexible.* Taking its title from Franklin D. Roosevelt's favorite disclaimer as America was entering World War II, this play shows one reason why people are violent. When the play begins, Socrates Blunderbuss is a sweet little toddler. He likes to see-saw and play dolls with the little girl next door. Play dolls! His father explodes. He buys Socky a gun and teaches him that shooting is fun. Socky learns fast and shoots anything that moves—red birds, people, Santa Claus, etc. Influenced by his environment, Socky passes into other violent aspects of our civilization and finally grows up to become ... what?—a dropout, or a success? A bum, or a hero? Does America punish or reward its violent citizens? *I Hate War* is a powerful but humorous commentary on our civilization. The play is episodic as the episodes flow together to delineate the development of human character. Even though the tiny fraction of time between some of the episodes represents the passage of several years, we see the interrelation of events. What happens tomorrow grows out of what happens today, grows out of what happened yesterday, and so on. We can never throw an event away or pretend it didn't happen. At the beginning of the play Socrates is a sweet, lovable little boy. By the end of the play, he becomes quite the opposite, molded by his environment—an environment in which parents, friends, football fans and even the government applaud violence, reward violence and create violent people. *I Hate War* is recommended for all groups. It is an especially powerful contest play. Ideal for experimenting with multi-media effects and new styles of lighting, the play relates to our time in both content and manner of presentation. *A director's script is available containing drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging, and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Approximate running time: 25 to 30 minutes. Code: IB9.*

## Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308  
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170  
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

[www.FamilyPlays.com](http://www.FamilyPlays.com)

ISBN-13 978-0-88680-086-4



9 780886 800864 >

I Hate War

# **I HATE WAR**

**A farcical tragedy  
in one act**

**by**

**I. E. CLARK**

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

© Family Plays

\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\*

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by FAMILY PLAYS 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 website [www.FamilyPlays.com](http://www.FamilyPlays.com), or we may be contacted by mail at: FAMILY PLAYS, 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.

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.

© 1981 by  
I.E. CLARK

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(I HATE WAR)

ISBN: 978-0-88680-086-4

## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with  
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

# I HATE WAR

## *Characters*

**Mr. Goldenrod**, a citizen  
**Daughty Goldenrod**, his daughter  
**Bubba Goldenrod**, his son  
**Mr. Blunderbuss**, his neighbor  
**Mrs. Blunderbuss**  
**Socrates Blunderbuss**, their son  
**Miss Sharon Fortune**, a philanthropist  
**A Redbird**  
**A Referee**  
**President of the School Board**  
**A Student**  
**A Drop Out**  
**A Hula Girl**  
**A TV Cameraman**  
**A Newsboy**  
**Postman**  
**Stretcher Bearers, Soldiers, Football Fans,**  
**Dancers, Student Protesters**

*(Many roles may be doubled)*

**Time and Place: Here and Now**

## ABOUT THE PLAY

“I Hate War” is labeled a farcical tragedy because each scene contains both a laugh and a tear—a far journey from the unity of tone practiced by the Ancients. But then our time is far away from their time. Life as we know it is a million laughs one moment and a bucketful of tears the next. And the same event that makes one person laugh will make another cry.

This play moves rapidly, as life in our time moves rapidly. It is the story of Socrates Blunderbuss from the time he is an innocent little kid of 5 or 6 until he grows up to be . . . what? A success? A failure? A hero? A villain? You decide—you and your audiences.

The play is episodic, the episodes flowing together to delineate the development of human character. Even though the tiny fraction of time between some of the episodes represents the passage of several years, we see the interrelation of events. What happens tomorrow grows out of what happens today grows out of what happened yesterday grows out of . . . grows out of . . . grows out of . . . Today’s toy may become tomorrow’s weapon. Today’s faltering step becomes tomorrow’s giant leap. We can never throw an event away or pretend it didn’t happen.

It is the intention of the author that the same actor should play Socrates throughout the play. His maturing from a toddler to an adult is indicated partially by costume changes, but mainly by acting. The significant change, however, is in his inner character. At the beginning of the play he is a sweet, loving, lovable little boy. He has become the opposite of all these things by the end of the play, molded by his environment—an environment in which parents, friends, football fans, even the Government applaud violence, reward violence, create violent people.

Daughty and Bubba should also be played by the same performers throughout the play. Numerous quick changes of costume are called for—but costuming should be symbolic, like the set and lighting. All that need be changed is a hat or a shirt or a skirt (a helmet and jersey will symbolize a complete football uniform, for example). The script provides time for these changes; the play was thoroughly tested on stage before being published.

“I Hate War” is recommended for all groups. It is an especially powerful contest play.



## I HATE WAR

*[At Up Right is the house occupied by the Goldenrod family. At Up Left is the house occupied by the Blunderbuss family. The houses are two-dimensional profile pieces or symbolic frames, with no attempt at realism. They may remain on stage throughout the play.]*

*At rise, SOCRATES BLUNDERBUSS and DAUGHTY GOLDENROD are see-sawing (in pantomime) at Down Center. They are dressed like little bitty kids, age 5 or 6. BUBBA, dressed like an 8-year old, is lying on his stomach Down Right reading a book. MR. GOLDENROD enters from his house at just about the same time that MR. and MRS. BLUNDERBUSS enter from theirs. The parents stand admiring the happy scene]*

MRS. BLUNDERBUSS. *[To Mr. Goldenrod, just a trifle silly]* Aren't they sweet! Our son and your daughter, Mr. Goldenrod. Hee! Hee! We might just be in-laws one of these days!

MR. GOLDENROD. Do you think I should ask him if his intentions are honorable, Mrs. Blunderbuss?

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. *[Ponders this dialogue, not sure whether the idea is good or bad]* Look, they're just five years old . . .

*[DAUGHTY falls off the see-saw. SOCRATES runs to her, awkwardly but affectionately pulls her to her feet, brushes off the dirt, and kisses her cheek. MR. GOLDENROD crosses to Daughty and whispers:]*

MR. GOLDENROD. He's a very nice boy, Daughty. Tell him thank you. *[DAUGHTY curtsies and says, "Thank you"]*

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. *[Crosses to Socrates, takes him by the arm, pulls him aside]* Hey, Socrates, old sprout, better watch that—kissing girls and all—guys'll call you sissy!

*[SOCRATES looks at Daughty, not sure whether to hold her hand or stick out his tongue at her. But before he reaches a decision, we hear jingling bells from the direction*

*of the Goldenrod house, and offstage voices sing "Here Comes Santa Claus." DAUGHTY and SOCRATES react to the sounds. BUBBA is absorbed in his book*

DAUGHTY. Oh, goody, goody, it's Christmas!

SOCRATES. Hey, Sanny Claus must be at your house!

MR. GOLDENROD. Let's run in and see what kind of presents he brought! *[MR. GOLDENROD, DAUGHTY, and SOCRATES run into the house happily singing, "Here Comes Santa Claus." MR. and MRS. BLUNDERBUSS stand near their house and watch. MR. BLUNDERBUSS is not smiling]*

MRS. BLUNDERBUSS. Oh my gracious, Mr. Blunderbuss, did you remember to buy some toys for little Socrates?

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. Yes, I got him just what he needs.

MRS. BLUNDERBUSS. What is it?

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. You'll see.

*[DAUGHTY and SOCRATES run out of the Goldenrod house. She is carrying a baby doll, and SOCRATES is obviously very interested in it. He speaks as they cross]*

SOCRATES. That sure is a pretty doll. What're you going to name her?

DAUGHTY. Her name is Dolly. Here, want to hold her?

SOCRATES. *[Taking the doll awkwardly by the legs]* Sure.

DAUGHTY. Not that way—you'll hurt her!

SOCRATES. Oh, I wouldn't want to hurt her. *[He holds the doll the way she shows him]*

DAUGHTY. Let's play house. I'll be the mama and you be the daddy, and Dolly will be our baby.

SOCRATES. Okay! *[They hold the doll in a walking position between them. MR. BLUNDERBUSS, who has been watching the scene in growing displeasure, strides to Socrates and grabs his arm]*

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. Hey, Socky, maybe Sanny Claus has been to our house. Let's go in and see. *[The BLUNDERBUSSSES go into their house. DAUGHTY crosses to Bubba and shows him her doll]*

DAUGHTY. Bubba, Bubba! Look what I got for Christmas!

BUBBA. *[Amiably]* Yes—it's pretty. *[Returns to reading]*

DAUGHTY. Don't you want to see what Santa Claus left for you?

BUBBA. Sure, Daughty. *[Rises, follows her toward door; looks at his book]* This is a great book.

DAUGHTY. What's it about?

BUBBA. It's called "Paradise in Boola-Boola." Gee, I'd like to go there sometime. *[They exit]*

*[SOCRATES emerges from his house carrying a fantastically mean-looking gun. His face is puzzled. He's not sure what to do with the gun. MR. BLUNDERBUSS follows him, beaming. MR. GOLDENROD is sitting at his window reading a newspaper; he pays no attention to them]*

SOCRATES. What is this?

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. It's a gun. It shoots things. Anything. Everything. Here, let me show you. *[He puts gun into position on his son's shoulder, then crosses to a fence post]* Now, I'm going to put this can on this post. See if you can shoot it off. *[SOCRATES, handling the gun awkwardly, aims in the general direction of the can, pulls the trigger, and says "Bang!" He misses the can. MR. BLUNDERBUSS crosses to Socrates, showing his disappointment]* You didn't aim, son! Look, sight along the barrel. Pretend that the can is a face. Those two big letters are eyes. Now you aim right between the eyes—and let him have it! *[SOCRATES aims again, pulls the trigger, and says "Bang!" The can falls off the post. BLUNDERBUSS excitedly pats his son on the back]* You did it! You did it! *[Runs to door of his house, calling]* Hey, Ma, did you see what your son just did! He's going to be a great hunter! *[MRS. BLUNDERBUSS looks out her window and applauds. SOCRATES is pleased with his parents' approval]*

SOCRATES. Did I do something good, Pa?

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. Socky, old man, that was wonderful. Now the real sport is to shoot a moving object. Let's see . . . *[He looks around, on the fence, on the ground; just as his gaze wanders to MR. GOLDENROD, that gentleman turns the page of his newspaper. BLUNDERBUSS considers for the briefest instant and then shakes his head negatively.]*

*He hears a bird singing and looks up in the sky; his eyes light up. He points to sky above Goldenrod house* / There, Socky, look there!

SOCKY. *[Aiming where his father points]* Where!

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. Up there, boy! Don't you see it!

SOCKY. *[Lowering gun]* You mean that pretty little red-bird?

*[The bird song continues, perhaps accompanied by music. A girl dressed like a REDBIRD enters and "flies" around the stage in a bird-like dance. MR. BLUNDERBUSS points at it excitedly]*

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. It's a target, boy, it's a target!

SOCRATES. But it's such a pretty bird . . . and so happy . . .

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. *[Looks around circumspectly, glances at Goldenrod, whose head is hidden by his newspaper]* Yeah—but nobody's watching. Go on—see if you can hit it. *[SOCRATES aims, says "Bang!"]* The REDBIRD staggers, flaps its wings in excruciating pain, and falls on its back. MR. BLUNDERBUSS grasps Socky by the shoulders, giving him a manly embrace *[MRS. BLUNDERBUSS runs out of the house]* Look what Socky did—the very first shot! *[He points to the RED-BIRD, which is writhing miserably in the last painful agony of life]*

MRS. BLUNDERBUSS. Oh, my—it's a pretty little red—*[BLUNDERBUSS clears his throat and glares at her]* Oh—that's—that's wonderful . . . He's a grape off the old vine all right.

SOCKY. *[Beginning to sense that he has done something grand and catching the excitement of his father, he runs to the Goldenrod house and calls]* Daughty! Daughty! Hey, Daughty! *[She enters from her house. SOCKY points to the bird proudly]* Look what I just did!

DAUGHTY. *[Holding her doll protectively]* Such a pretty bird. Is it dead?

SOCKY. Yeah. *[Posing majestically in imitation of his father]* And I killed it!

DAUGHTY. What are you going to do with it? Are you

hungry? Are you going to eat it for supper? [*SOCKY turns to his father questioningly*]

MR. BLUNDERBUSS. Nah! Redbirds ain't good to eat. It was just a target. Throw it in the trash can. [*He and SOCKY each take one of the bird's legs and pull it offstage. MRS. BLUNDERBUSS goes into her house. DAUGHTY runs to her dad at his window*]

DAUGHTY. Daddy, Daddy! Socrates Blunderbuss just killed a pretty redbird. Isn't that awful, Daddy?

MR. GOLDENROD. A redbird! That's against the law! [*He comes running out of the house, putting on his hat and coat*] Violent delights have violent ends—like ancestral voices prophesying war!

DAUGHTY. Where are you going, Daddy?

MR. GOLDENROD. I'm going . . . I was . . . I thought I ought . . . [*removing his hat and coat*] Oh, well, he's just a kid. But if he does it again . . .

[*GOLDENROD re-enters the house and returns to his newspaper at the window. DAUGHTY sits sadly beneath his window and caresses her doll. SOCKY returns wielding his gun happily. He sets the can back on the fence post and aims at it. But he lowers his gun without shooting*]

SOCKY. Ain't moving. [*He throws the can up in the air and shoots it three times—"BANG! BANG! BANG!" But shooting a can is no great thrill. He crosses Center, moving the gun around, looking for a moving target, sighting along the barrel. He sees Mr. Goldenrod, aims carefully. MR. GOLDENROD is absorbed in his paper and doesn't see him—and doesn't move*] Aw, he ain't moving neither! [*He aims at DAUGHTY, who cowers and puts her hands over her ears and freezes*] Ain't nothin' moving! [*When he turns away from her, DAUGHTY fearfully runs into the house. The faint sound of jingle bells reaches the stage; it gets louder and louder. SOCKY peers into the sky; an exultant look comes over his face. He takes careful aim and fires—"BANG!" The jingle bells stop. A red cap trimmed in white fur falls from the sky. SOCKY picks it up, examines it, gives a blood-curdling yell of triumph, and runs off singing, "I shot Sanny*

*Claus, I shot Sanny Claus” to the tune of “Here Comes Santa Claus.” We catch a glimpse of MR. BLUNDERBUSS leaning out of his window applauding. MR. GOLDENROD raises a cut-out window flap in the middle of his newspaper and peeks out—but quickly shuts it again and goes on reading]*

### INTERLUDE

*[DAUGHTY strolls on stage—a fourth-grader now with schoolbooks in one hand, her doll in the other, and bubble gum in her mouth. She calls to someone offstage. (Music and special lighting effects may accompany this and the following interludes)]*

DAUGHTY. I can’t now, Mary. I’ve got to go home and study—I never will learn how to work that hard old long division! *[SOCKY enters, also dressed like a fourth-grader. DAUGHTY sees him. She looks at her doll and then at Socky. She throws down the doll and chases him. A typical little boy who fears girls, he runs from her. As he disappears, she returns to her doll, picks it up, loves it sadly, and exits]*

*[Music and patterns of colored light flashing across the stage may indicate years passing by. SOCKY enters, now a junior high student, perhaps riding a bicycle. DAUGHTY enters from the opposite side of the stage, also a junior high student. SOCKY jumps off his bike, chases her, catches her by the arm. She pulls away and runs off. SOCKY snaps his fingers]*

SOCKY. Darn—she got away. *[He exits, dejected]*

*[Another brief music-and-light interlude may indicate more passing years. Stage lights then come up full. SOCKY—high school age now, wearing a football letter-award jacket—crosses from his house to Daughty’s house and knocks. He combs his hair while he waits for her to answer. DAUGHTY, also a high school girl now, comes out]*

SOCKY. Hi, Daughty. Hey, let’s go to a movie.

DAUGHTY. Aren’t you supposed to be in bed?

SOCKY. In bed? What for?

DAUGHTY. Bubba’s been asleep for an hour. He says our team is going to beat yours by at least three touchdowns . . .