

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this play is subject to royalty. It is fully protected by Original Works Publishing, and the copyright laws of the United States. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

The performance rights to this play are controlled by Original Works Publishing and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Royalties are payable with negotiation from Original Works Publishing.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured from Original Works Publishing through direct contact.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play:

**“Produced by special arrangement with
Original Works Publishing.”**

www.originalworksonline.com

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

Information, PLEASE!

First Printing, 2008

Printed in U.S.A.

More Great Plays Available
From OWP

Stoneskippers
by Robert R. Lehan

1 Male, 1 Female

Set: Bare stage, minimum props

Synopsis: A hungry, homeless woman seeks help on a beach from a man seriously engaged in mastering his technique for the competitive sport of ston skipping.

Shakespeare's a Dick
by Mark aloysius Kenneally

Set: Box set

2 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: When the young red-neck Wally curses the name of Shakespeare and opts to attend a Monster Truck Show instead of "As You Like It," he feels the wrath of the Bard. Waking up after a heavy night of boozing, he finds he can only speak in Shakespearian verse. His best friend Ramie searches for a cure from their high school English teacher Ingrid, while his girlfriend Doris swoons for the new Wally.

Information, PLEASE!

**by
J.C. Svec**

Information, PLEASE! was originally produced by Tribe Productions for the 5th Annual Spotlight On Winter Festival at Chashama, NYC, March 2003. *Information, PLEASE!* was directed by J.C. Svec; the production stage manager was Annelise Cohon; and the production design was by Studio 31. The cast was as follows: Ryan Pifher, Sara Shaning and Karson St. John.

Visit the author's website:
www.dramatistsguildweb.com/member/svec

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The pronunciation of the players in *Information, PLEASE!* are Eddie Giacomini (JOCK-OH-MIN), Bernie Parent (PUH-RONT) and Vic Hadfield (HAD-FEELED).

The timing of the phone rings are extremely important to the rhythm of the play. A Tele-Q from CEI, Inc., hooked up to the modular phone, will ring the phone on cue.

INFORMATION, PLEASE!

Characters:

GEORGE KOPAC, a regular guy in his mid-20's

KATIE STANTON, a hip, attractive young girl in her early 20's

RITA FOLEY, an uptight, self-centered conservative young 20 year-old

SCENE: A chilly Thursday night, April 8, 1971. An overhead street lamp provides the only illumination on the corner of 27th Street and Kennedy Boulevard. Adjacent to Dave's, the neighborhood Sweet Shoppe, is a rounded, vertical metal boothette that houses a public payphone and an assortment of wooden crates.

AT RISE: GEORGE KOPAC, an average looking young man in his mid twenties, stands before the phone. With one hand he holds the handset to his ear and with the other balances a pizza box. He is dressed in worn jeans, suede shoes and a large, olive drab Army field jacket that covers a tee shirt. Stuffed into one of the lower, oversized jacket pocket is a large bottle of soda from a local distributor. Over the course of a silent eternity, he feeds the phone an assortment of coins, over and over again.

GEORGE: *(exasperated)* Yes...I'm on a pay phone. No, I'm not mad at you.

(A long silence)

GEORGE: *(sweetening his approach)* Listen, I really have to get back to work. *(pause)* No, I'm not mad at you. *(pause)* Well, you don't seem to have much to say either. *(pause)* No, I'm not mad at you. *(pause)* Because I'm working. *(pause)* Because. *(pause)* No, you can't. *(pause)* No, it's not because I'm mad at you.

(Another long, annoying silence ensues leading George to once again feed the Bell apparatus.)

GEORGE: Hello. That was the last of my change, so, I only have a minute. *(pause)* If it doesn't get too busy. Yes, I'll try. I have to go now. Yes, I'll hang up first. *(pause)* What? Sure...no, no problem.

(George leans in to read the number off the phone.)

GEORGE: 437-0647. *(pause)* Me too. *(pause)* No, I'm really not mad. I'm going, now.

(George moves the receiver end closer and closer to the switch hook as he fights to terminate the endless conversation.)

GEORGE: Um-hmm...um-hmm...yes, I will...okay...bye...I promise...I really have to go...bye.

(George's battle finally comes to an end as he cradles the handset on its resting place. He proceeds to bang his head on the side of the boothette still balancing the pizza box. Regaining his composure, George examines the green order slip taped to the top of the box.)

GEORGE: 36 west 16th street. Mrs. Smith.

(George exchanges looks between the phone, his watch and the pizza box. Finally, with a deep sigh, he raises the box lid, checks to see if he is alone and pokes a finger into the melted cheese and sauce. Realizing the pie has cooled considerably; he pokes around several other slices.)

GEORGE: *(nonchalantly)* She'll never notice.

(The ringing phone freezes George in the middle of licking the tomato sauce from his finger. He stares at the ringing apparatus. Slowly, and hesitantly, he is drawn, inch-by-inch, towards the Bell invention. Just as George reaches the boothette and extends his arm for the handset, screams from a few feet away prevent him from answering the incoming call.)

VOICE (O.S.): *(harried)* NO! DON'T! IT'S FOR ME. IT'S FOR ME!!

(KATIE STANTON, a naturally pretty, hip twenty-year old with straight, shoulder length hair runs up to George. She wears faded bell-bottom dungarees and a knitted shawl that covers a heavy turtleneck. Bent over, and desperately trying to catch her breath, she carefully cradles a large tapestry shoulder bag.)

KATIE: *(gasping)* It's.... for.... me.

(Katie motions for the handset but is ignored by George who answers mid-ring.)

GEORGE: *(resigned)* Hello. *(pause)* Yes, I had a feeling it was you. *(pause)* Because, I just did. *(pause)* Yes, I'm happy it's you. *(pause)* I told you I wasn't.

(Katie, having caught her breath moves to just behind George and whispers over his shoulder.)

KATIE: That was not cool.

(George ignores Katie who grabs for the phone to no avail.)

GEORGE: Hey...that's not cool.

KATIE: *(desperate)* I have to use the phone.

(George quickly cups the transmitter end of the handset.)

GEORGE: *(angry)* I need a minute here.

KATIE: *(abruptly)* I don't have a minute.

GEORGE: Well, you'll just have to wait anyway.

(Katie ultimately loses a staring contest with George and moves away at his 'shoo' gesture.)

GEORGE: *(back into the handset)* Hi. Of course I'm still here. *(pause)* What? I'm not with anyone. *(pause)* I answered because you didn't give me time to get away. *(pause)* That's not what I meant.

(Katie, gripping her bag even tighter, has found her way back behind George.)

KATIE: *(loudly and emphatically)* It's an e-mer-gen-cy.

(George's attitude quickly turns to spin control.)

GEORGE: *(into phone)* Just some woman in the street. *(pause)* No one!

KATIE: *(sensually)* Please, oh, please, LET ME HAVE IT!

(George switches the handset to his other hand and turns away from Katie.)

GEORGE: No one.

(George directs his attention to Katie)

GEORGE: Just some crazy bag lady that needs to use the phone.
(pause) I don't know...about fifty or sixty. Life apparently has not treated her kindly. Yeah, I feel sorry for her too. *(pause)* Really?
(pause) Of course I will.

(George feels his pockets)

GEORGE: If I had any, I would. *(pause)* As soon as I can, I promise.
(pause) Me too. I said, me too.

KATIE: *(fed up)* Oh for Chris sakes, say it already.

GEORGE: *(embarrassed)* I love you...too.

(Expending his energy on a long, intense stare into Katie's eyes, George manages a slow and deliberate hanging up of the handset.)

GEORGE: *(sarcastically)* Thanks.

(George, balancing the pizza box, is aware that Katie is now grasping her bag tighter than ever. Both hold their ground, neither willing to surrender their territory.)

KATIE: *(annoyed)* Well?

GEORGE: Well, what?

KATIE: *(pointing at the phone)* May I please?

(George feigns a gentlemanly side step allowing Katie access to the phone.)

GEORGE: Katie frantically searches every pocket for money.

KATIE: *(off handed)* And that 'I love you' wasn't very convincing.

(Katie gives up her search, looks directly to George and holds up her pinky.)

KATIE: Wrapped pretty tight, huh?

GEORGE: That's none of your business.

(Katie's face contorts to George's response before she turns back to face the phone for which she obviously has no change.)

GEORGE: *(taunting)* Need a dime?

KATIE: *(without turning)* I was under the impression you were tapped.

GEORGE: Yeah, well everything is not always as it appears.

KATIE: *(extending an upturned palm)* Thanks.

(Katie and George split the distance between them as he pulls a handful of change from one of his deep jacket pockets. She pulls a dollar bill from her back pants pocket, rummages through the assortment of coins for the exact change and stuffs the dollar into one of George's breast pockets.)

GEORGE: *(disinterested)* Take it all. I really don't care.

KATIE: *(uncertain)* That's okay.

(As the two lock into a very different stare, an, 'I'm seeing you for the first time type of stare,' their gaze is interrupted by the ringing of the phone.)

GEORGE: *(pleading)* Please, don't.

KATIE: *(assuring)* It's probably my friends.

(George looks at the phone and then Katie, who responds with an 'I need to answer the phone look.' Reluctantly, he turns, understanding he has no choice.)

KATIE: *(answering)* Hello. *(pause)* Katie. *(pause)* Yes, I'm the one. Well, actually I'm not that old. *(pause)* Younger. *(pause)* Even younger. *(pause)* I will.

(Katie hangs up the handset and turns to George who is already expecting the worst.)

GEORGE: It wasn't one of your friends.

KATIE: Uh...no.

(George simply nods his head.)

KATIE: She said if you can tear yourself away from work, and, if you can find the time, call her...maybe she'll be home.

(Katie waits, but a response from George never comes.)

KATIE: *(apologetically)* I have to make my call.

(George places himself and the pizza on several empty crates that sit near the phone. He pulls the bottle of soda from his pocket and settles it on the ground. Separating a slice from the pie, he munches as Katie fails to reach anyone with three different attempts.)

GEORGE: *(interrupting the silence)* No luck, huh?

KATIE: *(caught off guard)* What? No.

GEORGE: Want a slice?

KATIE: *(taking a moment)* Sure, why not.

(George hands off a slice of pizza as Katie pulls up a crate next to him. She carefully tucks her bag behind the crate and out of sight.)

GEORGE: It's better when it's hot.

KATIE: *(through a mouthful)* Not bad cold. *(pause)* Shouldn't you make a phone call?

GEORGE: *(grabs another slice)* And a delivery.

(George gives the pizza and the phone a once over.)

GEORGE: Screw it.

(With an opener attached to his key chain, George opens the bottle of soda. He takes a swig and passes it over to Katie who declines the offer.)

KATIE: I'd better not...small bladder. *(pause)* You really shouldn't cop out on...

(Katie motions over to the phone.)

GEORGE: *(reluctantly)* Rita.

KATIE: *(holding back a smile)* You shouldn't leave the chick hanging. She's probably wiggling out.

GEORGE: *(pleased)* Let her. Come to think of it, you probably did me a favor.

(The phone rings. Katie immediately jumps up, but catches herself before taking any further steps.)

KATIE: *(back to George)* Do you...?

GEORGE: *(uninterested)* Be my guest.

KATIE: *(into the handset)* Hey. *(pause)* This is Katie. *(pause)* Excuse me. Who is this? *(pause)* That's disgusting. *(pause)* It says what? Where?

(Katie leans down and examines the inside of the metal shell of the boothette. Her suddenly widening eyes and mouth telegraph a horrific discovery of literature scribbled inside the booth.)

KATIE: *(screaming into the handset)* Well, I'm not, and I will not. *(pause)* No, I won't check for another phone number.

(Visibly hurt, Katie slams down the handset and desperately tries to rub her name off of the metal with the corner of her shawl. She turns to George who has stopped, laid down his pizza and is staring at her every action.)

KATIE: *(point to the graffiti)* This is not me.

GEORGE: *(consoling)* You don't have to explain to me.

KATIE: I'm not explaining, I'm simply stating that this is not me.

(Katie and George exchange places allowing him to examine the graffiti. He simultaneously hides being entertained by the poetry and making light of the situation.)

GEORGE: *(grinning)* There once was a girl from...um-hmmm.
(reading) Wow. *(reading)* Very athletic. *(reading)* Okay, let's not go there. *(jumping ahead)* Ask for Katie at...

KATIE: *(defensively)* That's not my phone number.

(George glares at Katie forcing her to wrap the shawl tighter around her frame.)

KATIE: And that's not me. I would never...

(Katie marches over to the boothette to assure herself of what it says.)

KATIE: *(pointing)* And that's physically impossible. The two lean in as George re-reads one particular line.

GEORGE: *(pointing elsewhere)* What about this?

KATIE: *(caught in the moment)* No. Definitely...well...

(Katie looks at George and realizes his attempt to comfort her has succeeded. She slaps him hard on the arm before heading back to the pizza.)

KATIE: *(partially smiling)* You psyched me out. Congratulations.

(George slides a black marker from his jacket pocket blacking out specifically selected words.)

GEORGE: *(finishing)* There. Now somebody does, but not you.

KATIE: Thank you.

GEORGE: Sure.

(Their growing interest in each other intensifies, as the two look around for someplace, or something else to preoccupy themselves. Abruptly, Katie's search becomes very serious.)

KATIE: Where's my bag?

GEORGE: *(calming)* Behind the crate.

(Katie regains her composure as she checks its location and tries not to make a bigger deal of her panic.)

KATIE: I just don't want to lose it.

GEORGE: It must...

KATIE: *(avoiding further questions)* Can I have another slice? I'm starving.

GEORGE: There's plenty.

(Katie peels away another slice for herself and George, who declines the offer. After several bites, Katie reads the receipt.)

KATIE: Were you supposed to deliver this?

GEORGE: 36 west 16th street.

KATIE: Mrs. Smith.

GEORGE: She'll never know the difference. Same time every week she calls for a small pie with extra cheese. Five minutes before we close. Exactly. Whatever the night, she's always my last delivery and most times, when I get there; she's forgotten she called.

KATIE: So, is it true what they say about delivery boys?

GEORGE: I don't know. What do they say...and who's saying it?

(The phone rings.)

KATIE: You get it. It's probably for you, anyway.

(George picks up the handset and extends it out to Katie who drops her half-eaten slice back into the box.)

KATIE: *(rushing to the phone)* Hello. *(pause)* Where are you? *(to George)* It's them. *(pause)* What do you mean where am I? *(pause)* Where are you? *(pause)* You haven't left the city yet? Why not? *(pause)* Well, that's very reassuring, but that's not the plan. *(pause)* Where are you calling from? *(pause)* Jack Dempsey's? *(pause)* You're in a bar? *(pause)* I don't give a shit if that's where some of the players go after the game. *(pause)* Hello? Hello?

(Katie taps hard on the switch hook several times before slamming down the handset and turning to George.)

KATIE: *(matter of fact)* Disconnected.

GEORGE: Sounds as if somebody got their signals crossed.

KATIE: He is such a jerk sometimes.

(George responds with a 'what do you expect from the male gender' gesture.)

KATIE: *(agreeing)* Most times.

GEORGE: Jack Dempsey's, huh?

KATIE: You know it?

GEORGE: Right across from the old Garden.

(Katie stands clueless.)

GEORGE: The old Madison Square Garden. Up on 50th. It's where Rangers fans hangout after the game hoping to hoist a few with the players. Personally, I prefer The Blarney Stone.

KATIE: Another hockey fan?

GEORGE: Be warned, we're growing in number. *(pause)* So...were you at the game tonight?

KATIE: I was.

GEORGE: *(disguising excitement)* Wow, a playoff game. How'd you...

(Katie's body language telegraphs her total and complete disinterest at George's curiosity.)

GEORGE: Anyway, you were at the new Garden. On 33rd street.
(pause) First game?

KATIE: First and I can assure you, most likely my last.

(The phone rings preventing any further discussion on the subject as Katie grabs the handset.)

KATIE: *(anxious)* Michael? *(pause)* Well, that was swell of the bartender. *(pause)* Oh, it was all very exciting. I'm glad you and your friends are enjoying reliving the events of the evening while I freeze my ass off on some street corner. *(pause)* Believe what you did? *(ignorantly)* What are talking about? *(pause)* Yeah, I have my bag. Why? *(pause)* Thanks for the concern. *(talking away from the handset)* Un-fucking believable. *(into handset)* Maybe if you had taken the time to worry about your girlfriend as much as...

(Katie slams down the handset keeping her back to George. The phone immediately rings, but, only once, as Katie, without regard, raises and drops the handset. The phone rings again, and, this time, does not cease until George squeezes past Katie to answer it.)

GEORGE: *(tentative)* Hel-lo. *(pause)* Uh, George. *(pause)* Just walking by. *(looking at Katie)* Straight hair, pretty, wearing a shawl? Yeah she's still here.

(Katie, intrigued by George's remarks, puts her hand up to signal she doesn't want to talk.)

GEORGE: *(into handset)* She's a little upset right now. *(to Katie)* Do you need a ride?

(Katie, seemingly for the first time, looks around and realizes she wouldn't know how to get home. Katie nods.)