

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

The Late Afternoon (Around 3:45 or So) Before Christmas

by
Brett Neveu

From...

35 in 10

Thirty-Five Ten-Minute Plays

Compiled and Edited

KENT R. BROWN



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our Web site: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, P.O. Box 129, Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

| |
|---|
| For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted. |
|---|

©MMV by
DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(35 IN 10)

ISBN: 1-58342-283-8

**THE LATE AFTERNOON (AROUND
3:45 OR SO) BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

By
Brett Neveu

© 2001 by Brett Neveu

The Late Afternoon (Around 3:45 or So) Before Christmas premiered in 2001 at The MehaDome Theatre at Frankie J's on Broadway in Chicago. It was produced by C'est Destine as part of "A Triple XXXmas Special: 3 Xmas Plays, 3 Playwrights, 3 Directors." The play was directed by Clint Corley, and featured Don Blair and Matthew W. Roth.

CHARACTERS

RICHARD BARTLET: In his 30s.

SANTA CLAUS: Older (yet ageless...)

SETTING: Santa's office. There is a chair and a desk. Another chair sits opposite.

TIME: The present.

THE LATE AFTERNOON (AROUND 3:45 OR SO) BEFORE CHRISTMAS

AT THE CURTAIN: *SANTA CLAUS, dressed as SANTA would be dressed, sits in the chair behind the desk. He has a coffee cup, a pen and a manila folder. He sips his coffee a few times. A pause. RICHARD BARTLET enters. He wears a festive sweater and khaki pants. RICHARD stands for a moment looking at SANTA. He walks to SANTA and attempts to sit on his lap.*

SANTA. No, no.

RICHARD. Oh. I'm sorry. (*RICHARD stands, embarrassed. A beat.*)

SANTA (*gesturing to chair*). Please sit down.

RICHARD. I'm sorry.

SANTA. Sit down please.

RICHARD. No problem.

(*RICHARD sits down in the chair opposite the desk. A pause. SANTA looks at the name on the folder.*)

SANTA. Richard Bartlet?

RICHARD. Yes.

SANTA. Of Bloomington?

RICHARD. Yes.

SANTA. What is your address?

RICHARD. 303 Harling Street.

SANTA. Did you move?

RICHARD. Oh. Yes. Last April.

SANTA. Your previous address?

RICHARD. 1618 Menker. Road.

SANTA. Okay.

RICHARD. Menker Road.

(SANTA opens the folder for a brief second. He quickly closes it and puts it back on the desk.)

SANTA. What do you want?

RICHARD. What do I want?

SANTA. For Christmas. What do you want?

RICHARD. Oh. I'm sorry. I thought you meant, "what did I want from you?"

SANTA. That is what I mean.

RICHARD. No, I thought you meant that I wanted something. That I had a complaint or something.

SANTA. That's not what I meant.

RICHARD. I know that. Right. I'm sorry.

SANTA. That's not what I meant.

RICHARD. Okay. I guess I would like a new jacket.

SANTA. Let's back up for a moment.

RICHARD. Okay.

SANTA. You've been naughty.

RICHARD. I have?

SANTA. Don't joke.

RICHARD. I *may* have been naughty, I don't quite remember the specifics—

SANTA. We should talk about you being naughty before we continue.

RICHARD. Oh.

SANTA. You knew what could possibly happen at the time when you were being naughty, didn't you?

RICHARD. The incident you may perhaps be referring to happened this past summer, so, in my defense, Christmas seemed quite far away.

SANTA. It's not like things change here, Richard.
Naughty is still naughty no matter what the circumstances.

RICHARD. I understand that.

SANTA. Warm weather is no excuse.

RICHARD. I understand.

SANTA. Do you think I'm some sort of rube?

RICHARD. I don't think you're a rube, Santa.

SANTA. Santa?

RICHARD. Um. Santa *Claus*.

SANTA. I don't mean to be a hardliner, here. It's not as if you don't know what's going on in your own life. It's not that you don't know if the situation you are in is "naughty" or if it's "nice." It's not even a judgment call. It's merely common sense.

RICHARD. Some things fall into a gray area.

SANTA. No they don't. Don't try to get me into a semantics discussion. You certainly know the difference, no matter the seeming confusion. There is no gray area.

RICHARD. This incident I believe you're referring to wasn't actually that naughty. Parts of it were naughty, I admit, but some other parts of the incident were quite nice.

SANTA. I'm not in the business of dissecting "incidents." I don't have time to go over every part of a person's actions and say, "Well, this part was half nice, and this part over here is leaning toward naughty, so I'll go ahead and give it a seventy-thirty split towards 'nice.'" That's not how things work.

RICHARD. Yes, but, if you were in my shoes—

SANTA. How long have you been coming to see me, Richard?