SAID THE SPIDER
TO THE FLY

A Comedy/Mystery in Two Acts

by
Craig Sodaro

BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS, LLC

Publishers of Contest-Winning Drama
Copyright © 2004 by Craig Sodaro
All rights reserved

CAUTION: Professionals & amateurs are hereby warned that Said the Spider to the Fly is subject to a royalty. This play is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, Canada, the British Commonwealth and all other countries of the Copyright Union.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this play are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS & ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this play are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. If necessary, we will contact the author or the author’s agent. PLEASE NOTE that the royalty rate for performing this play is $50 FOR EACH PERFORMANCE. (http://www.brookpub.com). Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. You will find our contact information on the following page.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author’s billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC  (http://www.brookpub.com)

TRADE MARKS, PUBLIC FIGURES, & MUSICAL WORKS: This play may include references to brand names or public figures. All references are intended only as parody or other legal means of expression. This play may contain suggestions for the performance of a musical work (either in part or in whole). Brooklyn Publishers, LLC have not obtained performing rights of these works. The direction of such works is only a playwright’s suggestion, and the play producer should obtain such permissions on their own. The website for the U.S. copyright office is http://www.copyright.gov.

COPYING: from the book in any form (in whole or excerpt), whether photocopying, scanning recording, videotaping, storing in a retrieval system, or by any other means is strictly forbidden without consent of Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

TO PERFORM THIS PLAY

1. Royalty fees must be paid to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC before permission is granted to use and perform the playwrights work.

2. Royalty of the required amount must be paid each time the play is performed, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

3. When performing one-acts or full-length plays, enough playbooks must be purchased for cast and crew.

4. Copying or duplication of any part of this script is strictly forbidden.

5. Any changes to the script are not allowed without direct authorization by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

6. Credit to the author and publisher is required on all promotional items associated with this play’s performance(s).

7. Do not break copyright laws with any of our plays. This is a very serious matter and the consequences can be quite expensive. We must protect our playwrights, who earn their living through the legal payment of script and performance royalties.

8. If you have questions concerning performance rules, contact us by the various ways listed below:

Toll-free: 888-473-8521
Fax: 319-368-8011
Email: customerservice@brookpub.com

Copying, rather than purchasing cast copies, and/or failure to pay royalties is a federal offense. Cheating us and our wonderful playwrights in this manner will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Please support theatre and follow federal copyright laws.
SAID THE SPIDER TO THE FLY

by
Craig Sodaro

ACT I
SCENE I

PAUL's studio apartment on a stormy afternoon. The scene is played before the curtain, with a pair of rickety chairs with a small table between them.

At rise, PAUL lies on the table as if HE's fallen asleep - or is dead. A few papers lie scattered across the table and under him. We hear a doorbell. PAUL doesn't move. The doorbell rings again. HE still doesn't move. SCOTTI enters left, wearing a coat and carrying an overnight bag.

SCOTTI: Paul? I stopped by so you could wish me good luck. (approaches PAUL with growing concern) Paul? Paul? (touches him; HE doesn't move) Oh, no! (pulls a cell phone from her pocket and dials) What have you done to yourself? Oh, hurry! Hurry! Yes? Yes! My... my friend is sitting here and he won't move! I live next door to him in the same apartment building and we've got this hole in one of our mutual walls that we usually hide behind pictures, but sometimes we talk through the hole... but this isn't important, ma'am! I mean I think he might be... oh, gosh, just send somebody over here right away!

PAUL: Scotti?
SCOTTI: Oh, Paul! You're alive!
PAUL: Of course I'm alive!
SCOTTI: Well, you could have fooled a mortician, the way you didn't even move, when I came in or called your name or anything!
PAUL: Yeah, well, I wish I were dead.
SCOTTI: At least then we wouldn't be arrested for the 911 false alarm!
PAUL: Don't worry.
SCOTTI: Easy for you to say. You didn't make the call.
PAUL: You didn't give them this address.
SCOTTI: You heard it all?
PAUL: You sounded so... sincere.
SCOTTI: I'd do the same thing for a cocker spaniel.
PAUL: You're very humane, Scotti.
SCOTTI: And you're very... tired?
PAUL: Worse than tired.
SCOTTI: It can't be all that bad.
PAUL: You wouldn't understand.
SCOTTI: That's right. I'm just a preschool teacher and you're a writer. I know in print, “writer” would be in italics, bold italics, for crying out loud.
PAUL: How about just a footnote on my one-line biography? Paul Tibbet: he came, he saw, he flopped.
SCOTTI: Another rejection?
PAUL: Three in the same day.
SCOTTI: I'll bet at least two of them had personal notes scribbled on the bottom. (PAUL shakes his head.) One of them?

(PAUL shakes his head.) Well, there are other publishers. (PAUL shakes his head.)

PAUL: Said the Spider to the Fly has been seen by every publisher of fiction on the North American continent.
SCOTTI: Well, there’s your problem. Send it to a non-fiction publisher. After all, your book’s all about bugs.
PAUL: The title’s figurative. It’s a mystery; a taut, tense thriller. Unfortunately, it’s not thrilling enough.
SCOTTI: Well, kill more of your characters.
PAUL: Everyone dies but one.
SCOTTI: Well, kill him.
PAUL: Her.
SCOTTI: Kill her, then!
PAUL: Somebody has to be left to tell the story; because I sure can’t.
SCOTTI: That's silly! You've been published in Reader's Digest.
PAUL: They liked my joke about Uncle Allen at Thanksgiving dinner.
SCOTTI: It was the way you told it. And you've had stories published in Effervescence, Nocturnal Fates, Time Warp Journal, and what's that other one?
PAUL: Who cares? None of them are in print any longer.
SCOTTI: You're being too hard on yourself.
PAUL: No, everybody else is.
SCOTTI: Well, then, you've got to decide what you're doing wrong.
PAUL: I'm not doing anything wrong! My muse says write, and I write.
SCOTTI: Get a new muse.
PAUL: Very amusing.
SCOTTI: I mean it. Maybe you need to... I don't know... mire yourself in the deprivation and sorrows of the world. Listen to the cries of the people, share their tears!
PAUL: You mean come down and help out at the preschool again?
SCOTTI: Let's not talk about that. I've got two glorious days away and I don't want to think about runny noses or loose teeth until Monday.
PAUL: That's right. Your big weekend.
SCOTTI: But I won't leave 'til I know you're all right.
PAUL: That's ridiculous. You won a weekend at Charlotte's Crypt. You've got to go so you can tell me all about it.
SCOTTI: It's Charlotte's Castle.
PAUL: Same difference! Nobody ever sees the old recluse who lives there. He might as well be dead.
SCOTTI: Maybe he just wants to find some new friends.
PAUL: Stranger things have happened.
SCOTTI: Like winning this contest. I don't even remember entering it.
PAUL: Maybe it's the start of a mystery.
SCOTTI: Said the spider to the fly.
PAUL: Don't worry about me. I was actually making a decision when I fell asleep.
SCOTTI: You're not going to do something... rash... are you?
PAUL: Just something I should have done a long time ago.
SCOTTI: Take a writing class?
PAUL: Why waste my time? I'll never be a real writer... and you know why? (SCOTTI shakes her head.) Because I've never lived. Hemingway became a great writer because he went off and volunteered to fight in wars. He shot elephants on safaris! He probably beat up John Steinbeck in a bar in California somewhere. Shakespeare fought duels and rubbed elbows with Queen Elizabeth. Samuel Pepys lived through the great fire of London. Actually, maybe he started it so he'd have something real to write about.
SCOTTI: You're being silly. You'd be arrested if you tried to rub elbows with Queen Elizabeth. And you don't have enough money to fly to London to light a barbecue, let alone burn the city down.
PAUL: You don't get it.
SCOTTI: I do, too. You're feeling sorry for yourself like Jimmy Helbert.
PAUL: Is he another writer who fell into the vat of obscurity?
SCOTTI: He's a three year old who brought treats for his birthday... but he wanted them all for himself and ruined his whole day feeling sorry for himself.
PAUL: I don't feel sorry for myself. Even if I'm a washed up never was. Go on. Have a wonderful time at Charlotte's Castle and forget about me. I'm going to burn my latest, throw my computer into Muffet Gorge, and find a real job selling T-shirts.
SCOTTI: I really do have to go. Mr. Muffet sent a car and I'm sure it's outside waiting.
PAUL: Don't worry about me. I'll be a different man when we next meet.
SCOTTI: I hope I like him as much as the old Paul.
PAUL (slyly, with a grin) You might not even recognize me. And, Scotti... be careful. Maybe Muffet wants to put the moves on you or something.
SCOTTI: I can take care of myself. Now, wish me luck.
PAUL: Good luck.
SCOTTI: And you, too. With reinventing yourself, I mean. (SCOTTI moves to kiss PAUL, who is ready. Instead SHE gives him a peck on the forehead and exits. PAUL picks up manuscript and dumps it in garbage can as the lights dim)

ACT I
SCENE II

Charlotte's Castle, a stone fortress built high on a hill. We see the great room, stone walls, one window up right, a huge fireplace left with a picture of Charlotte hanging over it. Table at right set with several chairs. A chair grouping at left. Entrances down left and right.
At rise, CADBURY stands at center, the epitome of the perfect butler down to the white towel folded over his arm. LILLY DECHAMP, wearing a form-fitting dress and a large hat and heels looks about the room discerningly. NORMA CARLTON sits primly in a chair.

LILLY: Always wondered what this place looked like inside. Can’t see much from the road, but one night my good friend Betty and me climbed up over the fence and got a good look at the outside of the house. I’ll bet you’d never do anything that crazy, would you, Norma?
NORMA: Oh, heavens, no.
LILLY: Yeah... somebody might spill the beans at the annual little league potluck or something, right?
NORMA: Well, now, I’ve been here once before, Lilly. Legitimately, that is. Charlie... that’s my husband... brought me up one Sunday when Mr. Muffet’s SUV was stuck in a snowdrift, and we had to tow him out. I got a good look at the place then. And Mr. Muffet tipped Charlie very generously.
LILLY: You actually saw Muffet?
NORMA: Oh, heavens, no. His chauffeur did all the tipping.
LILLY: (to CADBURY) You remember that, bud?
CADBURY: My name, Madam, is Cadbury.
LILLY: Yeah, just like those Easter eggs. You got a cream filling upstairs in your egg, too?
CADBURY: (insulted) I beg your pardon?
LILLY: (sighing, bored) I can tell this is going to be one of those weekends.
NORMA: I can’t imagine what you mean.
LILLY: I can sum it up in two words. A real drag.
NORMA: That’s three words.

(Doorbell rings. CADBURY moves down right.)

LILLY: Say, how many of us won this contest, Cadbury, my dear fellow?
CADBURY: I couldn’t say, Miss.

(CADBURY exits down right.)

LILLY: He couldn’t say. I’ll bet in his last life he was a telemarketer and his hell is having his tongue cut out in this life.
NORMA: That isn’t very nice.
LILLY: It’s the funniest thing I heard since I got here.

(CADBURY enters down right followed by SIOBOHAN and ETHEL. SIOBOHAN wears a brightly colored long skirt, a huge blouse, and quite a bit of jewelry. ETHEL wears walking shorts and a jungle jacket, and carries a backpack.)

CADBURY: This way, ladies. Two other guests are here. Allow me to present Mrs. Norma Carlton and Ms. Lilly Dechamp.
ETHEL: Oh, I know you both. I mean, sir, this is a very small town. I used to baby-sit for Norma and I had Lilly in Sunday school.
LILLY: That’s not generally something I spread around, Mrs. Hildebrand.
NORMA: You won this contest, too?
ETHEL: Well, I guess I did! I received that very kind letter... did Mr. Muffet write it himself?
CADBURY: I couldn’t say, Ma’am. I will remove your bags to your rooms. (bows, exits down right carrying bags)
SIOBOHAN: (with growing horror) I want to leave.
ETHEL: Hon, we just got here.
SIOBOHAN: I sense bad karma.
LILLY: Sheboygan, if I got out of every place where I felt bad karma, I’d never have gotten where I am today.
ETHEL: I take it The Lilly Pad is doing well?
LILLY: (proudly) We’re booked up ‘til August. Solid. Even the bridal suite. And you know there aren’t that many people gettin’ hitched in Webbton.
NORMA: Oh, now, Reverend Darcy does a fine wedding and folks always want to come to a pretty, secluded spot for their honeymoon.
LILLY: I oughta know. I had three of ’em.
ETHEL: Wasn’t The Lilly Pad one of your husband’s family’s homes?

END OF FREE PREVIEW