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Dramatic Publishing

DETECTIVE SKETCHES AND OTHER SHORT PLAYS

by
DOUGLAS POST



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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**DETECTIVE SKETCHES
AND OTHER SHORT PLAYS**

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DETECTIVE SKETCHES
(TROUBLE IS EATING MY PANTS)
a comic play

To my brother, Jerry,
who inspired Scenes 2 & 7,
and a whole lot more.

DETECTIVE SKETCHES (TROUBLE IS EATING MY PANTS) was first produced as a part of the Chicago New Plays Summer Shorts Festival at the Organic Lab Theater in Chicago on June 10, 1987. It was directed by Douglas Post; with sets and lights designed by Richard Strand; costumes designed by Tom Kelly; and sound designed by Rory J. Rice. The cast was as follows:

ALEX DIVER. Steve Pickering
THE LADY IN GREEN. Phebe E. Bohart
JAKE THE BARTENDER. James Fitzgerald
LOIS THE RECEPTIONIST Jane Lynch
MAYOR BUDDY SNOWJOB Mark Edward Heap
NO-LIPS NOLESKI. Michael Irpino
GOOSEBREATH MOOSEJAW David Ward
HARRY WEISENHEIMER. James Fitzgerald
THE KID. Michael Irpino
POLICE LIEUTENANT DENTZ David Ward
SERGEANT BULLYBOY MULROY .. Mark Edward Heap
TV ANNOUNCER. James Fitzgerald
REVEREND RUDY BANKHEAD. Mark Edward Heap
THE FAT GUY James Fitzgerald

CHARACTERS

ALEX DIVER
THE LADY IN GREEN
JAKE THE BARTENDER
LOIS THE RECEPTIONIST
MAYOR BUDDY SNOWJOB
NO-LIPS NOLESKI
GOOSEBREATH MOOSEJAW
HARRY WEISENHEIMER
THE KID
POLICE LIEUTENANT DENTZ
SERGEANT BULLYBOY MULROY
TV ANNOUNCER
REVEREND RUDY BANKHEAD
THE FAT GUY

The play is intended to be performed
by an ensemble of 7 actors;
5 men and 2 women.

TIME:

The early 1950s bleeding over into the present day.

PLACE:

The neon wilderness of America.

Detective Sketches (Trouble Is Eating My Pants)

SCENE ONE

(Music. The sound of a saxophone. A match is struck in the dark. ALEX DIVER is revealed lighting a cigarette. He eyes the audience. Then he speaks.)

DIVER. The name's Diver. Alex Diver. I'm a private dick in a big city on the edge of nowhere. Lived here all my life and never seen the same accident twice. Night rolls into this town real easy. Kind of like a sledgehammer coming down on a tomato. And tomatoes is where it all began. I never knew her name. I only knew the color of her eyes, the cut of her dress, the way her mouth twitched when she told me those funny, little lies. I call her ...the Lady in Green. *(He moves to a table and two chairs. He sits. This is all of the furniture that the play will require. The music fades out under him.)* I wasn't doing much of anything that particular night. Just counting the cracks on the office wall and wondering where the next paycheck was going to come from. Then *she* walked into the room.

(THE LADY IN GREEN enters.)

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DIVER. Right away I knew I was in trouble. She was a looker, all right. From head to toe. I leaned back in my chair, put out my cigarette, and said: Nice tits.

LADY. Pardon me?

DIVER. Hi, toots. Pull up a chair. (*She does.*) What can I do to you? For you.

LADY. I'm sorry?

DIVER. What can I do for you?

LADY. You're a detective.

DIVER. That's right.

LADY. I heard you're the best in town.

DIVER. Who told you that?

LADY. Your sign out front. It says you're the best in town.

DIVER. What of it?

LADY. Nothing.

DIVER. Man's got to earn a living.

LADY. I wasn't being critical.

DIVER. You believe everything you read?

LADY. No.

DIVER. But you'd like to.

LADY. Yes. Yes, I would.

DIVER. Better to come clean with me now. I want to know all the facts up front. Anything else you're not telling me about yourself?

LADY. Several things.

DIVER. Name two.

LADY. I have a small birthmark behind my right ear.

DIVER. And?

LADY. And I blew up a train when I was a teenager.

DIVER. Good. Now what seems to be the problem?

LADY. I've lost something. Of significance.

DIVER. Uh-huh. Can you describe this something?

LADY. I'm afraid not.

DIVER. Don't be afraid. Just tell me.

LADY. I can't.

DIVER. What?

LADY. Tell you what it is.

DIVER. Why not?

LADY. Because I don't know.

DIVER (*turns to the audience*). This was going to be tougher than it looked. (*He turns back to THE LADY.*) Is it a secret?

LADY. No.

DIVER. Is it bigger than a bread box?

LADY. I'm not certain.

DIVER. Does it begin with the letter W?

LADY. Honestly, I don't know.

DIVER. I see.

LADY. But it's gone. Vanished.

DIVER. Right. Well, don't you worry your pretty, little head, miss. We'll have it back to you in no time. (*To the audience.*) I had no idea what I was saying by this point.

LADY. Tomorrow.

DIVER. What?

LADY. I need it by tomorrow.

DIVER. Or what?

LADY. Or nothing.

DIVER. Don't threaten me, lady. I've been threatened by experts.

LADY. I wasn't threatening you.

DIVER. I've been in this business longer than you've been blowing up trains. Thought I'd forgotten about that, didn't you?

LADY. No.