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*Dramatic Publishing*

# FIGMENTS

A Comedy  
by  
BILLY ST. JOHN



**Dramatic Publishing**

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(FIGMENTS)

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# FIGMENTS

A Comedy in Two Acts  
For 7 Men and 7 Women

## CHARACTERS

RICK JACOBS . . . . . a playwright, has a vivid imagination,  
almost 30  
LONI WAGNER . . . . . a book store clerk, Rick's neighbor,  
mid-20s  
BEATRICE "MAMA" JACOBS . . . . Rick's mother, forceful,  
about 60  
MATT SANTORI . . . . . Loni's date, muscular, conceited,  
around 30

*and*

THE FIGMENTS OF RICK'S IMAGINATION:

FIGMENT #1 Veronica  
FIGMENT #2 David  
FIGMENT #3 Winston  
FIGMENT #4 Louise  
FIGMENT #5 Loni 2  
FIGMENT #6 Rick 2  
FIGMENT #7 Matt 2  
FIGMENT #8 Mama 2  
FIGMENT #9 Pop  
FIGMENT #10 Sarah

PLACE: Rick's apartment. New York.

TIME: The present.

(ACT I: A Friday. Late afternoon. ACT II: The next morning.)

## ACT ONE

SCENE: *The apartment is empty. [See Production Notes for set description.]*

AT RISE: *After a beat, RICK JACOBS enters from the kitchen carrying a cup of coffee. He is a disheveled man, wearing a none-too-clean sweatsuit. He seems deep in thought. He crosses to the recliner and sits. He takes a sip of coffee, then puts the cup on the side table. He takes up a legal pad and pen from the table and holds them in his lap, ready to use. He closes his eyes in thought. They will stay closed as FIGMENT #1 bursts through the front door. She is VERONICA, a mysterious beauty in a trench coat. She is frantic—frightened nearly to death. She slams the door shut and shakily engages the lock in the knob. She backs down the steps to C.)*

VERONICA. He's after me...oh, God!...he's after me! *(She rushes to the phone, snatches up the receiver, and frantically punches the buttons.)* Hello! Operator!?! Anybody!!! *(She realizes the phone is dead.)* It's dead! *(She slams down the receiver.)* David's gun! Where...the coat closet! He keeps it on the closet shelf.

*(She rushes to the closet and opens the door. FIGMENT #2/DAVID is standing there, almost dead. He wears slacks*

*and a white shirt; a big blood stain on his chest. VERONICA screams.)*

DAVID. Veronica...*(He staggers to the D end of the platform and falls down, dead. VERONICA screams.)*

VERONICA. David...he's dead! I...I have to get out of here!

*(She runs toward the archway. When she is almost there, FIGMENT #3/WINSTON steps into view. He is an evil-looking man. He wears a suit. A revolver is in his hand. VERONICA screams.)*

WINSTON *(raising the gun)*. Is this what you were looking for, Veronica?

VERONICA. You shot David! *(She moves away from him to LC as he advances toward her.)* Winston...no...

WINSTON. There's no need trying to escape. You can't outrun a bullet.

VERONICA. I don't want to die!

WINSTON. It's too late to beg for mercy now. Since you'd rather be with David than me, then you can both go together...to the morgue!

*(FIGMENT #4/LOUISE rushes in UC. She is WINSTON's wife. She wears a simple house dress.)*

LOUISE. Winston, stop! Don't harm her! Come home with me now and I'll help you forget you ever knew Veronica.

WINSTON. Forget her? How can I ever forget her? She's gotten under my skin. She's in my blood, Louise. The only way to get her out of my system is to kill her.

LOUISE. She's not worth it!

VERONICA. Louise is right—I'm not! She ought to know—she's my sister.

WINSTON. It's too late to turn back now. I've already shot David. Now I have to finish what I began. *(He extends the gun toward VERONICA. There are five quick, sharp knocks at the door. VERONICA flinches as if shot while WINSTON looks at the gun, puzzled. LOUISE looks annoyed. Realizing she's not shot, VERONICA gives WINSTON a questioning look. He shrugs his shoulders. There are more knocks at the door. THE FIGMENTS turn to look toward it, including DAVID who gets up off the floor. [Note: THE FIGMENTS in the play are able to relate to the "live" characters as well as one another.] RICK opens his eyes.)*

RICK. Who is it?

LONI *(off L)*. It's me, Rick...Loni.

RICK. Be right there.

*(He lays the pad and pen on the side table, gets up and crosses to the door. As he does this, DAVID backs into the closet and shuts the door while VERONICA and WINSTON back to the archway, through it, and out of sight; LOUISE backs through the UC door. RICK opens the front door. His neighbor, LONI WAGNER, is there. She is a nice looking young woman whom RICK is crazy about. She has come from work and is wearing a coat over her dress. She carries her purse and a small bag of groceries.)*

LONI. Am I interrupting?

RICK. No...not at all. Come in. *(LONI enters. RICK closes the door. LONI notices the pad, pen and coffee.)*

LONI. Legal pad, pen, coffee...you were working on your next play, right? I am interrupting.

RICK. No...really...I was just tossing some ideas about. I haven't actually started the next one. Sit down.

LONI. If you're sure...

RICK. Let me take your coat. *(She sets her bag and purse on the landing, takes off her coat and hands it to RICK. Then she crosses DL and sits on the sofa. He crosses to the coat closet UL.)*

LONI *(referring to the crumpled pages)*. I take it you haven't broken through your writer's block yet—either that or you're lousy at origami.

RICK. You're right the first time. I'll just hang this up.

LONI. I can't stay long.

*(He opens the door. FIGMENT #5/LONI 2 is inside. She wears a wig the same hair color and style as LONI's, and a dress that's identical to hers.)*

LONI 2. I want to be with you forever! You're the only man in the world for me!

LONI. I have a date.

RICK. Oh. *(LONI 2 crosses to stand above the real LONI at the sofa. RICK hangs up the coat.)* Do you have time for a cup of coffee?

LONI. No, thanks. *(He closes the closet door and crosses to the sofa where he sits beside LONI.)*

RICK. Well, there's plenty if you change your mind.

LONI 2. I didn't come here for coffee—I came here for your incredibly sexy body!

LONI. What I really stopped by for is advice.

RICK. Advice? About what?

LONI. The guy I've been dating, Matt—Matt Santori. I don't know what to do about him.



*(The closet door opens and FIGMENT #6/RICK 2 is there. He resembles RICK and wears a sweatsuit identical to his.)*

RICK 2. That's easy—ditch the sucker! *(RICK 2 closes the closet door, crosses to the sofa, and stands behind the real RICK, next to LONI 2.)*

RICK. What's the problem?

LONI. He's...well...he's rushing the relationship at a faster pace than I'm comfortable with.

LONI 2 *(crossing to R near the archway)*. He keeps running his hands all over my body...like...like...some giant spider!

*(FIGMENT #7/MATT 2 enters through the archway. He wears a sweatsuit to which three sets of extra arms and hands have been attached—one set at his sides, another at his waist, another at his hips. [See Production Notes for costume details.]*

MATT 2 *(with great lust)*. Loni, baby! *(He grabs her in his arms and runs all eight hands up and down her back.)*

RICK 2 *(crossing to THE OTHER FIGMENTS, R)*. You insignificant insect! Take your hairy hands off her!

RICK. What do you want me to do? Beat him up?

RICK 2. Put up your dukes! *(MATT 2 releases LONI 2 who rushes behind RICK 2 for protection. RICK 2 puts up his fists.)*

LONI *(laughing)*. Not hardly! He's into muscle building, karate, all that martial arts stuff. Matt's a terrific boxer as well. *(MATT 2 begins to pound RICK 2 with all eight fists. RICK 2 doesn't even get a blow in.)*

RICK. He's strong, huh?

LONI. Lord, yes! Fighting him would be suicide. (*MATT 2 grabs RICK 2 by the throat and flings his head from side to side, choking him. LONI 2 is distraught.*)

LONI 2. Stop it, Matt! Unhand him! Unhand him! Unhand him! Unhand him!

RICK. Then how can I help?

LONI. With words. You're a writer. Tell me what to say to Matt to get him to back off a little. (*RICK 2 tries to say something to MATT 2, but with the other's hands around his neck, the words come out garbled.*)

RICK (*thinking*). What should you say...

LONI 2 (*stepping U of THE OTHER FIGMENTS and pushing them apart; to MATT 2*). Leave Rick alone, you creep! He's the man I really love! Now, get out of my sight! You're really beginning to bug me!

LONI. I like Matt; I'm just not ready to be as intimate as he'd like us to be. How can I keep him at arms' length for a while?

MATT 2 (*to LONI 2*). Wanna do the dirty bounce?

LONI 2. Oh, go bounce a ladybug. (*Insulted, MATT 2 gives a "Humpf!" and backs out through the archway. THE OTHER FIGMENTS look at RICK as if waiting to be told what to do next.*)

RICK. Gee, Loni, I'm going to have to give this some thought. I just write murder mysteries. I've always had problems finding the words when my characters need to express their romantic feelings.

RICK 2 (*to RICK*). Yeah, and you have the same problem in real life, pal. Tell her how you feel about her.

RICK. I can't.

LONI. You can't what?

RICK. I can't think of anything at the moment.

LONI 2 (to RICK). A big help you are! If I have to wrestle with the spider man one more time, he's liable to pin me to the mat!

RICK. Mat...

LONI. Huh?

RICK. Matt. I'd like to meet him. I could advise you better if I got to know him, too.

RICK 2. Going to size up the competition, huh?

LONI. Matt's taking me out to eat tonight. I can bring him by here first. He's been wanting to meet you, too.

RICK (to LONI) & RICK 2 (to LONI 2). You told him about me?

LONI 2. I told him YOU were the one I'm lusty to go to bed with.

LONI. I told him you're not only my neighbor, you're my best friend.

RICK. That's nice.

RICK 2. Well, shit.

RICK. Sure. Bring him by for a drink.

LONI. Great. (*Rising.*) I need to run! (*RICK rises.*) I've just got time for a quick shower before Matt comes to pick me up. (*They start toward the closet door. THE FIGMENTS watch them from R.*)

RICK. Did you work late at the bookstore?

LONI. A little. I was waiting on a customer when five o'clock came, and I just couldn't walk away from her.

RICK 2 (to LONI 2). You are so thoughtful.

LONI 2. I try.

LONI. Then I had to stop by the market for a couple of things. (*She gets her groceries and purse from the land-ing.*)

RICK. I'll get your coat.

LONI. I'm really anxious to see what you think of Matt.  
(*RICK opens the closet door. MATT 2—still as a spider man—is inside. He gives RICK a smarmy grin. RICK reaches past him, gets LONI's coat, then closes the door sharply in MATT 2's face.*)

RICK. I can hardly wait to meet him. (*He holds out the coat and LONI drapes it over her arm.*)

LONI. Well, then. See you in a few. You're a doll. (*She kisses him on the cheek. LONI 2 grabs RICK 2's head in her hands and plants a big kiss on his lips. RICK opens the door and LONI exits. LONI 2 breaks her kiss and backs out the archway. RICK closes the door.*)

RICK 2 (*to RICK*). We're in love with her.

RICK (*crossing to DLC*). Yeah—for all the good it does us.  
(*RICK crosses to the recliner and drops onto it. RICK 2 crosses to the couch and perches on its right arm.*)

RICK 2. You know what the problem is? You're a wimp. If you don't tell Loni how we feel about her, we're going to lose her—if not to this Matt guy, then to somebody else.

RICK. I know...I know...

RICK 2. I come up with great lines for you, but you never use them. I try to get you to say, "I love you, Loni Wagner, with all my heart and soul!" What do you come out with? "Do you want a cup of coffee?"

RICK. Look, the thing about dreaming up good dialog is, in my imagination, Loni will say what I want her to say back to me. Life's not like that. If I tell her I love her, she might laugh in my face.

RICK 2. Then again, she might just jump on your bones.  
What do you have to lose? (*There are several knocks at the front door.*)

MAMA (*off L*). Ricky, are you home? You needn't break a leg to open the door—it's not one of your floozies, it's just your mother.

RICK & RICK 2. Mama!

RICK 2. There's the main problem we have with our love life. Even when we're able to get a girl, Mama always screws it up. I'm outta here. (*He backs to the UC door and out of it.*)

RICK. Coming, Mama.

(*He goes to the door and opens it. BEATRICE "MAMA" JACOBS is there. She enters.*)

MAMA. If I'm interrupting you and a loose woman, I can come back another time...when you're resting.

RICK. There's no one here but me, Mama. Let me take your coat. (*As the dialog continues, he takes her coat and hangs it in the closet. She crosses to above the sofa and puts her large purse on the R end.*)

MAMA (*noticing the crumpled paper*). You're creating—I don't want you should stop creating on my account.

RICK. I haven't started writing a new play, Mama. I'm still trying to come up with a good idea for one.

MAMA. My son, the playwright! Your father and I are so proud of you. (*She takes an ornate urn with a lid from her purse; to the urn.*) Aren't you proud of him, Ezra? (*She sets the urn on the phone table.*)

RICK (*crossing to her*). Mama, I've begged you not to carry Pop around with you. One day you're going to drop him and break him.

MAMA. I'm very careful with him. You think he doesn't enjoy getting out once in a while just because he's dead?

*(She reaches into her purse and brings out a Mason jar of stewed prunes.)* I brought you a little something.

RICK. Monkey testicles?

MAMA *(gives him such a look!)*. Don't be a wise guy. They're stewed prunes.

RICK. MORE stewed prunes? You know I HATE stewed prunes! I have ALWAYS hated stewed prunes!

MAMA. They're good for your bowels. I'll put them in the kitchen. *(She starts toward the kitchen door. RICK follows her.)*

RICK. No, Mama. You keep them. I haven't eaten the last jar you brought.

MAMA. So, start! You want to get irregular?

RICK. Mama...*(She exits. He follows. There is a moment of silence, then...)*

MAMA *(off UC)*. Ahhh!!! *(Beat.)* When's the last time you washed a dish?

RICK *(off UC)*. I was planning to do them tonight. There's nothing good on television tonight. I was saving them for reruns.

*(MAMA enters UC and crosses to the sofa where she sits L. RICK follows and stands L of the sofa. They are followed by RICK 2 and FIGMENT #8/MAMA 2. She wears a dress like MAMA's and a wig to match her hair. She also wears an apron with a bib, tied in a bow at the back. Streaming from the bow are two extremely long apron strings. They have been plaited into a single strand that ends in a noose. It is around RICK 2's neck. They cross to RC.)*

MAMA 2 *(to RICK 2)*. Such a smart mouth.

MAMA *(to RICK)*. Such a smart mouth.

MAMA 2. You did not get such a smart mouth from me...

MAMA. You did not get such a smart mouth from me, I can tell you—you got it from your father.

MAMA 2. What she said.

RICK 2 & RICK. I was just making a joke.

MAMA. Some joke. It's a good thing you write mysteries and not comicals—you could starve from such a sense of humor.

RICK 2. Oh, get off my back, Mama.

RICK. Yes, ma'am.

MAMA. And that kitchen... *(To the urn)*. Ezra, your son is a slob.

*(FIGMENT #9/POP enters at the archway and crosses to THE OTHER FIGMENTS. He is the spirit of RICK's late father. He wears a replica of the urn that covers him from the neck to the floor, hiding his arms and legs. Needless to say, he takes baby steps to get around. He has gray hair, glasses and a copy of the urn's lid on his head like a tam-o'-shanter.)*

POP. And it's because he takes after me—I know, I know...

MAMA. He takes after you in that respect.

POP *(to RICK 2)*. You know why she had me cremated rather than put me in the ground where I belong? She hated that I should turn to DUST!

MAMA. He was a good man, but he was a slob...

MAMA & MAMA 2. ...may he rest in peace.

POP. Who can rest, the way she lugs me everywhere in her purse—to bridge luncheons...to the grocery store...even to get her lip waxed. I get around more now than I did when I was alive.

RICK. Pop wasn't that bad.

POP. Thanks, son.

MAMA. Compared to you, he was Mr. Clean. So how long have those dishes been in the sink? When I gave them to you on your birthday six months ago, they were yellow—now they're GREEN! With all your floozies, you can't find one who will wash a dish for you?

RICK. Mama, I don't have a lot of floozies—I mean lady friends.

RICK 2 (*to MAMA 2*). I'd be thrilled to have just ONE girl-friend.

MAMA & MAMA 2. A good-looking boy like you.

MAMA. When you dress like a person and not like a slob.

POP. You watch—my name is about to come up again.

MAMA. But then, what can I expect? Like father, like son.

POP. Call me psychic.

RICK 2. Does that come with being dead?

POP. It comes from being married to your mother. (*RICK flops onto his recliner, exasperated.*)

RICK. For God's sake, Mama, I don't need to dress up to sit here in the apartment and write.

MAMA. Oooo, now you're angry.

RICK 2. You're damn right I'm angry!

RICK. I'm not angry.

MAMA (*rising and crossing behind his chair*). You shouldn't get upset at a little constructive criticism. (*She begins to arrange his hair with her fingers—which he detests. MAMA 2 grips the noose and begins to tighten it around RICK 2's neck, choking him.*) Take my advice—the sooner you fix yourself up and clean up the apartment, the sooner you'll find a darling girl who will want to marry you, instead of trollops who are just after your body. My dream is to see you happily married to a nice girl before I join your father.