

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



Burning Up the Stage

**Monologues, Audition Pieces
and Short Scenes for Actors
from Six to Seventy**
by

Vin Morreale Jr.



Burning Up the Stage

Vin Morreale Jr.

Monologues, Audition Pieces and Short Scenes for Actors from Six to Seventy

Tired of auditions where all the actors spout the same familiar monologues? Frustrated with the lack of creative pieces for your particular age range? Are you looking for works that allow you to explore a wide variety of well-defined characters? Then this is the book for you!

Burning Up the Stage is the ultimate collection for performers of all ages and abilities. Hundreds of innovative characters come to life in intense dramatic scenes, lyrical monologues and laugh-out-loud comedy sketches. Choose from more than 80 original works divided into four age categories: children, teens, adults and seniors. The book also contains valuable insights into the craft, such as: Auditioning Tips, What Makes a Good Actor?, Stage Business, and other helpful information. Whether you are a beginning actor or a seasoned professional, you will find a wealth of material with which to polish your craft. *Code: B87.*

ISBN-10 0-87129-865-1
ISBN-13 978-0-87129-865-2



02008



9 780871 298652

www.dramaticpublishing.com



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098
ph: 800-448-7469



Printed on recycled paper

© The Dramatic Publishing Company

BURNING UP THE STAGE

Monologues, Audition Pieces and Short Scenes
for Actors from Six to Seventy

by

VIN MORREALE JR.



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

*** NOTICE ***

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that each monologue and scene in this book is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. Monologues may be used for audition purposes only without royalty; however, all monologues and scenes in this volume are subject to royalty payment for professional and amateur performances, motion pictures, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, reprinting and translation into foreign languages.

For royalty information and permission to perform, other than auditions, please see the following page and the Royalty Acknowledgments section at the end of this book to locate the source able to grant permission for public performance. The following page and the Royalty and Acknowledgments pages constitutes an extension of this copyright page.

Published by The Dramatic Publishing Company
311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098
www.dramaticpublishing.com

Copyright ©MCMXCVIII by
VIN MORREALE JR.

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(BURNING UP THE STAGE)

ISBN: 978-0-87129-865-2

Important Royalty, Billing and Credit Information

As well as a training and audition resource, schools or theater producing groups may pull various scenes and monologues from this book and combine them in any fashion they wish in order to create a customized evening of entertainment. In the same way, actors can build a made-to-order showcase revue which highlights their individual strengths and talents. For royalty information on using these scenes and monologues for customized shows, please refer to the Royalty and Acknowledgments section in the back of this book. Whatever number or arrangement of scenes and monologues is used, the show must be titled and credited as: BURNING UP THE STAGE by Vin Morreale Jr. This title and credit must also appear on all programs and promotional materials. There are no royalties required for using the material in this book for training, scene study or auditioning, and copies of this material may be made for this purpose only. Author's credit must appear on this material and should read: "Excerpted from BURNING UP THE STAGE by Vin Morreale Jr. with permission of Dramatic Publishing."

To all the talented actors and actresses I have been fortunate enough to share the stage with over the past 20 years—those who have achieved fame and those who are still seeking it.

You are all stars in my book.

And to my niece, Danielle Leeber, whose talent and enthusiasm serve as a sparkling reminder of the true magic of the theater.

Contents

Introduction	ix
About This Book	xi
Auditioning Tips	xii
The Monologue	xvii

Monologues for Children

Bad	5
Helping Dad	8
First Day	10
Rocky	12
I'm Not Tired	15
Young Love	17
Omelet	19
Best Friends	22
Funny Paper News	25
The Night the Aliens Took My Pa	28
The Camping Trip	31

Monologues for Teens

Missing Julie	37
Mom's Bad Days	40
School	43
Tough Night Out	46
Why Me?	49
Turkeys	53
The Gulf	56
Uncool	60
Anticipation	64
The Night Before	67
Switchblade	70
Slow Dance With a Stranger	74
Wildcat	81

Monologues for Adults

Sermon	89
Finding Christmas	91
It's Over	94
Juanita's Presentation	97
Joseph	100
Truly Blessed	103
Freddie's Choice	105
'Twas a Night Before Congress	109
Home Again	112
Body Part Derby	116
While He Sleeps	120
Celestial Reasonings	125
Woolworth's	130
Meeting Delilah	133
Monster	138
UFO Rant	146
The Affair	152

Monologues for Seniors

Still Going Strong	163
Fairy Tales for Young Consumers	166
The Saddest Chicken	169
Anniversary	172
Just Try	175
Psychic Buddies Hotline	179
Innkeeper	184
Inorganic Gardener #1	187
Inorganic Gardener #2	189
Dear Mr. Pendergast	192
Unbuckling the Bible Belt	197
Miranda Remembers	204
Irv's Prayer	209
Wisdom	212

What Makes A Good Actor?	219
Stage Business – Don’t Forget the Physical!	222

Scenes for Children

When I Grow Up	227
Brownies	230
Little Shepherd, All Alone	236
Escape	241
Sonoma White & the Seven Dolts	245
The Slumber Party	248
Separate Ways	253

Scenes for Teens

Oh No! I Shrunk the Substitute!	259
The Fairyland Detective Agency	262
Danny & Brigette	266
Uncool	271
Brothers	275
The Courtship	279

Scenes for Adults

Breaking and Entering	291
Collaboration	299
Hostages for Hire	306
Marriage	309

Scenes for Seniors

Plain Speaking	321
No Gas	324
Face to Face	330
A Sign of the Times	338

<u>Mixed Scenes</u>	
The Encounter	343
A Lesson Learned	354
Funeral Parlor	358
Lazlo's Mine	361
Royalty and Acknowledgments	371

The Monologue

A monologue can best be described as a single character's one-way conversation with an audience. It offers a short glimpse into someone's life, an uninhibited flashing of emotion, often by a character who would otherwise be too embarrassed to reveal this side of his personality.

A monologue can also be an actor's greatest challenge. For this theatrical device forces the actor to crawl into the very soul of the character without the support of stage business or interplay with other performers on the stage.

With a monologue, you will either appear believable or you will look like someone desperately trying to act. There is seldom a foothold in between.

Many times, directors will request that you bring a prepared monologue to an audition. They may give you a cold reading with lines from the actual script and character, but they may also want to see what you can do with material you have already committed to memory. Having the right monologue, and performing it with dramatic fire or comedic inspiration, may be what finally wins you the role.

When using monologues for auditions, select one that is age-appropriate. Seeing a 16-year-old perform a monologue about her grandchildren may be an excellent acting exercise, but it is of little help to the director. The reverse is even more frustrating.

Memorize your monologue and rehearse it frequently. Identify all the changes and nuances which the playwright has given you to explore. Practice until you make the most of them. A good monologue should have at least three identifiable emotional shifts. Your challenge is to find these transition points, then make them sparkle.

It is a good idea to have both a comedic and a serious monologue in your repertoire. That way, you are prepared for any type of role which may be offered.

The monologues on the following pages can be used as audition pieces, acting exercises, or scenes in a showcase you wish to build and perform. Find one or two that fit your age group, and work each piece relentlessly. Practice until the character becomes a part of you and the words truly become your own.

Remember that with each character you portray, your acting ability will continue to unfold and evolve.

Royalty and Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following publishers who have allowed reprints of play excerpts to be contained within this collection. Performance rights for any of the material in this book must be arranged through Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock, Ill. Should you be interested in ordering the full script or obtaining performance rights to any of the complete plays mentioned below, please contact these publishers:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING

311 Washington St.
Woodstock IL 60098
Ph: 800-448-7469 Fax: 800-334-5302
www.dramaticpublishing.com

Breaking and Entering
The Happy Holidays Collection
Southern Discomfort
Uncool

CONTEMPORARY DRAMA SERVICE

A Division of Meriwether Publishing, Ltd.
885 Elkton Dr.
Colorado Springs CO 80907-3557
Ph: 716-594-4422 Fax: 719-594-9916

Oh No! I Shrunk the Substitute!

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

P. O. Box 1595
Venice FL 84284

Ph: 800-histage Fax: 800-453-5179

Fairies, Fantasy & Just Plain Fun
The Fairyland Detective Agency
Sonoma White & the Seven Dolts

ACADEMY ARTS PRESS

P. O. Box 24873

Louisville KY 40224-0873

Ph: 502-425-8897 Fax: 502-425-8996

The Best of the Senseless Bickering Comedy Theatre
Captive Christmas
Collaborations
Exquisite Anxieties & Other Stories
Phases
Voices From the Table

* * * *

I wish to thank my wife and children for their tolerance and support as I descended into the controlled insanity of writing this book.

I would like to add a final note of gratitude to Gayle Sergel for her assistance, guidance and tremendous patience in helping me assemble this collection.

Uncool

BETH

I just want to say, it isn't easy being a teenager...and it isn't easy being a teenager who looks and acts like me. Let's face it. Those other kids are right...I am a dolt...and a nerd...and a loser...

It's not that I'm complaining...well, maybe just a little. I know there are lots of girls more attractive than I am... more stylish...more athletic...more popular. And I can accept that. I really can.

I can accept it because...deep down inside, I know I have things to offer, too. I mean, I'm smart. I care about people. And I...well, maybe that's it. Maybe that's all I have to offer. But why isn't that enough?

I mean, why does high school always have to be this big, intense competition for status points? Why do the popular kids have to pick on us less popular ones? It isn't fair... They already have it all... Why do they feel they have to protect their position in this stupid social order by throwing everyone else down? Can't they see how much it hurts? Or do they just not care?

(Softly.)

All my life, I've been just a little slower, a little uglier, a little more awkward than everyone else. And if I ever for-

got how different I was, there was always someone prettier, someone more athletic, or someone more popular to point it out to me.

I'm the girl they whisper about. The kid that never gets picked to be on anybody's team. The one they laugh at. The girl most likely to be ignored.

So I bite my lip. I look away. I pretend it doesn't bother me...but it does. It does, and they don't see.

(She is crying now.)

I wish someone would tell me why everybody in school has to be separated into winners and losers?

(Softly, pleading.)

...And why I always end up as one of the losers...?

(Pulling herself together.)

I know that life isn't fair. Nobody said it would be. And I know there are no guarantees. But I just want...I would desperately love someone to see me as I really am. And accept me for being me.

Is that asking so much?

It's Over

CHARLES

My wife called me at work to say our marriage was over.

She said she wanted more out of life than a man like me could ever give her. And maybe I can't blame her for that.

I decided not to tell the kids until after dinner...but I think they know something's up. Cheryl, my wife, keeps staring at her country-fried steak, doing anything she can to keep from looking at me. Her jaw is clamped so tightly, the waitress comes by to ask if everything is all right. Cheryl can't answer, she can only nod. When she looks up at me, there are tears in her eyes, and she has to wipe them away with her white cloth napkin before the kids see her face.

I wanted one last family dinner at the kid's favorite restaurant...one last family moment for them to hold on to... one that I could hold on to. But it's turning into a disaster. The kids are so quiet, their eyes shifting from me to Cheryl, as if they're afraid one of us is going to start screaming at any moment.

We both know, they've seen enough of that.

Look at Laurie's face...and little Eric's. How can I tell them marriages don't always work out? How can I explain

to them a love that was supposed to last forever can sometimes slip away unnoticed...disappearing under the cover of a hundred silly arguments about bills, clothes on the floor, or even what's on TV tonight...

How can I tell them to always do what's right, when even I don't even know what that means anymore?

This is my last night as a husband and father...and all I can say to my kids is to sit up straight and finish their vegetables...

No Gas

(BUD pantomimes driving the car, while VIRGINIA is pressed as far against the passenger's side as possible. He steals a few looks at her, then turns the invisible steering wheel to pull the car over. He pantomimes turning the ignition off.)

VIRGINIA. What's the matter?

BUD. Dammit.

VIRGINIA. What's the matter? Why are we pulling over?

BUD. We're out of gas.

VIRGINIA. We're out of gas?

BUD. That's right.

VIRGINIA. My dates used to try to pull that trick on me five decades ago... I didn't fall for it then, either.

BUD. What do you want me to do? I don't have any gas!

VIRGINIA. That must be a first for you.

BUD. Give me a break, will ya?

VIRGINIA *(looks out her window)*. Why is it that men always run out of gas on some dark, deserted road?

BUD. What are you saying?

VIRGINIA. I'm just making an observation. Women run out of gas on the freeway, or at the shopping center. But men choose the most isolated, romantic settings to run out of gas.

BUD. You don't believe me, do you?

VIRGINIA *(facetiously)*. Gee, and I thought I was being subtle.

BUD. Why don't you believe me?
VIRGINIA. Well, for one thing...your gas gauge is reading more than half a tank.
BUD. It's broken.
VIRGINIA. It's broken.
BUD. Uh-huh.
VIRGINIA. Want me to fix it?
BUD. What?
VIRGINIA. My first husband used to own an automotive service station.
BUD. ...Really?
VIRGINIA. You bet. I can pop that sucker out and set it right in no time flat. Got any tools?
BUD (*too quickly*). No!
VIRGINIA. No?
BUD. No. No tools.
VIRGINIA. You mean to tell me you drive around in this deathtrap and you don't even carry a screwdriver?
BUD. What kind of screwdriver do you need?
VIRGINIA. A regular flat-head will do.
BUD. Sorry.
VIRGINIA. What if I had said a Phillips screwdriver?
BUD. Don't have that either.
VIRGINIA. You have no tools at all in this car?
BUD. No tools. No gas. No luck. (*Changing the subject.*)
Aren't the stars beautiful tonight? (*He looks out the front window and casually acts out the motions of undoing his seat belt.*)
VIRGINIA. What did you do that for?
BUD. Do what?
VIRGINIA. Unfasten your seat belt. Why did you unfasten your seat belt just now?

BUD. Well, we're stuck here. I figured we might as well get a little more comfortable.

VIRGINIA. I'm comfortable already.

BUD. How could you be? You're stuck to that passenger's door like one of those suction-cup stuffed animals people put on their car windows!

VIRGINIA. I'll take that as a compliment. Besides, a man doesn't unfasten his belt in front of a lady.

BUD. Damn it, Virginia, it was my seat belt. I wasn't trying to moon you! (*Changing tactics.*) Why don't you just relax...slide over here, and we can enjoy this beautiful summer night.

VIRGINIA. Oh, great. Now it starts...

BUD. This date isn't working out very well, is it?

VIRGINIA. Gee, and I thought I was being so subtle.

BUD. You already used that line.

VIRGINIA. I was so proud of it, I thought I'd use it again.

BUD. C'mon, Virginia... Loosen up. We're both collecting Social Security. It's not like this is going to give you a bad reputation... (*She hesitates, then slips off her own seat belt. She sits silently, still pressed against her side of the seat.*) You look beautiful in the moonlight.

VIRGINIA. That's because it hides all the wrinkles.

BUD. Stop that. Just look at the stars.

VIRGINIA. Little lights in the sky. I've seen them.

BUD. You're not making this easy, are you?

VIRGINIA. "Easy" is not an expression that should apply to a lady on a first date. (*He mumbles something under his breath.*) What did you say?!

BUD. Nothing.

VIRGINIA. I heard you say something. What was it?

BUD (*grumbling*). I said I should've asked Widow Millford out, instead!

VIRGINIA. Constance Millford? You wanted to ask out Constance Millford on a date? That woman could freeze Ben Gay!

BUD. As opposed to the icicles that are dripping off my dashboard right now?

VIRGINIA (*looks at him angrily, then relents*). Oh, all right...you horny old goat. (*She slides over on the car seat and leans against him. He smiles and throws an affectionate arm around her.*)

BUD. That's much better... You really are beautiful in the moonlight.

VIRGINIA. I know. I should have been a vampire.

BUD. Well, if you ever need a victim...?

VIRGINIA. You'd offer me your neck?

BUD. In a heartbeat. Veins and all.

VIRGINIA. That is the single sweetest...and the most disgusting thing anyone has ever said to me.

BUD. Thank you.

VIRGINIA (*sighing*). It really is a beautiful night, isn't it?

BUD. Not as beautiful as you. (*She sits back, looks up into his eyes and then kisses him tenderly. After a moment, they slowly break apart, and she snuggles in his arms once again.*) What was that for?

VIRGINIA. This was a really good idea, Bud. You haven't taken me parking since 1952. But you have to work on that gas-gauge story. That nearly blew the whole thing.

BUD. You always were more observant than me.

VIRGINIA. Maybe next week we can go skinny dipping down by Old Miller's Pond.

BUD. Like we used to before we were married?

VIRGINIA. Like we used to before we were married. (*She kisses him again tenderly.*)

BUD. The kids think we're crazy, you know.

VIRGINIA. The hell with the kids.

BUD. Virginia!

VIRGINIA. Shut up and enjoy the stars, Bud.

BUD. Anything you say, sweetheart. (*They both sit back and snuggle, as the stage lights dim.*)