

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

LIMBO

A One-Act Play
by
JOHN O'BRIEN



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

*** 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 fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. 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. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 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. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

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

©MCMLXXXVI by
JOHN O'BRIEN

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(LIMBO)

ISBN 1-58342-037-1

LIMBO

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 anything.

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?

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...moth...er...

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...