

Excerpt terms and conditions

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

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 you read the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Plays on Principle: Ten 10-Minute Plays

By

PAT MONTLEY

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 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.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 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.

©MMXXII by
PATRICIA MONTLEY

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(PLAYS ON PRINCIPLE: TEN 10-MINUTE PLAYS)

ISBN: 978-1-61959-286-5

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author 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 *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 (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

Plays on Principle (which originally included seven of the ten plays here) was premiered at the First Unitarian Church of Baltimore in 2019 as part of a bicentennial celebration. The production was funded by a Creativity Grant awarded to the playwright by the Maryland State Arts Council.

CAST:

Christine Demuth	Michelle Lee
Chris Edwards	Richard Peck
Flinn Leigh Eng	Vernon Rey
Melissa Feliciano	Molly Ruhlman
Layla Hodge	Owen Sahnnow
Timothy Johnson	Sally Wall

PRODUCTION:

Director	Pat Montley
Set, Sound & Lighting Designer	Daryl Beard
Stage Managers	Naomi Berkenbilt, Javier Jaramillo
Set Crew	Jim Houston, Scott Macleod, Richard Peck, Owen Sahnnow

For Sally
my best critic
and dearest

Suckled by Wolves

CHARACTERS

STEVE: 40s, any race; previously Rick's best friend, man with a conscience and a mission, a realist.

RICK: 40s, any race; previously Steve's best friend, sensitive, a romantic.

TIME: The present.

PLACE: A parlor in the bishop's residence.

Question: Who deserves forgiveness?

(At lights up, we see a parlor with two chairs. STEVE and RICK stand, waiting.)

STEVE. What's taking him so long?

RICK. He was never very ... punctual, Steve. Don't you remember?

STEVE. No.

(Beat.)

STEVE *(cont'd)*. I try not to.

RICK. I thought you went through years of remembering.

STEVE. That was a long time ago.

RICK. Right after?

STEVE. Not right.

RICK. Later, then.

STEVE. Much later. You?

RICK. Right after.

STEVE. Oh.

RICK. My parents.

STEVE. Of course.

(Beat.)

STEVE *(cont'd)*. Rick, we do have an appointment, don't we? I mean you called and talked to him.

RICK. Well, not to *him*. But we have an appointment.

(Beat.)

RICK *(cont'd)*. How's Sharon?

STEVE. Fine. Up for tenure at St. Mary's this year.

RICK. A shoo-in.

STEVE. We hope.

RICK. And the wunderkind?

STEVE. Good. Great.

RICK. Show me.

STEVE *(taking out his smartphone)*. Prepare to be dazzled.

(Shows picture.)

RICK. Wow! Cap and gown time already.

STEVE. Only grade school.

RICK. What're you saying—that we're not *that* old?

STEVE. What about your twins?

RICK *(getting out his smartphone and showing)*. Child prodigies, both. I think they actually look like Mike, don't you?

STEVE (*looking*). Wow—you're right. Amazing resemblance.

Considering. (*Taking the phone for a closer look.*) A mighty pair.

RICK. Regular Romulus and Remus.

(*RICK takes his phone back from STEVE.*)

STEVE. Don't.

RICK. I was only—

STEVE. I hated when he called us that.

RICK. Sorry. (*Referring to the photo as he puts phone away.*)

They're just about the age we were when ...

(*RICK trails off. STEVE pats his arm. Beat.*)

RICK (*cont'd*). Do you ... can you ever forgive him?

STEVE. For starters, he'd have to repent.

RICK. You think he hasn't?

STEVE. In the confessional, where it's easy and anonymous, sure.

RICK. He has publicly apologized.

STEVE. For the sins of ... (*Imitating the bishop's tone.*) "all those priests in my dioceses who have committed such heinous crimes." But not for his own sins. And not to us.

RICK. Perhaps he will ... tonight.

STEVE. And what about restitution? What about the obligation to restore what was stolen.

RICK. How can he give us back our innocence?

STEVE. He stole our sense of worth and dignity. And now he has to give them back.

RICK. But you have those things.

STEVE. *You* don't—not in the eyes of the church.

RICK. Is that his fault?

STEVE. His church's fault!

(*Beat.*)

RICK. What time is it?

STEVE. Quarter after.

RICK. What if he says no?

STEVE (*a determined reminder*). Like we decided on the phone after I saw the article ... we go to the paper.

RICK. Are you sure you're ready to do that?

STEVE. If we have to.

RICK. It won't be pretty. Aren't you concerned about ... what about Sharon's job?

STEVE. We've talked it through.

RICK. I can't tell you how much it means to me, Steve, that you're willing to put everything on the line like this.

STEVE. Aren't you?

RICK. Yeah, but I have more to gain.

STEVE. No. You don't. Not really. Not in the grand scheme of things.

RICK. How did he used to put it? "*In lux aeternitatis.*" All moral decisions should be made "in the light of eternity." Sounds grand, doesn't it?

STEVE. Maybe that was the problem. It was *too* grand. Maybe something less ambitious would have worked. Like the Native American idea of considering the effects of your actions on seven generations.

RICK. Seven's a good number. Seven sacraments ... seven last words of Jesus ...

STEVE. Seven sorrows of Mary ... seven gifts of the Holy Spirit ...

RICK. Seven deadly sins.

STEVE. I would've settled for one.

RICK. Sin?

STEVEN. Generation.

RICK. Was it a sin?

STEVE. For us?

RICK. For him.

STEVE. Are you kidding? How much did our families spend on therapy?

RICK. I know, I know. But maybe ... if things had been different ... I mean if people ... if the church hadn't ... if the culture didn't ...

STEVE. What are you saying? That it could have been possible for him to do what he did without fucking up our lives?

RICK. I'm just saying ... I'm saying that he loved me. All right?

STEVE (*sarcastic*). Yeah, right.

RICK. He did! I know he did!

STEVE. OK, OK. He loved you. Short-term love. Not seven-generation love. Because it's clear he doesn't love you *now*. Or he wouldn't have said what he said in the pulpit and in the media, and we wouldn't be here now insisting that he take it back.

RICK. Do you think he will?

STEVE. I think he'll say he's duty-bound as a bishop to uphold the teaching of the church, that homosexuality is a threat to the family, that the Bible says yadda, yadda, yadda, and anything else he needs to say to get his cardinal's hat.

RICK. Whooo ... how'd you get to be such a cynic?

STEVE. Life.