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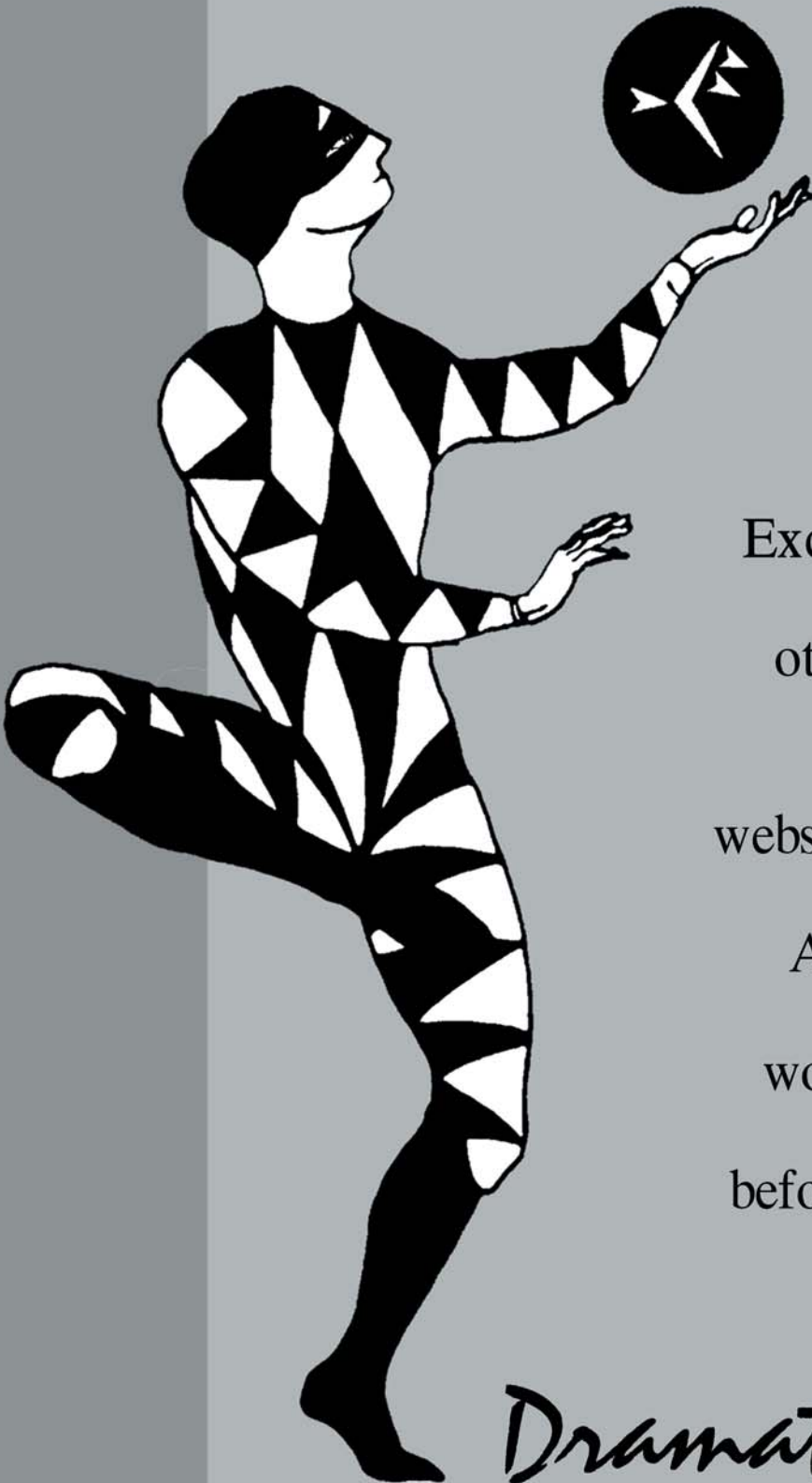
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Dramatic Publishing



RATS

by

JAMES EDWARD LUCZAK



The Dramatic Publishing Company
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RATS

**A Play in One Act
For Three Women**

CHARACTERS

OLD WOMAN

SOCIAL WORKER, neither young nor old

YOUNG WOMAN

TIME: The present.

PLACE: An old, decaying apartment building.

RATS premiered at Southern Repertory Theatre's first annual New Plays Festival in 1990. Artistic Director of Southern Repertory Theatre: Rosary Hartel O'Neil. Artistic Director of the Festival: Judith Royer of Marymount College in Los Angeles, California. Director of the play: Lee Prevost.

The three actors:

Old Woman:	Barbara Tasker
Social Worker:	D'Ayanna Hicks
Young Woman:	Donald Lewis, Jr.

To Helen

RATS

SCENE: *Darkness except for that penetration of light necessary to give expression to character. The OLD WOMAN in a rocking chair, back and forth, there not there, present and unaccounted for. Enter the SOCIAL WORKER consulting a clipboard.*

SOCIAL WORKER. Good morning!

(The OLD WOMAN rocks back and forth.)

SOCIAL WORKER *(looking about enthusiastically)*. It's a nice room! I mean—what you've done with it, uh—

(The OLD WOMAN rocks back and forth.)

SOCIAL WORKER. What I mean is—

(The light defining the OLD WOMAN interruptingly goes out.)

SOCIAL WORKER *(to that internal darkness externally defined as audience)*. I would have mentioned the curtains, but there were no curtains. I would have mentioned the floor swept clean, but it wasn't. I would have mentioned the pictures on the wall, family and friends, but they weren't.

(The SOCIAL WORKER suddenly swings the clipboard hammer-like against an unseen wall. There is a shock of exterminating impact.)

SOCIAL WORKER *(wiping the clipboard clean with undisguised disgust)*. Unless vermin were her next of kin.

(The OLD WOMAN emerges from the darkness, there not there, humming to herself.)

SOCIAL WORKER *(internal/external)*. I meant to just take her away, get it over with. After all, it's just a job. I'm not young anymore, all starry-eyed going to save the world. I've got kids in college. A house that still isn't paid for. Bills and more bills. Christmas 'round the corner. Mother could die at any time.

OLD WOMAN. Rats!

SOCIAL WORKER *(to the OLD WOMAN)*. Yes ma'am, that's why I'm here. You'll be temporarily housed in indigent quarters. I'm sorry, it's the only thing available right now. But, as soon as possible, you'll be transferred to a housing facility tenanted by people much like yourself.

OLD WOMAN. Rats!

SOCIAL WORKER *(internal/external)*. We're understaffed. There's too much expected of us. I'm here alone and have to deal with this. *(To the OLD WOMAN, while impatiently consulting the clipboard.)* Didn't you get our letter? You should have received written notification weeks ago. You should be prepared to leave.

(The light defining the OLD WOMAN goes out.)