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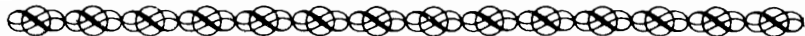
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*Dramatic Publishing*



A Full-Length Comedy

# Never Mind What Happened, How Did It End?

By  
David Rogers



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(NEVER MIND WHAT HAPPENED, HOW DID IT END?)

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NEVER MIND WHAT HAPPENED,  
HOW DID IT END ?

For Nineteen Men and Nineteen Women  
(fewer with doubling)

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C H A R A C T E R S

ANN  
KEVIN  
SARA  
DONNA  
PENNY  
DR. MITCHELL

YOUNG PENNY

CORA  
EVELYN  
BEATSY  
FLOYD  
ANDY  
MIKE

EDWARD

FATHER WINTHROP

MILLIE

SKEEZIX

HANNAH

..... *Guests at Young Penny's  
graduation party*

..... *Penny's parents*

..... *Other guests at the party*

TOMMY  
YOUNG DONNA  
GRANDFATHER WINTHROP  
MOTHER PENNY

continued on following page

CHARLES . . . . . *a chauffeur*  
MISS KELLY . . . . . *a nurse*  
OLGA . . . . . *a maid*  
M'SIEU FRITZ . . . . . *a hair dresser*  
MR. BLOOMQUIST  
GIRL REPORTER  
MAN PHOTOGRAPHER

LIEUTENANT

HOWARD  
ELAINE

JUDGE GARRISON

MONTY BLAKE  
FIRST LADY WEDDING GUEST  
SECOND LADY WEDDING GUEST  
DOUG  
DOUG'S MOTHER

Extra wedding guests, as desired

PLACE: *The Loring home in Fort Tyler, a small  
Midwestern city.*

TIME: *The present . . . and the past.*

Cast can be reduced by doubling Penny's attendants  
in "homecoming" scene, Act Two, Scene One as  
wedding participants, Act Two, Scene Two.

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# ACT ONE

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SCENE: The living room, porch and sun parlor of an old Victorian house. The porch is at L, a relatively small area. The center and major part of the stage is the living room. The sun parlor at R is the third area. For complete description of setting, see pages 95-96. The rooms and the furniture should seem old, Victorian, as though they had been lived in and with comfortably for many years. It is an afternoon in early autumn.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The living room and sun parlor are empty. On the porch, L, KEVIN, a good-looking boy of about twenty, casually dressed, is kissing ANN, an attractive girl of eighteen who wears jeans and a shirt. After a beat, from off UR we hear a crash.)

SARA (off UR). Ouch! Darn it!

DONNA (off UR). Be careful, Sara. Did you scratch the wall paper?

SARA (off UR). No. My leg.

(SARA comes down the stairs and enters the living room. She is twelve. She wears jeans and a sweat shirt and carries the sort of things that accumulate in guest room closets: three ice skates, a tennis racket, a punch bowl, a couple of shoe boxes, and/or the like. She is walking

toward the door to the sun parlor.)

SARA. I don't know why I have to do it all. Can't Ann help?

(DONNA, Ann and Sara's mother, enters down the stairs. She is in her early forties, dressed for house cleaning, and carries more things -- old coats, jackets, etc.)

DONNA. Because I asked you. Because you're the one who keeps throwing things in the guest room closet. Because all of this is yours.

SARA (stopping to argue). Not the punch bowl. And at least one of these skates is Ann's.

DONNA. I don't know where Ann is.

SARA. She's with Kevin.

DONNA. How do you know?

SARA. Does MacDonald's sell hamburgers? She should help, too.

DONNA (rather than argue, calling). Ann! (Hearing Donna, KEVIN, on the porch, jumps away from ANN, who puts a finger to her lips, telling him not to answer. ANN sits on porch glider.

KEVIN sits beside her and they talk quietly through the following. DONNA turns back to SARA.)

DONNA. Would you open the sun parlor door? (SARA looks at the load she carries, can't figure a way to shift it.)

SARA (butting open the door with her behind). The cedar chest?

DONNA (going through door, around imaginary wall to the bench/chest DRC). I haven't time to drag the ladder up to the attic. She'll be here any minute.

SARA (following DONNA). I don't know why you're

making such a fuss about Grandma. She's only your mother. (DONNA shoots her a look and dumps the clothes on the floor.) I see why you're making such a fuss.

DONNA. And if I were you, I wouldn't call her Grandma.

SARA. Why not?

DONNA. She's not the kind of lady that likes to be reminded she's a grandma. (She opens the chest. Startled.) Oh! (She takes out a Christmas wreath.) No wonder I couldn't find it last Christmas!

SARA. What should I call her then?

DONNA (setting wreath aside and piling clothes in chest). What did you call her the last time she was here?

SARA. I don't remember. I was only three or four.

DONNA (surprised it's been that long). Eight years . . . she's been in Rome eight years.

SARA. That's what I like about our family. They're so close.

DONNA (taking punch bowl and putting it in chest). The usual rules do not apply to your grandma.

SARA. I wouldn't call her that if I were you.

DONNA (annoyed). That's enough, Sara. (They put the rest of the things in the chest.) Careful of the bowl. Mother likes living in Italy. One of her husbands was Italian.

SARA. So that's why we have to clean out the guest room closet?

DONNA. I'll finish the closet. You go down to the washing machine and get the sheets and towels. Daddy should be back with her any minute. (She goes back through the sun parlor door, the living room and the archway and off up the stairs. SARA, nodding, goes off through door UR to kitchen. Meanwhile on porch:)



KEVIN (continuing the conversation we haven't heard).

Well, if you want to tell your parents, it's okay with me.

ANN. I think we ought to, Kevin. I'd . . . I'd feel better.

KEVIN. Then let's do it now. Get it over with.

ANN. Now? (Doubtful.) Oh . . . I don't know.

They'll probably say . . .

KEVIN. What?

ANN. I don't know. My mother won't understand.

KEVIN. Sure she will. She went through the same thing.

ANN. No.

KEVIN. Well, almost the same thing.

ANN. But it was so long ago.

KEVIN. She'll remember.

ANN. Everything was different then.

KEVIN. Different? (Admitting.) Well, Truman was president then, but how much difference does that make to a boy and girl in love?

ANN. Well, we should tell her . . . them . . .

but . . . let's think about it a few more days.

KEVIN. Never put off till tomorrow . . .

ANN. It's a bad day. My grandmother's coming from Rome.

KEVIN. You're making excuses. You know grandmothers. She'll kiss everybody, give you presents and then go take a six-hour nap.

ANN. Not my grandma.

KEVIN. What's so special about yours?

ANN. You ready? (He nods.) My grandma is Penny Loring.

KEVIN (amazed). Penny Loring! The old actress!

ANN (correcting him). The ageless actress.

KEVIN. Your grandma? (ANN nods.) She doesn't look any older than your mother.

ANN (looking at him a moment). She'll love you

for that.

KEVIN. I saw her on the Today show last week. She was pushing some book.

ANN. She just wrote her autobiography.

KEVIN. She's bananas. Every time she tried to read from the book, they bleeped her.

ANN. That's my grandma. Sees all, knows all and unless she's bleeped, tells all.

KEVIN. Well, if she tells all, ask her how your mother told her what you want to tell your mother.

ANN. I can't imagine my mother saying it . . . even to a crazy lady like my grandma.

KEVIN. She did. She had to. And there was a day when your grandmother told her mother. Probably right in this house.

ANN. I wish I had a video cassette of that.

KEVIN. They didn't have video cassettes then.

ANN. See! It was different!

KEVIN. Ann, you can't see into the past.

ANN. Some people can.

KEVIN. Only their own past. And then, they're not seeing it. They're remembering it.

ANN. It must be funny for her . . . my grandmother . . . coming back to this house . . . after all these years. Think of all the memories it must bring back to her.

KEVIN. Penny Loring? I can't imagine her having memories. Or a family. Or anything else like regular people.

ANN. Even actresses are people. Special people. It's funny. I've seen her old movies on the late show so I know my grandmother at every age. As a wisecracking blonde with no eyebrows, as a warm, motherly brunette . . . and in her later movies, as a hatchet murderess.

KEVIN. Weird.

ANN. Anyway, she comes on like a hurricane so it's a bad day to talk to the folks.

KEVIN. But . . .

ANN. So go on home, Kevin.

KEVIN. Okay. But I'm coming back later.

ANN. Sure. You can meet her.

KEVIN. Cool. And then we'll tell your mother.

If it's going to upset her, better to do it in the middle of a hurricane and maybe she won't notice so much.

ANN. You really think so?

KEVIN. Uh huh. (He kisses her.)

(SARA enters kitchen door carrying sheets, pillows, a comforter and towels. She goes through sun parlor door into living room.)

SARA (yelling upstairs). Ma! I got the pillows and the comforter, too.

DONNA (from upstairs). Bring them up!

SARA (yelling). I can't go upstairs. I can't see my feet!

DONNA. I'll be right down. Get Ann to help.

SARA (yelling). Ann! Stop smooching!

ANN (breaking kiss, to KEVIN). I'll kill her.

(Yells to SARA.) I'll kill you! (To KEVIN.) I'll see you later.

KEVIN. Right. . . . (Starts off, turns back.)

What do you say to a movie star?

ANN. "How do you do?" is polite; "I loved you in 'The Story of Florence Nightingale'" is a sure winner.

KEVIN. Gotcha! (He runs upstage, then off L. ANN follows him up, but then turns R through the unseen front door. She is lost to sight for a moment behind living room wall. Meanwhile:)

(DONNA comes down the stairs and enters the living room. She carries several galoshes, an old umbrella, some golf clubs and a hockey stick.)

DONNA (to SARA). Did you get the right ones?  
The ones with the little blue flowers?

ANN (entering through archway, walking to them; to SARA). I would wait till you're old enough to have a boy friend to take my revenge but I can't imagine any boy ever being interested in you.

DONNA. Ann, take the pillows and comforter.

SARA (as ANN does). I'm not going to be interested in boys. When I'm ready, I'll skip right over into men.

DONNA (to SARA). Open the sheets so I can be sure they don't have holes. Sometimes that machine . . .

(PENNY LORING enters L on to porch. Though she must be in her sixties, she gives little sign of her age. Her hair is flaming red, her clothes a travel outfit of the very latest style. She wears heavy, "actressy" make-up, a lot of large, expensive jewelry and carries a smart handbag and cosmetic case. She walks briskly through the unseen front door. At the same time, SARA is displaying the sheets for DONNA, who, arms full, inspects as the girls argue.)

ANN (to SARA). Big mouth! Yelling so everyone in the neighborhood thinks . . .

SARA (sing-song). You're smoochin' with Kevin!  
Smoochin' with Kevin.

ANN. You impossible worm! (As SARA continues the sing-song, ANN tries to hit her with the

pillows she is holding, managing to upset the balance of the things in Donna's arms, which fall to the floor along with the linen. They are all talking at once as PENNY appears in the hall, drops her purse and cosmetic case on the hall table and watches the scene in the living room.)

DONNA. Ann! You made me drop . . .

ANN. Make her shut up!

SARA. Smoochin' with Kevin . . .

PENNY (coming into living room, talking over them till they stop). I love it! I love it! It's grass roots America!

DONNA. Mother! (They stare at each other a beat.) I wanted everything ready . . . I wanted to change . . . fix up a little . . .

PENNY (going to her). Nonsense, Donna. You will look absolutely marvelous when you lose ten pounds. (They embrace and kiss.)

DONNA. Well, you look marvelous now! Almost the same . . . except for . . . When did your hair turn red?

PENNY (honestly confused). Wasn't it always red? (SARA laughs. PENNY turns to her.) Well, this can't be Ann. It's got to be Sara. (She embraces SARA, then pulls back and looks at her.) How pretty! (To DONNA, admiringly.) Skin! She has skin! (To SARA.) But at your age, darling, you must be careful to wash thoroughly. Blackheads turn to pimples. And always wash up. Up! (She pantomimes washing with an upward gesture. SARA giggles again. To DONNA:) Doesn't the child talk yet? (Before DONNA can answer, PENNY turns to ANN.) And Ann! What a young lady you are! I hear quite respectable people in America wear jeans. (She embraces ANN.)

(DR. MITCHELL, a pleasant man in his forties, wearing heavily rimmed glasses, appears L, carrying Penny's suitcases. He goes through unseen front door and disappears from view.)

ANN. It's good to see you, Grandma.

PENNY. Who? Listen, darling, let's get this straight. "Mother" was all right when Donna was a baby, but no more. From here on in, I'm "Penny" to everybody. Got it? (SARA giggles hysterically. PENNY looks at her, not quite sure she likes all the laughing.) What a cheerful child.

(MITCHELL appears in the archway, sets down the luggage and comes into the living room.)

MITCHELL. Well, I see you've met the girls, Mother Loring.

ANN. Call her "Penny," Daddy.

PENNY (smiling, pleased; to DONNA). She's bright as well as pretty. (To MITCHELL.) It was sweet of you to meet me at the airport. You know how I hate taxis.

ANN. Daddy took the whole day off. Had another doctor cover for him.

DONNA. Well, I hope we can have a nice long visit, Mother.

PENNY. Oh, we have forever! I don't have to leave till tomorrow after dinner.

DONNA. Tomorrow!

PENNY (explaining why it's so long). Well, I need the rest. It's been hectic. Right from the plane in New York to the Today show. Then on to Philadelphia for more TV . . . then Boston and Chicago. I don't know where. (To MITCHELL.) Do you give vitamin shots ?

MITCHELL. I can. Of course.

PENNY. I'll be up in a minute. I thought it would be enough to write my memoirs but they seem to expect me to sell them, too. Practically door to door.

DONNA. Must you leave tomorrow?

PENNY. I'm booked on the Johnny Carson show Thursday and then there's a retrospective of my films in San Francisco and then back to Hollywood and right into rehearsal.

ANN. Are you doing a new movie?

PENNY. No. They don't make my kind of movies any more. All the characters now are on motorcycles or drugs.

DONNA. What then?

PENNY. Vegas! (She does a little tap step.) I can still wiggle my feet and they pay better for it these days. (She walks around the room describing her act.) I'll have four boys in the act, and that clever young man who wears his hair in pigtails is doing my gowns . . . terribly elegant, and the skirt comes off at the end when I finish with the Charleston I did in "Manhattan Melody of 1931." (She does a bit of Charleston as she sings to some perky melody.)

Charleston

To that

Manhat--

Tan Melody . . . it's irresistible!

(SARA laughs hysterically. PENNY stops dancing.) Does she always laugh like that?

DONNA (firmly). Sara, will you take the linens up and help Ann make the bed?

SARA. Sure thing, Donna.

DONNA. Sara! (SARA scampers off upstairs followed by ANN.)

MITCHELL. I'll take the bags upstairs. In case you want to unpack them. Or pack them? (He gets the suitcases and exits upstairs.)

PENNY. Thanks. The girls are very pretty, Donna, and they seem sweet. (DONNA nods her thanks.) Do they do anything? Tap? Ballet? Jazz?

DONNA. No. They're just ordinary, average girls, Mother. The kind that grow up in Fort Tyler.

PENNY. Well, the world changes, but Fort Tyler remains the same.

DONNA. How is Rome?

PENNY. Eternal. (Remembering.) That's when my hair turned red. When I divorced Giorgio.

DONNA. I was sorry to hear about that.

PENNY (waving that away as unimportant). Darling, one thing I learned in Europe, is never marry an Italian. Well, I have a divine apartment in my beloved Rome. It overlooks St. Peter's. Which is only fair. St. Peter's been overlooking me for years. (DONNA laughs. PENNY walks around the room, looking at it.) Amazing! The house looks just the same.

DONNA. I've kept it that way.

PENNY. Wrong! Everyone should move once every five years. And if you don't move, you should at least redecorate. Otherwise people get too settled and houses . . . they get termites. Or ghosts.

DONNA. I have the termite man once a year and if there are any ghosts, they must be friendly.

PENNY (seeing Victrola; surprised). That's my old Victrola! I got it for a high school graduation present. I'm surprised it hasn't crumbled to dust. (She moves to it.) Don't you have a stereo?

DONNA. Sara does. In her room. Ann doesn't care.



PENNY (opening Victrola lid). You've even kept my records. (She holds up one or two old 78's.)

No. These can't have been mine. They're too ancient. They must've belonged to Thomas Edison. (Puts them back, walks to DONNA.) Doesn't Ann have music at her parties?

DONNA. Ann's not a party type. She's very sensible.

PENNY (disappointed). Oh, dear, oh, dear! I always had parties when I was eighteen. So did you.

DONNA. Young people are different today. More serious. More involved.

PENNY. Involved? Involved in what?

DONNA (unable to answer). Things . . .

PENNY. To be involved, you have to be involved in specifics. (Looking toward sun parlor.)

Have you kept the sun parlor the same, too?

DONNA. Of course. Go look.

PENNY (moving a few steps toward it; stopping and shaking her head). It was my father's favorite place in this house. I feel as though . . . if I looked, he'd be there . . . with his black hair and his mustache . . . handsome . . . not very well dressed, you know, but handsome . . . sitting in that old rattan chair . . . poring over a medical journal or something.

DONNA. I should think seeing him would be comforting.

PENNY. The past is dead. Interesting, but . . . gone. It's the future that counts. (Unable to resist, she goes to the door and stares at the rattan chair for a second, then she gasps a little and turns back.) You can do something about the future. Like redecorate. At least the sun parlor. (She walks quickly away from the door.)

DONNA. You saw him!

PENNY (guiltily). No! (More calmly.) Not really.