

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



Stealing Home

Comedy by Pat Cook

Stealing Home

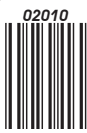
Comedy. By Pat Cook. Cast: 4m., 7w. “You can’t judge a book by its cover!” Cecil tells Officer Doughberg as he tries to explain why he and his partner, Pug, were caught in a funeral home in the middle of the night. He figures to confuse the policeman with fast talk and mumbo jumbo. Actually, they were there to heist a few trinkets, which is what Doughberg figured all along. What nobody figured on was Beulah Meadows, the owner of the place, showing up and recognizing Cecil as her long-lost son, Jimmy Meadows, who vanished from an amusement park some 25 years earlier. This, of course, comes as a tragic shock to Beulah’s daughters, who were just about to sell the funeral home for quite a bundle. “We’ll have to get rid of him,” intones Gretchen, the oldest daughter, “one way or another.” Before you know it, the place is overrun with other-worldly sisters, whining lawyers, policemen, psychiatrists and nuns! Is Cecil really there to help out his would-be mother? Or is he sticking around because he has a crush on Joan, the mortician? And is Cecil really Beulah’s long-lost son? Find out in this frantic farce when two con men set out to lift a few pieces of silverware and end up *Stealing Home*. Brought to you by the author of *Monday Always Leads to Murder* and *Death and Taxes*. *One int. set. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: SP4.*

Cover design: Jeanette Alig-Sergel

ISBN-10 1-58342-683-3
ISBN-13 978-1-58342-683-8



9 781583 426838



02010



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098
ph: 800-448-7469



Printed on recycled paper

www.dramaticpublishing.com

STEALING HOME

By
PAT COOK



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

© Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock, Illinois.

*** 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 website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., 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.

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.

©MMX by
PAT COOK

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

ISBN: 978-1-58342-638-8

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

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

STEALING HOME

CHARACTERS

CECIL charming conman, around 35
PUG Cecil's sarcastic sidekick, 30-ish
Officer DOUGHBERG suspicious 30-year-old cop
BEULAH kindly and trusting lady, late 60s
JOAN pretty but wise mortician, late 20s
ZELDA Beulah's youngest daughter, meek
IMOGENE Beulah's middle spooky child
GRETCHEN Beulah's pompous eldest daughter
HUNTER well-dressed, long-suffering lawyer, 60-ish
ANGELINA a nun with a secret
PHOEBE a no-nonsense psychiatrist

TIME: The present.

PLACE: The lobby of the Green Meadows Funeral Home.

Cecil and Pug, having been caught by the police breaking into a funeral home, are saved by the owner, Beulah Meadows, who suddenly recognizes Cecil as her long-lost son, Jimmy, who vanished at the age of seven. Cecil, rather than taking it on the lam after being freed, convinces Pug that they should “let it ride”—go along with Beulah and pretend to be this missing son. They'd have a place to stay for a few days, some hot meals and so on. And it's not like they were scamming the lady; this was all her idea. It was the ideal set-up. What Cecil didn't count on was having to meet the rest of the family.

CECIL (*eyes widen*). Wow, she is gorgeous! (*Now playing the part of the brother he jumps to his feet.*) Joan! (*He crosses to her with outstretched arms.*) Joan, dear Joan, my sweet sister Joan. It's me! Jimmy! (*He hugs her. BEULAH smiles and shakes her head.*) Your own Jimmy.

JOAN. Will you let go of me! (*She shoves CECIL away.*)

CECIL. What? Is this any way to treat your long-lost brother-dear?

JOAN. I'm NOT your sister!

CECIL. Hah?

BEULAH (*moves to CECIL*). No, no, this is my technician.

Joan Crandall.

CECIL. Oh, I beg your pardon. My mistake. (*Curiously.*)

Technician?

JOAN (*eying CECIL suspiciously*). Mortician and embalmer.

CECIL. You're awfully pretty for that job.

JOAN (*heard this one before*). Uh huh.

CECIL. I would've figured you for a model or movie star.

JOAN (*sarcastically*). Oh, I gave all that up because I like to be around graveyards. (*She sees PUG.*) And who's he?

PUG (*rises*). 'Evening!

BEULAH. He's a friend of Jimmy's. Why are you here?

(*PUG sits again and continues to snack.*)

JOAN. I got a call from Alfred. (*She circles CECIL looking over him from head to foot.*)

BEULAH. Officer Doughberg called you?

JOAN. He told me what went on here tonight. (*She looks at BEULAH.*) Tonight of all nights.

CECIL. Why tonight, what's happening tonight?

BEULAH. Just don't worry your head about it, Jimmy.

Now that you're here that should straighten things out.

CECIL. Straighten WHAT things out? (*He looks back at JOAN.*) What ARE you looking for?!

JOAN (*moves to BEULAH*). Mrs. Beulah, if I didn't know you better I'd swear you cooked up this whole thing.

CECIL. What thing?

BEULAH. How do you mean?

JOAN. Some trick to stall everything.

BEULAH. Now you KNOW I would never do any such thing.

CECIL. What thing?

BEULAH. I trust my girls implicitly and I know they're just thinking of what's best all around.

JOAN. Right. And what're they going to say when they meet him?

PUG. What thing?

BEULAH (*to PUG*). They want me to sell the business.

CECIL (*to himself*). Now what was I saying wrong?

JOAN. Whatever. (*She turns to CECIL.*) You want to explain who you really are?

BEULAH (*appalled*). Joan!

JOAN. Why you showed up here tonight? How you got in here? And what you're REALLY up to?

CECIL. Hey! If you'll just give me a chance to get in a word edgewise!

JOAN. Well?

CECIL. Listen, this is new to me, too, but when this lady here—

BEULAH (*correcting him*). Mom.

CECIL. —when Mom here told me everything it all made sense.

JOAN. Oh, it did?

CECIL. Sure. I mean look at that face. (*He indicates BEULAH.*) Have you ever seen a more honest face?

JOAN. Mrs. Beulah! You CAN'T be serious.

BEULAH. Joan, I ought to know my own son.

CECIL (*to JOAN*). Sheesh! Can't you cut a guy a little slack? (*He moves to PUG.*)

JOAN. Hey, you think I'M bad wait till you meet the others. Your...sisters?

BEULAH. Now what makes you say such a thing? I just
KNOW they'll be as jubilant as I am.

JOAN. Are we talking about the same people?

(At that moment, ZELDA enters through the front door.)

BEULAH. Zelda, you won't believe it, you just won't believe it.

JOAN. THERE'S an understatement.

ZELDA. Oh, where IS he, where is my dear Jimmy?

(CECIL cautiously raises a hand.)

BEULAH. Right over there.

(ZELDA tentatively crosses to CECIL.)

ZELDA. Jimmy?

CECIL *(cautiously)*. Yes?

ZELDA. It's so good to have you home again. *(Meekly she holds out her arms and clumsily hugs him.)*

JOAN *(surprised)*. Huh?

CECIL *(smiles, at JOAN)*. Hey, this ain't so tough.

BEULAH. Give him a real hug, Zelda.

ZELDA. Oh, sorry. *(She hugs CECIL again, again it is a clumsy attempt.)*

CECIL. I'm not going to break you know.

ZELDA *(breaks the hug)*. Oh, sorry. *(She sees PUG.)*
Who's he? If I may ask.

PUG *(rises)*. S'up?

CECIL. He's a friend of mine. *(He motions PUG to sit down, which he does.)* And you are sister Zelda.

ZELDA (*to BEULAH*). Oh, Mother, you must be so happy.

BEULAH. You just cannot imagine.

JOAN (*moves to ZELDA*). Zelda, you BELIEVE HIM?

ZELDA. Yes. (*A beat.*) Sorry.

BEULAH. Where are the others?

ZELDA. Right behind me.

(At that moment, IMOGENE enters through the front door. She is pale and dressed completely in black.)

IMOGENE. What a lovely night out. Cold, drizzling rain.

The fog is positively delicious.

PUG (*sees IMOGENE*). What in the name of Boris Karloff is that?

(CECIL motions PUG to keep quiet.)

BEULAH. Imogene. Here's your baby brother. (*She indicates CECIL.*)

IMOGENE (*moves slowly to CECIL*). James, dear James, returned home. "Home is the hunter home from the hill and sailor home from the sea."

CECIL. I have missed you SO much, sister Imogene! (*He holds out his arms.*)

ZELDA. Isn't it wonderful, Imogene? (*IMOGENE shoots her a dirty look.*) I mean, if YOU think it is.

IMOGENE. Diabolical I'd say. (*She reaches over and shakes CECIL's hand.*) Lovely to have you back home, James.

BEULAH (*to CECIL*). She'd give you a hug but she doesn't like to touch people.

IMOGENE. Not while they're alive, in any case. (*She sees PUG.*) Who's he?

PUG (*rises*). We'll get to him in a minute. (*He sits and keeps snacking, all the while watching the others.*)

JOAN. I don't BELIEVE this!

BEULAH (*moves to JOAN*). What's not to believe?

JOAN (*indicates the sisters*). Them! (*An aside to BEULAH.*) They're up to something.

(*At that moment, GRETCHEN enters through the front door. She is smartly dressed.*)

GRETCHEN. Okay, what's the story here? (*She points to PUG.*) Is that him?

PUG (*half rises*). Don't get up. (*He sits again.*)

BEULAH. No, that's him with Imogene.

CECIL (*to IMOGENE*). And she's—?

IMOGENE. Gretchen, the oldest.

(*CECIL rushes over to GRETCHEN with outstretched arms.*)

CECIL. Sister Gretchen!

GRETCHEN (*holds a hand up*). Please! The formalities. (*She eyes him up and down.*) I don't know you and you don't know me. Let's proceed from that basis, shall we?

BEULAH. Now, Gretchen, play nice.

GRETCHEN. Oh, Mother. I'm not so easily swayed by sentiment as SOME people.

BEULAH. I'm telling you he is your baby brother. And there's no sentiment about it.

GRETCHEN. So you say. A moment. (*She puts an arm about CECIL and pulls him downstage. She speaks to him quietly in a more brutal voice.*) Listen, pal, I don't know who you really are but trust me. First chance I get I'm going to gut you like a fish and make it look like an accident.

(*CECIL stares at her in disbelief and then turns to BEULAH.*)

CECIL (*a whining child*). MOM!

BEULAH (*moves to them*). Okay, you two, now there'll be plenty of time for us to catch up.

GRETCHEN. Now, Mother, somebody has to have their feet on the ground around this place. You know, after Father died—

BEULAH. Yes, yes, and you had to take over a lot of his responsibilities. (*She moves to CECIL.*) But now Jimmy's home and he can take over from now on.

GRETCHEN. That's what I thought.

(*IMOGENE and ZELDA move to GRETCHEN.*)

ZELDA. Isn't it wonderful?

IMOGENE (*to ZELDA*). Will you shut up?

ZELDA. Sorry.

GRETCHEN (*looks at JOAN*). Why are you here?

JOAN. I got a call from Alfred and he thought—

GRETCHEN (*pointedly*). Well, this is a family matter, don't you think?

JOAN. I'm sorry, EXCUSE me!

BEULAH. Gretchen, you stop that this minute! (*She moves to JOAN.*) Joan, she didn't mean anything by that, she was just—

JOAN. No, it's quite all right. (*She glares at GRETCHEN.*) I'm used to her. (*Back to BEULAH.*) I need to get back home anyway. (*She opens the front door.*)

CECIL. Nice to meet you!

JOAN. Whatever. (*She exits.*)

GRETCHEN. Would it be all right if I talked with my sisters a moment? (*For CECIL's benefit.*) In private, *s'il vous plait*?

BEULAH. You just behave. All of you. (*She moves to CECIL.*) Let's go into my office here and I'll show you all about the business.

CECIL. Sure. (*For the others benefit.*) Mom! (*He looks at PUG.*) Parnell?

PUG (*rises*). Right behind you...Jimbo.

BEULAH. This is all like a wonderful dream. (*She holds CECIL's face in her hand and exits into the manager's office.*)

(*CECIL looks at the others, sniffs indignantly and exits. PUG starts to move but then grabs another sandwich and exits.*)

ZELDA. Why did you call us up and ask us to be nice to him? (*GRETCHEN looks at her.*) I mean, if you'd care to tell us, that's all I meant. I wasn't trying to—

GRETCHEN. Oh, stop sniveling, Zelda!

IMOGENE. She does have a point, Gretchen. I went out of my way to welcome him into our little circle.

ZELDA. She really did! I've never seen Imogene so warm and friendly.

IMOGENE. Don't get used to it. *(To GRETCHEN.)* If you have some nefarious plan then pray tell us what it is.

GRETCHEN. It's quite simple. I want that imposter to think you're on HIS side. THAT way maybe he'll make a mistake and we can expose him. I just acted the way Mother would expect out of me. We don't want to upset her at this late stage in the game.

ZELDA. And now what?

IMOGENE. Yes, what's our next move?

GRETCHEN. Easy. We get rid of him. *(She looks out with a sinister look on her face.)* One way or another...we get rid of him.

ZELDA. How? *(The other two sisters glare at her.)* Sorry.

(LIGHTS black out.)