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Dramatic Publishing

BELONGINGS AND LONGINGS

a play about love and furniture

by

DOUGLAS POST



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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To my brother, David,
who first introduced me
to theater in Chicago.

BELONGINGS AND LONGINGS was first produced as a part of the Chicago New Play Summer Shorts Festival at the Organic Lab Theater in Chicago on July 10, 1986. This production was directed by Douglas Post; with sets and lights designed by Chris Phillips; props designed by Lisa Allenick; and sound designed by Mark Grinnell. The cast was as follows:

RICHARD..... Geoffrey Baer
LOU..... Steve Pickering
PETE..... Mark Edward Heap
DIANE Kathy Kirk
JILL..... Nancy Heap

The play was subsequently produced at the 13th Street Repertory Company in New York City on October 20, 1987. This production was directed by Terry Brogan; with sets and costumes designed by David Nelson; and lights designed by Stephen Petrilli. The cast was as follows:

RICHARD..... Bruce Barney
LOU..... Rick Schiaffo
PETE..... William Prael
DIANE Betsy Walton
JILL..... Virginia Thomas

BELONGINGS AND LONGINGS

A Full-length Play
For Three Men and Two Women

CHARACTERS

RICHARD
LOU
PETE
DIANE
JILL

All characters are in their late 20s to early 30s.

TIME:
The present.

PLACE:
The living room of an apartment in an upscale neighborhood in Chicago. Later, a nearby bar.

This play should be performed without an intermission.

BELONGINGS AND LONGINGS

SCENE ONE

AT RISE: *The living room of an apartment in an upscale neighborhood in Chicago. Morning. RICHARD sits with his feet up on the couch watching television. He is surrounded by a couple of chairs, a few tables, a sound system, some books, tapes, paintings on the walls, an area carpet, and a telephone. The front door swings open and LOU enters. He sees RICHARD and stops. RICHARD looks up. He rises.*

RICHARD. Oh, hi.

LOU. Hello.

RICHARD. You're a little early.

LOU. I am?

RICHARD. Yeah. It's all right. Come on in. (*LOU walks into the room.*) I'm Richard.

LOU. Hello.

RICHARD. You're Lou?

LOU. Uh-huh.

RICHARD. You're by yourself?

LOU. No. (*Pause.*) No, I brought someone. He's outside. In the truck.

RICHARD. Well, bring him in. (*Pause.*)

LOU. You're sure?

RICHARD. Of course.

LOU. Okay. I'll go get him.

(LOU exits through the front door. RICHARD turns off the television and attempts to straighten up the room. LOU enters with PETE.)

LOU. This is Pete.

PETE. Hello.

RICHARD. Hi.

LOU. This is Richard.

PETE. Richard. How are you?

RICHARD. Good. Very good.

LOU. We're early.

PETE. We are?

RICHARD. She said that you'd be by around noon.

PETE. What time is it?

RICHARD. Ten-thirty.

LOU. I told you.

PETE. Sorry. My fault.

LOU. Are we interrupting something?

RICHARD. No. No, not at all. Would you like some coffee
or—?

LOU. No.

PETE. No, thank you.

RICHARD. Well. *(Pause.)*

LOU. Sorry about walking in on you that way.

RICHARD. I understand. Old habits are hard to break.

LOU. I didn't think anyone would be home.

RICHARD. Right.

LOU. You're alone. Am I correct?

RICHARD. Yes, I...she had a lesson this morning.

LOU. A lesson?

RICHARD. A music lesson. She's learning to play the
cello.

LOU. The cello? Huh. Well, there's something new.

PETE. Beautiful instrument.

RICHARD. Yes, it is.

LOU. Seems a little late, doesn't it?

RICHARD. I'm sorry?

LOU. To start playing the cello?

RICHARD. Well, it's something that she's always wanted to do. I don't think that she plans to pursue it professionally, you understand. It's simply for the enjoyment of it.

PETE. She loves music.

RICHARD. Yes, she does. I don't mean to suggest that she couldn't make a career out of it if she wanted to. She's a remarkable woman. Quite remarkable. But then you know that. Or I assume that you have similar feelings. Or *had* similar feelings. I imagine that to be the case. *(Pause.)* Look, this is all a little difficult for me. I don't know how much you know about Diane and myself.

LOU. Not much.

RICHARD. She's told me quite a bit about you.

LOU. Really?

RICHARD. Oh, yes.

LOU. What did she say?

RICHARD. Well. Uh...she thinks that you've got enormous potential. That you could do just about anything you set your mind on. She seems to feel that you're a little...unfocused right now.

LOU. Unfocused?

RICHARD. Not in a bad way, necessarily. Just that you're...reaching. Searching, as it were. Which is not to say that she has anything but the highest regard for you. Because, well, I mean, obviously, she does.

LOU. Really?

RICHARD. Oh, yes.

LOU. Well, that's good to hear. (*To PETE.*) Don't you think that's good to hear?

PETE. I sure do.

LOU. So what did she say about old Pete?

RICHARD. Oh. Well, nothing. I wasn't aware that you and Diane knew each other.

LOU. Pete and Diane? Are you kidding me? They go way back.

RICHARD. Is that a fact?

PETE. Oh, sure.

LOU. High school sweethearts.

RICHARD. High school. Well, isn't that something?

PETE. Long time.

LOU. She introduced me to him.

RICHARD. Isn't that remarkable?

LOU. Yes, indeed.

RICHARD. Well, my gosh.

PETE. And here we all are. (*Pause.*)

LOU. You're staying here now, Richard?

RICHARD. I'm sorry?

LOU. Here? This apartment? Sleeping over? I don't mean to be rude.

RICHARD. No. No, it's all right. Yes. Occasionally. I go to school—

LOU. School.

RICHARD. Business school. I'm getting my master's. That's where I met Diane.

LOU. I see.

RICHARD. She'd just finished her lesson.

LOU. Her music lesson.

RICHARD. And she was trying to get her instrument into the back of the car.

LOU. Her cello.

RICHARD. And I offered to help.

LOU. And you charmed her with your boyish good looks.

RICHARD. Uh, actually, I commented on the fact that she reminded me of someone who—

LOU. You don't need to go into the details.

RICHARD. Right. (*Pause.*) So how about you, Lou? I mean, what kind of work do you do?

LOU. Me?

RICHARD. Yes. I mean, if it's not too—

LOU. Commodities.

RICHARD. Oh.

LOU. She didn't mention that?

RICHARD. No. No, I remember her saying something about ... public relations.

LOU. No, I gave that up. Commodities is what I do now.

RICHARD. Sure.

LOU. Futures.

RICHARD. Right. Well, that's a pretty exciting field today.

LOU. To tell you the truth, Richard, the bottom just dropped out of everything for me. I've got a dollar eighty-nine in my checking account. That's it.

RICHARD. Oh. (*Pause.*) Oh, well, I'm sorry to hear that. I'm sure you'll figure out a way to bounce back, though. (*Pause.*) And, Pete, you're in—?

PETE. I'm a poet. I write poems.

RICHARD. Oh. Poetry. Well, that's great. Not a lot of money in it, I imagine.

PETE. No. No, actually, I do pretty well.

RICHARD. You do? Well, say, that's terrific.

PETE. Last year I cleared... oh, thirty, thirty-five thousand.

I mean, I realize that's not a lot for somebody like *you*,
but for a *poet*—

RICHARD. No, that's excellent.

LOU. Why did you ask what I do? (*Pause.*)

RICHARD. I... I'm sorry?

LOU. Well, if Diane told you I was in public relations,
then why did you think to question that?

RICHARD. Gee, I... guess I'd forgotten about it.

LOU. Until the subject was brought up.

RICHARD. I suppose so.

LOU. Then it all came rushing back to you.

RICHARD. Right.

LOU. In a blinding flash.

RICHARD. Well, I—

LOU. Lou says that he's a commodities trader. Diane told
me that he was in public relations. Therefore, Lou must
be lying.

RICHARD. I never—

LOU. Did it ever occur to you or Diane that I might be
doing something different with my life?

RICHARD. I wasn't accusing you of lying.

LOU. Really? What were you accusing me of?

RICHARD. Nothing. I didn't... I simply misunderstood.

LOU. You misunderstood?

RICHARD. Yes.

LOU. We had a misunderstanding.

RICHARD. That's right.

LOU. So now it's straightened out. And you *understand*
that what I do is commodities. I may be down on my
luck. I may be a dismal failure at this point in my pro-
fessional life. But that's what I do.

RICHARD. Absolutely.

LOU. Not public relations.

RICHARD. Nothing like public relations.

LOU. Okay. I just wanted to get that cleared up. *(Pause.)*

RICHARD. Listen, maybe we should get started here.

LOU. Sounds good to me. Pete?

PETE. Hey, I'm there. Whatever it is. Count me in.

LOU. We've just been waiting for you to give us the word, Richard.

RICHARD. All right, then, let's see. Um... I know that she packed up most of your things and left them in a box in the kitchen. She said that she thought she'd gotten everything, but that there might be one or two other items and if you spotted them you should go ahead and pick them up. Although I imagine most everything you'd want has been set aside. She's very thorough. You know Diane.

LOU. Uh-huh. I'll go take a look. *(He exits into the kitchen. A moment.)*

RICHARD. So. Poetry, huh?

PETE. Oh, yeah.

RICHARD. Gee, I wonder if I've read anything of yours.

PETE. Do you read much poetry?

RICHARD. Me? No.

PETE. It's doubtful, then.

RICHARD. Right. *(Pause.)* So. So you and Diane have known each other—?

PETE. Since we were, oh... fifteen, sixteen, I guess.

RICHARD. Really?

PETE. Oh, yeah. We dated all the way through school. Then, of course, she went off to, uh... college.

RICHARD. Uh-huh. And you didn't?

PETE. No. No, I went to trade school.

RICHARD. Trade school? *(Pause.)* For poetry?

PETE. Well, I mean, you've got to learn your craft somewhere.

RICHARD. Right. *(Pause.)* Well, that must have been rough on you. Separating at that age.

PETE. No, not really. She was screwing around with three or four other guys at the time. Things got pretty messy. She's probably told you about it.

RICHARD. Oh. Sure.

PETE. That's one thing about Diane that I have always admired. The fact that she can be so open about her past. I mean, it's not like she wants to preserve any illusions or anything. I know that's something about her that Lou was initially attracted to. You've probably found the same thing.

RICHARD. That she...?

PETE. Is not ashamed. That was then. This is now. Throw caution to the wind and let the chips fall... wherever. *(Pause.)* You only go around once so, I mean, really, who cares? *(Pause.)* Because life is not a destination to be reached, but a road to be...something. *(Pause.)* Go for it. That's Diane.

(LOU enters carrying a box filled with several items.)

LOU. Well, we've got a little problem here.

RICHARD. What's that?

LOU. This is everything she gave you?

RICHARD. That's what she packed up.

LOU. Where are my sweaters? Where are my hiking boots? Where's my global atlas and my Japanese camera?

RICHARD. I don't—

LOU. I can't believe this is everything she gave you.

RICHARD. She told me she—

LOU. I'm going to check in the bedroom. (*He starts to exit.*)

RICHARD. Um—

LOU (*stops, turns and looks at RICHARD*). Yeah?

RICHARD. I don't think...boy, I don't know quite how to say this. I don't think that she wants you in that part of the house. (*Pause.*)

LOU. Why not?

RICHARD. Well—

LOU. You two got some funny toys lying around that are going to be an embarrassment?

RICHARD. No, but—

LOU. I wouldn't go into *that* part of the house if the things I wanted were in *this* part of the house. (*Pause.*) What did she tell you about me? (*Pause.*) What did she say?

RICHARD. Uh...that's okay. If you need to—

LOU. What. Did. She. Say?

RICHARD. Well...she said that your relationship ended on something of a...sour note.

LOU. No kidding. Okay, Richard. Let's do this multiple choice: Did she say that I walked out or that she threw me out?

RICHARD. She...she said that she threw you out.

LOU. I see. Well, that's interesting.

RICHARD. Look, I don't want to make an issue of this. If you—

LOU. Wouldn't you say that's an interesting assessment of our time together, Pete?

PETE. Listen, I'd rather not—

LOU. I'm going into *that* part of the house to try to find some of *my* things. Is that okay with *you*, Richard?

RICHARD. Certainly. I think you should.

LOU. Thank you. (*He exits into the bedroom. A moment.*)

PETE. He's upset.

RICHARD. Boy, I didn't know there was such hostility between them.

PETE. Oh, yeah.

RICHARD. I knew there was some anger. Some unresolved feelings.

PETE. He hurt her pretty bad.

RICHARD. I just had no idea it was this intense.

PETE. Things probably would have worked themselves out if the police hadn't gotten involved. (*Pause.*)

RICHARD. The... police?

PETE. She didn't tell you about that?

RICHARD. Well. No.

PETE. Oh. Well, I'm sure she's got her reasons. Hey, if Diane has chosen to forget about that episode, I think it's only fair that the rest of us do the same. Water behind the, uh... bridge and all that. (*Pause.*) How long have you two known each other?

RICHARD. Two months.

PETE. Two months. Well. Two months can be a very long time. Or two months can be a very short time. It all depends on what you're doing. And who you're doing. (*Pause.*) With. Who you're doing it with. (*Pause.*) It being the two months. Not the, uh... other thing. (*Pause.*) I think you know what I'm trying to say.

(*LOU enters carrying more items.*)