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Dramatic Publishing
LIMBO

A One-Act Play
by
JOHN O'BRIEN

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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A One-Act Play
For Three Women, One Man and A Male Voice*

CHARACTERS

PA .................................................. an old man
PAMELA ........................................... Pa’s daughter
ANDREA .......................................... Pa’s daughter
JANET ............................................. Pa’s daughter

TIME: A summer’s day.

PLACE: A garden.

*Author’s Note: The play has more impact if the audience doesn’t expect Joey. You may wish to omit his name from the program and announce it afterwards.
LIMBO

SCENE: A garden with a swing, a gazebo, and a lawn chair. PA sits in a wheelchair down right center. Up center there is a shed. The three daughters are in the garden. PAMELA is closest to PA.

PA. Did...I...
PAMELA. What?
PA. Tell...you...
PAMELA (to ANDREA). Do you want to try?
ANDREA. No, but I will. (To PA.) You look better today, Pa.
PA. Did...I... (ANDREA looks to JANET for help.)
JANET. Not me...
ANDREA (to PA). Did you tell us what?
JANET. I just had a turn.
PA. What.
ANDREA (to PA). What did you tell us?
PA. He...
ANDREA. Who?
PA. What.
JANET. Back to Square One.
ANDREA. You said he.
JANET. If you pass go, collect two hundred dollars.
ANDREA. Who is he?
PA. What.
ANDREA. I give up.
PAMELA. Pa? Look at me. I'm over here. (He turns his head ever so slowly to face her.) Not what. Who. Who is he?
PA. Who.
PAMELA. That's right.
PA. He...
PAMELA. Take your time.
JANET. The patience of Job.
PA. Jo...ey.
PAMELA. What about him?
PA. He...
PAMELA. Yes?
PA. Sent...
PAMELA. Go on.
PA. Me...
PAMELA. What?
PA. What..
ANDREA. Try when.
PAMELA. You’ll confuse him.
JANET. He’s already confused.
PAMELA. You’re not helping.
ANDREA. We never did.
PAMELA (to PA). What did Joey send you?
PA. Card.
JANET. If you believe that, you’ll believe any-
thing.
PAMELA. When?
PA. Chris...mas.
PAMELA. That’s nice.
ANDREA. It’s also impossible.
PA. Jo...ey...sent...me...
JANET. A card.
ANDREA. At Christmas.
PAMELA (to PA). That’s nice.
JANET. So are you.
ANDREA. I’m glad one of us is.
JANET (to PA). Where is it?
PA. Good...
JANET. He always does that.
PA. Boy.
ANDREA. Does what?
PA. What.
JANET. Pretends he can’t hear me.
PAMELA. He’s not pretending.
JANET. He hears you.
ANDREA. Let me try. Pa, where is the card Joey sent you at Christmas?
PA. Jo...ey...sent...me...card...
JANET. We know that.
ANDREA. Where is it?
PA. It.
JANET. Change the subject.
ANDREA. To what?
PA. What.
JANET. Anything.
ANDREA. The garden looks good.
PA. Good.
ANDREA. That takes care of that conversation.
PA. Hedge.
JANET. He said something new.
PAMELA. What about the hedge, Pa?
PA. Cut.
PAMELA. Somebody cut the hedge?
JANET. He did.
ANDREA. Who?
JANET. Pa.
PAMELA. That’s right.
JANET. He cut it every year.
PA. Year.
JANET. After he cut it, he’d look at it and say:
"Not bad, if I do say so myself, not bad."
PA. Lad...der.
PAMELA. What ladder, Pa?
PA. Shed.
PAMELA. Ladder in the shed.
ANDREA. This sounds like a class in English-for-
Beginners.
JANET. He climbed the ladder to cut the hedge.
PAMELA (to PA). When?

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ANDREA. I’ll bet he says spring.
PA. Spring.
ANDREA. Child’s play.
PAMELA (to PA). You did a good job.
ANDREA. In the good old days gone by.
JANET. Ask him if he cut the Christmas card.
PAMELA. Don’t.
JANET. He didn’t hear me.
PA. Chris...mas...
JANET. Sorry.
PA. Card.
PAMELA. Pa? It’s me. Pam...e...la.
ANDREA. You’re starting to talk like him.
JANET. We’ll all talk like him someday.
PAMELA (to JANET). Tell him who you are.
JANET. Who am I?
PAMELA. Please.
JANET. Hello, Pa. Remember me? I’m Janet.
PAMELA (to ANDREA). Now you.
ANDREA (to PA). Andrea.
PA. Who.
JANET. At least he didn’t say what.
PA. What.
PAMELA (to JANET). Cut it out.
PA. Cut.
ANDREA. Oh no.
PA. Hedge.
JANET. Damn.
PA. Pam.
ANDREA. Close enough.
PAMELA. I’m right here.
PA. And...
ANDREA. Andrea, that’s me.
PA. Jan...
JANET. Et.
PAMELA. You have a good memory.
PA. Mem...or...ee.
PAMELA. You remembered your three daughters.
PA. Daught...
ANDREA. Remember what he used to say?
PA. Ers.
JANET. "Everybody otta have a dotta."
PAMELA. Papa's girls.
ANDREA (sitting on the swing). I feel like a girl, being back here.
JANET. Remember what else he used to say?
ANDREA. What?
JANET. "The highest compliment...
PAMELA. ...you can pay a woman...
ANDREA. ...is to call her a lady."
JANET. Sounds old-fashioned, doesn't it?
PAMELA. He's an old-fashioned guy.
PA. Old.
ANDREA. Too late to change him now.
PA. Now.
JANET. Too late to change anybody.
ANDREA. What do you want to change?
JANET. To make the second half of my life happier than the first.
PAMELA. Half?
ANDREA. How long do you want to live?
JANET. As old as him.
ANDREA. Why?
PA. Why.
JANET. It beats dying.
PAMELA. Shhh.
PA. Dy...
JANET. He has the ears of a rabbit.
PA. Ing.
PAMELA. No, Pa. She was talking about dyeing her hair.
PA. Hair.
JANET. No, rabbit.
PAMELA. Don't.
JANET. I couldn't resist.
ANDREA. Next time, resist.
PAMELA (to JANET). Tell him about your hair.
JANET. What about it?
PA. Hair.
PAMELA. You know.
PA. No.
JANET. I may become a redhead, Pa.
PA. Red...
JANET. Head.
PA. Your...mother...
JANET. What about her?
PA. Her.
ANDREA. He's right.
PA. Right.
ANDREA. Mother was once a redhead.
JANET. When?
PA. When.
JANET. When she was young.
PA. Young.
PAMELA. That's right.
PA. Right.
JANET. I don't remember.
PA. Re...
PAMELA. Neither do I.
PA. Mem...
PAMELA. I saw a picture.
PA. Ber.
ANDREA. Me too.
PA. Red...head...
PAMELA. He's going to sleep.
PA. Sleep.
JANET. Thank God.
PA. God.
JANET (referring to herself). Born to lose.
PA. Re...mem...ber...